Franklin Boulevard Historic District

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The Metropolitan Detroit Preservation League gratefully acknowledges the contribution of all those who have been a part of making the Franklin Boulevard Historic District Tour a success, including:

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W e l c o m e

The First Annual
Franklin Boulevard Historic District Homes Tour
Sunday, October 18, 1992

Sponsored by the Metropolitan Detroit Preservation League

Metropolitan Detroit Preservation League

800 Edison Detroit MI 48202 (313) 730-3521

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History of Pontiac

Pontiac is one of the oldest cities in Michigan. When the city was founded by Col. Stephen Mack and the Pontiac Company in 1818, it was part of an Indian Trading Post. In fact, the name Pontiac is taken from the famous Ottawa Indian chief. By 1820, Pontiac had become a significant trading post for area settlers. The Great Lakes provided a migration route less rigorous than an overland route, particularly for New Yorkers who came west after the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. Settlers came to Pontiac through Mt. Clemens and up the Clinton River. The Clinton River also provided a power source for the operation of the early businesses in the area including the first venture, a sawmill established by the Pontiac Company. The reduction of land prices from $2.00 to $1.25 an acre further enticed settlers into the Pontiac region. Michigan became a state in 1837 and Pontiac was incorporated on March 20, 1837.

In 1840, tragedy struck the young town as a fire destroyed 25 of the downtown business buildings. The village rebuilt and became a city in 1861. By 1877, the city had a population of 4,000 and was home to three newspapers, two banks, 60 business places, hotels, mills, foundries and factories.

Early industry relied on the water power provided by the Clinton River. Perhaps as an indicator of the city's automotive destiny, one of the largest industries of the 1800s was the carriage and wagon building business. By 1883, Pontiac had contributed to Michigan's

fourth-place ranking in the country's production of carriages and wagons. The city's location between Detroit and Flint, along with its history of industry, made it a logical choice as a site for automobile production. A number of auto manufacturers were located in Pontiac including Oakland Motor Car Company and Pontiac Motors. By 1910, William C. Durant had consolidated most of the local auto manufacturers to create General Motor Car Company of Flint.

As the importance of the automobile grew, so did Pontiac's population. In 1918, Woodward Avenue, connecting Detroit and Pontiac, was paved with funding from levied taxes and citizen contributions. However, due to the heavy volume of traffic on Woodward, it was only one year later that the street was widened for the first time. By 1929, Pontiac felt the first downward turn in growth. The Depression hit the city hard, as several large businesses closed. In 1961, shortly after its centennial celebration, urban renewal came to Pontiac. During this movement, the appearance of the city was drastically altered. A number of the older buildings were demolished and the Clinton River was declared an eyesore and buried beneath the city. Today, efforts are underway to return Pontiac's physical beauty, as well as give its citizens a sense of pride in who they are, and what their city has accomplished.

History of Franklin Boulevard

The Franklin Boulevard Historic District is one of three districts in Pontiac listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood known as the Franklin Boulevard Historic District was developed in stages as the population of Pontiac moved west, away from the downtown area. Henry Clay Ward, the son of businessman David Ward, who owned the house at 295 W. Huron, platted the final section of the neighborhood, Franklin Boulevard, in 1886. Leaving a permanent mark on the area, Henry Clay named the newly platted streets after himself, his wife Mary Day, and his eldest son Franklin.

Buildings in the Franklin Boulevard subdivision were required to be used for "...residences only...no saloon, store or other manufactory" and "that no dwelling less than two hundred thousand dollars shall be erected." The neighborhood boasted residents who were among the most influential families of Pontiac and included lawyers, bankers, doctors, industrialists and newspaper publishers.

Pontiac's remaining three oldest structures are included within an earlier section of the district. Located at 164 Lawrence Street is the Church of Christ, Scientist, once the home of the Edward C. Smith family. The house was purchased by the church and extensively remodeled to provide the auditorium. Next door is the Darrow-Hoyt house, the oldest surviving residential structure. The second-oldest house is the

large Italianate house known as the Myrick-Palmer house, located at 233 W. Huron Street.

These early houses were joined, over time, by a variety of structures ranging from small buildings on the eastern edge of the neighborhood to the large homes of Franklin Boulevard. Although Henry Clay Ward's subdivision of the area took place in 1886, there were two separate auctions to sell lots. This resulted in a unique blend of styles and buildings constructed from 1848 to 1930.

The Franklin Boulevard neighborhood was more than an interesting collection of buildings. The Boulevard was once known as the Boulevard of Roses. Henry Clay Ward spent a large sum of money in the beautification of the neighborhood. In 1892, the Detroit publication *International* described the area: ". . . the Boulevard of Roses is an avenue of which every resident of Pontiac feels a personal pride . . . Located on the west side of the Clinton River in one of the highest parts of the city, the Boulevard is 1,500 feet in length, 100 feet wide, and lined on both sides with trees and shrubbery, predominantly roses. The road is perfectly graded, has paved gutters and asphaltum walks six feet wide on each side. Gas mains, water and sewer pipes are ready for connection and the street is lit by electricity. On each side of the Boulevard are double rows of maples and elms."

Today Boulevard residents are returning the area, once again, to a place in which every Pontiac resident can feel pride.

The Oliver Leo Beaudette House

269 West Huron
Georgian Revival with Arts and Crafts Detail, 1917

This is the third house in the Franklin Historic District owned by a member of the Beaudette family, early industrialists who founded the Beaudette Body Company, a carriage manufacturer which eventually became part of Fisher Body. Leo, the original owner of this house, is the son of O.J. Beaudette, owner of 87 Franklin Blvd.

The Beaudette house is an elegant blend of several architectural styles. The symmetrical facade, placement of the window groupings, classical entrance porch, and Palladian window in the dormer represent characteristics of the Georgian Revival style. Evidence of the Arts and Crafts Movement appear in the use of contrasting materials to provide surface ornamentation on the home's exterior. An example of contrasting materials is seen in the color and texture of the stone belt course beneath the second story windows against the brick walls. The belt course also serves to emphasize the horizontal feel of the building. Stone is also used as quoins around the center window in the groupings on both sides of the main entrance. Inside the house, the number of built-in furniture elements as well as the use of iridescent Pewabic tile on the living room fireplace reinforce the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The building became the home of the Y.W.C.A. in the late 1950s. The O.L. Beaudette house is listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and on the State Register of Historic Places.

28

The Dr. J.J. Murphy House

28 Franklin Boulevard
Queen Anne Hybrid, Circa 1895

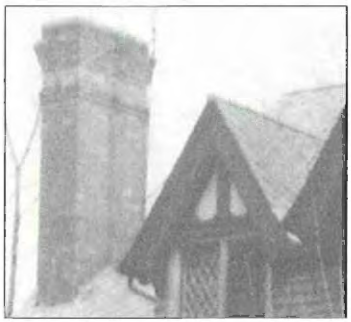
This home was built for Dr. J.J. Murphy and his wife, Emily, on land purchased from Henry Clay Ward. Mrs. Murphy held title to the property until 1944. Although the properties were restricted to residential use, it is believed that Dr. Murphy practiced medicine in the receiving parlor, and, at some point, removed the wall which separated the receiving parlor from the family parlor to create more space for his practice. Shortly after original construction, the Murphy family enlarged the front porch to enclose the porte cochere with a railing and added baroque-style ornamentation of terra cotta to the front porch gable.

In 1944, John Murphy, son of the original owners, sold the house to Dr. Conger, a dentist with offices on Saginaw Street. Dr. Conger resided here until the mid-1980s. The current owners have begun extensive restoration and remodeling. Fortunately, previous owners left original materials intact so that the current residents have not had to undertake stripping of the quarter sawn oak, mahogany, ash, and other woods used through the home. However, they have had to restore the porch (which was condemned by the city at one point), remodel the kitchen, and repair and paint the building facade. One surviving element of the original construction is a fixture located inside the front door which indicates the building was constructed with provisions for both gas and electric lighting.

58 The Andrew Lewis Moore House

58 Franklin Boulevard
Queen Anne Style, Circa 1900

Andrew Lewis Moore was a prominent attorney in the Pontiac area with the law firm of Baldwin, Jacokes and Moore. Well respected as an orator, Mr. Moore represented Oakland and Macomb counties at the Michigan Constitutional Convention of 1907, during which the state constitution was revised. Based on this experience, Mr. Moore was unanimously elected chairperson of the convention body which wrote Pontiac's commission charter. Mrs. Moore, too, was active in local society and served as president of the Women's Literary Circle in 1912. Both Moores were active in their congregation at First Methodist Church on South Saginaw, and, upon their deaths, the Murphy home became the parsonage for the church.



This Queen Anne house is an interesting combination of shapes and textures. The mass of the two-story, tower-like, cap-roofed bay window on the right is balanced by the openness of the wrap-around porch on the left. A sun porch, located on the first floor behind the front porch, features a Pewabic-tiled floor.

The building is currently undergoing restoration.

The Oliver Joseph Beaudette House

87 Franklin Boulevard
Prairie Style with Craftsman Elements, Circa 1914

Oliver Joseph (O.J.) Beaudette moved his family to this house from his Orchard Lake house in 1914. O.J. was the founder of the Beaudette Body Company, one of Pontiac's largest employers. Beaudette Body originally constructed carriages and, later, car bodies as part of Ford Motor Company. Eventually, the firm was sold to Fisher Body, which later became part of General Motors.

In 1952, the house was sold to the Pontiac Board of Education for use as office and storage space. It remained in their possession until 1981, when Chuck and Angie Johnson purchased the building and began the restoration process. In 1986, the men of Eta Phi chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity purchased the building for living quarters.

The 8,000 square-foot house sits on a one-half acre lot. Remains of the original fieldstone wall can be seen on the south side of the property. Original features of the house include oak cabinets, mahogany woodwork, ceramic and quarry tile floors, and a green tile roof with copper eaves. The fraternity has done extensive remodeling to accommodate its 29 tenants. Included in the work has been the creation of 17 bedrooms and other shared living spaces.

118

The George H. Hannum House

118 Franklin Boulevard
Prairie Style, Circa 1910

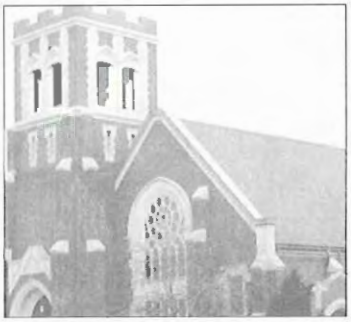
This house has a strong and lasting tie with the automotive industry of Pontiac. The first owner, George H. Hannum, was the president and general manager of the Oakland Motor Car Company. Other early owners included John Hoskins, manager of Pontiac Airport; Benjamin Jerome, an engineer with Pontiac Motor Car Company (formerly Oakland Motor); and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, he being employed by General Motors. The American Red Cross also owned the home at one point.

The Prairie Style building has undergone extensive remodeling by its current owners. For three years, between three and six skilled laborers worked steadily on the home repairing and replacing wiring, plumbing, plaster, woodwork, and windows along with reworking the heating plant. The interior features were inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's work with the Prairie Style and include leaded glass and extensive use of wood. Among the most notable elements are the two-story library with a hidden passage and a sun room with original Pewabic tile floor.

All Saints Episcopal Church

85 Williams at Pike Street
Gothic Revival Style, 1907

This church building is not the first structure located at the corner of Williams and Pike Streets. In 1857, the Zion Church constructed a frame building on the site and occupied it until 1905 when a fire destroyed the building. In 1907, the Zion Church became the All Saints Episcopal Church and laid a cornerstone for the new brick church. As the congregation grew over the next two decades, the need for more space became evident and the church constructed an addition, Stevens Hall, in 1927. Now a community center, Stevens Hall includes a gymnasium, stage, auditorium, kitchen, library, and parlor along with meeting rooms and staff offices. On Dec. 28, 1948, a second fire swept through the building, leaving only the exterior walls standing. The present building is a result of the subsequent reconstruction efforts.



All Saints Episcopal Church is filled with ornamental elements which portray Christian history and its study. Stained glass windows surround the walls of the building while the floor of the chancel and sanctuary are made of Pewabic Pottery tiles. Each tile depicts the symbol of a saint listed in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. The medallions located on the altar rails depict the vocations of the parishioners of the church, including one for wheelwrights. The 40 rank organ was completed in 1957 by the Aeolian Skinner Company of Boston and was voiced for both worship and concert use.

164 First Church of Christ, Scientist

164 West Lawrence
Greek Revival Style, 1836, Rear addition Circa 1920

The original house was constructed in 1836 by Thomas J. Drake, the owner of a local sawmill. Mr. Drake later established the *Pontiac Gazette* newspaper and served as the first prosecuting attorney of Oakland County from 1850-52. Mr. Drake was also appointed the first Provincial Governor of Utah. The Drakes never had children of their own, but in 1847, Mrs. Drake's widowed sister and nephew, Julia Talbot Smith and Edward Smith, moved into the suite that is now the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Edward became an engineer and played a part in laying the Union Pacific Railroad in the United States as well as the first railway in Peru. He lived most of his life in this house, eventually marrying and raising a large family.

In 1921 the Edward C. Smith house was put up for sale and the First Church of Christ, Scientist, which wanted an affordable building in a central location, made the purchase. Church members left intact the entire front part of the house, including the rooms and both Ionic-columned, Greek Temple front porches. The rest of the house was demolished to make way for construction of the current auditorium. The church remains a vital part of the district.

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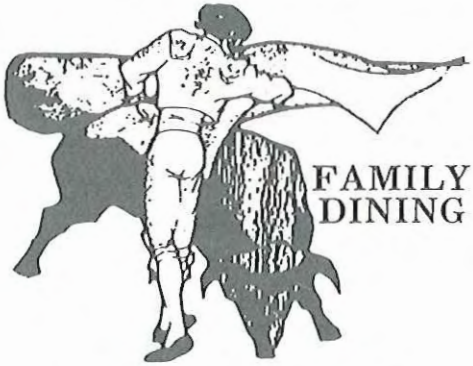

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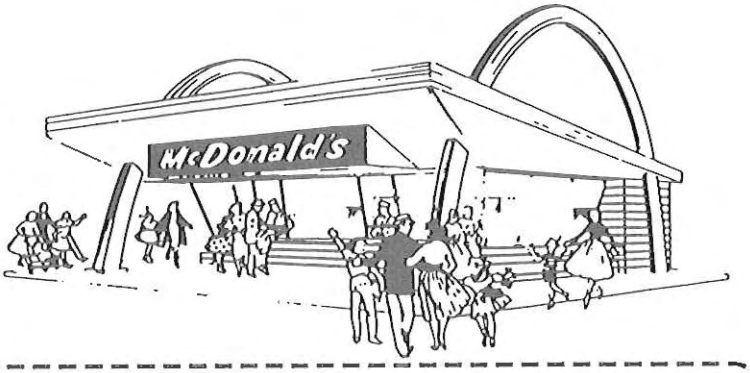

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We hope you enjoyed our home and would like to thank you for visiting Franklin Boulevard Historic District.

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Thank you for attending the First Annual Franklin Boulevard Historic Homes Tour. The Metropolitan Detroit Preservation League is a newly-formed organization of citizens who share a common commitment to preserving our past.

Our members believe that the key to a better future lies in appreciating the valuable contribution of those who came before us. Together, we seek to become an influential force in preserving and restoring the viability of historic homes and properties throughout the metropolitan area.

We hope you'll be a part of our exciting, growing network of preservationists!

Membership Application

Yes! I want to share in the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area. Here's my annual membership gift of:

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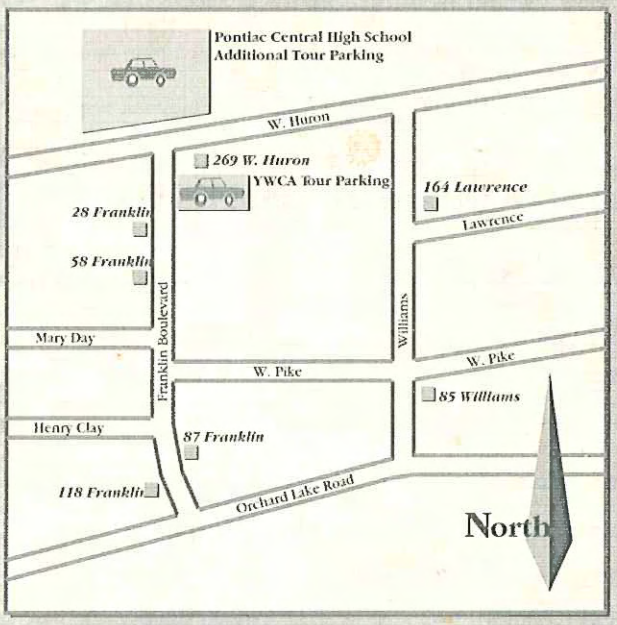
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