

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

29.

Historic Designation Advisory Board

PROPOSED NEW CENTER AREA HISTORIC DISTRICT

Final Report

The proposed New Center Area Historic District consists of both sides of Virginia Park between Woodward and the Lodge Service Drive, and, in general, the first two blocks west off Woodward of Seward and Delaware, excluding the Woodward frontage, Pallister and Bethune between Bethune Court and Third, and the north side of Lothrop between Second and Third. The proposed district is located approximately three miles from the heart of downtown Detroit. To its north are more residential streets; to its south is a mixed use area with major commercial development, the New Center I Building, Fisher Building and General Motors Building, and some industrial development; to its east is a commercial strip along Woodward Avenue, Detroit's principal thoroughfare; and to its west are the Lodge Freeway and Henry Ford Hospital.

The residences in the proposed district date from about 1895 to 1930. A portion of the district, primarily on Bethune, Pallister, and Delaware, is being revitalized by housing rehabilitation, street re-routing, and other improvements and is called New Center Commons. Apartment buildings are primarily located on Seward, and Virginia Park is soon to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

BOUNDARIES: The boundaries of the proposed district are outlined in black on the attached map and are as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the centerlines of Lothrop and Second Avenue and proceeding northerly along the centerline of Second Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Bethune; thence westerly along the centerline of Bethune to its intersection with the centerline of Bethune Court; thence northerly along the centerline of Bethune Court to its intersection with the centerline of Delaware; thence easterly along the centerline of Delaware to its intersection with the centerline of Second; thence southerly along said centerline of Second to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley between Delaware and Pallister; thence easterly along said east-west alley to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley between Woodward and Second; thence northerly along the centerline of said north-south alley to its intersection with the southern boundary of Lot 92 of Peerless Addition No. 1 of part of $\frac{1}{4}$ section 56 of the 10,000 Acre Tract (L18/P33), extended westward; thence easterly along the southern boundary of said Lot 92, extended eastward, to its intersection with the centerline of Woodward Avenue; thence northerly along the centerline of Woodward Avenue

to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley between Virginia Park and Euclid, extended eastward, this being the same as the northern boundary of Lot 1 of the aforementioned Peerless Addition No. 1, extended eastward; thence westerly along the centerline of said east-west alley to its intersection with the centerline of the east service drive of the John C. Lodge Freeway; thence southerly along the centerline of said east service drive to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley between Seward and Virginia Park; thence easterly along the centerline of the said east-west alley between Seward and Virginia Park to its intersection with the centerline of Third Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline of Third Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Seward; thence west along said centerline of Seward to its intersection with a line drawn parallel to and 13' west of the western boundary of Lot 14, Block 7, of Beck's Subdivision of part of $\frac{1}{4}$ sections 55 and 56, 10,000 Acre Tract (L4/P59); thence southerly along said line to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying between Seward and Delaware; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the western boundary of Lot 38 (extended northward) of Block 4 of Henry Weber's Subdivision of part of $\frac{1}{4}$ sections 55 and 56, 10,000 Acre Tract (L2/P40); thence southerly along said line to its intersection with the centerline of Delaware; thence easterly along the centerline of Delaware to its intersection with the centerline of Third Avenue; thence southerly along the centerline of Third Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Lothrop; thence easterly along the centerline of Lothrop to the point of the beginning.

HISTORY: The proposed New Center Area Historic District is comprised of several subdivisions of Sections 55 and 56 of the 10,000 acre tract, a tract of land entrusted to the Governor and Judges by an Act of Congress in 1806. The 10,000 acre tracts were a donation from the General Governors of the Territory of Michigan to defray the expenses of public buildings. This tract was not platted until 1816, about the time that Augustus B. Woodward received the tract from the Governors and Judges. This land lies north of the Boulevard and south of the Detroit Terminal right-of-way, and was bounded on the west by Greenfield Township and on the east by Conant Avenue.

In 1849, Gottlieb Beck purchased the south one-half acre of the north 106 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres of quarter sections 55 and 56 of the 10,000 acre tract, extending from Woodward to 12th Street, for a sum of \$1,490. Beck came from Germany in 1837 and engaged in the tannery business on East Fort Street. He built a brick two-story farmhouse on Woodward at the corner of what later became Seward in 1851 and a tannery on Pallister Avenue just west of Woodward. Mrs. Beck moved back downtown with her children after Beck's death in 1855, when it must have been quite a burden to live so far out of town. Lewis, the Beck's eldest son, ran the tannery on Pallister until it burned down during the Civil War years. Traugott Schmidt, who operated his own tannery on Croghan (now Lafayette) and employed Lewis Beck as foreman, married the oldest of the Beck daughters, Mina, who later became the mother of a police commissioner, Carl E. Schmidt.

The old Beck Farm was sold in several parcels that were later subdivided. Beck's Sub, including both sides of Seward, was platted in 1876 by Caroline M. Wenzell (Beck), Lewis H. Beck, Carl E. Schmidt and Ida Schmidt (the latter two were the children of Mina and Traugott Schmidt), et.al. Schmidt's Sub, which included most of Seward between Woodward and Second Avenues, was platted in 1894 by Carl E. Schmidt, tanner at Traugott Schmidt, and his wife Alice.

By the end of the century, "...palatial residences now line the avenues that have been laid out through the farm, including Pallister, Parkman [later vacated], Delaware, and Seward Avenues." (Scrapbook: Palmer, Vol. 29; P. 157) These grand houses on Seward, occupied by such well-known Detroit personalities as Charles T. Fisher (Fisher Body Company), Frank W. Osborne (Assistant Treasurer, Buhl Sons Co.) and Charles Kotting (architectural firm of Chittendon & Kotting), were demolished for the construction of attractive medium-height apartment buildings erected between 1914 and the early 1940s.

Henry Weber, furniture manufacturer and dealer, his wife Caroline, Bernhard Stroh, brewer and father of Strohs Brewery, and his wife Clotilde, owners of the land consisting of both sides of Delaware and Pallister, filed a plat of Henry Weber's Sub with the Wayne County Register of Deeds in 1873. Later, the Weber Sub was sold and resubdivided in the 1890s into Stone and Todd Company's Sub (1893, Delaware between Woodward and Third), Leggett's Sub (1899, Pallister), Irving Place Sub (west of Hamilton) and Leggett and Miller's Sub (1912, Delaware between Hamilton and Third). However, a small part of Henry Weber's Sub, centered around Delaware and Third, was not resubdivided.

Another major subdivision in the New Center Commons area was Lothrop and Duffield's Sub, platted in 1892. It includes Bethune, parts of Lothrop and part of the north side of Grand Boulevard. Divie Bethune Duffield (1821-1891) formed a law partnership with George Van Ness Lothrop, called Lothrop and Duffield, soon after they both passed the Detroit bar exam in 1843. In 1857 they acquired the Taylor Farm, part of the 10,000 acre tract, in what was then in Greenfield Township, bounded by Woodward, 12th, on the north by a line 225' south of Pallister and on the south by Grand Boulevard. In addition to comprising one of the best regarded law partnerships in the city, both Duffield and Lothrop achieved prominence in their own rights.

Mr. Lothrop (1817-1895), a graduate of Brown and attendee of Harvard Law School, became city attorney general in 1847 and remained in that capacity for almost 30 years. He was also general solicitor for Michigan Central Railroad Company. In 1885 President Cleveland appointed him Minister to the Russian Court. When Lothrop died, he had about \$900,000 in real estate holdings in Detroit.

Mr. Duffield was on the Detroit Library Commission and was an active member of the school board; a branch of the Detroit Public Library was named after him in 1912 and Duffield School was named in his honor. He was also a staunch temperance advocate and a poet.

After the death of D. Bethune Duffield in 1891, his wife Mary and George V. N. Lothrop and his wife Alvina subdivided their tract. Mary died in 1898, after which the partnership, known as Lothrop and Duffield Land Co. Ltd., was formed. The partnership included the sons of D. Bethune and Mary Duffield, George Lothrop (a physician) and Bethune Lothrop (a lawyer); Lothrop heirs; and, principally, Henry B. Lothrop, who became agent of the company. Individual lots were then free to be sold.

Streets, with the exception of Virginia Park, were named in the New Center area after either the landowner, subdivider or a famous person. Seward was named in 1860 after William H. Seward, the noted statesman; Pallister Road in 1860 after Thomas Pallister, landowner; Lothrop in 1883 after George V. N. Lothrop; and Bethune in 1881 after the maiden name of Mrs. George Duffield.

They were originally laid out in a straightforward, gridiron fashion and were paved with cedar, with the exception of Virginia Park, which was paved in brick. Building restrictions were attached to the deeds on all of the parcels in the various subdivisions and they usually varied from block to block. Houses in the first block west of Woodward were to be more expensive than those in the second or third blocks; a minimum construction cost was amongst the restrictions. Setbacks from the street or front lot line were also restricted. As a result, a uniformity from block to block was achieved.

Virginia Park, the northernmost street in the proposed district, encompasses an area which was laid out in 1893 by John W. Leggett and his wife, Grace; Frank E. Snow and his wife, Frances; and Joseph C.

Hough and his wife, Nellie. John W. Leggett was partner in the real estate firm of Hunt and Leggett. Frank E. Snow was a real estate developer and president of the Riverside Cartage Company which was located in the Hammond Building. The third developer, Joseph Hough was a newspaper advertising agent.

Virginia Park, originally named Virginia Avenue, is composed of three plats, each one a linear strip one block long and one lot deep. The Peerless Addition Number One runs between Woodward Avenue and Second Boulevard; Peerless Addition Number Two runs between Second Boulevard and Third Avenue, and Peerless Addition Number Three runs between Third and the John Lodge Service Drive, originally Crawford Street. Building lots were 50' wide by 163' deep. Two lots, on either side of Virginia Park, faced Woodward. These four lots, Lot 1, 2, 91 and 92, were approximately 87' in width and 200' deep. Public alleys of 20' in width ran perpendicular to Virginia Park west of the lots which faced Woodward. Each lot was referred to by name in the original plat, such as Tanglewood, Thistledown, Sorrento, Mayview, Shamrock, etc.

Building restrictions filed with the deeds required that property on Virginia Park be used for residential purposes only, that the buildings should be set back 25' from the street; that no building not of stone or brick be constructed; that no dwelling cost less than \$5,000; that no double houses be erected; and that no more than one house on each 50' lot be erected.

Additional restrictions were placed on the four lots which faced Woodward Avenue. These required that the owners pave Woodward Avenue along their property with asphalt pavement and install sewers, lay gas pipes, install stone sidewalks, and plant shade trees.

Concern was raised as early as 1910 about the rapidly increasing commercialization of Woodward Avenue. Homeowners became concerned about the diminishing residential character of Detroit's most prominent thoroughfare and the negative impact this commercialization would have on adjoining property values. In response to this a group of property owners on Virginia Avenue formed the Virginia Avenue Improvement Association with the goal of re-landscaping the entrances to the subdivision. In keeping with the park-like nature of the new plan, the name was changed from Virginia Avenue to Virginia Park. Property owners donated between \$500 to \$2,500 to finance the plan. Under the headline, "Property Owners on Virginia Avenue Teach A Lesson In Civic Patriotism In Plan To Preserve Exclusive Residence Setting," the Detroit Free Press of March 26, 1911 announced:

"Unique beyond anything yet devised in this city and strikingly original in the method of development is the plan by which property owners along Virginia Avenue propose to increase the natural beauty of their street and perpetuate it as a park-like thoroughfare, exclusively devoted to fine residences."

Property was acquired by the association on either side of Virginia Park at Woodward Avenue and on Hamilton Boulevard. On the east and similarly on the west, the property has a frontage of 163'; it extends 220' south on Woodward Avenue and 200' north of Virginia Park. George V. Pottle, a local architect and resident of Virginia Park, designed the semi-circular entranceway and gates. The Detroit Free Press of March 26, 1911 described the project thus:

"Across the end of Virginia Avenue it is planned to erect an ornamented brick wall of Virginia Colonial design. The middle and main section of this wall will be 80 feet long at either end of the middle section, space will be left for an ornamental driveway 20 feet wide which will curve into Virginia Avenue like the segment of a circle. Beyond the driveway will be an ornamental pillar, then space for a footwalk and a short extension of the wall. For 50 feet inside the wall, the ground will be converted into a park, planted with trees, plants and shrubbery, through which will pass the driveways and walks.."

These improvements were constructed with private money and dedicated to the city. The majority of Lots 1, 2, 90 and 91, the lots on Woodward Avenue, were given to the city in 1911. The public alleys which ran between Lots 1 and 2 and Lots 90 and 91 have been vacated. The entranceway on Woodward Avenue has survived intact. The western entranceway, however, as well as 240' of Virginia Park frontage is now part of the John C. Lodge Freeway.

Gates were erected and small parks were planned in other prominent residential subdivisions along the Woodward Corridor at about the same time. These included the Arden Park-East Boston Historic District and the Boston-Edison Historic District.

The growth of the city of Detroit was aided by the electric railway (early 1890s) and that development of rapid transit out Woodward Avenue marked the beginning of the movement toward the boulevard on the north. The idea of creating a boulevard around the city first came up in 1870; it was envisioned as a gravel road where gentlemen with fast horses could let out the reins. Throughout the 1880s money was appropriated for the boulevard, but because of the controversial nature of the project, the street was not begun until 1891, when the plough was put into the fields at Woodward Avenue. West Grand Boulevard would become the base line for the New Center commercial development by General Motors and the Fisher Brothers of the 1920s.

Over the years the New Center area carried with it both prestige and decline. A retail strip developed on both sides of Woodward Avenue, the eastern boundary of New Center; major department stores located in New Center. Professional people resided in the ample houses even after the more affluent gradually moved to more prestigious neighborhoods such as Boston-Edison, Palmer Woods, or Grosse Pointe. But as the shift to the suburbs continued and the nation and city experienced less prosperous times and racial strife, the New Center area began to decline in popularity as a place to shop or live. The large single-family homes were converted to boarding houses or subdivided into rental units. Some later became Wayne State University Cooperative living houses or half-way houses.

General Motors Corporation announced in late 1978 that it was renovating what it called "New Center Commons." A massive revitalization project has been undertaken that involves rerouting streets, creating pedestrian malls on Pallister, Delaware, and Bethune with alley access to houses, rehabilitating buildings, and installing street furniture. Revitalization of New Center Commons by G. M. and the construction of the New Center One Building are anticipated to bring the people and prestige back to New Center.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Within the New Center Historic District are representative samples of residential architecture spanning the years 1895 through 1930. Residential works of Detroit's leading architects of the early twentieth century are represented in New Center Commons, including George V. Pottle, designer of the Virginia Park entranceway; Richard Marr, Joseph Mills, and A. C. Varney. Architectural firms represented are Pollmar & Ropes; Smith, Hinchman & Grylls; Rogers and MacFarlane; Baxter, O'Dell & Halpin; Chittenden & Kotting; and Malcomson and Higginbotham. Many residences were designed and constructed by building and contracting firms such as William J. Newton Company; Spitzley and Sons; W. E. Briggs Company, and many more.

All of the homes built as single dwellings in New Center Commons were constructed between 1895 and 1920. Homes dating from the last decade of the nineteenth century are usually located in the first block between Woodward Avenue and Second Boulevard. The homes are two and one-half stories tall and their diversity of architectural styles include Neo-Georgian, Arts and Crafts (Craftsman), Bungalow and Neo-Tudor.

Moderately tall apartment buildings erected approximately between 1915 and 1940 replaced single-family dwellings predominately on Seward. Most were built in the second and third decades of the twentieth century; these are adorned with rich historical detail.

1. 120 Virginia Park, The Charles Warren Pickell House, 1895, Colonial Revival, Tuller and Van Huse, contractors

Charles Warren Pickell was one of the prominent and widely known insurance men in the Midwest. Born in New York, Pickell moved to Michigan at an early age. Pickell graduated from Michigan State Normal College at Ypsilanti in 1879. From then until 1881 he was successively principal of the Public Schools at Middleville and Bronson, Michigan.

In 1884 Pickell became superintendent of Schools at Ludington, Michigan, a post he held for four years. From 1888 to 1891 he was district manager of the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company at Grand Rapids. He came to Detroit in 1891 as associate manager of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, and a few months later became general manager.

Pickell had personally written more than \$15,000,000 worth of insurance. He was the author of several volumes including "Plain Hints" which was called the "insurance men's bible." Pickell was also responsible for writing a number of essays on insurance salesmanship.

The Pickell House is one of the earliest on Virginia Park. It is one of three built by Tuller and Van Husan on the first block of Virginia Avenue with permit #819 at an estimated cost of \$18,000. The central feature of this symmetrical facade of orange brick is the large Colonial Revival three-quarter circular porch with Ionic columns. The wooden portico has a modillioned cornice, leaded glass sidelights surrounded by thin fluted pilasters, and a transom window above the door surround the entranceway.

Every fourth course of brick on the first story is recessed, creating a rusticated appearance. The two sash windows per bay share a common stone sill. Quoins of brick and a central Palladian window arrangement accentuate the upper story. A gable with a port-hole-type window intersects with the flat topped hipped roof over each of the end bays. A denticulated cornice caps the facade, and a dormer with Adamesque detailing and a swan's neck pediment projects over the central bay.

2. 660 Virginia Park, The Albert H. Finn House, 1897, Colonial Revival style, Rogers & MacFarlane, architects

Albert H. Finn, a prominent Detroit publisher, was the first resident at 660 Virginia Park. Finn was the son of Rev. Silas W. Finn, an energetic Baptist minister of Royal Oak. In 1879, as a boy of 17, Finn began publication of The Midget, known as Royal Oak's second newspaper which, however, only survived 15 weeks.

Finn became advertising manager and assistant general manager of the Detroit Journal, publisher of the Michigan Christian Herald, and founder of the Franklin Press, under whose imprint early issues of the American Boy, Motor News and other magazines were published. He also organized the first of the nationally famous Ad Craft Club advertising courses. In 1916 Finn turned to real estate. Specializing in Woodward Avenue frontage, Finn sold \$800,000 worth to Hugh C. Chalmers within the first month of his new career. Finn also served as president of the Bungalohill Land Company, secretary of the Van Alstine Land Company, and maintained large holdings in Detroit, Toledo, and Chicago.

For many years Finn was closely associated with the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library and was instrumental in enlarging its collection of Baptist manuscripts, letters, photographs, periodicals, and other valuable historical materials.

A life deacon in the First Baptist Church of Detroit, Finn helped organize the Young People's Union in 1891 and was one of the founders of the Children's Home at Thirteen Mile and Greenfield Road.

The Finn House is a large, Colonial Revival home with a symmetrical facade; an open portico with graceful Ionic columns supports a simple denticulated entablature. The importance of the central pavillion is further emphasized by the arched, paired windows above the portico and the paired gables with broken pediments at the attic level. A simple denticulated cornice divides the main body of the house from the steep hipped roof. The architectural partnership of Rogers and MacFarlane were very comfortable designing in the Colonial Revival style; examples of their residential architecture can be seen in West Village and Indian Village also.

3. 700 Virginia Park, The Charles B. Van Dusen House, 1908, Neo-Tudor/Arts and Crafts style

The first residents of 700 Virginia Park were Charles B. Van Dusen and his wife Minnie. Van Dusen served as president of the S.S. Kresge Company for 13 years. Van Dusen began in the retailing business in 1885 as a clerk for Allen Sheldon & Company, and in 1891 he joined the wholesale and dry goods firm of Edson, Moore and Company. Van Dusen joined the firm of Kresge and Wildon in the operation of a number of five-and-dime stores in 1904. By 1912, the S.S. Kresge Company was organized; Van Dusen was elected to the board of directors and made secretary-treasurer. He became vice president and general manager in 1915 and ten years later Van Dusen became president of the S.S. Kresge Company.

The most prominent feature of this asymmetrical orange brick house is the east bay; its gable intersects with the gabled roof of the building, and has a heavy vergeboard. The stuccoed second and attic story of this bay are articulated with false half-timbering and painted framing motifs; windows are grouped in threes. The second story of this bay projects, forming an oriel window. A stuccoed shed dormer projects from the west bay side of the roof. The front porch is supported by squared-off wood posts in an Arts and Crafts manner.

4. 750 Virginia Park, The Douglas House, 1910, Arts and Crafts style, George V. Pottle, architect

George V. Pottle, the architect of 750 Virginia Park, lived on Virginia Park and designed the gates at the ends of the three block long street in 1911. The Douglas House was built for H. A. Douglas, treasurer and assistant secretary of the Michigan Sugar Company and Minnosota Sugar Company, at an estimated cost of \$6,500.

Mr. Pottle combined the Arts and Crafts propensity towards expressing materials and their joinery with the Prairie School's continuity of horizontal lines and large overhanging eaves. The first two stories are brownish orange brick; a porch with a slightly sloped roof spans the west half of the first floor. This porch is composed of brick piers; each of its faces is cut back to appear clustered. The wooden corniceline of the porch continues over the east one-half of the first story directly above three windows which rest on a continuous concrete sill. On the second story, the upper sash of the two groups of paired windows are subdivided by lead into small squares; each pair shares a sill.

The attic story is the most unusual feature of this house. It begins directly above the second story windows and culminates with the peak of the gable roof. It is sheathed in wood horizontal siding above a frieze of decorative wood work. Substantially overhanging eaves of the roof are supported by large wooden brackets with lower arms that extend the length of the attic's one-half story. Attention to detail in the attic is apparent; wooden pegs are plainly visible in the cornice, as are simulated tool marks on the brackets.

5. 120 Seward, Gramont Manor Apts., 1923, Second Renaissance Revival,
Hugh T. Miller, architect

Like Pallister, Delaware and Bethune, Seward Avenue was populated with professionals and businessmen who lived in the substantial, well-built, moderately priced dwellings by 1900. But by 1915, the first of the moderately scaled apartment buildings had replaced all but a few single-family houses on the first two blocks of Seward west of Woodward.

Gramont Manor Apartments, designed by Hugh T. Miller and built and owned by Sam Satovsky, contractor and builder, in 1923, had 49 units and was constructed at an estimated cost of \$136,000. It is four stories tall and is of reinforced concrete and yellow brick. The masonry foundations give the appearance of rustification; the sills and the watertable are also masonry.

The front facade has four projecting sections. The entrance bay between the two inner projections is deeply recessed, creating an almost processional entry. Upright cast iron lamps lead to the smooth masonry entrance vestibule; the segmentally arched doorway is flanked by Corinthian columns supporting an entablature bearing the name of the building. A medallion with cornucopia occupies the center of the balustraded attic section of the entrance. Decorative panels bearing garlands, patera, and anthemian ornaments are found in panels on the facade of the building. Decorative curved pediments top the cornices of the projecting and receding facade of this substantial apartment building.

The sides of the building are orange common brick. Light courts create projections and recessions in the plan of the building.

6. 620 Seward, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, 1922-23, Classical Revival, George D. Mason, architect

Mary Baker Eddy, spiritualist, naturalist and poet, founded her own brand of theism utilizing Christian concepts and naturalism and called it "Christian Science." She was a prolific writer and had a tremendous following. There are presently ten Churches of Christ, Scientist in Detroit; each has its affiliated reading room.

The Christian Science Monitor, the church's weekly newspaper, is one of the most widely circulated and read newspapers in the country.

The Third Church of Christ, Scientist was designed in 1922 by George D. Mason, outstanding Detroit architect whose career spanned the years 1875 to the 1940s and included the designs of churches, residences, commercial buildings, public buildings, and institutional buildings in a variety of styles. He travelled widely in Europe in 1884 and 1911 and became familiar with the gamut of historical styles. In 1920 he established the firm of George D. Mason & Company, architects.

The center of the reinforced concrete and yellow glazed brick building bows outward, forming a convex curve. Pilasters rising the two stories are at the corner of the building and where the bow begins. There are six engaged Tuscan two story columns around the curve with decorative panels at their bases. Wreaths are situated above the pilasters on the entablature. In between each column is alternately either a wooden double door or a double window.

Above the double windows of the second story is a continuous Greek fret pattern, and above the denticulated cornice in the attic panel is the name of the church.

7. 89 Delaware, The John S. Fee House, 1902, Queen Anne/Classical Revival, S. A. Palmer, builder (?)

The design of the Fee House, whose first owner was John S. Fee, manager of the Weaver Coal Company, reflects the transitional phase from Queen Anne to Colonial Revival around the turn of the century. The facade of the Fee house is stone; the sides and rear are orange common brick. The courses of rough-cut stone are thinner towards the top of the building, creating a lighter appearance at the top. The three story corner tower with a conical roof is indicative of the late nineteenth century Queen Anne massing. The open porch, however, is decisively Colonial Revival, with its Ionic order. The centrally placed door is surrounded by sidelights and topped with a transom window.

Above the entrance on the second story is a bowed window. All windows on the main body of the house have transoms containing leaded or stained glass. In the hipped roof are two dormers with hipped roofs and triple windows.

8. 116 Delaware, The George E. Lane House, 1902, Queen Anne/Colonial Revival

R. A. Bailey, possibly of the R. Arthur Bailey Company, manufacturers of plaster reproductions, received the permit for construction of this two and one-half story brick building with stone trim on February 17, 1897. When completed, it was estimated to have cost \$5,000.

George E. Lane, the first owner of the house, was the secretary/treasurer of Morgan and Whately Company, ladies skirt and wrap manufacturers. He did not stay at this address long; in 1904 Charlemayne Clark, president of the Phoenix Wire Works, resided here. In the early 1920s it became the home of Newman's Miss School, a girl's finishing school. The addition to the west of the house was built in 1923 by the school. In the 1960s the buildings functioned as a print plant.

Architecturally, this house shares several features with the Perry McAdow House, locally designated with the First Unitarian-Universalist Church Historic District. Its porch is recessed on the west side of the facade; an arched opening leads to the porch and entrance. Above the entrance on the second story is a bowed oriel window. An oriel window is also on the west elevation. On the east corner of the facade is a two-story tower with a steep conical roof.

The first and second stories are divided by a band of brick headers cut on the diagonal. Beneath the cornice is a frieze of decorative brickwork. The main roof of the house is a steep hip with a flat top; it has one centrally located dormer projecting from it.

9. 715 Delaware, Neumann House, 1905, Colonial Revival, R. R. Stuart

William Neumann was general manager of William F. V. Neumann and Company, representing the Welsh Motor Car Company, Wayne Automobile Company, Soules Motor Car Company, Waverly Electric Company, and White Steamer Company. This orange brick two and one-half story house, built for Mr. Neumann, was constructed at an estimated cost of \$4,000.

The porch is most characteristic of this simple Colonial Revival style. It occupies the eastern and central bay of the first story of the front facade; simple wooden Doric columns hold up the entablature and modillioned cornice of its almost flat roof. The western bay is composed of a two-story bay window with some leaded glass transoms. In the center-front of the

10. 8032-8050 Third, Terraces, 1915, Baxter, O'Dell & Halpin, architect

Mrs. Roy Haberkorn (Mary) commissioned Baxter, O'Dell, and Halpin to design these five rental units on property she and her deceased husband, a contractor, owned.

This row, between Seward and Delaware, cost approximately \$10,500 to construct. It is two stories tall and built of red-orange pressed brick. In appearance and arrangement, they are typical of comparable size terraces elsewhere in Detroit from the first quarter of the twentieth century. Bays flank the brick porches with side-facing stairs, creating an undulating effect on the facade. Pairs of brackets support the projecting cornice.

11. 701 Bethune, The Langdon House, 1907, Neo-Tudor, Pollmar & Ropes, architects

Mrs. Emma Langdon was the original owner of this house designed by the well-regarded Detroit architectural firm of Pollmar and Ropes. Its estimated cost was \$4,500. The front facade is articulated with two bays that project slightly forward; the first story is brick; the rest is stucco with decorative half-timbering painted red, although the stuccoed cream surface is carried down to the first story in the projecting west bay. The open porch has a gabled roof supported on brick piers. Its frontal gable has a cream-colored stucco finish and half-timbering painted red. Transom windows over first story windows contain leaded glass.

The main hipped roof of this house is intersected by a large gabled roof facing the street. It has wide vergeboards and contains one paired window in the center.

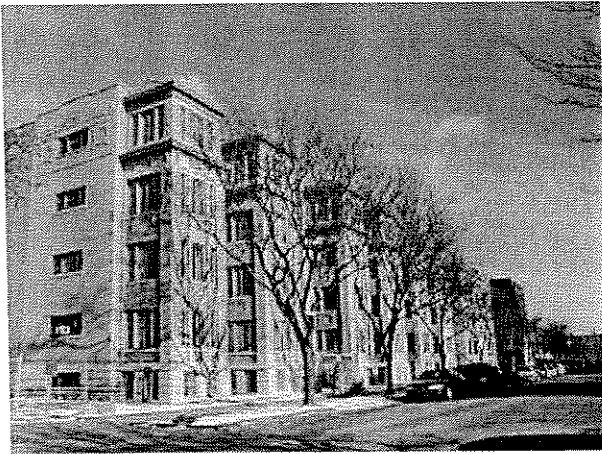
The Langdon House is representative of the well-designed modestly scaled houses in New Center Commons.

RECOMMENDATION: The Historic Designation Advisory Board recommends that the City Council establish the New Center Historic District with the design treatment level of rehabilitation. A draft ordinance for the establishment of the district is attached for consideration by the City Council.

New Center Historic District

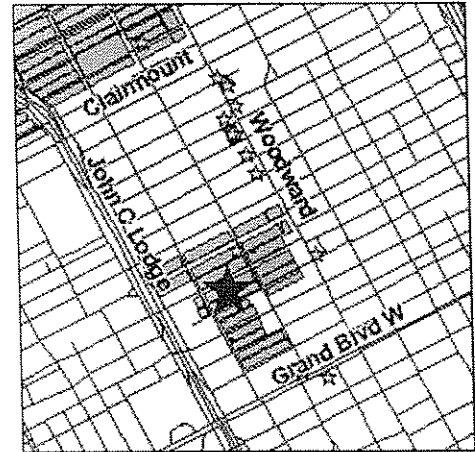
General boundaries: Virginia Park, Woodward, Lothrop, John C. Lodge Expressway.

Local	v	11/22/82
State		
State Marker		
National	v	2/28/83



Granmont & Birchmont Apts.

112-120 Seward



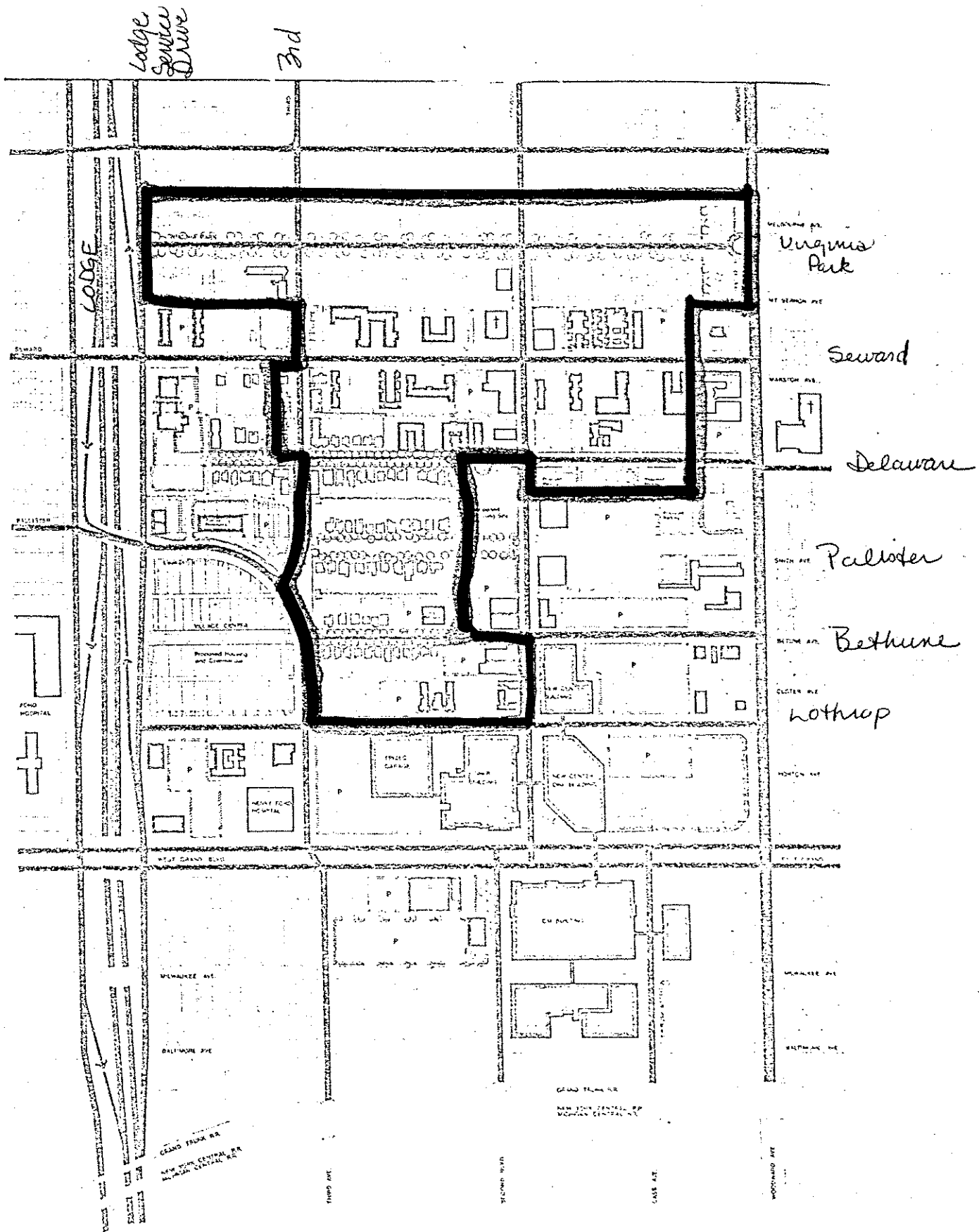
Historic overview:

Many streets in the New Center area were named after a landowner, subdivider or a famous person. Seward was named in 1860 after William H. Seward, the noted statesman; Pallister was for Thomas Pallister, landowner; and Lothrop after George V. N. Lothrop, City Attorney General, Minister to the Russian Court and real estate entrepreneur. The streets were originally laid out in a straightforward gridiron fashion and were paved with cedar, with the exception of Virginia Park (originally Virginia Avenue), which was paved in brick. Building restrictions were attached to parcels, ensuring that homes on the block closest to Woodward were more expensive than the second and third blocks, and minimum costs were enforced.

West Grand Boulevard became the base line for the New Center commercial development by General Motors and the Fisher Brothers of the 1920s. A retail strip developed on both sides of Woodward Avenue, the eastern boundary of New Center, and prestigious and high-end department stores located within the district. However, the nation and city experienced less prosperous times and racial strife during the late 1960s, and the shift to the suburbs was underway. New Center retained some professional people as residents even after the affluent gradually moved to more prestigious neighborhoods. Yet New Center's popularity declined, and many homes were converted to boarding houses or rental units, convenient for Wayne State University students.

In 1978 General Motors Corporation announced that it was renovating what it called "New Center Commons". A massive revitalization project rerouted streets, constructed pedestrian malls, and rehabilitated buildings. The project created a more upscale neighborhood, and today New Center Commons thrives as a residential area.





PROPOSED NEW CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
(Boundaries outlined in heavy black)

SCALE 3 INCH - 100 FEET




EXPRESSWAY

100

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----

Downloaded At: 11:53 11 September 2009