

# City of Detroit CITY COUNCIL

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## Final Report Capitol Park Local Historic District

By a resolution dated April 4, 2012, the Detroit City Council charged the Historic Designation Advisory Board (HDAB), a study committee, with the official study of the proposed Capitol Park Historic District in accordance with Chapter 25 of the 1984 Detroit City Code and the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act.

The Capitol Park Local Historic District is composed of twenty-one buildings (eighteen contributing, three non-contributing) located on Griswold Street between Michigan Avenue and Clifford Street in downtown Detroit. Also included is a public space and a monument with a bronze statue. The district is sandwiched between the Lower Woodward Avenue Local Historic District and Washington Boulevard Historic District on its east and west respectively, north of the Historic Detroit Financial District, and south of the Grand Circus Park Historic District.

The Capitol Park Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. It included buildings facing the north side of Michigan Avenue west of Griswold, which have since been razed. The Farwell Building and Griswold Building, included in this district, were individually listed on the National Register in 1976 and 1980, respectively. This local designation study report is based on those National Register nominations, augmented by a survey by HDAB (March 11, 1998).

**Boundaries:**

On the east, the alley running north-south between Griswold Street and Woodward Avenue; and

On the south, the centerline of Michigan Avenue; and

On the west, the alley running north-south between Washington Boulevard and Griswold Street.

On the north, the centerline of Clifford Street.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundaries of the Capitol Park Historic District generally include those buildings oriented towards or identified with Capitol Park, the triangular open space in the center. The boundaries include those buildings still extant in the National Register of Historic Places nomination; the building at 44 Michigan, included for its contributing Modern-style facade; and the buildings in the block north of Grand River Avenue to Clifford. The district is roughly triangular, with its three sides surrounding an open space known as Capitol Park.

**Significance**

Capitol Park is a landmark of liberty, for at its site began full self-government by the people of Michigan in the Union of American states. Early governmental, educational and commercial activity in the city of Detroit was centered in Capitol Park and its surrounds. The first state capitol, the first city high school, and Governor Stevens T. Mason's final resting place have prominently occupied the park.

The Capitol Park Local Historic District also represents Detroit's significant growth throughout the nineteenth century, from a town devastated by fire in 1805 through the establishment of the park in 1893 and then, through its architecture, the prosperous late-nineteenth century commercial center to the modern-age city built in the ensuing decades of the twentieth century. Several of the buildings were designed by some of Detroit's leading architects, including Albert Kahn, Donaldson & Meier, and Malcomson & Higginbotham; the life-size bronze monument to Michigan's first state governor, Stevens T. Mason, is an impressive work of the nationally prominent sculptor Albert Weinert.

**History**

In 1805, a bill was passed in Washington that created the Michigan Territory. Part of the Upper Peninsula and all of the Lower Peninsula were divided into four districts: Detroit, Erie, Huron, and Michilimackinac. President Jefferson appointed a governor and judges to administer the

territory. Soon after, Governor William Hull, Chief Justice Augustus B. Woodward, Judges Frederick Bates and John Griffin, and Secretary Stanley Griswold took their posts in Michigan.

On June 11, 1805, Detroit was destroyed by fire. Judge Woodward was the central figure involved with the reestablishment of the town. Influenced by Major Pierre L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C., Judge Woodward

... created a street network for Detroit that ... was quite unconventional, and controversial in its day. It was conceived by multiplying an equilateral triangular unit, dividing it by perpendicular lines to create right triangles. These right triangles were then divided into eight blocks arranged around a central space that Woodward wanted to be used for public wells and pumps, markets, schools, and fire engines. The large equilateral triangles were linked together with "circuses" or circles that were to be public parks. (Binno, Rebecca, "Woodward Avenue: Detroit's Commercial Historic District," 1997)

A grand circle would be the nucleus of downtown with radiating avenues and intersecting streets. The Act of Congress on April 21, 1806 which authorized the laying out of "Park Lots" and the "Ten Thousand Acres" adjoining enabled Woodward to proceed with the design. Unfortunately for the Judge, the plan was never completely accepted by Detroit landowners. Only a fragment of the Governor's and Judges' Plan, as it was formally known, was executed with the laying out of half of the Grand Circus and the Campus Martius and the web of streets that form part of the central business district. By 1816, the plan was practically abandoned. However, it was Judge Woodward's plan that resulted in the triangular public spaces of Capitol Park, Harmonie Park and Library Park.

Eventually, eighty-six Park Lots were laid out along both sides of Woodward Avenue, stretching north towards Adams Avenue. The majority of the lots were irregular in size and acreage. According to the 1806 Act of Congress, Capitol Park "...was to be reserved for public wells and pumps, for markets, for public schools, for houses for the reception of engines or other articles for the extinguishment of fires and for the preservation of the property of the inhabitants, for houses for the meeting of religious, moral, literary or political societies, or other useful associations, and generally for such purposes of utility or ornament as the City Council of Detroit may at any time by law provide." (Detroit Free Press, 3/24/1918).

Originally, the Governor and Judges had decided to build a court house in the center of the Grand Circus, but that decision was revoked nine years later on November 7, 1815 when a congressional act changed the location to the head of Griswold Street. Nearly another nine years passed before construction began. By this time, in 1823, Detroit had metamorphosed from a town to a city. The population increase influenced the decision by the United States Congress to transfer the government of the Territory to the governor and a legislative council. The design for the new "court house" building then had to accommodate the newly created Legislative Council as well as the courts.

The building, designed by Obed Wait, cost \$20,000 and was erected on Capitol Park between 1823, when the cornerstone was laid, and 1828, when the Legislative Council met for the first time within its walls. The Supreme Court and Wayne County courts were also located in the building from 1828 until 1847. When Detroit became the capitol of Michigan after statehood

was attained in 1837, the building became the state capitol. The relocation of the seat of state government from Detroit to Lansing in 1847 left the building vacant until the Board of Education petitioned Detroit city government to use it as a high school.

Since the title holder of the Capitol building could not be identified by Congress or Detroit city government, the Board of Education took possession of it without title or lease. Between 1847 and 1892 the building functioned as Capitol Union High School. During this time, it was enlarged and remodeled in order to accommodate school requirements. On January 27, 1893 the building was destroyed by fire. The site of the first state capitol and Detroit public high school was converted into a park on February 20, 1893.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, memorials were erected throughout the city's parks. Following the custom of the time, Capitol Park was identified as a perfect location for a monument. The family, friends, and colleagues of Michigan's first governor, Stevens T. Mason, appealed to city government for a Detroit memorial to him. Often referred to as 'the boy governor,' Stevens T. Mason held office from 1831 to 1837 in the Capitol Building. Mason was appointed secretary and acting governor at the age of twenty in 1831. Officially elected governor in 1835, he was reelected in 1837 when Michigan became a state. Notable events that distinguished Mason as governor involve the resolution of the wildcat bank furor, which had almost crippled Michigan's economy, and the territorial dispute with Ohio over the Toledo strip.

Stevens T. Mason died in New York City on January 4, 1843 at the age of thirty-one. After sixty-two years, his remains were returned to Detroit and were buried in Capitol Park on June 4, 1905. The Mason monument was sculpted in 1908, in a decade when many monuments of its kind were erected throughout the nation as part of the City Beautiful Movement. On Memorial Day, 1908, a life-size bronze statue of Mason was erected over the grave site at the head of Griswold at State Street. Sculptor Albert Weinert made the figure from the bronze of an old canon donated by the War Department. The inscription on the upper part of the base of the statue reads, "...to the memory of her first Governor-whose ashes lie beneath. Called to the duties of manhood while yet a boy he so acquitted himself as to stamp his name indelibly on the history of the Commonwealth. Gov. Stevens T. Mason." Sculptor Albert Weinert studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and in Brussels. Born in Leipzig, Germany in 1863, Weinert died in 1948. Besides the Stevens T. Mason Monument in Capitol Park, Weinert's works included the Lake George Memorial in Lake George, New York, McKinley Monument in Toledo, Ohio, and the sculptural groups "Recording the Purchase of Manhattan Island" and "Consolidation of Greater New York" in the lobby of the Hall of Records (1899-1907) in New York City. He was a member of the National Sculpture Society and the Society of Independent Artists.

In 1828, Governor Woodbridge honored his friend, Governor Roger Griswold of Connecticut, by naming a street located between Michigan Avenue and Clifford Avenue running along the east side of the park after him. Also, Rowland Avenue, between Michigan Avenue and Grand River Avenue on the west side of the park, was named after Major Thomas Rowland, public official and veteran of the War of 1812. Eventually, businesses began to locate along Griswold and Rowland across from the park. In 1907, the name of Rowland extending from Michigan Avenue to State Street was changed to Shelby, and between State and Clifford it became a part of Griswold Street.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Capitol Park district, together with the surrounding areas of Grand Circus Park and Washington Boulevard, was transformed from a mix of residential and commercial uses to a major commercial and financial center. The transformation in the physical appearance of downtown Detroit was primarily influenced by the growth and prosperity of the automobile industry. Henry Ford's introduction of the assembly line for the mass production of automobiles in 1910 and his revolutionary five dollar a day wage in 1914 led to the burgeoning population of the city of Detroit. Since available land in the downtown area became scarce, residential development moved to the periphery of the city. Eventually, existing residential dwellings in the downtown area were replaced by edifices of higher density, including office buildings, retail stores, restaurants, hotels, and theaters. By the late 1920's, the Capitol Park, Grand Circus Park and Washington Boulevard districts contributed greatly to the financial prosperity of Detroit.

Major local financial institutions located in the Capitol Park area, which had, for some years, been a commercial and financial center in downtown Detroit. R.L. Polk's 1920-21 Detroit City Directory predicted that the financial district of Detroit would continue to move northward on Griswold until "within a few years the entire street, including Capitol Square Park, will be exclusively occupied by financial interests (page 214). Among these institutions were the United Savings Bank of Detroit (successor of the Detroit United Bank, incorporated in 1901), the National Loan and Investment Company, the American State Bank, the Wayne County and Home Savings Bank, and the Detroit Savings Bank. The Detroit Savings Bank, which claimed the title of the "oldest bank in Michigan," was founded in 1849 as the Detroit Savings Fund Institute. It moved in 1921 from its old location in the Penobscot Building to the former Chamber of Commerce Building, and then renamed the Detroit Savings Bank Building. The Wayne County and Home Savings Bank was a combination of several banks consolidated into one with greater power; it changed its name in 1913 and soon after moved to its new building at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Griswold Street.

Two of Detroit's major industries before the advent of the automobile, fur processing and cigar manufacturing, are also represented in the Capitol Park Historic District. Detroit was founded as a fur trading post in 1701; the Herman and Ben Marks Fur Company carried on that tradition in the building they purchased at 1211-13 Griswold in 1927. Although the company imported its pelts, it manufactured, sold and stored furs in the building. Brown Brothers cigar factory, at 119 State Street, opened its business near Capitol Park in 1887. In 1891, tobacco manufacturing was the leading industry in Detroit, and the tobacco factories became the largest employers of women in the city.

While financial and manufacturing establishments were certainly indicative of the economic activity in the Capitol Park area, it was the office and commercial space that dominated the streetscape. Buildings named after their owners, such as the Smith Building, Malcomson Building, Farwell Building, Bennett Building, Bamlet Building, Stott Building, Cunningham Building and Stanley Building, represented entrepreneurial success. Most were built as speculative office buildings, housing lawyers, accountants, dentists, doctors, real estate and insurance companies, financial institutions, and small retail establishments. Some housed family-run retail establishments and offices with long-term associations to Detroit, such as Cunningham's Drugs, Kern Department Store, Mabley's clothing store, Kinsel's Pharmacy, Peter Smith & Sons grocery, and People's Outfitting Company.

The stature of the Capitol Park location was reinforced by the architectural quality the owners sought. They commissioned some of Detroit's leading architects to design what they intended to become part of their legacy. Henry Engelbert, Spier & Rohns and Gordon W. Lloyd, proficient late-nineteenth century architectural practitioners, are credited with Kinsel's Pharmacy (1877; razed), the Bamlet Building (1897) and the Chamber of Commerce Building (1895), and Brown Brothers Cigars (1887), respectively. All three were noted church designers; Engelbert is credited with St. Albertus Roman Catholic Church, Spier & Rohns with Sweetest Heart of Mary Roman Catholic Church, and Lloyd with Christ Church Detroit, all listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These architects had reputations beyond the city of Detroit, most notably Spier & Rohns, who was commissioned by the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk rail roads to build train stations across the state of Michigan.

Several of the architects of the early twentieth century buildings in the Capitol Park Historic District were also known beyond the borders of Detroit. Albert Kahn Associates was responsible for the building housing the United Savings Bank of Detroit (1921) and the Griswold Building (1929). Malcomson & Higginbotham, architects of the Malcomson Building (1906) and, as the firm of Malcomson, Higginbotham & Palmer, the building at 1211 Griswold (1919), were known throughout Michigan for its innovative school designs. The firm of Donaldson & Meier, architects of the one skyscraper in the district, the David Stott Building (1928), was proficient in church and school design, and Bonnah and Chaffee, in addition to the Farwell Building (1915), was the architectural firm of record for the Barlum Hotel, Barlum Tower (now Cadillac Tower) and Indian Village Manor, all in Detroit.

As with other commercial areas throughout the city, the businesses in Capitol Park were hit hard during the Great Depression. The banking system in Detroit collapsed, and dissolution of businesses and foreclosures on properties followed. Eventually, new owners and tenants replaced those hit by the hard times, and the Capitol Park's retail businesses, restaurants and entrepreneurs prospered with the war effort of the early 1940s. In the 1950s the population of Detroit peaked at almost two million.

In addition to its role in commerce and industry, Capitol Park was a hub for Detroit's public transportation system. According to Polk's Detroit City Directory of 1940, "The City of Detroit Department of Street Railways is the largest municipally-owned transportation system in the country. It operates 909 street cars and 1,597 motor coaches..." A general information bulletin published by the City Plan Commission on August 19, 1954 entitled, "Capitol Park - A Recommendation for a Civic Improvement," stated that "23,000 Detroiters board D.S.R. [Detroit Street Railway] buses and trolley coaches in Capitol Park daily for destinations out Grand River or along the Fenkell and Linwood lines. Over 700 coaches from three main D.S.R. lines use Capitol Park as their downtown loading station." In 1955, Capitol Park was redesigned with a comfort station and four bus loading shelters erected by the Department of Street Railways and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Pedestrian walkways through the park and along Shelby (Griswold Street on the west) were created, causing the reconfiguration of the Mason monument site.

On August 2, 1955, the Detroit Common Council adopted a resolution to the effect that the remains of Governor Mason would not be removed from the City of Detroit, and that the remains would be reinterred on the site of the original State Capitol. Today, the monument and burial site of Governor Stevens T. Mason still remain in Capitol Park, as well as a tablet marking the site of

the first state capitol building attached to a boulder behind it, adding some perspective to the overall development of the city of Detroit in comparison with the rest of the state. The remains of Governor Mason were reinterred and the monument relocated over them with the relocation of the bus facilities and redesign of the park in 2010.

In the ensuing three decades, Detroit lost almost half of its population as people moved out to the suburbs by way of a growing freeway system. Consequently, this depopulation trend led to disinvestment in the downtown area, resulting in vacancies and underutilization of buildings. Today, the Capitol Park Historic District is poised for reinvention as a residential loft district.

Although the functions of the buildings surrounding Capitol Park have changed over time, the role of the park remains the same as when it was established in 1893. The somewhat reconfigured triangular space continues to provide open space for the citizens of Detroit.

### **Physical Description**

Comprised of twenty-one buildings constructed for commercial use and an open space improved by natural landscaping, street furniture, paved pathways and one monument, the Capitol Park Historic District is a unique pocket of downtown Detroit similar to the Harmonie Park Historic District, a certified local historic district located on the northeast side of downtown, and Library Park, just east of Woodward Avenue behind the Hudson Building site. The form of the Capitol Park district is defined by the relationship of the surrounding buildings to the open space, or park. The contributing buildings, erected between 1877 and 1929, represent the best of the outgoing stylistic trends of the late nineteenth century and the modern aesthetic of the twentieth century, as well as the radical change in construction techniques brought about by the use of reinforced concrete and steel.

The Capitol Park Historic District consists of a triangular area surrounded by four national register historic districts. On its west side is the Washington Boulevard Historic District, on the east side is the Lower Woodward Avenue Historic District, approximately one block north is the Grand Circus Park Historic District, and on the south across the six-lane Michigan Avenue is the Historic Detroit Financial District. The historic buildings included in the Capitol Park Historic District that face Michigan Avenue provide an entrée into a unique urban space created as part of the historic Woodward Plan.

Capitol Park, the defining landscape feature in the district, is now a large five-sided open space located between the two-way traffic of Griswold Street on the east and the brick-paved service and pedestrian side of Griswold Street, actually an extension of Shelby Avenue, on the west, and between State Street on the south and Grand River Avenue on the north. Griswold Street, the north-south roadway through the district, is ninety feet wide at its entrance from the intersection of Michigan Avenue on the south but narrows to sixty feet as it parallels the park and continues northward between Grand River Avenue and Clifford. The intersecting side streets, State Street, Clifford Avenue and Grand River Avenue, are also sixty feet wide.

Capitol Park was originally a triangular space but its southern corners were modified as various improvements were made throughout its history. Brick paving and concrete walkways lined with replica historic, single-lantern, light standards intersect the park for the benefit of pedestrian movement. Three raised landscaped areas of grass turf in the southern half of the park are

defined by low rises of pebble aggregate walls. The Stevens T. Mason monument is located at the center of the eastern perimeter of the park in one such landscaped setting. The statue of Governor Mason is facing west across the park. On another such area on the southeast corner of the park is a state historic marker commemorating the site of the Finney Barn, in which the great conflagration of 1805 that destroyed the town began. A two-sided state historical marker at the south end of the park commemorates the Capitol Union School on its side facing east and Michigan's First Capitol on the side facing west.

Located along the periphery of the curbs along Griswold are double-lantern ornamental light poles. The north end of the park is mostly brick-paved with trees planted in metal grates and similar street furniture. The roadway in front of the buildings facing the west side of the park is concrete. A row of trees was planted on the side of the roadway in grates surrounded by brick paving. The Griswold streetscape north and south of the park is more ordinary, consisting of concrete sidewalks and uncoordinated street furniture and lighting.

Griswold Street and Capitol Park provide the setting for the buildings comprising the Capitol Park Historic District. The northern block of Griswold Street between Grand River Avenue and Clifford Avenue contains buildings that are lower in height with more vacant space in between. While some fall within the period of significance of the Capitol Park Historic District, alterations, a parking deck and lot, and demolition has taken its toll on the quality of the resources and their setting.

The core of the Capitol Park district is located between the busy Michigan Avenue thoroughfare and Grand River Avenue. The Chamber of Commerce Building, located on the northeast corner of State Street and Griswold Street, has the distinction of being the one extant metal skeleton skyscraper of two that were erected in Detroit in 1894-95. It remained Detroit's tallest skyscraper for only a year, having been surpassed by a fourteen story building. Directly across State Street from it is the thirty-seven story David Stott Building (1928), a modern skyscraper rising above its neighbors in all its Art Deco glory. Capitol Park was built up over a period of time; old buildings were replaced by newer ones throughout its history. Consequently, the artistically appointed Farwell Building (1915) was designed in the style of Beaux Arts classicism while the adjacent building, the Malcomson Building (1906), was designed in a medieval revival style. The district represents a delightful array of styles from the Italianate to the Art Deco, spanning over fifty years of architectural history.

The Capitol Park district as an urbanized yet pedestrian-friendly place is exemplified by first floor storefronts and accessible mezzanines. The Bamlet Building (1897) and the Smith (Capitol Park) Building (1912), while separated by fifteen years, both take advantage of their corner sites by providing the main pedestrian entrance at the corner in a rounded bay that extends up the height of the buildings. The earlier of the two, the Bamlet Building, was inspired by the Classical Revival style; the Smith Building, the Beaux Arts. The continuous street wall is another defining element of the district. Buildings have no setback from the public sidewalk. Nos. 1211-13 Griswold (1919) and 116 Michigan, the Jewel Theater (1911), are two slender buildings originally sandwiched between more substantial older edifices, extending the walls of continuity.

In the period of Detroit's substantial growth, between 1915-1929, buildings got taller as a result of the new construction technology, such as advances in vertical transportation, and



new wealth. The Stanley Building (1922) at 25-35 State Street, the Griswold Building (Kahn,1929), and the David Stott Building are representative of that period.

As seen with commercial buildings in the Lower Woodward district of similar scale, the ground levels of many buildings in Capitol Park were modified as new materials became available in the 1940s and 50s. Former storefronts were filled in or reconfigured to respond to modern marketing trends and security concerns. Many buildings lost their cornices as a result of a building department order to remove them in the late 1950s after a disastrous incident on Woodward Avenue. Buildings became underutilized as Detroit shrunk in population in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, sometimes resulting in boarded up display windows. Major modifications were made to the bank building on the corner of Michigan and Griswold when it was shortened to two stories from eight and it received a Modern-style facade.

While business uses dominated throughout its history, the Capitol Park district is poised for transformation into a twenty-four hour mixed-use area with loft apartments, retail spaces and entertainment venues. Underutilized and deteriorating buildings now present opportunities where they once represented blight; the historic nature of the architectural resources contributes significantly to the revitalization of Capitol Park, as it does in the Park Avenue, Grand Circus Park, Washington Boulevard, Harmonie Park and Woodward Avenue historic districts.

### **Inventory of Resources:**

The resources included in the Capitol Park Historic District application are:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Architect/Builder</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Capitol Park	Capitol Park	Woodward Plan	c. 1806
2. Capitol Park	Stevens T. Mason Monument	Albert Weinert, sculptor	1908
<b>West Side of Griswold</b>			
3. 1133-39 Griswold	United Savings Bank of Detroit	Albert Kahn Associates	1921
4. 1145 Griswold	Smith Building	Allyn Engineering Co.	1912
5. 119 State Street	Brown Brothers Cigars	Gordon W. Lloyd	1887
6. 1201 Griswold *	McDonald		1977
7. 1211-13 Griswold		Malcomson Higginbotham & Palmer	1919
8. 1215-19 Griswold	Malcomson Building	Malcomson & Higginbotham	1906
9. 1249-1259 Griswold	Farwell Building	Bonah & Chaffee	1915
10. 1265 Griswold	Bamlet Building	Spier & Rohns	1897
11. 1405 Griswold *			
12. 1411 Griswold *	Parking Garage		1961
13. 1427-39 Griswold			1927
14. 1457 Griswold	Issac Agree Downtown Synagogue		1930
<b>East Side of Griswold</b>			
15. 44 Michigan Avenue	Wayne County & Home Savings Bank		1915/61
16. 1134 Griswold/ 27-31 State	Cunningham Building	Smith Hinchman & Grylls	1928
17. 1150 Griswold	David Stott Building	Donaldson & Meier	1928
18. 1212 Griswold	Chamber of Commerce Bldg.	Spier & Rohns	1895
19. 1214-30 Griswold	Griswold Building	Albert Kahn Associates	1929
20. 1250 Griswold	National Loan & Investment Co.	Rogers, Bonah & Chaffee	1917
21. 25-35 W. Grand River	Stanley Building	Brown, Derrick & Preston	1922
22. 37-45 W. Grand River	Bennett Building		c. 1895
23. 1416 Griswold			
*noncontributing			

## DESCRIPTIONS (keyed to map)

### **Park:**

#### **1. Capitol Park:**

In 1823, the population of the Michigan Territory caused Congress to transfer governance to a governor, legislative council, and judges. To house the new government, a structure was built here between 1823 and 1828. When Michigan became a State in 1837, the building became the State Capitol, and it functioned as such until 1847 when the government seat moved to Lansing. The building was used as a public high school until destroyed by fire in 1893. The Capitol and the high-school are both commemorated by a two-sided State Historical Commission marker at the south end of the park.

After the fire, the land was converted to a park. It has remained a public space up to the present. In 1955, Capitol Park was redesigned for use as a public transport hub with a modern-style shelter. That structure was removed in the 1970s. In 2009, with the opening of the Rosa Parks Transit Center to the west, the site was restored to its status as a park.

A State Historical Commission historical marker on the south end of the park commemorates Finney's Barn, a connection to the Underground Railroad. In 1850, Seymour Finney purchased a plot of land near the park and erected a tavern with a large barn that served as a way station on the pathway to freedom.

### **Monument:**

#### **2. Stevens T. Mason Statue, Capitol Park, Griswold Street and State Street**

This monument stands at the site of the State's first capitol building. In 1831, at the age of nineteen, Mason (1811-1843) was appointed Secretary of the Territory of Michigan by President Andrew Jackson. He successfully petitioned Congress to declare Michigan a state and served as its first governor from 1836 to 1840. Mason's ashes were reinterred in 1905 at the site of this monument, unveiled in 1908. Albert Weinert (1863-1948) was the sculptor. He depicted Mason standing confidently on a pedestal representing in relief two fasces, or bundles of sticks bound with a double-headed axe, the Roman symbols for the power of magistrates. A semicircular platform and balustrade once surrounded the statue; they have since been demolished.

The statue is by Albert Weinert, cast in bronze from melted-down Fort Michilimackinac cannons. Mason's remains were uncovered under his monument as part of the remodeling of Capitol Park in June 29, 2010 that necessitated the moving of the statue. He was reinterred in its present location centered on the east side of Capitol Park during a ceremony October, 27, 2010

### **Buildings: West of Griswold Street**

#### **3. 1133-39 Griswold, United Savings Bank of Detroit**

The building located on the west side of Griswold between State Street and Michigan Avenue was constructed under permit #18302 issued to Albert Kahn on May 9, 1921 for the United Savings Bank of Detroit. Construction costs were estimated to be \$150,000.

The United Savings Bank of Detroit was established in 1902 by Frank Bruce Leland. Originally from Rose, Michigan, Leland had practiced law in Flint and Detroit from 1885 until 1895. In

1895, he became general manager of the National Loan and Investment Company. Leland was also president of the United Savings Bank of Detroit. The bank dealt strictly with savings accounts and was the first in Detroit to establish banking by mail.

Original blueprints display a richly decorated Classical Revival facade dominated on the first story by three arched openings, the center one containing the double-doored entrance to 1133 Griswold, and, in the northernmost bay, a rectangular opening providing a double-doored entrance into 1139 Griswold. Ornate architrave moldings, carved and tooled stone surfaces, and decorative grilles once enlivened the ground floor. A regular pattern of rectangular windows prevailed throughout the rest of the front facade, ornamented with paterae and decorative moldings, and capped by a decorative cornice.

During the United Savings Bank's proprietorship of the structure, minor alterations to the interior and exterior were made. First floor windows were first altered in 1942. Seven years later, the entrance doors, partitions, and lobby were altered. In 1971, the Detroit and Northern Savings and Loan Association purchased the building and proceeded to more drastically change both the interior and exterior. When the present facade was added to the front exterior of the building the original windows and arches were obscured. Currently, Franklin Properties owns the building.

#### 4. **1145 Griswold, Smith Building (a.k.a. Capitol Park Building)**

A permit (#1171) was issued to the Allyn Engineering Company, architects and engineers, for the construction of this 62 feet by 100 feet, ten-story brick and steel building on April 26, 1912. It was built at an estimated cost of \$100,000 for Henry J. Smith, whose company, Peter Smith & Sons, was one of the leading grocers in Detroit. Established in 1850, the company was first located in the old Central Market. Peter Smith & Sons' store and offices were located in the first five floors of 1145 Griswold while the other five stories were rented out as office space.

The Smith Building was located prominently on the corner of Griswold and State streets, its State Street elevation facing Capitol Park. It had entrances on the ends of both elevations and at the corner. Each of the two visible elevations is articulated in three bays, forming the corner with a bowed bay. Windows are grouped in threes between the pilasters separating the bays. The ground floor with storefronts and mezzanine level has been modernized, probably in the 1940s, with maroon-colored metal panels and octagonal windows. The stories above the mezzanine as well as the upper two stories above a thick belt course are terra cotta-faced. The original cornice has been removed. The Smith Building was advertised as being equipped with four passenger elevators and one freight elevator, a vacuum cleaning system, air washing machines, and a complete ventilating system. The interior was designed by the Vinton Company, a well known Detroit contracting firm. Mahogany panels lined the columns and stairwell of the building.

Because the building resulted in substantial financial loss, Smith sold the structure two years after it was built to Emory Leydon Ford, member of the Detroit Ford family who owned the Michigan Alkali Company, chemical manufacturers.

During Ford's ownership, the building was leased for commercial and office activity. In 1917, a major part of the building became a retail store for the T.B. Rayl Company, a Detroit hardware manufacturer. Established in 1875, the company operated an earlier store on Woodward Avenue

before moving to Griswold. The T.B. Rayl Company occupied eight floors of the building until the late 1950s.

The American State Bank, later known as the Peter Smith American State Bank, bought the building in 1920. Interior alterations were made to accommodate the stores and offices that leased the remaining floors of the structure. Since the late 1920s, the building has been known as the Capitol Park Building. The Sallan Realty Company is the current owner.

#### **5. 119 State Street, Brown Brothers Cigars**

In 1882, Detroit draftsman Ernest Witbech inherited lot 81 of Section 8 of the Governor and Judges Plan, and it remained in the Witbech estate until 1963. Permit #68 was issued to architect Gordon W. Lloyd on December 23, 1887, for the construction of this five-story brick building on the site. Originally, the structure was a cigar factory, first the Brown Brothers manufactory and later the United Cigar Stores factory.

In 1920, Detroit grocer Henry J. Smith leased the structure. Milford Golden bought the building in 1963 and is the current owner. The building was altered in 1970 and 1971 in order to provide space for a pub, dental clinic, and business school.

In 1858, Gordon W. Lloyd, a native of England, arrived in Detroit. The training Lloyd received as an apprentice to his uncle, Ewan Christian, taught the young architect about the restoration and construction of churches. Influenced by the Gothic Revival, Lloyd designed Christ Episcopal Church in 1861 and Central Methodist Episcopal Church in 1866-67, both in Detroit. Lloyd designed residences and institutional buildings as well, including the Parker House at 975 E. Jefferson Avenue and Dowling Hall of the University of Detroit downtown campus. Lloyd's warehouse of 1887 for the D.M. Ferry and Company bears some stylistic resemblance to this factory building of the same year.

Architecturally speaking, the building is Victorian Romanesque in style, characterized by the semi-circular arches of the fifth and sixth stories, contrasting textures of stone including the rough stone belt courses, patterned brick courses at the lintel or arched level of windows, decorative, carved capitals and corbels. The building is articulated in three vertical bays on its front, north-facing facade that are divided by pilasters rising to the parapet. A highly decorative cornice divides the fifth and sixth story of the north and west elevations. The first floor has been altered significantly. The building is a near twin to another Lloyd design formerly located on Larned Street, which was demolished for the expansion of Cobo Hall. As such, it is a significant example of Lloyd's commercial work.

#### **6. 1201 Griswold, Noncontributing**

The McDonald's Corporation purchased the south 48.77 feet of lot 57 of Section 8 of the Governor and Judges Plan in 1977, and permit #33577 for the construction of this concrete block restaurant was issued on January 13, 1977. Construction of the building cost \$100,000.00. This building does not contribute to the proposed district.

## **7. 1211-13 Griswold**

C. William Palmer, partner in the firm of Malcomson, Higginbotham and Palmer, was granted permit #14238 on August 30, 1919 for the construction of this six-story brick and terra cotta-faced loft for its owner, Alexander Malcomson. Malcomson built the adjacent building, 1219 Griswold, thirteen years earlier.

The building is narrow: its width is approximately twenty-four feet, its depth one hundred feet and its height approximately eighty-six feet. The symmetrical facade is divided into three vertical bays above the first story; the outer bays contain a single rectangular double-hung sash window per floor and each floor of the center bay consists of a pair of such windows set in a double-wide opening. The terra cotta facade has a "blind fanlight" motif at the top of the central bay, that device being flanked by rondels placed above the outer bays.

According to the 1921-26 Detroit City Directories, the Roger J. Sullivan Furniture Company occupied the building. The Herman and Ben Marks Fur Company, fur importers, purchased the building in 1927. President Herman Marks and secretary and treasurer Ben Marks manufactured, sold, and stored furs within the space. An advertisement for their fur business is still visible on the south elevation of the building. The storefront was remodeled in 1927, perhaps reflecting new requirements brought on by the Marks' purchase. In 1958, in compliance with a City of Detroit directive, the cornice of the building was removed.

The building has had many owners and tenants since; in 1965, optical offices utilized the first floor. The building was occupied by an ice cream store and video arcade in the late 1970s. In 1987 a carry-out restaurant was on the first floor.

## **8. 1215-1219 Griswold, Malcomson Building**

The permit for the construction of a brick, six-story structure intended for use as stores was issued to the Detroit architectural partnership of Malcomson & Higginbotham on November 22, 1906 when the property was addressed as 29-31 Rowland (Permit #2873). The estimated cost of the structure was \$35,000.

The Malcomson Building was built for Alexander Y. Malcomson. Born in Scotland, Malcomson migrated to Detroit in 1880 at the age of fifteen. After working as a grocery clerk for a short time, Malcomson opened his own store. Eventually Malcomson entered the more profitable fuel industry. He later founded Malcomson & Houghton, a company that manufactured coal and coke that eventually merged into the United Fuel & Supply Company. Alexander Y. Malcomson was also known for his initial financial support of Henry Ford, and in 1902, he became the first vice-president and treasurer of the Ford Motor Company.

According to the Detroit city directories, a variety of businesses occupied the building. Industrial Morris Plan Bank, Star Clothing Company, and the architectural offices of Malcomson & Higginbotham were some of the early tenants. The Malcomson Estate sold the building to the Nisley Company in 1927.

Above its now-altered storefronts, the composition of the facade of the Malcomson Building displays the art of a skilled practitioner. Articulated in two identical vertical sections, each contains two broad window openings on the third, fourth and fifth floors and a large horizontal opening containing a band of six windows with transoms on the sixth floor. The openings on the

fifth floor, unlike all others, have Tudor arches, contributing to the Medieval style of the building. Also Medieval in flavor are carved console brackets at the string course level beneath the sixth story and the smaller ones dividing the sills between the Tudor-arched windows at the fifth story.

In 1927 the first floor store-front was divided into two stores; the original cornice was likely removed in 1958 under the city directive. The lobby and store-fronts were remodeled in 1957.

#### **9. 1249-1259 Griswold, Farwell Building**

Financing for the construction of this building came from the estate of Mrs. Emmer J. Farwell, wife of Jesse H. Farwell, the originator of the idea to build office-commercial buildings on Rowland Street (now Griswold) near Grand River. Jesse H. Farwell was a renowned contractor, vessel owner, manufacturer and realtor.

Detroit architect Harrie W. Bonnah designed this steel-framed building that opened in 1915 (permit #383, 2/13/14). Bonnah had been a Detroit architect for thirty years and one of the first to register in Michigan. He was head of the firm Bonnah and Chaffee, the firm also responsible for the plans for the Barlum Hotel, Barlum Tower, the Lawyer's Building, Indian Village Manor, as well as several Detroit school buildings.

The eight-story Farwell Building is an example of early twentieth century commercial architecture. Built to house both shops and offices, the building is distinguished on the exterior by large windows, horizontal in proportion and set deep in a structural frame. The curtain wall is predominately brick; the cornice of the building was terra cotta, relieved with Pewabic tile. This ornamentation was removed in 1956. The architectural iron and bronze work, Tiffany mosaic ceiling, and Skyros marble walls of the main vestibule of the building were outstanding original features, of which only vestiges remain today. The architectural iron work was handled by the Russel Wheel and Foundry Company of Detroit. Above the mezzanine level is a central light well that extends up to the roof, creating a dramatic atrium lit by natural light. It was placed on the National Register in 1976.

#### **10. 1265 Griswold, Bamlet Building**

Thomas Rowland conveyed the lot upon which the Bamlet Building was later erected to Joseph Bamlet under the Governor and Judges plan on May 7, 1835. Joseph Bamlet, a brick mason, proceeded to build a road house on the lot. After his death a year later, Bamlet's wife and family converted the building into a tavern. Living quarters for tenants were in log houses situated in a row along Grand River Avenue west of the tavern to Washington Avenue. By 1864, the area was ripe for the construction of business structures. George Bamlet, son of the late Joseph Bamlet, demolished the log houses and built a four-story brick building next to the road house.

The road house and the adjacent building were razed in 1897 when Frank H. Bamlet, grandson of the late Joseph Bamlet, built the present six-story brick building on the south side of Grand River Avenue between Griswold and Washington Boulevard at an estimated cost of \$30,000. On January 18, 1897, permit #39 was issued to contractor J.T. Currie. The Bamlet Building was designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Spier & Rohns. Established in 1884, the firm was well-known for their Victorian train stations and churches. Stations in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Niles, Lansing, and Grand Rapids for the Grand Trunk and Michigan Central Railroads were designed by the pair. Also, historic Sweetest Heart of Mary Church, built in 1893, was a

commission of the firm. In 1894, the Chamber of Commerce Building, another building in the Capitol Park district, was designed by the firm.

During the early 1900s a variety of businesses occupied the building. Dental and optical offices leased rooms, as did real estate and architectural firms. Also, according to the 1900-1905 Detroit city directories, the Gutchess Metropolitan Business College was an occupant. In later years the structure was renamed the Holden Building (1921-22), Burns-Gray Building (1926-31) and Capitol Square Building (1931- present). The Gustava D. Anderson Estate owned the structure from 1932 until 1963. In 1963, the Broadway Investment Company bought the structure. In 1965 the store entrance on Grand River was replaced with display windows. Griswold Associates owned the building in 1967-1984.

**11. 1405 Griswold, Noncontributing**

Two-story glass and metal commercial building

**12. 1411 Griswold, Parking Garage, Noncontributing**

This parking structure was originally built and owned by the Griswold Development Company. That company received a permit on April 24, 1961 for the construction of a three story masonry parking garage. The 168 x 90 foot parking structure's estimated cost of construction was \$180,000.00. The First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Detroit purchased the property in 1969.

**13. 1427-1439 Griswold**

In 1927 William Wreford, a livestock dealer, owned this two-story brick and block Colonial Revival-style structure on part of lot 65 of Section 8 of the Governor and Judges Plan. Restaurant entrepreneurs Thomas Constand and Kouzinia J. Seros leased the building in 1927.

During the 1920s to the late 1940s the native Greek Seros family operated restaurants on Grand River and Griswold. After a fire in 1943, the original facade of the building was remodeled. In 1945 Elias Bricolas bought the building from Wreford and continued to carry on the Seros food service business. Larry Mongo and James E. Beale bought the restaurant in 1985.

Originally containing two storefronts, 1439 Griswold now has a central entrance flanked by two large glass-filled openings. The first floor is divided from the second floor by a frieze and cornice; a denticulated cornice rests above the second story. The second story contains three regularly spaced double-hung sash windows.

**14. 1445 Griswold, Issac Agree Downtown Synagogue**

During the late 1920s, Joseph Lucking bequeathed the parcel of property upon which this building was subsequently built to his daughter, Mary Apel. On August 28, 1930, a permit was issued to Apel for the construction of a four-story 36'10" x 100 foot commercial building at an estimated cost of \$47,500.

Mary Lucking Apel was born in the family home on this property. Her husband, William Apel, founded William Apel & Son Coal Inc.; he died in 1932. During the late 1930s, Apel lost ownership of the building to the First Liquidating Corporation.

According to the 1934-37 Detroit City Directories, a ladies' clothing store, beauty salon, and

medical offices had occupied the building. In 1944, the Fingris Corporation bought the building for \$100,000 and extensively altered the interior and exterior for future occupants. In 1945, the partition between the two stores on the first floor was removed. Also, a finishing school for girls changed the interior again in 1953. Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue purchased the structure in 1964. The synagogue altered the floors and installed a drop ceiling on the first floor social hall.

The Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue was founded by Nathan and Charles Agree, in memorial of their father, businessman Alexander Isaac Agree, in 1934. The Agrees had been a prominent Jewish family in Detroit for over thirty years. After emigrating to the United States from Russia, the Agree family had made Connecticut their first home. In 1909, Alexander moved his family to Detroit. Nathan Agree had been a real estate investor and owner of the former Detroit Hotel. Brother Charles was the founder and president of his own architectural firm, Charles N. Agree, Incorporated. It remains the only existing synagogue in Detroit in its original building.

Sited on a triangular lot at the northern end of Griswold, the narrow end of the four-story concrete frame building on Clifford is just one bay wide, originally containing a single double-hung sash window. Above its granite base, the building is faced with limestone. The Griswold elevation, or front facade, is six bays wide. The design of the building is utilitarian in nature, with large curtain wall openings containing four double-hung sash windows within each bay of its concrete frame on the third and fourth floors. The fenestration of the first and second stories has been altered with the removal of the original windows and now has rectangular aluminum frames filled with colored windows. Details are spare and occur in the form of diamond shapes centered in the metal corrugated spandrels and metal vertical elements of the parapet wall.

### **Buildings: East of Griswold Street**

#### **15. 44 Michigan Avenue, Wayne County and Home Savings Bank, 1915**

Built on the site of the former Home Savings Bank building, the Wayne County and Home Savings Bank continued serving the working people of Detroit by making a specialty of small accounts. Between 1915 and 1931, another series of mergers and consolidations led to the formation of the First Wayne National Bank. This bank, with offices in this prime location facing the Campus Martius, had the distinction of operating the country's largest city branch banking system. Of its 180 branches, 67 were within the Detroit city limits.

The bank went into receivership in 1933 and was partially occupied by the receiver, appointed by the Michigan Comptroller of Currency and his staff. In 1948 the building was purchased by the Industrial National Bank; Industrial Bank and Manufacturers National Bank consolidated in 1955, the site became Manufacturers' Michigan-Griswold branch office. It became home to Independence National Bank, an African American owned establishment, in the late 1970s.

The eight-story, 1915 building was completely redesigned into a two-story modern structure c. 1965, its appearance unrecognizable from the original. Instead of classical references, the building is totally Modern in its appearance. The steel beam frame of the new structure is part of the steel frame supports of its predecessor.

Two-story arched, stark white concrete facing, large two story windows articulated in three vertical parts, the interior floor with railings seen through the glass at the second story level. The



cornice, composed of closely-set vertical slats, is set back slightly from the concrete curtain wall, A pair of revolving doors occupies the width of the central ground floor opening on the Michigan Avenue façade and a single set are the north of the Griswold façade.

**16. 37-45 W. Grand River, and 1218 Griswold c. 1895**

No permit has been found for the construction of this five-story solid masonry commercial structure on the southeast corner of Griswold and W. Grand River Avenue. It first appears in the 1895 City Directory as the Bennett Building.

On May 13, 1895, Detroit businessmen from the middle and upper classes formed the social organization they called the "Supreme Division of the Loyal Guard." The Pingree Division, No. 35, met every second and fourth Monday of each month in the Loyal Guard Hall at 1218 Griswold in this building. In 1900, The Supreme Division of the Loyal Guard purchased the property from Edgar K. Bennett. Between 1902 and 1903, the Loyal Guard remodeled the structure for meetings and commercial activities.

In 1911, the Supreme Division of the Loyal Guard sold the building to the Kern brothers, owners of the eponymous department store, who leased space to a number of retail stores and medical offices. From the early 1910s until after 1930, J.D. Mabley operated a clothing store at 17-19 Grand River, and the M. J. Baker Clothing Store was in the structure in 1932-33. From at least 1934 until 1940 Fintex, Inc. operated a men and boy's retail clothing store in the building. The First Church of Christ, Scientist rented the space in the early 1950s and purchased the structure from the Kern Realty Corporation in 1970.

In 1932 the store entrances were altered. The front store entrance was changed from the middle of the first floor to the corner of the building. Also, significant interior alterations occurred when the store space was remodeled into a Christian Science reading room in 1955. In 1972, all but one window on each of the third to fifth floors were filled with masonry.

**17. 25-35 W. Grand River, Stanley Building, later the Grand River Building**

This building is located on the south side of West Grand River between Woodward and Griswold Streets. On August 8, 1922, permit #36198 was issued to Sebastian S. Kresge, president of S.S. Kresge Company, for the construction of a ten-story brick and concrete structure. Originally named after Kresge's son Stanley, the building was designed by architects Brown, Derrick and Preston. The structure measured 60'1 x 59'6 long. Its estimated cost of construction was \$190,000.

Since 1912, when the S.S. Kresge five and dime store was established, Kresge had become a household name in Detroit. After working various jobs in his home state of Pennsylvania, Kresge became a traveling salesman in 1892-97. In 1897, he opened his first shop in Memphis, Tennessee with partner J.G. McCrory. Eventually, Kresge moved to Detroit in 1907 and worked with Charles J. Wilson until obtaining title to the firm in 1912. The building was later renamed the Grand River Building.

According to the Tract Index of Wayne County Records, Kresge leased the land upon which this building was constructed. The estate of Harriet Lathrup owned lot 69 of Section 8 of the Governor & Judges Plan until 1973, when Qwikey Donut & Coffee Shop purchased the land with the building.

The interior received minor alterations during the years that the Kresge Foundation owned the structure (1922-1973); the first and second floors of the exterior underwent dramatic change in 1976, obscuring the original appearance. Floors three through nine are starkly articulated by a single double-hung sash window between the pilasters that divide the facade into eight vertical bays. The tenth floor is composed of similar windows but without the pilasters. A denticulated cornice rests above a classical frieze of low relief. Side and rear elevations are utilitarian in appearance, with the concrete frame partially exposed.

#### **18. 1250 Griswold, National Loan & Investment Company**

The National Loan & Investment Company of Detroit purchased the property in 1910. On May 22, 1917 permit #15637 was issued for the construction of a brick building; its estimated cost was \$28,000.

The architectural firm of Rogers, Bonnah & Chaffee originally designed the building. James S. Rogers, Harrie W. Bonnah and Walter C. Chaffee were partners until Bonnah and Chaffee established their own firm. Bonnah was the president of Bonnah & Chaffee for over thirty years and one of the first architects to register in Michigan. A Detroit native, Chaffee, together with his partner, designed the Barlum Hotel, Barlum Tower, Farwell Building, Lawyer's Building, Indian Village Manor and several Detroit schools.

The National Loan and Investment Company remained owners until the late 1950's when the Surety Savings and Loan Association purchased the building. The interior and front entrance were altered in 1938. The front of the building was altered in 1955 when the occupancy had changed from a restaurant and bank to the Surety Savings and Loan Association.

The three story structure measures 31 x 100 feet and stands forty-four feet high. It has an unusually tall parapet wall, on which there are indications that the original cladding and cornice have been removed.

#### **19. 1214-1230 Griswold, Griswold Building**

The Griswold Building was constructed in 1929 according to the designs of the well known Detroit architect Albert Kahn as a speculative office building. It is of architectural significance as an interesting example of Albert Kahn's versatility in adaptation of the Romanesque to a large commercial structure. The Griswold Building was listed on the National Register in 1980, about the time it was converted to senior citizen housing.

The Griswold Building is a brown brick twelve-story rectangular office building directly across the street from Capitol Park. It fills its entire lot and is closely abutted by other buildings so that only two elevations, its front (west) facade and the upper part of the north elevation, are visible. The structure is composed of two parts - the base and the tower. The nine bays of the three-story base are faced in limestone and contain shops on the first and second levels. The U-shaped brick, nine-story tower with its central five bays set back from the face of the building is characterized by columns of windows. The fenestration consisted of unusual twelve-light steel-framed sash in rectangular openings, with the exception of the second and twelfth story windows, which have arched tops. Replacement windows of c. 1980 closely resemble the originals. Other than the decorative brickwork, exterior ornament is limited to the carved stone

masks above the second story windows and the stone plaques above the third story windows. No architecturally significant interior spaces remain.

#### **20. 1212 Griswold, Chamber of Commerce Building**

The building located on the east side of Griswold between State Street and W. Grand River Avenue was originally known as the Chamber of Commerce Building. On April 16, 1894, Benjamin Hyde, contractor for the City of Detroit, took out permit #367 for the construction of this thirteen-story structure, estimated to cost \$450,000. It was to be utilized for city government and business purposes. The Chamber of Commerce Building was Detroit's tallest building for a short while; completed in 1895, that distinction was lost to the fourteen-story Majestic Building in 1896. The building is one of two downtown structures built on steel frames in that same year, the first such structures in Detroit. The other does not survive, making this the oldest steel-frame tall building in the city.

The building was designed by Spier & Rohns, a leading Detroit architectural firm in practice during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Established in 1884, the firm was known for its Late Victorian period train stations and churches. Spier & Rohns received commissions from the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk railroads, among them the stations in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Niles, and Lansing. The firm also designed the locally designated Sweetest Heart of Mary Church in 1893.

In 1920 the city governmental functions relocated from the building and the Detroit Savings Bank, tenants since the opening, purchased the building. The bank made interior alterations to the upper three stories in 1938, and the mezzanine floor was altered in 1966. At some time, formerly round-arched window and entrance transoms were squared. A recent owner, the United Foundation, made major alterations to the interior of the entire building in 1986, including facing the former light court facing Grand River with glass and topping it with a peaked glass roof. Presumably, the original cornice of the building was removed in accordance with a 1958 City of Detroit directive.

Architecturally, the Chamber of Commerce Building is a handsome, early example of an all-steel framed structure. Richardsonian Romanesque in style, it is characterized by a straightforward treatment of stone and a regular arrangement of deep-set windows. Its substantial volume, massing and scale, slightly bowed outer window bays, and large round arched entrances are also indicative of this style. The footprint of the Chamber of Commerce building measures 100 x 88 feet.

#### **21. 1150 Griswold, David Stott Building**

In 1909 and 1914, David Stott, a leading Detroit manufacturer, purchased interest in lot 77 of Section 8 of the Governor and Judges Plan. After Stott's death in 1916, permit #41193 was issued to the Stott Realty Company on March 16, 1928 for the construction of a thirty-seven story 72 x 84 foot office building at an estimated cost of \$1,250,000.00.

David Stott was a well regarded business man who contributed to the commercial development of Detroit. Born in England in 1853, the Stott family emigrated to Detroit when David was thirteen. Soon after, Stott began work in the dairy business for a brief period until the flour mill industry captured his attention. Eventually, he became the president of David Stott Flour Mills Inc., Morehead Manufacturing, and Stott Realty. Stott was also secretary and treasurer of the Detroit Barrel Company and director of the Peninsular State Bank.

The Detroit architectural firm of Donaldson & Meier designed the steel-framed building with brick curtain walls. The firm was established in 1880 and was known for designing numerous Detroit churches, commercial buildings, and the Belle Isle Casino. The Stott Building is an outstanding example of the contemporary skyscraper of the period, obviously derived from the Saarinen design for the famous Chicago Tribune Tower competition. Simple in design, the tower building has a reddish granite base with an ascension of tan-orange bricks that cease at the twenty-third floor. The tone of the building changes from deep tan to buff as a series of setbacks rise with terra cotta parapets at the top of the building.

According to the 1930-35 Detroit city directories, the initial tenants of the building consisted of a variety of realtors, lawyers, medical doctors, and hair dressers. Also, The Stott Realty Company occupied the seventeenth floor.

## **22. 1134 Griswold, 27-31 State Street, Cunningham Building**

On December 6, 1928, druggist Andrew R. Cunningham and his son, Edward A. Cunningham, took out permit #53879 for the construction of two connected concrete commercial buildings adjacent to the east and south elevations of the David Stott Building. The Cunninghams took out a mortgage on the property from the Federal Bond & Mortgage Company in exchange for a leaseholder bond plan. The plan would use money from investors to financially back the construction costs of the buildings. The estimated cost for the two structures was \$492,632, according to the permit application.

Born in 1871, the senior Cunningham moved to Detroit from Charlevoix, Michigan when he was eighteen years old. After establishing his first business at Joseph Campau Avenue and Monroe Avenue, Cunningham proceeded to open chain drug stores throughout the city. During the Depression, the company was on the brink of collapsing. Although Andrew R. Cunningham had declared personal bankruptcy, he was able to transfer company stocks to his daughter-in-law and secretary, who returned them at a later date. In 1931, the company merged with the Economical Drug Company, with Andrew Cunningham as president.

Smith, Hinchman & Grylls designed the two buildings. This Detroit architectural firm was established in 1861 when Sheldon Smith and his son, Mortimer L. Smith, became architectural associates. Upon the death of Mortimer, the younger Smith continued under his own name. During the 1920s, the third generation of Smiths, Fred L. Smith, joined with consulting engineer Theodore H. Hinchman Jr. and architect H.J. Maxwell Grylls to form the present day firm. Notable skyscrapers designed by the firm were the modern Buhl, Guardian, and Penobscot buildings in downtown Detroit. Among other projects displaying the firm's versatility were Renaissance-style public buildings, Gothic-style churches, and Neo-Tudor mansions and clubs.

The three-story steel and brick structure on the east side of Griswold between Michigan Avenue and State Street was of modern design. The exterior had stone and marble detail and steel windows. The interior stairways were made with iron and concrete, and tile partitions lined the brick walls. The basement was utilized as a restaurant with the sub-level for mechanical storage. A Cunningham store and four other retail businesses occupied the first floor. The other two floors and mezzanine were used for sales space. Also, the building came equipped with both passenger and freight elevators. In 1970, a new store front was added, totally obscuring the building's original facade (Permit #42120, Jan. 7, 1970).

Fortunately, the interconnected steel and brick, six-story building at Twenty-seven to Thirty-one State Street shared the same modern facade as its companion on Griswold Street and has remained intact to this day. Its first floor was approximately twenty-one feet high and the other floors were twelve and one-half feet high. Above the four stories of windows in the facade are zigzags and other Art Deco motifs. The building was utilized as commercial space; three stores occupied the first floor and sales offices occupied the rest. Also, there were two passenger elevators and one combined freight/passenger elevator.

The building received minor alterations to the interior and exterior when the Colonial Department Store, a men and boys retail clothing distributor, were occupants. After Rite-Aid Pharmacy leased the buildings, the front entrance was covered with awnings.

### **23. 1416 Griswold**

Oswold Voight purchased the property from Abel Humphrey, et al, in 1873. Voight had operated a carriage and wagon factory and repair shop. After Oswald's death, his wife Minnie sold the building in 1919 to Walker Brothers Catering Company, which operated a lunch room there. They lost the building in 1934. Metro Life Insurance Co. sold it to Michael Luft, a salesman for Mohawk Liquor, in 1943, and his estate sold it in 1983. In its later years, the building was well known as the location of the Mayfield Chop House.

The building is a nineteenth century structure modernized in the second or third decade of the twentieth century with a new front and interior detailing. The two entrances are located at the sides of the front facade; a molded course divides the ground floor from the two above. Two large window openings occupy each floor of the building; raised brick panels below the third floor window openings divide the second and third stories. Label moldings top the third floor windows; the cornice has been removed. Until recently, the building's south elevation featured the ghosting of a painted sign that read, "Voight Carriages."

### **Criteria**

The proposed historic district meets all four criteria contained in section 25-2-2: (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, and (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: Kwaku Atara, Melanie A. Bazil, Robert Cosgrove, Keith A. Dye, Zene' Frances Fogel-Gibson, Edward Francis, Calvin Jackson, Harriet Johnson and Doris Rhea. The *ex-officio* members who may be represented by members of their staff, are Director of Historical Department, the Director of the City Planning Commission, and the director of the Planning and Development Department.

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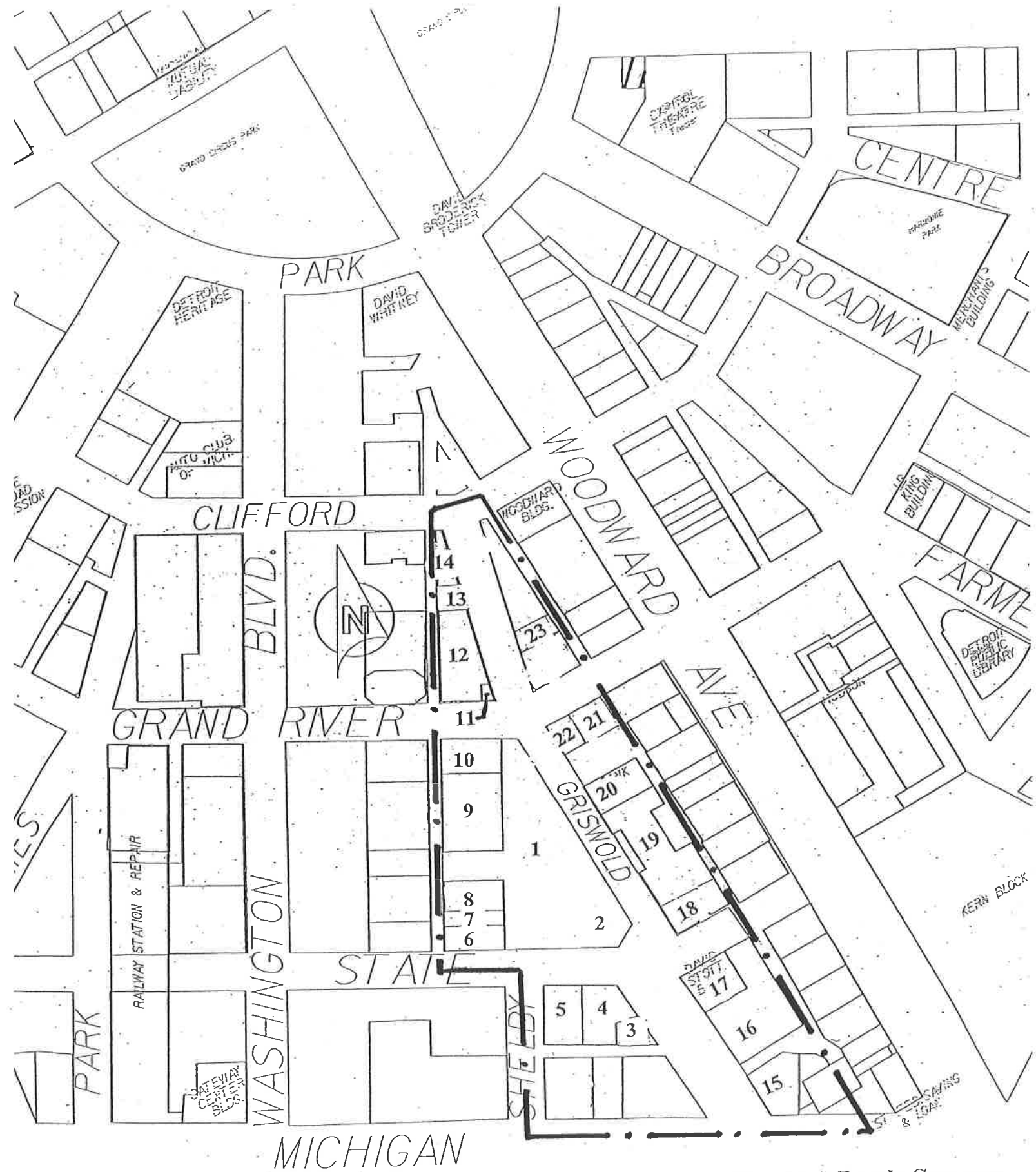
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### Capitol Park Survey

Building numbers are keyed to Capitol Park Historic District report.