



Final Report
Heritage Hill Historic District Study Committee
Period of Significance Update
Grand Rapids, Michigan
August 2017

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Charge of the Historic District Study Committee

By a resolution dated March 28 2017, the Grand Rapids City Commission named the Heritage Hill Historic District Study Committee in accordance with Chapter 68 of Title V of the City Code and the Michigan Local Historic District Act, PA 169 (1970), as amended.

City Code Chapter 68, Sec. 5.392 provides that the purpose of this Chapter is to:

- 1) Safeguard the heritage of the City of Grand Rapids by preserving districts which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history, and to preserve Historic Landmarks;
- 2) Stabilize and improve property values in such districts, and
- 3) Foster civic beauty.

Under Section 5.398 of the Grand Rapids City Ordinance the Study Committee is charged to undertake the following actions:

- 1) Conduct a photographic inventory of resources constructed between 1924 and 1970 within the Heritage Hill Historic District following procedures established by the Michigan Historic Preservation Office;
- 2) Conduct basic research on the historic resources located within the proposed district;
- 3) Determine the total number of historic and non-historic resources constructed between 1924 and 1970 and the percentage of historic resources of that total. In evaluating the significance of historic resources, the study committee shall be guided by the selection criteria for evaluation issued by the United States Secretary of the Interior for inclusion of resources in the National Register of Historic Places, as set forth in 36 CFR §60;
- 4) Prepare a preliminary historic district study committee report;
- 5) Transmit copies of the preliminary report for review and recommendation to the Grand Rapids Planning Commission, the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission, the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Michigan Historical Commission, and to the Michigan Historic Preservation Review Board. Copies of the preliminary report shall be made available to property owners in the proposed historic district and to the general public;
- 6) Hold a public hearing in compliance with the Open Meetings Act not less than sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the preliminary report;
- 7) Prepare and submit a final report with recommendations for the Period of Significance update of the historic district to the Grand Rapids City Commission.

Heritage Hill Historic District Study Committee

Jennifer Metz	Past Perfect, Inc., 36 CFR 61 Certified in Architectural History; former member Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission
Rebecca Smith-Hoffman	Past Perfect, Inc., 36 CFR 61 Certified in History; Chair, Grand Rapids Historical Commission; Heritage Hill Resident
Jan Earl	Director, Heritage Hill Association; Heritage Hill Resident
Wayne Norlin	Architect; Heritage Hill Resident
Wesley Beck	Former member, Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission; Heritage Hill Resident
Ilana Chamelly	Heritage Hill Business Owner; Heritage Hill Resident
John Robinson	Principal, Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center

Report Researched and Written By:

Past Perfect Inc.

Mapping Provided By:

City of Grand Rapids Planning Department

Boundary Description

This study report will not alter the boundaries of the Heritage Hill Historic District. The boundaries will remain as originally defined in 1974; revised in 1978, and amended in 1991, which is roughly described as Crescent Street at the north, Union Avenue at the east, Pleasant and Thomas Streets at the south, and Lafayette Avenue, State Street, and Jefferson Avenue at the west (see the Grand Rapids Planning Department map of the district that is attached).

For an exact description, please consult Grand Rapids City Commission minutes and the Grand Rapids Planning Department.

Boundary Justification

This study will not change the existing boundaries of the Heritage Hill Historic District as described above. The purpose of this report is to modify the existing district by updating the Period of Significance and providing eligibility evaluations for resources built between 1924 and 1970.

Determination of Significance

Criteria of significance have been established by the National Park Service under which properties are judged to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These criteria are also used by the State of Michigan and the City of Grand Rapids in judging the eligibility of properties for historic designation. The National Register Criteria addresses the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture that is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, as well as:

- A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Properties are often significant for more than one criterion.

Period of Significance Update Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends that the Period of Significance of the Heritage Hill Historic District be updated to the period 1845 to 1968.

With the adoption of the recommendation of this study, the local Heritage Hill Historic District will have a Period of Significance from 1845 to 1968. The updated Period of Significance encompasses all resources constructed in the district from the date of the oldest structures to the date of the structures constructed just prior to the moratorium on demolition and new construction enacted by the City Commission in June 1969.

The Heritage Hill Historic District is significant under the themes of architecture and commerce under National Register Criteria A and C.

Architectural development in Heritage Hill during the period of this study falls into two distinct periods, pre-World War II (1924 to 1942) and post-World War II (1948 to 1968). A majority of the residential and commercial structures constructed during the period of this study have a high degree of architectural integrity, retain original materials, and represent the architectural styles and building practices found in the twentieth century in the Midwestern United States.

Commercial development falls into the same two distinct periods. In the pre-war period a major portion of commerce was devoted to automobile sales and service, which was centered in nearby Heartside, along with two commercial buildings and a supermarket providing services to the residential neighborhood. The post-war period saw many of the auto-related buildings replaced by general office development and medical offices. The steady expansion of commercial use in Heritage Hill in the decades following World War II reflected national trends – the growth of automobile-centered development with its unending need for parking, and the flow of business out of the central business district.

Historic Resources Inventory

An intensive level survey of resources constructed between 1924 and 1970 was conducted in the Heritage Hill Historic District between February and April 2017. Properties found to be built prior to 1924 and after 1970 were not surveyed based upon project scope.

From archival research and visual inspection, 83 properties were determined to have been constructed between 1924 and 1970. Seventy-one properties were found to be contributing resources to the district (71%) and twelve were found to be non-contributing (12%).

Description of the District

The Heritage Hill Historic District is a roughly thirty-seven block area bounded by Michigan Street at the north, Pleasant and Thomas Streets at the south, Union Avenue at the east, and Lafayette and Jefferson Avenues and State Street at the west. Exact boundaries are provided within the existing ordinance and are not changed by this study. A map of the historic district is attached. The Heritage Hill Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The local Heritage Hill Historic District was created in 1974; its boundaries were revised in 1978, and amended in 1991. It is one of the largest urban historic districts in the country.

Located on a rise at the east side of the Grand River valley overlooking downtown Grand Rapids, the Heritage Hill Historic District contains approximately 1300 structures representing one of the largest and finest concentrations of American architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth century in Michigan. Architectural styles represented in the district include Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Stick, Queen Anne, Shingle, Richardsonian Romanesque, Chateausque, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Prairie, American Foursquare, Craftsman, Bungalow, and styles of the Modern Movement.

The streets of the district are laid out in a grid, with those running north-south designated as avenues and those running east-west as streets. An exception to the grid is State Street, which angles between Madison Avenue and Jefferson Avenue, following a trail established by the Native Americans.

In addition to the residential structures, the district contains the DeVos Campus of Grand Rapids Community College on East Fulton Street, the Masonic Temple at the northwest corner of East Fulton Street and Lafayette Avenue NE, two public schools at Fountain Street NE and College Avenue NE, and small commercial areas along Jefferson Avenue between East Fulton Street and State Street SE, State and Cherry Streets between Jefferson Avenue and Union Avenue, and at the corner of Union Avenue and Lyon Street NE. Two churches are located in the district – Central Reformed at East Fulton Street and College Avenue NE, and First Netherlands Reformed on Crescent Street NE.

Development of the District – 1924 to 1968

During the period covered by this study, neighborhood development can be divided into two general periods – pre-World War II (1924-1942) and post-World War II (1949-1968). In the pre-war period the majority of the residential structures - twenty houses, four duplexes, and a four-story, 105-unit courtyard apartment building were constructed between 1924 and 1926. Although the early 1920s were a boom period for Grand Rapids businesses, leading many to expand factories and to increase output, signs were indicating the boom would not last. In the furniture industry particularly, increased production created a glut on the market; prices began to drop in mid-decade and sales decreased. The trouble in the furniture industry spread to other related businesses and by the time the crash came in 1929, building in the city had slowed considerably. Between 1927 and 1942, only four houses and four small apartment buildings were constructed in Heritage Hill, an indication of the effects of the business slowdown.

Following World War I, apartment construction was on the rise throughout the city as a remedy for the post-war housing shortage during the war and immediately after. Material shortages leading to higher costs, as well as the high cost of labor and interest rates slowed construction. The five apartment buildings constructed in Heritage Hill were a harbinger of the changing nature of housing that would come after World War II.

Commercial development in the pre-war period began along Jefferson Avenue at East Fulton Street on the eastern edge of the district in 1926 with the construction of a five-storefront building, housing businesses that provided neighborhood services. Automobile-related business developed on State Street between Jefferson Avenue and Prospect Avenue in the early 1920s and continued to the middle of the decade. A two-storefront building (1925) and a supermarket (1942) were constructed on State Street and Madison Avenue SE, and a single medical office building was constructed on Cherry Street (1941).

Following World War II, only one single-family house was constructed in the district (1946) between 1946 and 1968. In the following two decades all residential development was limited to the construction of apartment buildings. Seven one- and two-story, small-scale apartment buildings are found throughout the district, as well as the three-story Croydon on Logan Street, the six-story Hillmount Apartments on Cherry Street, the three-story Waters House Apartments, which covers nearly an entire block along East Fulton between College and Union Avenues, and the seven-story Waters Apartments on College Avenue.

The post-war period began a mad dash to the suburbs enabled by the construction of two expressways through Grand Rapids and national advertising convincing people that a modern new house in the suburbs was the only place to raise a family. Single-family occupancy in the district dropped precipitously during this period. Not only were the new apartment buildings noted above constructed, but existing single-family houses were rapidly being subdivided into multiple units.

The post-war commercial development along State Street that supplanted the automobile-related business consisted primarily of small, one and two story office buildings housing doctors and dentists, insurance companies, and other small businesses, many of which had moved out of the central business district.

Three churches were constructed during the study period: Central Reformed, First Netherlands Reformed, and the former Bethlehem Lutheran, which was converted into apartments in 2014.

Context Statement: Architecture

Region: Heritage Hill Historic District, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Date: 1924-1968

Subthemes: Architects, Residential Architecture, Commercial Architecture, Ecclesiastical Architecture

In Heritage Hill houses in the post-World War I period were being steadily constructed on the remaining buildable lots scattered throughout the neighborhood, which were nearly gone by 1929. Architectural styles widely popular across the country at this time can be seen in these houses and in the small apartment buildings constructed in the period between 1924 and 1942. These structures retain a high degree of architectural integrity and exhibit the materials and building techniques common to their time – brick or stucco Tudor Revival, clapboard and shingle variations of Colonial Revival, and brick and/or stucco vernacular interpretations of the Prairie style. Many fine examples of these styles were designed by local architects of regional reputation, including Alexander McColl, George Stone, Robinson & Campau, Benjamin & Benjamin, Emil Zellner, and Pierre Lindhout, worked in the district.

The commercial buildings constructed during this period also were designed with Classical Revival or Tudor detailing, as well as designs exhibiting the clean lines and lack of ornamentation of the Modern Movement styles of the post-war period. The Fanatorium (1939), a

bowling alley on Jefferson Avenue was designed in the Art Modern style; next door the Grand Rapids Public Museum (1940) is an example of the WPA Art Deco style. A medical office constructed just before World War II at 456 Cherry Street SE (1941) could be mistaken for a modern house with Colonial Revival detailing and (originally) an attached garage.

The single house constructed in the post-World War II period at 39 Prospect Avenue SE (1946) was designed in the Cape Cod style. The numerous apartment buildings constructed during this period are in the mid-century Colonial Revival style or variations of the Modern Movement.

The commercial buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s reflect nationally popular styles of the time. Again, two early medical offices at 310 East Fulton Street (1949) and 522 Cherry Street SE (1954) are akin to ranch houses of the period with low-pitch, hipped roofs and wide over-hanging eaves, with horizontal bands of windows. A Colonial Revival office building was constructed at 407 East Fulton Street by the Packaging Corporation of American (1961), but the majority of the commercial structures of the post-war period exhibit interpretations of the styles associated with the Modern Movement, which was popular in the mid-twentieth century - by architects such as E. John Knapp, David Post, and James Bronkema.

Seventy-one resources evaluated in this study are contributing to the architectural significance of the Heritage Hill Historic District. They embody the distinctive characteristics of architectural styles, types, uses, and materials commonly found in twentieth century Midwest urban residential and commercial construction during the period 1924 to 1968, reflecting the post-World War I and post-World War II development of the city of Grand Rapids. Due to significant alteration, twelve buildings are considered to be non-contributing.

Architectural Styles – 1924 to 1968

Gothic Revival

Gothic Revival is an architectural movement that began in the late 1740s in England that romanticized medieval styles and the simplicity of medieval times. The first Gothic Revival house in the United States was designed by Alexander Jackson Davis in 1832. The style was popularized through pattern books and was used for all buildings types until 1860; it was used in church design into the twentieth century.

Constructed variously of stone, brick, or wood, the most common feature of the style is the pointed arch, used for windows, doors, and decorative elements such as porches, dormers, or roof gables. Other characteristic details are stained glass windows, steeply pitched roofs, front-facing gables, and one or more towers with a high spire or a Norman castle-like truncated tower.

There are two examples of churches built in the Gothic Revival style during the study period.

Pre-war

253 Prospect Avenue NE 1933 Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Post-war

540 Crescent Street NE 1951 First Netherlands Reformed Church

Tudor Revival

The Tudor Revival style of residential architecture has many variants and stylistic interpretations. It was popular in the United States from 1890 to 1940, but it exploded in popularity in the 1920s, comprising about a quarter of all houses built during the period (McAlster, 2015). This popularity is reflected in the number of houses constructed in this style in Heritage Hill, and throughout the city and its early suburbs, during the period between World War I and World War II. It is a style that has been revived and altered repeatedly and continues to be referenced in recently constructed houses.

The style's characteristics include masonry construction (rarely clapboard), most commonly brick and stucco or a combination of the two, often with faux half-timbering and cast-stone accents. Roof shapes are typically steeply-pitched side or cross-gable that can be found in various configurations, usually with prominent chimneys.

Pre-World War II Residential

533 Avalon Terrace SE	1924	Alexander McColl
200 College Avenue NE	1931	Alexander McColl
550 College Avenue SE	1926	Alexander McColl
258 College Avenue SE	1926	Frederick Robinson
225 Crescent Street NE	1930	
460 Fountain Street NE	1924	Robinson & Campau
508 Fountain Street NE	1929	John VandenBogert
530 Madison Avenue SE	1925	Kenneth Welch
138 Prospect Avenue NE	1925	Don Lakie
517 Prospect Avenue SE	1931	

Pre-World War II Commercial

210 East Fulton Street	1928	
340 State Street	1925	Benjamin & Benjamin

Colonial Revival

The Colonial Revival style of architecture was built in the United States between 1880 and 1955. It was also used for commercial buildings and churches during the period. In Heritage Hill this style was common from the 1920s through the 1960s. It was built in relatively small numbers until about 1910, but between 1910 and 1930 about 40 percent of American houses

were built in the Colonial Revival Style. It became the dominant style for domestic building throughout the first half of the twentieth century (McAlester, 2015). Unlike other styles, it did not die out after World War II, but continued to be built into the 1950s and 1960s. Today the Colonial Revival style is used in some variation on new houses built with historical design elements.

There are sub-variants, but the style can be generalized as having a central entry, with a decorative crown or pediment supported by pilasters; there may be a fanlight over the door and/or sidelight windows; windows generally have multi-paned, double-hung sashes that are frequently placed in adjacent pairs. Roof shapes can be gabled, hipped, or gambrel. Exterior materials are usually brick or clapboard painted white or light colors. Many of these houses have operable wood shutters, either solid or slatted.

Pre-World War II Residential

62 College Avenue NE	1925	John VandenBogert
66 College Avenue NE	1925	John VandenBogert
70 College Avenue NE	1926	
110 College Avenue NE	1925	Benjamin, Robinson & Benjamin
24 Lafayette Avenue SE	1942	J. O. Barkwell
415 Lyon Street NE	1929	
401 Morris Avenue SE	1926	Pierre Lindhout
400-402 Morris Avenue SE	1924	
406-408 Morris Avenue SE	1924	

Pre-World War II Commercial

456 Cherry Street SE	1941	
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Post-World War II Commercial

10 College Avenue NE	1957	Eggers & Higgins of New York City
Central Reformed Church		J & G Daverman,
407 East Fulton Street	1961	
500 East Fulton Street	1961	
Waters House		
29 Prospect Avenue NE	1963	
76 Union Avenue SE	1960	

Prairie Style

The Prairie style was a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century style with roots in the city of Chicago. Although the style is most closely association with Frank Lloyd Wright, there are a number of Prairie architects, who worked with Wright, among them George Maher, Thomas D. Tallmadge, Walter Burley Griffin, and Marion Mahony Griffin. It is an indigenous American style that is found widely in the Chicago suburbs and throughout the Midwest. The style is most often

two-stories, of brick or stucco or often a combination of the two, characterized by a low-pitch, often hipped, roof with widely over-hanging eaves, one-story wings or porches, with windows in pairs or in multiples; all design elements emphasize horizontality. The most common vernacular form of the style is the American Foursquare, which often featured Prairie, Colonial Revival or Craftsman detailing. The vernacular forms were widely disseminated by popular magazines and pattern books. It was a short-lived style and is rarely found after 1929.

Although the district has two high-style Prairie Houses – one designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and one by Marion Mahoney, both constructed outside the time period of this study, there are several vernacular interpretations of the style.

Pre-World War II Residential

349 College Avenue SE	1926	
341 Madison Avenue SE	1925	
410-412 Morris Avenue SE	1924	
411 Morris Avenue SE	1924	Pierre Lindhout
416 Morris Avenue SE	1924	W. G. MacDonald
501 Morris Avenue SE	1924	Pierre Lindhout
517 Morris Avenue SE	1924	Pierre Lindhout

Post-World War II Residential

425 Lyon Street NE	1949	Louis Zaagman
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Art Deco/Art Moderne

The Art Deco and Art Moderne Style are related early twentieth century styles, which were typically used for commercial structures and apartment buildings, but rarely for residential structures.

Art Moderne is used more commonly for vernacular structures, with minimal architectural detail, simple facades, flat roofs, rounded corners, glazed tile facades, aluminum banding, glass block or corner windows. It was often used in the design of gas stations, bus stations, theaters, and grocery stores built between 1920 and 1940.

Art Deco was more decorative, often featuring accents of silver, gold, white and metallic. Stylized chevron and sunburst patterns were common, as well as vertical spires and other parapet detailing at the roof line. Flat roofs were typical, along with banding at doors and windows, and patterned flooring. Marble and concrete were frequent materials. It was employed in movie theaters, small commercial and apartment buildings, and Works Progress Administration public projects.

The district has vernacular examples of the Moderne styles, characterized by clean lines, minimal decorative detailing, and glass block or corner windows

Pre-World War II

311 State Street SE	1925/NC	Universal-Wood Lincoln Dealership
9 Prospect Avenue NE	1938	Regency Apartments
40 Jefferson Avenue SE	1939	Fanatorium Bowling Alley
50 Jefferson Avenue SE	1940	Former Grand Rapids Public Museum
557 Crescent Street NE	1941	Crescent Street Floral

Post-World War II

337 Logan Street SE	1951	Croydon Apartments
505 Cherry Street SE	1952	Hillmount Apartments

Modern Movement Commercial

The same materials, assemblies, and design elements of the large scale, high-style signature buildings designed by major architects in the mid-twentieth century also appear in the smaller, vernacular interpretations constructed in Heritage Hill in the post-war period.

Modern Movement design elements include a flat roof with coping at the roof line; windows set flush with the outer walls; smooth, unornamented surfaces without exterior decoration; porcelain enamel panels; patterned steel panels; spandrel glass curtain walls; and aluminum doors and windows. Large expanses of plate glass also formed an integral part of many designs. Brick is sometimes stacked with continuous vertical joints rather than a running bond.

Post-World War II Commercial

516-522 Cherry Street SE	1951/1962	Medical Office
415 Cherry Street SE	1953	Commercial Building
435 Cherry Street SE	1953	Commercial Building
120 College Avenue SE	1954	WOTV
330 State Street SE	1954/NC	Commercial Building
50 College Avenue SE	1955/NC	Demolished 2017
550 Cherry Street SE	1955	Travelers Insurance
346 Wealthy Street SE	1955	Commercial Building
425 Cherry Street SE	1956	Commercial Building
214 East Fulton Street	1957	National Cash Register Company
153 Lafayette Avenue SE	1960	Medical Office
245 State Street SE	1960	Medical Office
255 Washington Street SE	1963	Medical Office
320 East Fulton Street	1963	New York Life Insurance Company

Architects

Grand Rapids was fortunate to have a group of talented local architects with regional reputations working in the district during the period of this study.

Roger Allen

Roger Allen (1872-1967) began working with his architect father, Frank P. Allen, following graduation from high school in 1911. After service in the United States Navy during World War I, Allen spent two years with Smith, Hinchman & Grylls in Detroit before returning to Grand Rapids in 1921. F. P. Allen & Son designed schools in many small communities in West Michigan, the Lake County courthouse, apartment buildings, houses, small commercial buildings, and factories.

Roger Allen continued practicing alone following his father's death in 1933. He served as the architect for Central Michigan University for nearly thirty years and also designed many buildings for Ferris Institute (now Ferris State University) and Aquinas College.

Allen designed the former WPA Art Deco style Grand Rapids Public Museum (1940) at 50 Jefferson Avenue SE.

Benjamin & Benjamin/Benjamin, Robinson & Benjamin

Thomas Benjamin (1861-1950) was born in Grand Rapids, his parents having emigrated from the Netherlands. As a young man he worked in the furniture factories, serving as superintendent of the Nelson, Matter & Company factory and later held the same position in the Sligh Furniture Company. In 1889, Benjamin began to work as a carpenter and builder. Ten years later, he was listed in the City Directory as an architect. When his son, Adrian T. (1882-1967) joined the firm following his graduation from the United States Naval Academy in 1904, Benjamin & Benjamin (sometimes known as Benjamin & Son) began its long history of designing and building houses, churches, and commercial structures throughout West Michigan.

Benjamin & Benjamin was a full-service firm; they platted and sold lots, designed houses, provided construction financing, supervised construction, and sold insurance. Most of the houses lining Benjamin Avenue, as well as many other streets in the Easttown neighborhood were designed by the firm. In East Grand Rapids two plats were developed, along both sides of Cambridge Avenue and the west side of Plymouth Avenue between Franklin and Sherman. Benjamin-designed residential and commercial buildings can be found in most neighborhoods on the city's east side.

From September 1906 to September 1907, Benjamin & Son published a monthly magazine, which featured the firm's residential designs, discussed style trends, and advertised local contractors and suppliers. During World War I, Adrian Benjamin acted as production manager and Washington, D. C. representative for the Togan-Stiles Company, overseeing production of the first prefabricated structures for then-Under Secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Designed by Benjamin, these buildings served as barracks, hospitals, storehouses, office quarters, and repair shops.

In 1921, Thomas Benjamin came out of retirement and the firm Thomas Benjamin & Son resumed its pre-war organization following the brief partnership of Adrian Benjamin with H. H. Weemhof. Benjamin & Weemhof were often featured in the "Building News" section of the *Grand Rapids Herald* and appear to have specialized in "modernizing" houses – adding Bungalow style windows and brick porches to older structures.

Benjamin & Benjamin designed the Dutch Colonial Revival house at 110 College Avenue NE (1925) and the Tudor Revival commercial building (1925) at 340 State Street SE.

James Bronkema

James Bronkema (1924-2014) was a Grand Rapids native. After graduating from Calvin College, he joined the Navy Air Force in 1943. Following the war he returned to Grand Rapids to begin a career in the development business. In 1947, he designed and built his own home on Leonard Street NW using salvaged street pavers because bricks were in short supply. A self-taught architect and builder, Bronkema designed and built more than 150 Modern Movement houses and commercial buildings between 1947 and 1960. In the late 1940s, at the age of 25, he became the youngest president of the Grand Rapids Area Home Builders.

Examples of his work can be found throughout the Grand Rapids area, particularly in the Riverside Park neighborhood on the city's Northeast Side and on Fultonwood Avenue SE, a cul de sac off East Fulton Street developed by Bronkema.

In 1955, Bronkema's offices were located at 425 Cherry Street SE, which he designed and built.

Bronkema left Grand Rapids for Tampa, Florida in 1960, where he developed and constructed commercial buildings. In 1970, he moved to San Francisco to oversee the development of the Embarcadero Center, a vast retail center with more than 3 million square feet of floor space for retail and restaurants. He continued as managing partner and CEO of the Embarcadero Center until his retirement in 1989.

Bronkema designed Modern Movement office buildings at 400 Cherry Street SE (1954) and 425 Cherry Street SE (1956) (He also designed an office building at nearby 645 Cherry Street in the Cherry Hill Historic District (1954).

Daverman Associates

The architectural firm J. and G. Daverman Company founded by Johannes Daverman and his son George in 1904, designed houses, schools, churches, and commercial buildings. During the 1930s George's sons, Herbert and Joseph, both architects, and his nephews, Robert and Edward, both engineers, joined the firm, which became Daverman Associates. As it grew in size, Daverman also expanded the types of services offered to include a wide variety of architectural, engineering, and planning work. During the 1950s and 1960s, Daverman began

working nationwide and by the 1970s the firm was designing buildings in Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Jamaica. The firm was responsible for most of the urban renewal-era buildings around Vandenberg Plaza.

Daverman Associates served as supervising architects with Eggers and Higgins for the construction of the Colonial Revival style Central Reformed Church (1957) at 10 College Avenue NE.

Eggers & Higgins, New York City

Otto Reinhold Eggers (1882–1964) and Daniel Paul Higgins (1886–1953)

Eggers and Higgins were long time associates of John Russell Pope, with whom they worked for nearly thirty years. After the death of Pope, the original architect of the Jefferson Memorial, they were chosen to complete the construction phase of the project. They also completed the construction of the West Building of the National Gallery of Art from Pope's design. The firm was known for its Colonial Revival style architectural design, which is likely why it was chosen to design the Central Reformed Church.

Eggers and Higgins designed the Colonial Revival style Central Reformed Church (1957) at 10 College Avenue NE.

Raymond A. Freeburg, Jamestown, New York

Raymond Freeburg (1893-?), the son of Swedish immigrants, practiced throughout Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania, where he was well-known as an architect of Lutheran Churches associated with the Swedish community. He received his architectural training at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, from which he graduated in 1917.

Freeburg designed the Gothic Revival style Swedish Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 253 Prospect Avenue NE.

E. John Knapp

E. John Knapp was born in Grattan Township, north of Grand Rapids, on July 28, 1916. After serving in the Air Force during World War II, Knapp received his undergraduate degree in architecture and engineering from Lawrence Institute of Technology in 1947. He worked as a for a number of Detroit firms between 1945 and 1951, including Smith Hinchman & Grylls, Minoru Yamasaki, and Eero Saarinen & Associates.

Knapp came to Grand Rapids in 1952 to establish a partnership with Charles A. O'Bryon, which had offices at 300 East Fulton Street. The firm designed custom houses, churches, and commercial buildings. Working with Albert Builders, they designed over 300 houses in East Grand Rapids, Rockford, and throughout West Michigan.

In the 1960's Knapp joined Daverman Associates. At this time the firm was involved with projects in the city's Civic Center urban renewal plan, where eight buildings it designed were constructed between 1962 and 1980, including the Knapp-designed Transamerica Title Building

(1964 - now the Kent County Probate Court building). Knapp opened a Daverman office in Madison, Wisconsin in 1966 that specialized in campus planning. During Knapp's time there, five University of Wisconsin master plans were completed.

Knapp designed innovative modern architecture from 1952 to 1966 throughout West Michigan, including in Grand Rapids the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company Building (1963), the Teamsters Union Building (1964), the Rhonda Tire Building (1959), the Faith Lutheran Church (1957), Faith Methodist Church (1957), and the North Park Presbyterian Church (1962).

Knapp designed the Modern Movement style Lafayette Medical Building at 153 Lafayette Avenue SE.

Don Lakie

Although the Architectural data base maintained by the History and Special Collections Department of the Grand Rapids Public Library notes that Don Lakie designed a number of houses in the city between 1911 and 1927, many in the Tudor Revival style, no biographical information about him was found.

Lakie designed the Tudor Revival house at 138 Prospect Avenue NE (1925).

Pierre Lindhout

Pierre Lindhout (1891-1940), one of the most prolific of the Grand Rapids architects of the early twentieth century, began his career in 1905 at the age of fourteen in the office of the local firm of Osgood & Osgood. For the next five years he learned his craft, moving from apprentice to draftsman to architect. Osgood & Osgood designed a wide variety of structures, including churches, commercial buildings, and private residences and many of Lindhout's later designs reflect elements characteristic of their work.

From the time he went into business for himself in 1909, until his early death in 1940, Lindhout designed scores of buildings of all types not only in Grand Rapids, but throughout the Midwest. Many of Lindhout's residential designs exhibit a strong Prairie School influence – two stories, often with a one-story wing or porch, a low-pitched hipped roof, widely overhanging eaves, sets of windows in twos, threes, and fours. They usually were constructed of brick, stucco, or a combination of the two materials, with clean, well-proportioned lines. Lindhout also designed in variations of the Colonial Revival style.

Lindhout designed the Dutch Colonial Revival house at 401 Morris Avenue SE (1926), the Tudor Revival house at 511 Morris Avenue SE (1925), and interpretations of the Prairie style at 411 Morris Avenue SE (1924), 501 Morris Avenue SE (1924), and 517 Morris Avenue SE (1931).

J. Alexander McColl

Alexander McColl (1891-1967) graduated from the University of Michigan in 1916 and opened his own firm in Grand Rapids in 1924. McColl specialized in residential design for over fifty

years, in a variety of styles. He designed a great many Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival style houses in East Grand Rapids, Ottawa Hills, Garfield Park, Riverside Park, and Cascadia as these areas were developing in the 1920s. With landscape architect Eugene Goebel, with whom he frequently worked, McColl designed the Mayfield plat north of East Fulton Street on the eastern edge of the city in the mid-1920s where are a number of McColl designed Tudor Revival houses. He also designed an impressive International style house in East Grand Rapids on Plymouth Avenue.

Outside of Grand Rapids McColl designed the Crystal Downs Resort near Frankfort in 1927, as well as the First National Bank and the Roehry Jewelry building in Luddington in 1924.

McColl designed Tudor Revival style houses at 533 Avalon Terrace SE (1924), 550 College Avenue SE (1926), and 200 College Avenue NE (1931).

David Post

David Post was born in 1926 in Grand Rapids and studied architecture at the University of Michigan. He worked for Daverman Associates before starting his own firm, which eventually became Post, McMillen and Palmer. One of his buildings, the Words of Hope Building on Ball Avenue NE is a beautiful concrete and glass structure that sits on an elevated site on Ball Street NE overlooking the I-196 expressway.

Post designed his Modern Movement office at 330 State Street SE (1954).

Frederick S. Robinson Robinson & Campau

Frederick Robinson joined his father William G. Robinson in the practice of architecture following his graduation in 1897 from the Cornell University School of Architecture. As W. G. and F. S. Robinson, father and son continued to design important residential and commercial structures in Grand Rapids, including the Manufacturers Building, the Klingman Furniture Exhibition Building, the first Masonic Temple, and the Waters Building, as well as numerous buildings in the Heartside Historic District.

Following his father's death in 1907, Robinson formed a partnership with Antoine B. Campau. Campau studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Atelier Lalou in Paris, and for a short time in Boston with Coolidge & Coolidge before coming to Grand Rapids. Robinson & Campau designed the original Butterworth Hospital; the Wurzburg (demolished), Steketee, and Herpolsheimer (demolished) department stores; the Peninsular Club; Central, South, and Union High Schools; the YMCA and YWCA; the First Methodist Church; and many other private and public buildings in the city and region.

Robinson designed his Tudor Revival style residence at 258 College Avenue SE (1926). Robinson & Campau designed the Tudor Revival house at 460 Fountain Street NE (1924).

John VandenBogert

John VandenBogert does not appear in the Architectural data base of the History and Special Collections Department of the Grand Rapids Public Library and no biographical information was found. He is named as architect of the Heritage Hill houses he designed in the "Building News" section of the *Grand Rapids Herald* in articles individually discussing those houses.

VandenBogert designed the Dutch Colonial Revival house at 60 College Avenue NE (1925) and the Colonial Revival houses at 62 College Avenue NE (1925) and 70 College Avenue NE (1926), as well as his own residence, the Tudor Revival style house at 508 Fountain Street NE (1926).

Kenneth Curtis Welch

Kenneth Curtis Welch (1891-1973) was a Grand Rapids native. Although Welch was educated as an architect, he spent only a small part of his career in the practice of conventional architecture. He studied briefly at the University of Michigan, but received both his B.S. and M.S. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1915 and 1916 respectively. He returned to Grand Rapids and began to practice his profession. In partnership with Charles Huggett, he designed twelve large traditional homes, many of which were never built because of World War I.

After the war, Welch went to work half-time for his father, as Vice-President in charge of planning for the Welch-Wilmarth Company. Welch served with this company as Vice-President in charge of Design until 1952 when he resigned to devote all of his time to shopping center development.

Welch designed the Tudor Revival style house at 530 Madison Avenue SE (1925), which appears to be one of the few residential designs by Welch that was actually built.

Emil Zillmer

Emil Zillmer (1891-1957) graduated from the Armour Institute of Technology (now ITT), in Chicago in 1913. His known works include a number of commercial buildings in Muskegon and residential designs in Grand Rapids (VanderPloeg, WMModern). In 1936, Zillmer designed a notable International style house on Pinecrest Street SE in East Grand Rapids.

Zillmer designed the Art Moderne-influenced apartment building at 9 Prospect Avenue NE (1938).

Context Statement: Commerce

Region: Heritage Hill Historic District, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Date: 1924-1970

Subthemes: Automobile/Insurance/Medical

Commercial districts and service nodes within residential neighborhoods are a theme found in the history of development in Grand Rapids. The concept of providing goods and services

within easy access to residents, as well as to those coming from outside, can be seen in neighborhood business districts throughout the city; for example on Cherry Street, Wealthy Street, Bridge Street, Plainfield Avenue, and Kalamazoo Avenue, where commercial development began along street car lines. Although the Heritage Hill commercial areas are not as large as those of some city neighborhoods, there are commercial nodes along State Street SE, Cherry Street SE, Jefferson Avenue SE, and Union Avenue NE.

As with the residential construction, commercial structures built in Heritage Hill during the years covered by this study fall into two general periods – pre-World War II (1924-1942) and post-World War II (1949-1963). The development associated with automobile sales and service that began along State Street in the early 1920s came to an end with the onset of the war when automobile production ceased. When commercial development resumed in the 1950s and 1960s, it consisted of office and medical buildings constructed mainly along State Street, Cherry Street, and East Fulton Street; one building was constructed on Lafayette Avenue SE and another on Washington Street SE.

The construction in 1926 of a five-shop building at Two Jefferson Avenue on the southeast corner of East Fulton Street and Jefferson Avenue began the commercial development of this block on the western boundary of Heritage Hill as the central business district expanded. Over the years, its five shops housed a tailor, a milliner, a dry goods store, an interior decorator, a photographer, and a florist catering to the nearby residential area. In 1928, the General Tire Company opened a sales room and garage around the corner at 210 East Fulton Street. In 1939 and 1940 respectively, these businesses were joined by the Fanatorium Bowling Alley at 40 Jefferson Avenue and the Grand Rapids Public Museum at 50 Jefferson Avenue.

After the turn of the twentieth century, the wholesale houses and factories located in nearby Heartside were joined by automobile dealers, as well as businesses catering to the automobile – repair shops, parts distributors, and parking garages. Four men owned motor cars in Grand Rapids in 1900 – Dr. Richard Smith, Dr. Perry Schurz, August W. Mohnke, and John T. Byrne. By 1902, the city had enacted an ordinance requiring numbered license tags on automobiles rather than tags with the owner's initials. J. W. Thoma, the first Grand Rapids resident to receive a State of Michigan license plate, was issued No. 13 in 1905. Nearly 3,000 city residents owned automobiles by 1915; two years later 9,364 automobiles and 1,316 trucks were vying for space on city streets – a 300 percent increase. The city's first Auto Show was held in February 1910; by 1922 the show was attracting thousands of people anxious to view the year's new models.

As the demand for autos increased, the area around South Division Avenue, Commerce Avenue SE and Sheldon Boulevard developed into the motorcar center of the city. Handsome showrooms with plate glass windows replaced the large, Queen Anne houses that lined the Boulevard in the 1880s and 1890s. Within a few blocks prospective customers could examine the latest Ford, Buick, Austin, Packard, Nash, Hudson, Hupmobile, Franklin, or Peerless.

By 1915, the dealerships and businesses selling automobile-related goods and services were beginning to spread east to LaGrave and Jefferson Avenues and into Heritage Hill on Washington and State Streets. In 1925, a small commercial building was constructed on State Street at the corner of Prospect Avenue, which housed a Kroger grocery store and a coffee shop. The 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows three filling stations, three automobile dealerships, and an auto body shop in the block of State Street between Jefferson and Lafayette, along with an apartment building and small houses converted into flats. In the same block of nearby Washington Street are three automobile dealerships, and a service station. In the next block of State between Lafayette and Prospect are an automobile dealership, a grocery warehouse, a Kroger store, and a coffee shop, along with a few single-family houses, and houses converted into flats, medical offices, or shops.

By 1940, commercial use along State Street was well-established and began to move east along Cherry Street. The first building constructed specifically as a medical office on the street was built at 456 Cherry in 1941. The Kroger Grocery and Baking Company, which had opened a store at 340 State Street when the building was constructed, built a streamline “supermarket” across the street at 363 State Street in 1942. A two-page spread in the June 18, 1942 *Grand Rapids Press* announcing the grand opening included a full-page advertisement featuring in-store special prices, along with a map indicating the large free parking lot adjacent to the building. These were the last two commercial buildings constructed in the district until 1951.

The steady expansion of commercial use in Heritage Hill in the decades following World War II reflected national trends – the growth of automobile-centered development with its unending need for parking, and the flow of business out of the central business district. By the mid-1950s, those auto dealers that had survived the Depression and the war-time automobile-production freeze were moving out of downtown to larger buildings in more suburban areas of the city. Over the following years, a number of the buildings that housed the dealerships and axillary services were eventually demolished to make way for parking lots or for new buildings. In Heritage Hill only three auto-related structures remain standing – 251 State (service station), 311 State (automobile dealership), and 320 State (Auto Glass & Mirror - built prior to 1924), all now house other uses.

Medical and dental offices, insurance companies, and other businesses seeking less expensive land for expansion and to provide adjacent parking were moving out of the central business district and into the city’s neighborhood business districts. A December 1955 article in the *Grand Rapids Press* described the proposed development of two medical buildings – one at 50 College Avenue SE (demolished) and one at 600 Cherry Street SE (never built) – both to feature large parking lots. In the article, Dr. C. Allen Payne, president of the Kent County Medical Society is quoted as saying, “members of the society consider adequate parking for patients one of the most important provisions of good medical service today.”

The first medical office on Cherry Street (1941) was joined by three more, constructed between 1951 and 1962 at 522 Cherry Street, 500 Cherry Street, and 516 Cherry Street. A medical office was constructed at 310 East Fulton Street in 1949; at 50 College Avenue SE in 1955; at

153 Lafayette Avenue SE in 1960; at 245 State Street SE in 1960; and at 255 Washington Street in 1963. Developers were drawn to the area not only by the opportunity to construct modern new buildings and to provide free parking to tenants, but also by the proximity of St. Mary's Hospital.

Original tenants of 415 Cherry Street SE were medically-related non-profits - the American Cancer Society, the Cancer Detection Clinic, and the Kent County Chapter of the National Association for infantile Paralysis. In 1959, 311 State Street SE, which had housed an automobile dealership since 1925, was purchased by the Medical Arts Pharmacy and Hospital Supply Company.

Lionel Halloran, owner of the Halloran Detective Agency, developed and had his offices at 435 Cherry Street in 1953. In 1955, the Michigan Bell Telephone Company engineering department and Yellow Pages advertising division, along with the General Motors Acceptance Corporation were tenants in the newly-constructed 345 State Street SE. Subsequent tenants of both buildings were doctors and dentists.

Three insurance companies that previously were located downtown moved into the area at this time. Travelers Insurance Company located at 550 Cherry Street SE in 1955; the Zurick-American Insurance Company was an original tenant of 425 Cherry Street SE in 1956; and the New York Life Insurance Company occupied 320 East Fulton Street in 1963. The newly organized WOOD-TV constructed its offices and studios at 120 College Avenue SE in 1954, which it continues to occupy. In 1957, the National Cash Register Company built its new offices at 214 East Fulton Street. The Packaging Corporation of American located its offices in a new building at 407 East Fulton Street in 1961.

The development of commercial buildings came to a halt in June 1969, when the Grand Rapids City Commission placed a moratorium on all construction and demolition in the area until studies were completed and enabling legislation at the state level was implemented that would enable a local historic district ordinance to be enacted allowing the designation of Heritage Hill as a local historic district.

Twenty-five buildings in the survey are significant under the theme of Commerce. A number of the commercial buildings that were evaluated continue to house business offices as originally designed and continue to contribute to the economic viability of the city. An office building, 345 State Street and its adjoining parking garage, has been converted into apartments. Buildings were found to be significant under the theme of Commerce using the National Register Criteria if they originally housed a commercial activity relating to the history and development of the City of Grand Rapids. The majority of these buildings retain the essential physical features that convey identity for the period of significance and are considered to be contributing. Due to significant alterations, four of these buildings are considered to be non-contributing.

Buildings related to Commerce

<u>Pre-World War II</u>	557 Crescent Street NE	Crescent Street Floral
1924-1942	210 East Fulton Street	General Tire Company
	2 Jefferson Avenue SE	Commercial Building
	40 Jefferson Avenue SE	Fanatorium Bowling
	50 Jefferson Avenue SE	Grand Rapids Public Museum
	251 State Street SE	Service Station
	311 State Street SE	Automobile dealership (NC)
	340 State Street SE	Commercial Building
	363 State Street SE	Kroger Grocery & Baking Company (NC)
	456 Cherry Street SE	Medical Building
<u>Post-World War II</u>	415 Cherry Street SE	Commercial Building
1951-1963	425 Cherry Street SE	Commercial Building
	435 Cherry Street SE	Commercial Building
	500 Cherry Street SE	Medical Offices
	516 Cherry Street SE	Medical Offices
	550 Cherry Street SE	Travelers Insurance Company
	120 College Avenue SE	WOTV
	214 East Fulton Street	National Cash Register
	310 East Fulton Street	Medical Building (NC)
	320 East Fulton Street	New York Life Insurance Company
	407 East Fulton Street	Packaging Corporation of America
	153 Lafayette Avenue SE	Medical Offices
	330 State Street SE	Commercial Building (NC)
	255 Washington Street SE	Medical Offices
	346 Wealthy Street SE	Commercial Building

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