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The West Grand Boulevard Corridor. Photo

**Final Report: Proposed West Grand Boulevard
African American Arts and Business Historic
District**

By resolution dated March 14, 2017, the Detroit City Council charged the Historic Designation Advisory Board, a study committee, with the official study of the proposed African American Arts and Business Historic District in accordance with Chapter 25 of the 1984 Detroit City Code and the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act.

The proposed West Grand Boulevard African American Arts and Business Historic District consists of 32 contributing buildings built between 1905 and 1926. The boundaries incorporate one (1) non-contributing building and also vacant land. Primarily composed of residential architecture on the north and south sides of West Grand Boulevard, it is located just west of the New Center Area, the John C. Lodge Freeway (M-10), and Henry Ford Hospital and east of Hanover Street. The district is approximately 4.5 miles north-northwest of Detroit's point of origin in Campus Martius Park in downtown.

MAP



BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the proposed West Grand Boulevard African American Arts and Business Historic District, shown in on the attached map, are as follows:
Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of West Grand Boulevard and the centerline of Hanover Street; thence northerly along the centerline of Hanover Street to the centerline of Hanover Street and the centerline of the east-west alley just north of West Grand

Boulevard; thence easterly along the centerline of the east-west alley first north of West Grand Boulevard; thence easterly along the centerline of the east-west alley just north of West Grand Boulevard to the centerline of Kipling Street; thence southerly along the centerline of Kipling Street to the centerline of West Grand Boulevard; thence easterly along said centerline of West Grand Boulevard to the extended east lot line of 24 through 22 Lothrop & Duffield Land Co. Ltds Subdivision Liber 23 Page 38 Plats, Wayne County Records 8/77 120 X 135; thence southerly along said lot line and its extension to the centerline of the east-west alley just south of West Grand Boulevard; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Holden Avenue; thence westerly to the east line of lot 9 of block A Hamlin & Fordyces Subdivision Liber 16 Page 10 Plats, Wayne County Records 8/76 42645 square feet; thence southerly along said lot line to the centerline of the east-west alley just south of West Grand Boulevard; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Wabash Street; thence north to the centerline of West Grand Boulevard; thence westerly to the intersection of the centerline of West Grand Boulevard and Hanover Street.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries identified are inclusive of historically significant properties that have been utilized for or by the African American music industry, business and institutional community. The boundaries also include one building, James H. Cole Home for Funerals, which was designated as a local historic district in 2013.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Address criteria A, B and C as outlined in the National Register Criteria. The period of significance is 1905-1975.

Under Criteria A, Commerce (business); Ethnicity and Race; Arts and Entertainment, Planning/Development; Under Criteria B, names associated with Motown that are embedded in the history of music in Detroit, the United States, and the world; under Criterion C, the typical yet distinctive residential architecture from the first quarter of the twentieth century.

HISTORY

Grand Boulevard

The district is located on parcels abutting West Grand Boulevard. “The Boulevard” as many Detroiters know it, at its inception was a tree lined thoroughfare, spanning 12 miles and connecting the western portion of the Detroit River with the eastern portion through a scenic route. Bela Hubbard, a community leader, attorney, historian and lumber baron created the vision for this boulevard based on the inspiration of Paris, France and that city’s famous broad streets, park amenities and grand boulevards designed by Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann. Hubbard’s plan contributed to Detroit’s nickname as the “Paris of the West,” amongst other attributes of the City that added to that moniker.

At the time, the proposal would create what was considered a U-shaped box around the city, as it was the city limit proper at that period and thought to be the final boundary of expansion. It wasn’t until 1891, that the plan for the Boulevard was realized, after funding

was secured. Construction finally began 15 years after its initial proposal, largely due to the support of Detroit Mayor Hazen Pingree. The year 1913 marked the completion of a major achievement for the City in the form of the beautifully decorated boulevard, lined with flowerbeds, trees and other pleasurable features.

Neighborhood History

In the early 20th century, the portion of West Grand Boulevard in the vicinity of the proposed district was just opening to a new housing subdivision development. The original homes were primarily occupied by the middle-upper class spectrum of citizenry. The construction costs of houses built on this stretch of the Boulevard during this time, typically ranged from \$4,000-\$6,000 and were mostly designed by builders. Still, there were exceptions such as the two-family dwelling at 2625 West Grand Boulevard, which cost \$8,000 and was specially designed by an architectural firm, Varney and Winter, in 1916 for their client, Jason H. Shulte who owned Detroit Leather Works and was the Treasurer of Detroit Rendering Company, Inc.

Several men from the growing automotive-related economy were among the first residents (Polk's *Detroit City Directory, 1924-25*), including A. R. Miller, distributor of Troy Motor Truck Trailers (2673 West Grand Boulevard); David Creider, President of Michigan Metal Supply Company (2676 West Grand Boulevard); and C.F. Kruegar, sales manager for Detroit Starter Company (2644 West Grand Boulevard). According to records, this subject stretch of the Boulevard was also home to agents of various industries, ranging from real estate to purchasing, insurance to investments and travel to manufacturing. The district was also inclusive of school principals, cashiers, a bank manager, a meat market owner (Thomas Barlum & Sons), clerk, two schoolteachers and a store manager.

When the neighborhood began to grow, supportive institutional infrastructure was built to support the residential base in the area. One such institution was the Duffield Branch Library (2507 West Grand Boulevard) designed by Detroit architect Marcus Burrowes and built in 1916 and was financed by steel baron Andrew Carnegie along with a host of other libraries in Detroit. The name Duffield was applied to the library in honor of Divie B. Duffield, a Commissioner for the Detroit Library Commission in the early 1900's. Religious structures, such as Redeemer Presbyterian Church and adjoining Chapel (2764 West Grand Boulevard,) were built in 1924 and 1913 respectively and (demolished in 2017), the former of the buildings being a George D. Mason designed structure were also vital in supporting the growing community in that era.

Providence Hospital (1910), once known as the House of the Providence while it operated as an orphanage, maternity hospital and infant asylum, served the district until its relocation to Southfield and subsequent building demolition in 1965. Henry Ford Hospital (2799 West Grand Boulevard) is another institution that has served the community for decades, but stands outside of the district, to the east, and is a product of the commissioning of the automotive innovator, Henry Ford. The organization opened as a private hospital in 1915. Over the years, Henry Ford Hospital has undergone expansions and organizational changes, until it reached its current structure and grandeur today, standing as a historically significant staple of the community. The hospital sits on a twenty-acre site although it had

much smaller beginnings, Henry Ford foresaw expanding the hospital incrementally as necessary. These institutions supported the surrounding residential populace, which included multi-unit apartment buildings that lined the West Grand Boulevard block faces nearer to Woodward and also the commercial buildings and parking lots adjacent to, what now exists as the John C. Lodge Freeway.

The synergy of these two historical anchors, seems to have induced smaller doctor's offices to locate in the Temple Boulevard Building going into the early 1900's. The Boulevard Temple Building (2567 West Grand Boulevard) and the Regeant Apartments (2535 W. Grand Boulevard) are what remains of the multi-unit residential buildings of the subject properties. The neo-gothic Boulevard Temple, having at one time operated as a mixed-use building, housing commercial uses such as a beauty parlor, coffee shop and sales offices, while the apartments above housed the likes of supervisors, dentists, agents and other professions in the building. The Arbor Home Assisted Living Building (2501 West Grand Boulevard) is also a surviving commercial building in the district.

The portion of West Grand Boulevard that is encompassed in the district fall within the boundaries of the Northwest Goldberg neighborhood, which lies just north of the Woodbridge neighborhood, west of the New Center area, and south of the Virginia Park neighborhood. The neighborhood derives its current name from Louis J. Goldberg Elementary School, which was built in 1905. The original structure was constructed at 1930 Marquette Street between Piquette and McGraw and later relocated near Ferry Street and St. Antoine. The school was named after London, England native, Louis J. Goldberg who was born into a Jewish family in 1866 and later immigrated to Detroit in 1888 at the age of twenty-two. Goldberg gained his prominence serving as a Detroit Board of Education member in the twentieth century. A one-time principal of Goldberg Elementary School, praised Louis Goldberg as being, "an energetic, conscientious leader who led the fight for more and better buildings, for better equipment in the schools and for better salaries for teachers." Goldberg's passion for the school system earned him the honor of being the first Jewish person to be named, President Pro-Tempore of the Detroit School Board in the year 1900.

Early African American History in Detroit

In the early 1800's, Detroit became a type of "promised land" for African Americans prior to the Civil War because of the accessibility to Canada for escaping slaves via the Underground Railroad. Detroit was one of the last stops in route to freedom. Detroit local abolitionists (many of them being white) of the era were instrumental in facilitating the crossing of fugitive slaves into the safety and freedom of Canada across the Detroit River. Some freed slaves decided to settle in Detroit despite the fact that it was at times risky, due to bounty hunters that looked to profit from capturing escapees and returning them to the South.

For this reason, African Americans had established a deep-rooted connection with Detroit. So by the 20th century, when Blacks in the South became aware of Detroit's demand for thousands of workers in the automotive arm of the Industrial Revolution, it took little to persuade them to uproot from the South and migrate north with aspirations of equality in employment, as well as housing, the political arena and other facets of life. Many African

American business owners and practitioners of the South followed their customer base and patients to the north with the same aspirations in what history now calls the “Great Migration.”

Prior to the automotive boom, 20th century American society deemed the “black man’s job” to be one primarily in service industry work. This was the glass ceiling for African Americans in that era in most industries. Even highly educated black men were limited to entering the ranks of jobs as porters and servers for example. The company that employed the most black men in the 1920’s was the Pullman Company. While white men were the conductors of the trains, black men were held to roles as shoe shiners, bed makers, clothing ironers; and essentially limited to serving jobs. Black men educated in law, theology and engineering, for example, were discriminated against in the hiring practices for employment.

In the year 1900, only about 1.5 percent of the city’s population was black. Nonetheless, the black population increased ten-fold by 1913, and later, that population had swelled to roughly 41,000 in Detroit. The primary stimulus for African Americans to migrate to Detroit from the South after World War I was that the auto industry had mass positions that needed labor workers. Of those companies, Henry Ford hired thousands of African American men to work for Ford Motor Company (FMC). FMC was one of the few if not only, companies, that allowed black workers access to some of the higher status jobs of the plants, which were normally held for white men. This policy was transformational in many ways for the black community that was systematically shut out of countless jobs, simply on the basis of race. Ford also welcomed the first African Americans to the Henry Ford Trade School in the 1920’s, which at the time was unacceptable socially in the white power structure. However, blacks fit into Ford’s ¹“Americanization Plan,” perfectly from his perspective.

In his thinking, it was a plan to mold his employed European immigrants largely, but also those considered to be outside of the social constructs of generally accepted American society. Ford’s plan called for the creation of an invasive program that used hired sociologists to monitor the personal home activities of all of his employees, making sure that their personal lives were in order and to ‘Henry Ford standards.’ This level of invasion of private life didn’t come cheap as Ford created what was known as the \$5 dollar day, one of the highest wages at the time for the automotive labor force. This wage came in the form of the normal hourly pay and second half being in the form of profit sharing. This new pay scale set FMC at a level that was highly desired by job seekers and especially blacks, as there were not many opportunities to earn this pay grade.

Many believe that there were also other factors that influenced FMC’s hiring of so many blacks at a time when such a practice went against the racial and social norms. One reason was that with Ford’s American Plan, there was also a political agenda attached and Ford expected loyalty from his employees when it came to politics. So when Ford lent support

¹ The Henry Ford Americanization plan was intended to assimilate foreigners and others that worked for Ford Motor Company into the American structure by teaching to be fluent in English and other American institutional principles and values.

for certain political affiliations and policies, he expected that those who worked for him would support and vote in unison with his agenda. In addition, while Ford did allow blacks to enter positions that were not typically open for them in other companies, it has also been believed that because of the racial climate of the era, this may have also been used to jeer whites and blacks to compete intensely amongst themselves to increase productivity. It's been said that Ford used the racial tension and competition to benefit the company. Blacks were also known to have the more intensive labor positions in the factory, especially those that had detrimental health impacts causing many to die at early ages.

As Africans Americans arrived in Detroit with hopes for better and equal opportunities than were offered in the South, they were met with the opposite. Subpar housing in slums east of downtown, known as Paradise Valley and Black Bottom is what they were confined to. The Black Bottom; Paradise Valley Boundaries were Woodward Ave on the west, Russell/Chene on the east, the Detroit River on the south and the northern boundary was flexible depending on who was asked. One thing that became evident to blacks who migrated to the north, was that many of the racial adversities they faced in the South, were very much alive and well in Detroit. Events such as the 1863 riot, when mobs of whites, indiscriminately attacked black neighborhoods resulting in numerous injuries and deaths, was one expression of the climax of that racial oppression. White supremacist segregation policies such as 'redlining' also fueled the oppression of blacks.

Between 1910 and 1930, the promise of jobs continued to attract blacks, and so the population soared. Roughly 70 percent of blacks in Detroit took up residence in the Black Bottom neighborhood. Parts of this neighborhood were shared with Italians, Jews, Czechs and East Europeans. Outside of Black Bottom there were other nodes of African American communities. Some of those included a twelve-block area east of Woodward, north of Grand Boulevard, and a small community in Hamtramck.

Discriminatory housing practices abounded and blacks in many circumstances had to pay exorbitant rents, even up to 50% more than their white counterparts for the exact same housing unit types and living conditions. Conditions in black neighborhoods were deplorable in this era. It's estimated that 12,000 to 15,000 African American Detroiters were squeezed into the Black Bottom neighborhood, which totaled about 60 city blocks. Circumstances were so bleak that at times, that blacks even had to pay to sleep in others automobiles, on pool tables and other similar places. Some houses even lacked baths and toilets in them. According to a 1938 Detroit Housing Commission housing inventory, findings revealed that 85 percent of all housing was closed to blacks and that 50 percent of housing occupied by blacks was substandard.

Few, who were subjected to these conditions, contested these unethical practices because they were liable to face repercussions and possibly be put on the streets. So in general, blacks refrained from expressing any discontent with the housing conditions due to that fear. However, in 1943 yet another riot broke out in Detroit, stemming from an altercation that occurred with young men at Belle Isle. This sent the city into a racial uproar between blacks and whites as it has been found through studies that much of the violence was likely spurred by whites attacking homes and blacks defending their residences.

Urban renewal, also referred to as “Negro removal,” by many blacks, marked the period in the city’s history that African Americans were forced out of Black Bottom due to the Federal Highway Act of 1956 and the subsequent demolition of the neighborhood to make way for Interstate I-75 led by then, Mayor Albert Cobo.

Life in the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhood was suddenly brought to an end and African Americans were displaced as the Chrysler Freeway was installed, in the neighborhoods place. Lafayette Park now also lies on former Black Bottom, while Ford Field lies where Paradise Valley was once located.

African Americans move West

Due to decades of discrimination through practices of redlining, deed restrictions, as well as other discriminatory housing policies, combined with blatant physical violence from the Klu Klux Klan and other organized white neighborhood associations, as happened in the infamous ²Dr. Ossian Sweet case; African Americans were barred from many areas in the City.

As a result of the discriminatory factors, coupled with the displacement from the Paradise Valley and Black Bottom areas, through Urban Renewal in the mid-to-late 1950’s, a haven for Blacks was established in the Virginia Park and Northwest Goldberg neighborhoods. As more blacks moved in, Jewish families moved further northwest and into the surrounding suburbs as well. Initially considered a Jewish enclave in the 1920’s, the area soon opened to Blacks along 12th Street (present day Rosa Parks Boulevard).

The reason that blacks congregated in this area is because Jews were one of the only groups that would sell homes to blacks during that era. So by the 1960’s, the area had demographically become majority African American. The influx of black residents into the area provided a large congregation for churches such as King Solomon Baptist Church. The Northwestern Goldberg community hosted nationally renowned personalities at King Solomon Baptist Church because it enjoyed one of the largest African American held auditoriums of that time, with a 5,000 person seating capacity. Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X were of the most notable figures to visit the neighborhood, speaking from King Solomon Baptist Church on several occasions.

Other African American churches and organizations also began to thrive due to this large inflow of blacks including churches such as Central Congregational Church, New Bethel Baptist Church, and St. Stephen African Methodist Episcopal Church.

² Dr. Ossian Sweet was an African American physician who became famous when he and associates used a firearm for self-defense while being attacked at his Detroit home by a white mob, resulting in the death of one of the mob members. Dr. Sweet, his family and friends were acquitted by an all-white jury in what is now known as the Sweet Trials.

Grand Boulevard: An African American Arts, Business, and Institutional Hub

Hitsville U.S.A., Motown Museum

West Grand Boulevard was originally built as a neighborhood that housed the middle-upper class echelon of the city and its large homes reflect the type of scale that this class was accustomed to. As the last of the Jewish community continued to relocate further northwest in the city and even into the suburban communities bordering Detroit, it solidified African Americans new home even more.

By the 1940's-60's the West Grand Boulevard corridor had transitioned from the single-family homes that it once was known for. As had occurred in many of the once affluent neighborhoods in Detroit such as Virginia Park and Brush Park, the majority of the homes that were once single-family dwellings, had become subdivided into duplexes due to the expense that it took to maintain them. On Grand Boulevard, outside of the district, large concentrations of group homes began to locate along the thoroughfare because of its conduciveness to house many individuals.

A plethora of the homes along the subject stretch of "the Boulevard" within the district also transitioned to businesses and institutional uses. The majority of those businesses were black-owned since African Americans took the place as the predominant ethnic group in the corridor.

One of the most notable of those businesses that emerged on West Grand Boulevard was led by, a little known record producer at the time, by the name of Berry Gordy Jr. When Gordy purchased the two-story house at 2648 West Grand Boulevard in 1959, it was probably unconceivable that he would become a worldwide icon and that his record label would later be an empire.

This was the beginning of the record label called Tamala Records, and more famously known as Motown Records. The record label was started with a loan for \$800 and the conversion of the rear portion of the home into a studio, as Gordy transitioned the home into the entity that would go on to garner international success in the music business. Some of Detroit's prime talent in the form of bass, drum and jazz musicians helped to create the "Motown Sound." This sound was refined by the brand and was typified in its use of tambourines, chord structures, melody, electric bass guitar chords and the call-and-response method of singing that was familiar in African American churches. Horns, strings, a four-beat drum pattern and electronic equalizing also denoted the Motown sound.

The brand of the company continued to evolve, until it also became popularly known as Hitsville U.S.A (Motown's headquarters from 1959 until 1968.) The once single home that housed Motown's operations, began to expand through acquisition of neighboring houses on the south and north sides of West Grand Boulevard from 1961-1965. Those properties and their repurposed functions are as follows:

W. Grand Blvd. Addresses	Acquisition Date	Function
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2644/46	April 18, 1961	Jobete Publishing Company (currently museum entrance)
2648	August 1959	Motown Recording Studio (Hitsville)
2650	January 1962	Offices; Vacant lot after destroyed by fire 1971
2652/54	January 1962	Motown Administration
2656	March 1965	Motown Finance
2662/4	July 1966	Motown Sales and Marketing
2666/8	July 1966	Motown Sales and Marketing
2670/2	July 1966	International Talent Management Incorporated
2657	January 1966	Artist Development (currently Gamma Phi Delta Sorority Inc.)

Gordy was not always a record producer and label owner. He got his start in the business when he initially began as a songwriter for local Detroit acts, but soon realized that producing records would bring him larger compensation in the form of royalties. Gordy's family members were also a vital part in making the company a success. Esther, Robert and George, were the Gordy siblings that helped run the company, as well as Berry, Sr.



Photo from the Motown Museum collection

The atmosphere of West Grand Boulevard during this era was phenomenal according to those that were engulfed in the Motown culture. It has been described as a mix of a “college dormitory and experimental laboratory.” Smokey Robinson once wrote that “We loved the house, until we’d spend more time there than home.” The house was more than just a place of business for studio recordings. It had become a social gathering place for the stars and up and coming artists. Smokey Robinson described the studio as, “the most energetic place on the planet.” There was so much activity at the Motown Studio A at all times of night and day, that Anthony Fierimonte, a young beat cop at the time, recalls that he first thought the house was an “after-hours spot” as he walked the beat on his West Grand Boulevard route, until his partner corrected his first thought.

There can never be enough said regarding the way in which Motown profoundly changed the world on many levels, boldly demonstrating the beauty of “blackness,” black enterprise, excellence, elegance, tenacity and ingenuity at a time when African Americans needed it most as they faced the oppression and exclusion of white America in everyday life.

Many of the Motown artists lived and went to schools in the neighborhood including Florence Ballard of the Supremes and Mary Wells who attended Northwestern high school. Several other artists were educated in Detroit Public Schools (DPS) and lived in surrounding neighborhoods as well.

Motown not only represented African American artistry in an elegant and sophisticated way that made black youth want to emulate their favorite stars, but the label also transcended the African American community and reached into the mainstream white American culture. At a time when there was much racial divide in America, as the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s was moving full steam ahead; blacks and whites were brought together through the soulful “Motown sound” coming out of Hitsville U.S.A.

Some of the most notable Motown stars that helped the label to achieve its global success are as follows (but not limited to):

Diana Ross and the Supremes
Gladys Knight and the Pips
Stevie Wonder
Michael Jackson and the Jackson 5
Marvin Gaye
The Temptations
Smokey Robinson and the Miracles
Diana Ross
The Four Tops
Martha and the Vandellas
Lionel Richie
The Commodores
The Marvellettes
and many more.

The stars of Motown produced hundreds of hits with the label achieving numerous Billboard Top 100 No. 1 hits in the 1960's and 70's with classics such as, "Please Mr. Postman," "My Guy," "Baby Love," "My Girl," "Stop in the Name of Love," "I Want You Back," "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," "I'll Be There," "Just My Imagination," "Let's Get it On," "Superstition," "Three Times a Lady" "Reach Out I'll be There," and dozens of others, totaling over 180 number one hits on the U.S. Billboard Charts, included in their repertoire.

The soulful Detroit music at least for a moment in time, made people forget their racial differences, as the Motown stars achieved crossover success and were adored by blacks and whites alike. The label and artists as a force served to bridge ethnic gaps through their influence, and broke racial barriers for musical collaboration through their worldwide dominance in the industry. This appeal to crossover demographics led to the company making history as being the highest-earning African American business in America. The Motown era, literally changed the world and still has huge influence on music and pop culture until this day. Many of the stars that have roots at Motown went on to super stardom statuses, continuing the legacy of the label that began at 2648 West Grand Boulevard.

While the Motown movement was in full effect on the Boulevard, building its legacy as the greatest African American record label and arguably the greatest cross-cultural record label in history as well, there were other key African American entities along West Grand Boulevard. These entities added to the remarkability of the corridor at that time. One of the things that are shared amongst many of these entities is that they created their own opportunities when the white power structure of the time would not allow them to integrate indiscriminately into their organizations, businesses and social fabric. The strong willed, African Americans viewed this as opportunity instead of letting the racial atmosphere destroy their American dream.

Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc.

One such entity, in existence today at 2657 West Grand Boulevard, also having their inception stemming from the necessity to by-pass the bigotry of that period, is Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc.

Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc. (GPDS) is a college based sorority that was founded in February of 1943 out of Michigan's only Historically Black College known as Lewis College of Business (LCB) (also known as Lewis Business College) which first located in Detroit on West Warren.

The school was founded in 1929 using \$50 in financing by founder, Violet T. Lewis with the intent of stimulating opportunities for unemployed African Americans in the Great Depression. At that time, most public and private collegiate level institutions denied blacks from enrolling, so the vision of the college was to fill the gap caused by the racial barriers of the city.



Violet T. Lewis, founder of the Lewis College of Business and Gamma Phi Delta (to the left) Elizabeth Garner, co-founder of Gamma Phi Delta (to the right). Photo from GPD website.

Using that same determination that was used to establish LCB, Lewis (founder) and Elizabeth Garner, a teacher at the college, decided to start the Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc. In addition to the founding two, there were 11 other members that became known in GPDS history as the 13 Original Pearls.

The sorority's headquarters were located within the district at 2657 West Grand Boulevard and have been a solid community partner in the neighborhood ever since, also being contributing a member of the West Grand Boulevard Collaborative.

Over the years GPDS has attracted business and professional women from all spheres of influence and now have Chapters nationwide. One of the sorority's achievements is the establishment of their annual scholarship and endowment awards; the Violet T. Lewis Memorial Scholarship and Undergraduate Scholarship and Luthermae E. Adams Endowment Fund and the Ann McElwee Perpetual Endowment Fund plus other scholarships.

The sorority also gives back to the community through its four youth group programs that supports academic excellence for students.

As was written by Willie B. Kennedy, Gamma Phi Delta, in the poem excerpt from the "Gamma Phi Delta Sorority Fiftieth Anniversary Tribute," the poet captures the essence of the sorority and its origin as she passionately articulates:

*“So they moved with Charm and Grace,
Which was not void of the obstacles they must face.
We know the story, which we hold so dear,
Today we salute them with accolades and cheer.*

*Our illustrious founders, Violet Lewis and Elizabeth Garner set the tone,
It is through their organizational skills that Gamma Phi Delta has grown.
But our founders didn’t succeed all alone.
There are dedicated soror whom we must enthrone.”*

As Gamma Phi Delta approaches their 75th anniversary, their founders and organizational legacy has been a key protagonist in the education of over 27,000 business graduates and the sorority is continuing the legacy of commitment to African Americans and all in the City of Detroit.

Just as the Lewis College of Business was created to fill the need of blacks that were not allowed to attend other institutions of higher learning, and Motown Records to allow for black artists to have an equal shot in the music business, it was the same in many other industries.

Other industries are also represented on the West Grand Boulevard corridor in the district. Those include the funeral home, floral and insurance industries.

James H. Cole Home for Funerals

James H. Cole Home for Funerals (Cole’s) is within the district boundaries located at 2624 West Grand Boulevard, but is already ³locally designated as of 2013. Cole’s is almost 100 years old and is also the oldest black owned Detroit based funeral home in the city. The business was moved to West Grand Boulevard in 1962 after they had followed the same pattern as many other black residents and businesses, starting in the Black Bottom area and eventually making their way west, once the opportunity arose. The funeral home got its start from James H. Cole I who the *Detroit News*, in 1901, called “One of the most successful and highly respected Negroes in Detroit, amassing nearly \$260,000.” He was also featured in other publications later on and well known in Detroit. That small fortune eventually went into establishing the family’s long-time business. During the eventful era, the company served the African American demographic that was being blacklisted or taken advantage of by white funeral home businesses. James H. Cole Home for Funerals is a neighborhood staple.

Brazelton Florist

Another such service that still exists on “the Boulevard” today is the well-known black owned Brazelton Florist located at 2686 West Grand Boulevard. Brazelton is a signature red-painted brick Federal Revival style building along the corridor. Edgar Brazelton II, (the original floral shop owner) born in Birmingham, Alabama was like many other blacks of the time, filled with hopes for the American Dream in Detroit. Brazelton eventually

³ James H. Cole Home for Funerals was designated as a single-building historic district in 2013. For more information, please see the full report stemming from a resolution dated February 28, 2012.

began the ACME Flower Shop in 1941 which was located at 3936 Brush Street. The shop as many other black owned operations did, served primarily black customers that were treated badly with price gouging or not served by whites at all.

Brazelton served as the President of the Booker T. Washington Business Association and used this platform to advocate for the African American businesses in the community. The Ed Brazelton III is the current owner at the West Grand Boulevard location, which relocated to the Boulevard in 1968 from the Black Bottom, for the same reasons that many other black residents and business owners moved from the old neighborhood. The business has been one of the anchors of the Boulevard ever since.

Lewis & Thompson Agency, Inc.

Yet another pillar that has added to the fabric of the business community, located on the corridor at 2621 West Grand Boulevard is the Lewis & Thompson Agency, Inc. (LTA) (originally the W.A. Lewis Agency). This black-owned business was started by Walton Lee Lewis and originally located on Warren and Beaubien.

Struggling to find work, as numerous blacks did, after graduating from the University of Northern Iowa with a Bachelor of Science degree, Lewis, like many blacks, began working at Ford Motor Company (FMC) sweeping floors at the Rouge plant in 1938. In addition, he also ran his insurance business on the side. He had set in his mind that, once the money he made from insurance premiums equated to the amount of money that he earned at FMC, he would leave FMC and go into the insurance business full time.

In 1941, Lewis reached that goal and kept his promise to himself, leaving FMC and started his own insurance company, which first held offices on Warren and Beubien and moved multiple times in the city. Eventually the company's offices moved to 2617 West Grand Boulevard in 1957 making them one of the first black businesses on the Boulevard. This building was located next door to the business's current location and at one time both owned by the Lewis family. 2621 West Grand Blvd (the company's current location) was once occupied by Lewis' brother David Lewis Esq. and the Law Firm of Lewis and Munday, which later moved its offices to downtown Detroit.

The company has a history of providing insurance for minority owned businesses as well as non-profit organizations and public entities. Lewis went on to obtain many accomplishments becoming the first African American on the board of the National Bank of Detroit and also president of Victory Loan. The business is now owned and operated by Robert P. Lewis, the son of Walter Lee Lewis (who passed in 1995). The Lewis family recently sold the 2617 West Grand Boulevard property to Dr. L. Brintley General Surgery and moved next door to 2621 West Grand Boulevard where their offices are currently housed.

Nathan Johnson & Associates, Inc.

Nathan Johnson & Associates, Inc. was an African American owned architecture firm (owned by Nathan Johnson), historically located at 2512 West Grand Boulevard, on the corner of West Grand Boulevard and Wabash Street. The building and its neighboring

structure were purchased by owner, Nathan Johnson in 1960, and subsequently conjoined and remodeled as one office for his architecture firm which was established in 1956.

Originally born in Herington, Kansas, a small town comprised of 3,500 citizens, whom Johnson described as only having 35-40 black residents. Nathan Johnson was inspired and mentored by a white grade school teacher named Roxy Frost who also connected him with others who would later help. As Johnson had an early talent for drawing, Frost, steered him away from his original consideration of being an artist and encouraged him to pursue architecture because as she explained, “you’ll live your whole life and never be respected,” referring to the life of an artist. Johnson took that advice, and went on to study architecture and graduated from Kansas State University, top ten in his class and a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. Johnson also served in the US Navy prior to his education.

Johnson later moved to Detroit in 1950 to further his career as an architect. He took a position with White and Griffin; White being the first black architect registered in Michigan. Eventually Johnson moved on to work with Harold H. Fisher and Victor Gruen & Associates (notable for designing and building Eastland and Northland malls)

In a period when African American architects were uncommon, and there was a struggle to overcome racial barriers, Johnson found his architectural expression in the popular Modernist style, procuring work on a number of notable suburban Detroit churches. When asked why he worked on so many churches, Johnson humorously reminisced, that church commissions were the only jobs that he could be a part of at one point in his career. Johnson found his niche architectural expression in the modernist style, eventually being tapped by the Detroit Board of Education to become the first appointed African American architect for the board. This entry into designing and building schools led to more work.

Nathan Johnson started Nathan Johnson & Associates, which in its prime, held a staff of approximately 40 architects, technicians and planners. The firm was supported by interior designers, professional estimators, specification writers, graphic specialists, construction supervisors, model builders and photographers.

Johnson’s Modernist architectural expression can be admired in much of his work that he went on to do around Detroit. Those works include:

House of Diggs
Thunderbird Inn, Northville
Church of the Resurrection, Ecorse
Stanley Hong’s residence, 961 East Boston
Second Baptist Church addition
Stanley’s Mannia Café
Sherrard Jr. High School Addition
Eastland Shopping Center
Bethel AME Church, Tower and Townhouses
Belle Masion East
Coleman A. Young Manor

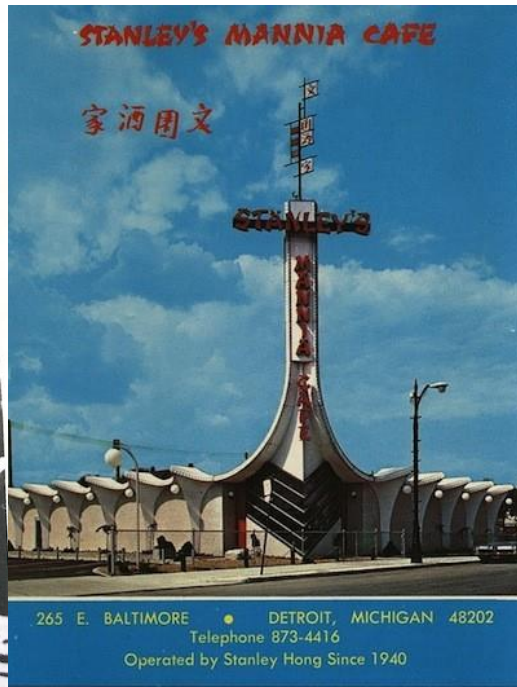
Wayne County Community College
E. Side Prison
William C Loving Elementary School
Wayne State University Graduate/faculty housing facility
William Dickerson Detention facility
Highland Park Community High School
Detroit People Mover stations and Maintenance Control Facility

Johnson has many notable works but says that one his favorite projects was Stanley's Mannia Café. He explained that, "Stanley was very inspirational to him and that they had a good relationship with high respect for each other." Johnson also says that, "Stanley accepted the fact that he was a minority and dealt with minorities." While many other establishments were not, Stanley's Mannia Café was very welcoming to blacks.

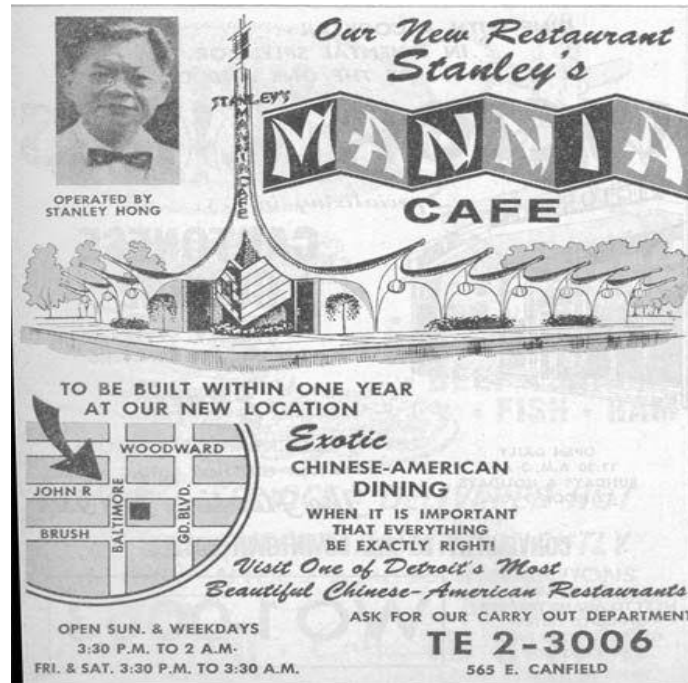
Stanley's Mannia Café exemplifies the Modernistic Googie-style of architecture, which is rare, but was used in 1950-60's restaurants, bowling alleys, motels, and theater design. Johnson says that he built it as tall as he did so that people could find it.



Photo of Nathan Johnson; from Nathan Johnson And Associates brochure



Stanley's Mannia Café, advertisement



Restaurant flyer for Stanley's Mannia Cafe

By June 1969 Nathan Johnson & Associates was considered the oldest and largest black-managed architectural firm in Michigan because one of its principals was Donald F. White, Michigan's first black architect who started in 1938 and later joined with Nathan Johnson. The firm was larger than most average firms in the nation in that period.

Throughout Johnson's career, he went on to serve in many capacities in the City of Detroit and throughout Michigan. The roles that he filled during his career include being a member of the American Institute of Architects, the Michigan Society of Architects, member of the National Organization of Minority Architects, served on the Board of Directors of the Kansas State University Alumni, the Director for Detroit General Hospital, Commissioner for the Detroit Historic District Commission, Commissioner on the Wayne County Planning Commission, Detroit Fire Appeals Board and Commissioner for the Building Authority.

By the end of his career, Johnson had completed a variety of projects for schools, universities, public housing commissions, private business commissions and transportation authorities. He was a registered architect in 13 states. Johnson entered retirement in 2000. His successful career is a testament to those minority architects that come behind him, entering the profession.

As Johnson thinks back to his career as an architect while he embraces retirement, he had this to say, "I'm grateful to God for living the life that I lived....What I'm enjoying more right now than anything is sitting out looking at a river that God made, the sun that He made, a painting; the sky couldn't be any more beautiful because he made them and all I can do is look out and try to emulate what He's done in my way....that's about it." Nathan Johnson is 93 years old and currently resides in the City of Detroit.

Andy's Pharmacy

Andy's Pharmacy located at 2676 West Grand Boulevard and owned by Ghassan Yabeck (of Lebanese descent). The pharmacy business originally began at the lot where CVS Pharmacy exists today at 2630 West Grand Boulevard (also known as 2590 West Grand Boulevard). The pharmacy was located in Rigo Supermarket and prior to that the pharmacy was located in a stand-alone building at the corner of West Grand Boulevard and 12th street (Rosa Parks Boulevard).

Ghassan currently operates the pharmacy along with Joseph Fakhoury who is from southwest Detroit (Jordanian descent) and has worked with him since 1989. The business has a niche-based business of loyal customers that are many times known by name when ordering a subscription. Andy's serves 90% of its customers by delivery.

Other businesses that are currently existing in the district include Dr. Kaigler and Associates; Comprehensive Maxillo-facial Care and Smile Design located at 2671 West and also Harold's Place Hair and Nail Salon, owned by Harold Hackett. Both of these businesses have been in operation for 30-40 years serving the surrounding community.

Tiki's Treasures, is currently being remodeled to function as a resale store to be coupled with a bistro located at 2641 West Grand Boulevard. While Dr. L. Brintley General Surgery located at 2617 West Grand Boulevard, recently bought their building approximately two years ago for their practice.

Other Significant History

As the City of Detroit observes the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Rebellion, it is necessary to recount how that historic event impacted the subject stretch of West Grand Boulevard since ground zero of the rebellion was only a half-mile away from the district.

On that notorious day in July of 1967, the notable Motown artist Martha Reeves while performing at the Fox Theatre had the unfortunate job of announcing the news that the rioting was spreading throughout the city and cautioned the audience to leave calmly to return home.

While West Grand Boulevard and many other business corridors and industries were thriving in the city there was simultaneously resentment of the oppressive power structure that had been boiling up for decades. African Americans for so long had been treated like second class citizens, brutalized by the police, denied fair housing, overlooked for employment, kept from certain social classes and so on. All of this tension was at its peak and the raid on a blind pig located on 12th Street (Rosa Parks Boulevard) by local police, followed by an agitated crowd was enough to "tip the pot" of decades of frustration of those who had been oppressed. An altercation took place between the crowd of by-standers and police and the rest is history.



The business located on 12th Street that was operating as a blind pig and became the epicenter that led to the 1967 Rebellion events.

During the week of the rebellion breaking out, the Hitsville U.S.A. record labels had eight singles in the Billboard Hot 100, which included two songs in the top 20. However, despite the nationwide success of their records, the studio had to uncharacteristically shut down even though they were known for working around the clock to produce the music they were famous for.

Some members of Motown even tried to come into work during the week of the riots while gunshots could be heard in the distance, showing their work ethic and loyalty to Motown, but Gordy sent them back home, just wanting everyone to stay safe. Otis Williams (one of the original Temptation members) recalls driving through the streets as buildings burned to the ground. He remembered being in disbelief that the Motown buildings were still untouched by the fires that had destroyed most of 12th street. He felt that it was a sign that Motown was respected amongst the city, where it had immunity of sorts from the mayhem. Another theory from a resident that lived in the area through the perilous times, felt that it may have been the fact that tanks were stationed on West Grand Boulevard by the time the uproar had spread south, that saved the Motown buildings and other buildings on West Grand Boulevard. Whichever reason it may be, West Grand Boulevard escaped the 1967 uprising destruction, largely intact and still a jewel of the city until this day.

Continuing Legacy

Present day West Grand Boulevard appears much the same as it has for the last several decades. While the historic structures mostly remain, carrying with them many of the businesses that have been outlined. There are also many newer businesses that have more recent roots that are continuing the legacy of arts, business and institutional heritage for the corridor.

The strong entities that now exist, plus coming expansion of Motown Museum and Henry Ford Hospital (outside of the district) will continue to strengthen this corridor retaining it as one that will continue to create more history for a new generation in the City of Detroit.

Today the corridor is also being supported by the West Grand Boulevard Collaborative (WGBC) which is a collective of dozens of surrounding organizations and block clubs that have a vision to see the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods maintained and revitalized.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION and LIST OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

West Grand Boulevard A3 District

Setting:

West Grand Boulevard, in the area of the West Grand Boulevard A3 District, is a major thoroughfare with three traffic lanes and a parking lane in each direction, separated by a grassy median planted with flowers and shrubs, to Rosa Parks Boulevard (formerly 12th Street) It continues west of Rosa Parks as a central five-lane thoroughfare with local access/parking roads on its north and south sides separated from the main road by curbs. The district is composed of approximately five blocks across from each other on the north and south sides of West Grand Boulevard. The major anchor outside of the east end of the district is Henry Ford Hospital, and outside of the district to the west are some commercial uses and large modern apartment buildings that take over the streetscape before small-scale residential uses continue west of Fourteenth Street.

The properties within the district are separated from the roadway by grass tree lawns between the street curbs and public sidewalks. Many of the properties in the district were built for residential use and later converted to commercial uses, and their appearance reflects this. Institutions such as the religious structures and a public library were located at the west end of the district near Rosa Parks (formerly Twelfth Avenue). The residential properties on the north and south sides of the street have common heights, setbacks, ample front lawns and very narrow side lots, creating a continuity of building façades along this prominent West Grand Boulevard streetscape. They are all two-stories in height with tall attics, have two-story bay windows, and display popular early twentieth century historical styles, including Prairie, Arts and Crafts, and English Revival. Several of the residences have been modified to accommodate businesses that African Americans established in the late 1940s through 1960s. Those exterior alterations/additions occurring within the period of significance are generally significant features of the buildings. All have ample front yards, and landscaping is usually established around the foundation of the building, allowing for a continuity of front yards interrupted only by walkways leading to front entrances but, occasionally, driveways. Garages off the alleys, often built at the same time as the house in similar materials, were once commonplace but have long been replaced with parking lots as buildings turned to commercial uses; only a couple still remain on the south side of West Grand Boulevard. Lawn signage related to the current business establishment is also common. In general, the impression of a uniform, yet diverse, appearance to the streetscape is apparent.

North Side

1. 2671-73 West Grand Boulevard (1915)

Located on the northwest corner of West Grand Boulevard and Kipling, this moderately scaled, painted brick faced residential dwelling is two stories tall with a hip roof with a simple dormer centered on its front slope. It was converted into a doctor's office in 1949 and, like its neighbor to the west, it has undergone major modifications to its front façade and east elevation, although its second story still retains some original window openings, although filled in or replaced with fixed panes. The west elevation still retains its original double-hung window types. A major modern flat roofed, glass, metal and brick addition

was attached to the first story of the front façade and east elevation in 1960, replacing the first story front porch and entrance with a largely glass enclosure containing the entrance at grade on the west end and a row of large windows. Narrow vertical windows on the east side elevation give a nod to the modern style. The building shares a paved parking lot behind it with the property to its west.

2. 2665 West Grand Boulevard (1913)

A smaller house compared to its neighbors to the west, this two-family, painted brick two-flat features a hip roof with a wide overhang and visible rafter tails, and a hip roof dormer centered on the front slope that has a set of four windows with double-hung two-over-one sashes. The building is accessed from a central concrete walkway leading to masonry steps between brick wing walls to the front porch. At first story level is a full-length porch with square brick columns supporting its roof and the second story porch, which has unoriginal metal railings. A single first floor entrance on the west end of the front façade is original; the original east end fenestration is obscured by an entrance enclosure added in 1949 that provides access at grade. At second story level on the east half of the front façade is a bay window with its outer faces containing double-hung four-over-one sashes, and its central bay containing a single large window with a leaded transom above.

A bay window remains on the second story of the east elevation, above the attached one-car garage addition that begins at the front building line and extends the length of the building to a rear parking lot that is shared with 2671-73 W. Grand Blvd.

3. 2661-2663 West Grand Boulevard (1914)

This tall, substantial, side gable roofed, brown brick English Revival style residential building is composed of two halves with a brick chimney rising from a central party wall dividing the two duplex units. Two identical half-timbered, stucco gable dormers with groupings of four double-hung nine-over-one windows are situated above each windowed bay of the front façade. The two halves of the façade are dissimilar below the roof; the western half features a two-story, three-sided bay window and the east half features a slightly projecting squared bay first floor under a slightly sloping roof and a grouping of three windows at the second story level. All windows on the front façade are double-hung, nine-over-one sashes, with the exception of the twelve-over-one sashes at the wider center faces of the western two-story bay. Both halves of the façade have single-door entrances on their outer ends. These entrances are accessed off of a central concrete walkway extending from the public sidewalk that joins with another concrete walkway parallel to the building that leads to masonry steps between wing walls with limestone caps. The deck of the porch extends from entrance to entrance. Above the west entrance is a flat window hood and above the east entrance, continuing from the line of the porch roof to its west, is a raised wooden pediment. A low landscape wall stretches between the wing walls, creating an area for plantings at the foot of the front façade.

On the east and west elevations, the broad side roof gables are half-timbered stucco and have a set of paired windows. Single windows and groupings of windows sharing limestone sills puncture the side elevations. A narrow concrete paved driveway extends along the east side of the property and stops at the front building line.

4. 2657 West Grand Boulevard (c. 1912) Gamma Phi Delta Sorority , Motown-related

Another substantial brick Four Square building with Prairie overtones, the two-story red brick, formerly residential building at 2657 West Grand Boulevard displays a straightforward but asymmetrical façade beneath the overhanging eaves of its hip roof. A hip roof dormer with slate clad walls and a wide window is centered over the front façade; all hip roofs, including that of the porch deck, have deep eaves and rafter tails. A porch deck extends almost the full length of the front façade; the porch roof, supported on square brick piers, covers the single-door entrance with sidelights on the east side of the façade. The concrete steps and porch have brick wing walls with limestone caps; the wing wall extends at the length of the porch uncovered beyond the entrance. A grouping of three slender double-hung windows is centered above the entrance at second story level. The east side of the front façade features a two-story bowed bay with a grouping of three windows on its center and a single one-over-one double-hung window on each side, on both floors.

The west elevation of the building features a chimney flanked by first floor square windows and a two-story brick box bay containing a one-over-one double-hung window on its sides and two groups of two one-over-one double-hung windows on the long central faces of both stories. A large, flat roofed, rectangular concrete block addition that was built in 1949 as a recording studio occupies the western rear of the property to its rear (north) lot line. Its entrance door with a metal awning above it oriented towards the fenced parking lot on the corner lot to its west. This addition has red brick veneer cladding on the small section that faces south toward West Grand Boulevard. The east elevation of the original residential building features a door with a gable roof hood, windows at both floors and a slate-clad hip roof dormer in the center of the roof. A narrow driveway extends along the east side of the property and ends under a carport roof.

5. 2641 West Grand Boulevard (c. 1914)

Located on the northwest corner of Woodrow Wilson and West Grand Boulevard, the front (south) façade of this substantial, symmetrically arranged two-story brick veneer residential building is missing its original porch, although its masonry capped wing walls and deck are still extant. Situated on each side of the single-door entry is a square picture window, above which is, at second story level, a shallow wood-framed box bay containing three double-hung sash windows. Centered on the shallow hip roof is a rather squat wood-shingled dormer containing two double-hung sash windows. Its visible east elevation, facing Woodrow Wilson, has a basement entrance at its southeast corner and features a multi-window single-story projecting bay towards the rear. The original single-family building was converted to a two-family residence in 1924. A large, modern 1964 addition to the building occupies what was once the rear yard of the property, then used as a day care center and residence.

6. 2633-35 West Grand Boulevard (1916)

This substantial two-story, rectangular, brick veneer, Foursquare, two-family flat is missing its front, two-story porch, once likely its major architectural feature. Its high, masonry capped porch walls extend across the front of the building, although the porch roof originally extended only partially beyond the entrance bay, as its markings on the wall indicate. Its western entrance bay is composed of two single doors; above, at second story level, is a sealed-up porch door. A two-story, three-sided, shallow bay occupies its eastern

half, each face per floor containing a one-over-one double-hung window. The building has a hip roof with a central, hip roof dormer containing two double-hung windows. Its side and rear hip roofs also sport dormers.

The building was converted to a music school in 1956 and an insurance office with an apartment in 1968,

7. 2629 West Grand Boulevard (1914)

The entrance to this two-story, rectangular, reddish-brown brick, Prairie/Tudor Revival two-family flat is accessed by a straight concrete walk that extends from the public sidewalk partially up the slightly graded lawn, then up two steps before continuing to the building. A mature tree with plantings around it occupies the lawn. The building itself features a low hip roof with a centered low hip dormer containing three windows across. Its eastern entry bay consists of a set of masonry steps between brick stair walls, masonry trimmed porch walls, and square brick columns with geometric detail and brick brackets against the wall supporting the flat porch roof and porch deck above. The recessed single-door entrance is flanked by subdivided sidelights. The upstairs unit has access to a balustraded porch through a single door with sidelights. The west bay of the front façade features a two-story, three-sided bay with stucco panels between floors. The middle face of the bay contains two windows and is wider than the outer ones. Windows are double-hung sash, and, on the second floor, have vertically subdivided upper sashes. The west elevation features a two-story shallow timbered box bay and chimney wall. The building's exterior façades appear in their original condition. It was converted into offices in 1966.

8. 2625-27 West Grand Boulevard (1916)

The front of this substantial, brick veneer, Arts and Crafts style two-family dwelling is covered with a variegated slate-clad, side-facing gable roof with a kick at its front corners, which is intersected by a shallow gable that has a projecting stuccoed dormer with a curved pediment over the east half of the front façade. Its overhanging eaves have exposed rafter ends. A large hip roof extends back over the rest of the building. Decorative raised brickwork forms quoins at the corners of the front façade and wall banding, as well as banding on the chimney extending from the east elevation. Windows are double-hung sash with upper sashes or transoms subdivided. The east side of front façade is composed of a box bay with a row of four windows across with eight-paned transoms and stucco panels dividing the first and second stories. Modest half-timbering also decorates the porch roof. Access to the porch on the west side of the front façade is up two sets of stairs between the stair walls; round columns on the upper stair walls support the porch roof. A single door with sidelights provides entry into the building, and a single window occupies the second story of this west bay. The building's west elevation features a two-story fenestrated bay; its east elevation features a chimney wall and dormer.

9. 2621-23 West Grand Boulevard (1914)

This former two-family, two-story, brick and stucco dwelling with a rectangular footprint is English Revival in style and features a steep side gable roof with an intercepting frontal gable over its western bay. Its first story is brick; original stucco above has been replaced with narrow artificial siding. Beneath the gable is a three-sided, two-story bay containing a window opening on each face, the outer openings on the first story

now boarded. At second story level crowning the bay is a crenelated parapet. The entrance bay on the east half of the front façade has a replacement door of glass and metal with sidelights; above at second story level is a single window opening with fixed pane replacement windows. The west elevation still retains its stucco box bay with its original triple window configuration and stepped chimney wall. A large flat roof covers the rear of the building. The building was converted from a two-family dwelling into offices for eight attorneys in 1972.

10. 2617-19 West Grand Boulevard (1915), Dr. L. Brintley, General Surgeon

A typical Four-Square with Prairie-style overtones, this former two-unit brick veneer and stucco dwelling features a low hip roof and hip roof dormers with broad overhanging eaves and visible rafter tails. It has a rectangular footprint and is set on a high basement. The front façade features a slightly projecting two-story brick bay on its west half that contains a wide window opening on each story and, on the east half, an entrance bay with the addition of a metal and glass weatherproof enclosure, added in 1967, beneath the hip roof of the porch. The entrance door into the enclosure is at grade. Wall surfaces and openings on the second story of the west bay and the frontal dormer are filled in but likely were stucco surrounding the windows.

The west side elevation on Churchill Avenue provides a view of the original double-hung windows with subdivided upper sashes, a stucco box bay, and a soldier course at second story sill level. The chimney wall features frames composed of headers with small masonry squares at its corners. Despite its conversion for use as professional offices, the building retains its original massing, arrangement of window openings, roof shapes and decorative brickwork. It was connected to its eastern neighbor, 2621 W. Grand, by a brick wall in 1974, and the two properties share concrete paved rear yards for parking.

11. 2577 - 2599 West Grand Boulevard Martin Luther King Jr. park

Located along Rosa Parks Boulevard to Churchill, this park is surfaced with concrete and brick and features raised planters with trees and bushes. Its eastern boundary is fenced from the vacant, grass-covered site to its east.

12. 2565 Rosa Parks Boulevard, Boulevard Temple Rehabilitation and Nursing Center (1926)

Constructed as Boulevard Temple Methodist Episcopal Church by Detroit architect J. Ivan Dize in 1926, this massive Neo-Gothic/Art Deco limestone structure includes three distinct but integrated components: a nine-story apartment tower at the corner of West Grand Boulevard and Rosa Parks; the five-story church school at the north, and the Neo-Gothic style church in between. The apartment section of the complex was converted to senior citizens' housing in 1962, and the church was decommissioned in 1973 after a move to the suburbs. Nathan Levine (1929-1994), born in Detroit, practiced architecture in Detroit and Southfield, Michigan, as Nathan Levine & Associates. Levine received a Bachelor's of Architecture from the University of Michigan in 1951 and a PhD in geriatric architecture in 1987. He is responsible for the award winning design for converting the church into nursing facilities and ninety living units in 1975, thus integrating it into the retirement complex. Although it still resembles a church on the outside, the main sanctuary was

⁴transformed into an atrium, creating an “indoor garden effect” with dining, visiting and private rooms in areas on different levels.

Michigan Registry of Historic Places: P25031, Listed March 16, 1982.

13. 2535 West Grand Boulevard, Apartments (1919)

Located on the northwest corner of West Grand Boulevard and Dunedin, this large-scale, flat roofed, inverted U-shaped, symmetrically arranged, buff brick and stone, three-story Mediterranean style apartment building has a long, landscaped open court in front that runs centrally through the property. It was built under permit #8015 as a sixty-one-unit apartment building at an estimated cost of \$175,000 by Harry Silverman. Decorative wrought iron fencing lines the split, curved front walkway leading into the courtyard, following up sets of steps. In front of the ends of the inverted “U” facing the street are small grass lawns and foundation plantings.

The two identical street façades are composed of four bays—the recessed central entrance bay, the flanking projecting tower pavilions, and an inner recessed bay with a tall, open tower and balcony overlooking the central courtyard. Each recessed glass and metal double-door entrance in the central bays is set at grade and is topped with a broken pediment. Narrow window openings flank the two-story decorative terra cotta setting of windows over the pediment. Wider window openings containing two double-hung sash windows occupy the tower pavilions, which culminate at the third floor with arched openings. Windows appear to be replacements of the originals pairs of double-hung varieties. Entrances off of courtyard are either similar or slight variations of the theme. Finished brick goes along the east side elevation for a short while before becoming common brick; the visible west elevation along Dunedin follows the finish and decorative scheme of the front. While the main roof is flat, roofs over towers are hipped and over decorative walls, sloped, all showing visible rafter tails. Now clad in asphalt shingles, they were likely originally clad in clay tile..

Side elevation features wide openings containing similar sets of mostly two-over-two double-hung windows sharing a limestone sill, and horizontal basement windows. Two entrances on the west elevation off of Dunedin are similar to those facing West Grand Boulevard with double-doors and segmental pediments with urns; the southernmost entrance and bay are more decorative, resembling the front façade entrances, and culminate in a hipped tower roof. On the east side elevation, the finished brick and adornment only extend two bays, before continuing with common brick, as does the rear, or north, elevation.

14. 2507 West Grand Boulevard, Divie B. Duffield Branch Library (1916)

The Divie B. Duffield Branch Library, designed by Detroit architect Marcus Burrowes, fronts West Grand Boulevard on the southeast corner of West Grand Boulevard and Dunedin Streets, in a busy residential area. The library, built in the Classical Revival style, is a large, two-story, five bay, rectangular structure of Bedford limestone, with a tiled hip roof. Consistent with the Classical Revival style is its symmetrical arrangement, the

⁴ “Architects Honored,” *DFP*, Dec 11, 1976, 3B. Levine was honored for 2568 W. Grand Boulevard – the United Methodist Retirement and Nursing Care facility, by the Detroit Chapter of the American institute of Architects.

centrally located door, the smooth stone finish, the cornice over the doorway, and the large, rectangular windows in recessed arched openings with keystones.

When facing the east elevation on West Grand Boulevard, the words “Detroit Public Library” are carved in the frieze beneath a simple cornice and dentil molding, followed by a stringcourse, giving the impression of a full entablature. The first, second, fourth and fifth bays are almost identical. Four different Greek vases are incised in the tympanums of the keystone-topped blind Roman arches over large openings, containing four over six double-hung sash windows. The bottom half of the windows are obscured by decorative vertical wrought iron bars with two round circles on the top. Slightly recessed pilasters with fluted capitals flank the windows. The top of the pilaster terminates at the belt course and the blind Roman arch continues above it. Beneath the windows are stone sills and decorative aprons with a circle incised in the center of it.

The main entry is located in the third bay of the east elevation. Wood framed glass double doors are obscured by decorative wrought iron gates with circled quatrefoils in the centers. Stone molding frames the entry. A transom positioned above the door is partially concealed by a white sign with black lettering that says “Detroit Public Library - Duffield Branch.” Above the sign, an egg and dart trimmed cornice mounted on corbel brackets shelters the doorway. Inscribed in the wall beneath the cornice is “Divie B. Duffield Branch.” A sidewalk leads up to the centrally located staircase which once spread across bays two, three, and four, allowing entry from any side, but now has a concrete handicap ramp on the western half. A water table defines the raised basement of the building, with windows beneath.

The south and north elevations are identical to each other. Each elevation has three bays with windows identical to the ones found on the West Grand Boulevard elevation. The rear elevation is utilitarian with four rectangular windows located on the upper portion of the wall and a solid double door in the center.

15. 2501 West Grand Boulevard, Arbor Home (c. 1932)

Arbor Home is a unique Art Moderne style limestone faced, flat roofed building with an irregularly-shaped footprint. Characteristics of its Art Moderne style are its round corners, austere limestone facing, horizontal lines, and sculptural panels in low relief. The horizontality of the design is emphasized by a high water table, alternating tall and narrow, regularly arranged, cut limestone blocks, and a narrow limestone cornice and coping.

In plan, the front (south)-facing façades are in the form of an “L” toppled sideways to the right, the end of its foot forming the west portion of the front façade close to the street. The area within the foot and the leg of the “L” contains a fenced, raised lawn, accessed up a set of three masonry steps set within a limestone retaining wall. A wide sidewalk leads to the main entrance, which is raised up to porch level. The porch, which was added in 1975, extends from the entrance door eastward towards the corner of the front façade, with a sloped, aluminum roof overhead. A stylized, low-relief archway motif above the single-door entrance is composed of stylized dentils and square panels of bas relief carvings signifying medicine and... The name of the building, ARBOR HOME, centered in the archway, is spelled out in metal letters, and above, the window sill below the second story window has an anthemion detail. There is one window to the west and three to the east of the entrance, joined to the second story windows by metal spandrels, each with a bas-relief

centered within. Three equally spaced windows connect vertically with metal spandrels on the eastern facing wall of the leg portion that faces the grass yard.

The entrance on the end of the foot of the “L” near the public sidewalk is shaded by an awning and consists of a steel replacement door at grade and a row of three small square windows forming the upper section of a black-painted wooden wall area. Inset in the second story level is a three-sided paneled bay window with a pair of one-over-one double-hung windows on its front face and a single narrow window in each of the angled bays.

The side elevations extend further north on the lot and each has a light court. The vertical connecting window arrangement extends to the the east elevation, facing the Duffield Library Branch. The building was converted from a clinic and apartment to a convalescent home for the aged in 1965.

SOUTH SIDE

16. 2702 West Grand Boulevard (1911)

This red-orange brick, rectangular, two-family flat has a hip roof with flared eaves and a hip roof dormer with three windows centered over the middle bay. On a high brick basement, each unit has an individual single door on the outer sides of the front façade, accessed up masonry replacement steps with iron railings. The porch deck extends the width of the facade and its two flat roofs over each entrance are supported on square brick piers. A door out onto the roof deck is located on the east side of the façade, although the railing is no longer extant. The middle bay is composed of a two-story shallow three-sided bay window with two double-hung sash windows occupying its front face and single ones on its side faces. The west elevation features a three- sided, two-story bay.

17. 2696-98 West Grand Boulevard (1914)

The multi-unit orange brick, hip roof, Prairie-influenced residential building at 2696 West Grand Boulevard has a large rectangular footprint, with the long side facing the front (north) and rear (south). Its five-bay wide, symmetrically arranged front façade rest on a tall basement. The entrance bay is centered on the façade, and is accessed by a central concrete walkway leading to the concrete porch steps between wing walls capped with limestone. The porch walls extend beyond the entrance bay to the adjacent two-story three-sided bay, and its corner square piers rise above the flat porch roof to form the short corner piers of the second story railed wooden deck. A single story door onto the porch is located in the central bay, over the first floor entrance, at second story level. The three-sided bays flanking the entrance bay are composed of one-over-one sash windows sharing limestone sills, and the outer bays feature a large picture window on the first floor and a double-hung window at the second floor. A large hip roof has broad overhanging eaves; a hip roof dormer is centered on its front slope and has three one-over one double-hung sash windows, the center one larger than those flanking it.

The side and rear elevations are common reddish-orange brick. On each floor, a pair of windows sharing a sill is flanked by a single window on each side elevation, all one-over-one double-hung sash. There is a paved parking area in the back of the building.

18. 2692-94 West Grand Boulevard (1914)

This attractive two-unit dwelling in the Arts and Crafts/Prairie style has a high basement and a rectangular footprint. It is crowned by a hip roof with flared ends that bears an unusual front-facing, centered roof dormer with splayed walls and two windows divided into nine panes, separated by a solid decorative wood panel. A single straight concrete walk curves off to each side of the front façade, meeting with the steps up to the front porch. between porch walls. Square brick columns support the curved porch beams on the first floor. The first story façade is composed of two wood-framed entry doors with multiple panes on either side of the front façade and a three-sided bay window in center. The bay windows have one sash with vertically divided transoms above. On the eastern half of the second story is a three-sided bay and on the western half, a wood framed multi-paned glass door onto the porch, which has a decorative balustrade. This building retains a high level of integrity on its exterior., and is one of the few that has a garage off the back alley, built in 1921.

19. 2686 West Grand Boulevard (1913), Brazelton Florist

Rectangular in plan, this large, multi-unit, parapeted, flat-roofed, red-painted brick building on a high basement is Federal Revival in style. Its front façade is generally symmetrical, composed of two-story, three-sided outer bays and a narrow bay centrally located in between. Each story contains an entrance on the first floor and a second story porch door on the outer face of the bays on the second floor. The original porches have been altered; the second story porches have been removed. The first floor entrance vestibule on the west side of the building is approached up a set of masonry steps between brick wing-walls and a small porch. It likely had a balustrade above that served as the enclosure to the second story porch. The easternmost entrance is sheltered by an unoriginal sloped roof. In between the entrance bays at first story is a single small rectangular window. The second floor windows on the inner faces of the outer bays and the central bay are one-over-one double-hung; the windows on the central face of the bays is wider and has a transom above. Above the second story windows, beneath the molded frieze, are raised brick-framed rectangular panels.

A central concrete walkway leads to a walkway running along the front of the building to the two entrances. The west side of the front yard is paved; the east side is grass turf with a sign bearing the name of the business.

20. 2684 West Grand Boulevard (1905)

This turn-of-the-century, two-story, buff brick, rectangular-plan, two-flat has a tall hip roof with visible rafter ends beneath its wide, overhanging eaves, and a pedimental, shingled dormer with raking verge boards over the east half of the facade. Beneath the projecting dormer, the front façade displays a two-story, three-sided interlocking brick-angled window bay comprising the east half of the front façade and the entrance bay comprising the west half. The window bay is composed of one-over-eight sashes. The porch on the west half of the façade is composed of square columns and its roof carries the deck for the porch with railings servicing the egress above. To the left (east) of the multi-paned, wood-framed entrance doors on both stories are a small square window. A tall

chimney rises towards the front of the east elevation, and a transverse gable tops a three-sided bay. There is a small garage in the rear of the building off of the alley.

21. 2676 West Grand Boulevard (1916), Andy's Pharmacy

The two-story, two-family flat at 2676 West Grand Boulevard is a brick veneer and stucco Arts and Crafts style, rectangular residential building originally with two units. It is covered with an asphalt clad jerkin-head front roof with a flat roof extending over the rear of the building. Its flat-topped hip roof dormer contains three windows; all roofs have visible rafter tails. The front façade, on a high basement, rises up about 3/4 ways up, culminating in a soldier course of brick before the stucco wall begins. It is composed of an entrance bay on the west and a bay containing a fixed pane picture window on each story on the east. The western entrance features a porch with square brick columns and masonry steps between wing walls. Above the bracketed frieze of the porch at second story level is a wooden balustraded porch with an exit door. The visible west elevation features a chimney emerging between the two windows on the clipped gable, a two-story shallow three-sided window bay, and original double-hung windows.

In the lawn to the west of the wide concrete walkway leading to the porch is a sign for the commercial establishment and a modern steel sculpture. A lot-wide paved parking lot extending to the alley separates this building from the property to its east.

Motown-related buildings: Eight buildings in the West Grand Boulevard A3 Historic District are associated with Motown. The seven that follow are on the south side of the Boulevard; one, at 2657 West Grand Boulevard, is across the Boulevard on the north. Architectural descriptions for these are edited versions of those prepared by Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting, for Motown.

22. 2670-72 West Grand Boulevard (1912), Motown-related

The two-story tall red brick Prairie style two-family house at 2670-72 West Grand Boulevard has a rectangular footprint. It sits on a raised basement and is covered with a hip roof with deep eaves supported by simple triangular brackets. Centrally placed on its front slope is a shingle-clad hip roof dormer with three windows. The three-bay wide front porch spans the facade. The bays are separated by brick piers and the porch has brick wing walls with limestone caps on the front and sides. A set of wide wood steps with metal railings access the center bay. The west third of the facade is occupied by a two-story tall brick clad bay with three-over-one windows in the angled sides at both floors. The center has a five-pane transom above a single large sash. The entrance door is east of the bay on the first floor, and east of that there is a large three-over-one window. At the east edge is a second entrance door. At the second floor, there is a three-over-one window and entrance door to the east of the bay window. The full-length porch roof is surrounded by a metal railing.

The west elevation has two square windows, a set of three double-hung windows, and two double-hung windows at the first and second floors. A tall brick chimney protrudes from the roof. The east elevation has windows at the first and second floors but is very close to the neighboring house and is difficult to see. The rear elevation has doors at the basement, first and second floors. A metal stair runs from the second floor to the

ground. There is one one-over-one double-hung window at the first and second floors. The building was converted to a beauty shop in 1970.

23. 2662-64 West Grand Boulevard (1912), Motown-related

The two-story tall Prairie style two-family house at 2662-64 West Grand Boulevard sits on a raised basement and has a hip roof overhead with a hip roof dormer containing a group of four, three-over-one double-hung windows centered on the front slope of the roof. The front facade and square porch columns have been covered with “Permastone,” and the brick on the sides and rear has been painted. The front porch covers the west half of the façade and is accessed by wide concrete steps with metal railings. The original entrance door between the sidelights has been replaced; it still has sidelights on both sides. The second story porch, accessible from a second-floor door, has a metal railing and a metal awning supported by metal posts. This second story door is flanked by window openings on both sides. The east half of the façade has a three-sided permastone-clad bay that extends from the ground to the roof. At both floors the angled sides of the bay each contain a one-over-one double-hung window and the front has a pair of one-over-one double-hung windows.

The west elevation has one-over-one double-hung windows at the first and second floors and a small two-story tall, three-sided bay with a one-over-one double-hung window in each side at both floors towards the rear. The east elevation has a massive chimney near the front with square windows on either side at the first and second floors. A brick-clad three-sided bay extends from the basement level to the roof. It has one-over-one double-hung windows in each side at both floors. A small hip roof dormer has a pair of three-over-one double-hung windows. A pair of one-over-one double-hung windows are located in back of the bay at the first and second floors. The rear elevation has doors at the ground level and first floor and a newer wood porch. A door opening at the second floor has been boarded up. There is a single one-over-one double-hung window and a group of three one-over-one double-hung windows at the first and second floors. The building was used as a funeral home prior to 1965, and adult foster care in the 1970s.

24. 2658-60 West Grand Boulevard (1913), Motown-related

This is a simply arranged, two-story, tan brick, Four Square, two-family house with a raised basement and side gable roof. A vinyl-sided dormer with a grouping of three one-over-one double-hung replacement windows is centered on the front slope of the roof. The front façade is articulated as two sides—the eastern, entrance side containing two doors on the first floor, and the western, two-story three-sided bay, containing a one-over-one double-hung window per face. The front porch spans the length of the front façade, and features square brick piers and porch walls with limestone caps. A set of wide concrete stairs between brick wing walls with limestone caps lead up to the porch in the east bay. At the second floor is single door porch access, which is surrounded by a metal railing.

The gable ends of the side elevations are sided with vinyl and have a single window in their center. The west elevation features a two-story, three-sided, vinyl clad fenestrated bay and the east elevation has one-over-one double-hung windows at the first and second floors. The rear elevation is common brick at the first and second floors, the gable end clad in aluminum siding. There are doors at the first and second floors and a newer two-story

wood deck at both. One-over-one double-hung windows puncture the first, second, and attic levels of the building. Its backyard shares a paved parking lot with its neighbors to its west.

25. 2656-60 West Grand Boulevard, (1912), Motown Museum Historical Foundation, Motown-related

This two-story tall, painted brick, Tudor Revival style single-family house features a side gable roof with visible rafter tails and a prominent stucco and half-timbered front gabled wall dormer above the projecting west bay of the front facade. This dormer, punctured with two one-over-one double-hung windows, is embellished with half-timbering, raking bargeboards, and decorative corner brackets. The front façade is articulated in two bays— the easternmost entry bay and the westernmost two-story, three-faced window bay. The entrance bay has been altered; its original porch has been removed and replaced with a concrete deck and steps, with metal railings. A single one-over-one double-hung window is centered under the roofline at second story level. The angled side faces of the two-story western bay each have a single one-over-one double-hung window at the first and second floors, and the front face of the bay has two similar windows at both floors.

The side elevations are very close to the neighboring houses; their gable ends clad in shingle siding with a single window in the center. The front end of the west elevation has a chimney wall with a tall brick chimney projecting through the roof behind the dormer. The east elevation has a door at ground level, with a shallow stucco and wood timber box bay projecting above. Window openings are covered by metal security bars at the first and second floors. The rear elevation has a door, a grouping of three one-over-one double-hung windows and a single one-over-one double-hung window at the first floor and two one-over-one double-hung windows at the second floor, all now covered with metal security grills. The backyard shares a paved parking lot with its neighbors.

26. 2654 West Grand Boulevard (1912), Hitsville USA, Motown-related

Rectangular in plan, this two-story tall, red brick, Four Square/Arts and Crafts-style two-family house on a raised basement sports a side gable roof across the front and a transverse gable roof over its rear. A centered roof dormer has battered wood shingled walls with a grouping of four double-hung windows, and bargeboards with inwardly curving ends. The front porch spans the façade of the house and has two unequal width bays separated by brick piers supporting a flat roof. The porch fascia has a slight arch with wood block keystones in the center of each front and side bay. The porch and front stairs have brick wing walls with a limestone cap. The east half of the façade has a two-story tall brick clad three-sided bay with a one-over-one double-hung window in each side on both floors. The first floor has two side-by-side entrance doors. At the second floor, there is a boarded over door and square window opening. The second story porch has been altered and now has a metal railing.

The west elevation has one-over-one double-hung windows spaced across the first and second floors. Gable ends are sided with wood shingles. The east elevation has a two-story tall wood sided bay that has wood shingles where the top curves back into the house's shingle clad gable end. There are smaller rectangular window openings at the first and second floors, and pairs of one-over-one double-hung windows at each floor toward the

rear. The rear elevation has a gable end clad in wood shingles. There are two doors at the first floor and one-over-one double-hung windows at the first, second and attic levels.

27. 2648 West Grand Boulevard (1913), Hitsville USA, Motown-related

Purchased by Berry Gordy Jr. on August 2, 1959, this is the first building Mr. Gordy bought for his newly formed record company, Jobete Music Company. Previously a two-family flat, then a photography studio, the rear concrete block addition became the recording studio, the first floor of the house became offices, and Berry Gordy Jr. and his family lived on the second floor. Studio A continued to be used for limited recording until 1974, two years after the company relocated to Los Angeles in 1972. It subsequently went into use as a museum.

The original two-family residence is two-story tall white stucco Arts and Crafts style building on a raised basement with a rectangular footprint; it now has two one-story tall additions at the rear (1948, 1964). Its main roof is a hip with a central shed roof dormer bearing three windows, each containing a nine-pane casement window that has been painted out. Concrete steps lead to the center of the full-length concrete decked front porch, which has metal railings, and connects to the porch at 2644-46 West Grand Boulevard to the west. Over each of the two single-door entrances on the outer sides of the porch are decorative wooden bracketed gabled window hoods. The west door is infilled with a solid panel; the east door is flush with a small diamond shaped window near the top. A sign above the door reads, "Motown Studio A." The original porch structure has been removed to accommodate a large angled aluminum and glass storefront window on a glass block base. The storefront window is surrounded by a wood frame that angles outward from the bottom to the top. A large sign located above the window spans between the top of the door hoods and reads, "Hitsville U.S.A." At the second floor, there is a single one-over-one double-hung window and a group of three one-over-one double-hung windows.

Where the west elevation is connected to the building to the west, the connector, added in 1963, is set back and has a recessed aluminum and glass storefront door with transom and sidelights at the first floor. There are no openings in the second-floor wall of the connector. The east elevation has single sash windows at the basement level. At the first floor the windows have been boarded over but the openings are intact and consist of a small rectangular opening, a pair of what were likely double-hung windows, and a smaller likely double-hung window. At the rear of the east elevation the one-story concrete block addition is painted and has no openings. The second floor of the house has a small rectangular single sash window, a one-over-one double-hung window, a pair of one-over-one double-hung windows, and two smaller one-over-one double-hung windows. The rear elevation of the building is comprised of the two painted concrete block additions, the east addition extends to the edge of the alley. Mechanical equipment blocks the west addition.

28. 2644-46 West Grand Boulevard (1912); Motown-related

This two-story tall red brick Prairie style two-family residential building on a raised basement with a hip roof has a rectangular footprint. A concrete barrier free ramp with metal railing added in 1994 extends from the west half of the front porch. The porch is three bays wide and spans the width of the house. A set of concrete steps with brick wing walls ascend to the east bay of the porch which has brick piers supporting a shallow hip

roof. The porch has brick wing walls with a limestone cap in the center bay and on the sides. The house facade has a three-sided brick clad bay window with openings on each side that have been infilled with glass block. A flush metal door is located west of the window. At the second floor, there is a single window opening with a single sash and a three-sided bay window with wood panels below window openings with single sash windows on all three sides. A hip roof dormer is centered on the roof. It has three window openings, each containing a nine-pane casement window that has been painted out.

The west elevation is devoid of openings. The west side of the 1994 addition is painted concrete block. The east elevation is painted brick and there is one square window opening at the second floor. The two-story connector to 2648 is attached on this side. The rear elevation is the back of the 1994 addition and is painted concrete block. There are small square window openings at the first and second floors. This building is physically connected to 2648 West Grand Boulevard at the basement level and a walkway at the second floor.

29. 2624 West Grand Boulevard, Cole Funeral Home

Locally Designated

30. 2550 West Grand Boulevard (c. 1920, 1966-67), Union Grace Missionary Baptist Church

This former furniture store was converted to a meeting hall and offices for the Retail Clerks Union in 1966. The building was modernized at that time; the first story display windows were blocked in and faced with aggregate panels and the entrances were redesigned. The west end features a Modern glass and aluminum entrance; the east end features a recessed entrance with blond doors, red panels, and square orange floor tile. The second story features horizontal banding between horizontal strips of windows. Contrasts in light and dark materials outline and emphasize features of the Modern-style building. Its front façade was expanded in both directions in 1967 with the construction of single story concrete block additions that were faced in brick veneer on the street ends.

Side elevations face parking lots and are not architecturally treated. There is an entrance at the western side. The building now functions as a religious institution and educational center.

31. 2524-26 West Grand Boulevard (1913)

A two-family flat in the Prairie style, this two-story, orange brick veneer building on a high basement has a rectangular footprint. Its high hip roof extends over the front façade, sheltering the second story porch. It, and its triple window dormer, have broad overhanging eaves. A full two-story open porch extends to the edges of the main roof on square columns with limestone cushions. High porch walls, capped in limestone, contain the first floor porch, breaking at the east side of the front for the steps between wing walls, leading onto the porch to the entrances. Two single doors with a window between provide entry into each unit. A three-sided, two-story bay occupies the west side of the front façade; all first floor openings are boarded but the second story still has some original single sash with divided upper sash arrangements. The second story porch is enclosed by a wooden balustrade; its entrance door is on the west side of the front façade.

The side elevations feature roof dormers and two-story bay windows with limestone sills and lintels, similar to those of the front façade.

32. 2512 -2518 West Grand Boulevard (1912, 1913; 1971), Office of Nathan Johnson Associates

Architect Nathan Johnson converted the easternmost residential two-unit building into his office in 1959. In 1971, he combined that with the two-unit structure to its west to expand and adapt his architectural practice, resulting in this modern design. Characteristic of the Modern style are its large areas of windows, vertical elements, and floating stairs, although the original dormers are still visible on the hip roofs.

Painted white, simplicity and clean lines define the remodeled building. Vertical lines break up the horizontal mass of the building in the form of projecting vertical elements between window bays, divisions of wide windows and two-story tall strip windows. The single entrance door is centered on the westernmost façade and above it is a similarly sized window opening. Set on a high basement, the building is accessed up a set of “floating” stairs, meaning they have treads but no risers, and they, with the porch deck, give the appearance of floating on air. A simple metal railing surrounds the stairs. The easternmost half of the present unified building projects forward a few feet of its neighbor, allowing the connection between the two buildings, an unadorned solid wall, to be set back to accommodate foundation plantings in the front of the westernmost half, flanking the entrance. Window openings are presently filled with glass block. Side and rear elevations display windows likely in their original forms, now filled with glass block.

Non-Contributing Building:

2630 West Grand Boulevard, CVS.

CRITERIA

The proposed Historic West Grand Boulevard African American Arts and Business Historic District qualifies for criteria A, B and C as outlined in the National Register Criteria, and also meets the following criteria adopted by the Historic Designation Advisory Board:

- . (1) Sites, buildings, structures or archeological sites where cultural, social, spiritual, economic, political or architectural history of the community, city, state or nation is particularly reflected or exemplified.
- . (2) Sites, buildings, structures, or archeological sites which are identified with historic personages or with important events in community, city, state or national history.
- . (3) Buildings or structures which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural specimen, inherently valuable as a representation of a period, style or method of construction
- . (4) Notable work(s) of a master designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

COMPOSITION OF THE HISTORIC DESIGNATION ADVISORY BOARD

The Historic Designation Advisory Board has nine appointed members and three *ex-officio* members, all residents of Detroit. The appointed members are: Melanie A. Bazil, Keith A. Dye, Louis Fisher, Zené Fogel-Gibson, Theresa Hagood, Calvin Jackson, Victoria Byrd-Olivier and Kari Smith. *Ad hoc* members for this study are Olympia Development of Michigan, represented by Emily Palacios, and James A. Young. The *Ex-Officio* members, who may be represented by members of their staff, are the Director of the Historical Department, the Director of the City Planning Commission, and the director of the Planning and Development Department.

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