

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 PROPERTIES RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUALLY ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Twelve of the buildings included in the intensive level survey are recommended individually eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. These buildings are enumerated in Table 5.1-1. This table identifies both the building and the NRHP Criteria of Significance under which it is recommended eligible.

Table 5.1-1 Intensive Level Properties Determined NRHP Eligible

Current Name	Historic Name	Address	NRHP Criteria for Evaluation
US Com	Michigan Bell Telephone Building	146 W. Cortland Street	A, C
Vermuelun's Furniture	Masonic Temple	157 W. Cortland Street	A, B, C
Otsego Apartments	Otsego Hotel	102, 104-106 Francis	A, C
Jackson Business Development Center	Geo. Walcott & Sons	414 N. Jackson/201-215 Calhoun	A, C
Howard Feed Warehouse	Eldred Mill Powerhouse	138 Louis Glick Highway	A
Jackson Democratic Party Headquarters	N. G. Davis Grocery	201-205 S. Mechanic	A, B, C
Bloomfield Building	Bloomfield Building	236-244 S. Mechanic	A, B, C
The Elaine Apartments	People's National Bank	101 E. Michigan	A, C
—	—	105 E. Michigan	A, C
Holda's Appliances	N. S. Potter Building	528 E. Michigan	A, C
Hayes Hotel	Hayes Hotel	228 W. Michigan	A, C
Advantage Collision Repair, Inc.	Detroit, Jackson, & Chicago Railway Interurban Car Barn	115 N. Milwaukee	A

Nine of the identified resources are recommended eligible, in part, based on their architectural significance (Criterion C). Among these resources are the Claire Allen-designed Masonic Temple and the Otsego Hotel. Further investigation of the Otsego Hotel building may reveal that the architect, so far known simply as Malcomson, may in fact be the well known Detroit area architect, William Malcomson of the firm of Malcomson and Higginbotham. Other buildings recommended eligible under Criterion C are excellent examples of their architectural style, and have retained a high level of historic integrity.

Two of the buildings are recommended eligible under Criterion B, association with persons significant in our past. The former Masonic Temple with its association with celebrated Jackson architect, Claire Allen, meets this criterion. C. C. Bloomfield, one of Jackson's leading business men of the nineteenth century, is associated with the building he constructed, the Bloomfield

Building, and the building which housed his business during his early career, the N. G. Davis Grocery Store.

Each of the twelve properties identified for individual recognition on the NRHP are recommended eligible under Criterion A, association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. Two of the buildings, the Otsego Hotel and Hayes Hotel, were erected to accommodate the large number of visitors brought to Jackson, in part due to its role as a hub for numerous railroad lines. The former Detroit, Jackson & Chicago Railway Interurban Car Barn is also linked to Jackson's golden era of railroad travel, in this instance as part of the extensive interurban system that linked many of Michigan's communities. The Michigan Bell Telephone Building was the first structure constructed in Jackson to house a telephone office, while the Masonic Temple was the first building erected to specifically house the Masons. The Bloomfield Building was for years associated with entertaining and educating Jackson residents, serving over the years as the public library, Atheneum (or Majestic) Theater, Knights of Pythias hall, and Jackson Business University.

Criterion A is applicable for both the N. G. Davis Grocery Store and the building at 105 E. Michigan, which were constructed to accommodate commercial endeavors in the city during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The Geo. Walcott & Sons building similarly is representative of the industrial activities of the city during the same time period. Early twentieth century additions to the Jackson streetscape, the People National Bank building and the N. S. Potter building, represent the growing influence of the banking and automobile industries in the city. Finally, the Eldred Mill powerhouse is the last extant element associated with the flouring mill business that once thrived in the city.

5.2 POSSIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICTS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL STUDY

During the course of CCRG's initial survey of the project area and intensive level survey of 25 properties, an effort was made to define, in a preliminary fashion, the areas within the downtown area where historic districts may possibly exist. The areas identified are depicted on Figure 5.2-1, with detailed maps provided in Appendix E. To determine if historic districts are present in these areas and their boundaries careful examination of the landscape must be undertaken. This is more than an examination of the buildings, but should also consider things such as visual and physical boundaries, building density, and changes in land use patterns. The clues are provided by the city itself.

Physical and visual boundaries are one of the strongest clues in determining the edges of historic districts. Heavily traveled streets, elevated railroad lines, rivers, even large open areas, create both real and perceived boundaries. The four-lane wide Louis Glick Highway, for example, is a strong physical barrier dividing the areas north and south of its path. This is further reinforced by the adjacent railroad track, which adds the requirement at both Jackson and Mechanic streets that travelers must pass beneath the overpass, and giving the sensation that you are either leaving something behind, or entering into a new and somehow different space. Large expanses of open spaces, such as the extensive paved parking areas north of W. Pearl, create the feeling of separation or a boundary between the viewer and the more densely inhabited areas to the south.

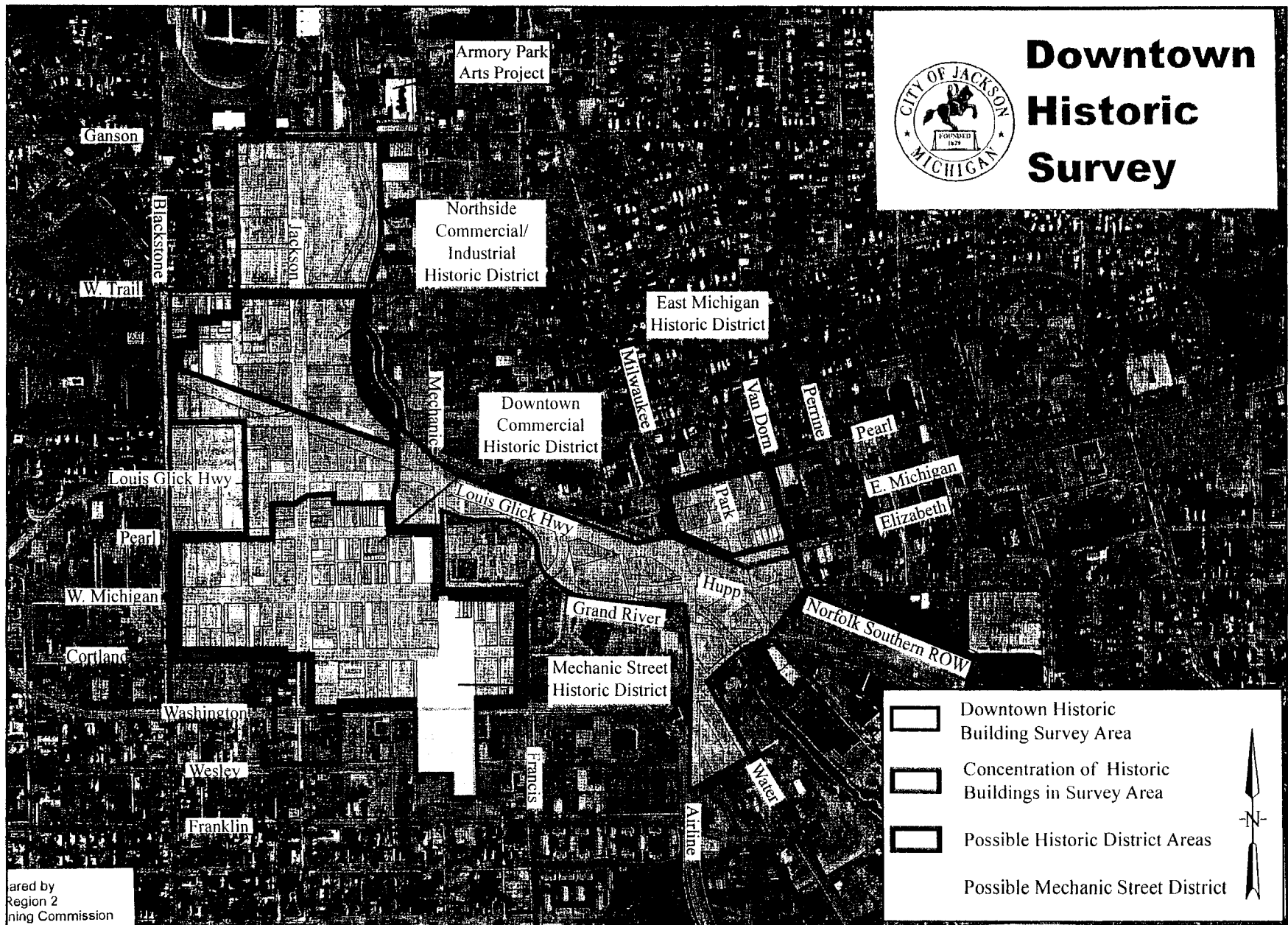


Figure 5.2-1. Possible Downtown Jackson Historic Districts

Building density is also an important consideration. A substantial portion of any historic district should consist of contributing resources. In other words, the boundaries of any historic district should restrict the district to those properties that support the areas of significance applicable to the district. This is not to suggest that a historic district boundary should snake around property lines, including only those contributing resources, but instead should be drawn in a logical fashion so as to limit the number of non-contributing resources. A well defined historic district includes as much property as is needed to support the areas of significance, and no more.

Finally, distinctive changes in the land use patterns should also be considered in determining the boundaries of a historic district. While it is not unusual to have a historic district of mixed residential and commercial properties, typically a single historic district would not include residential, commercial, and industrial properties. This is, in part, because there are often real or perceived boundaries between these functions, particularly industrial uses. There may also be the perception of boundaries due to changes in building scale or the density of the area.

Giving consideration to the landscape, it is clear that both physical and visual boundaries will assist in the definition of historic district boundaries. By eliminating large areas of open land, concentrations of buildings less than 50 years old, and those buildings that are isolated in the landscape a smaller historically cohesive district may be defined. This does not mean that those properties outside the redefined boundary are not considered eligible for historic designation, rather that they appear to be outside a concentration of buildings with the same areas of historic significance, and may more appropriately be considered to be individually significant.

The area identified between Francis and Blackstone streets with its concentration of historic buildings was further refined by CCRG to suggest the boundaries of two smaller possible historic districts, one focusing on the commercial center of the city and the second linked to the industrial activities generally found north of the railroad. The core city district also takes into consideration the proximity of commercial areas south of Washington excluded from the original survey area, and extends the district boundary along Jackson to Wesley and just south of Wesley on Mechanic Street.

As suspected when making the selection of the 25 properties for intensive level survey, the strongest area for the establishment of a historic district, either a NRHP historic district or locally designated historic district, is along Mechanic Street. It is CCRG's opinion that the boundaries of this possible historic district be extended south to include the St. Mary Star of the Sea building complex (church, rectory, kindergarten complex) on the east side of Mechanic, as well as the former Elks Temple, now PJ's Banquet Hall, on the west side of the street. The northern terminus of this district may be best located at Pearl Street, with large open areas and a major shift in building use and density north of the boundary.

Finally, the possible historic district identified on E. Michigan should also be slightly expanded. Extending the area several blocks to the east would incorporate a number of architecturally distinctive buildings constructed in the 1920s. The eastern boundary in this area takes into consideration the changing land uses, eliminating the newer structures associated with the large Foote Hospital complex.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The City of Jackson has a rich history. Fortunately, not only does the city have a number of written resources filled with the stories of the people and events that made Jackson, it also has a number of buildings that stand as witnesses to those same people and events. The Michigan Central Depot is a lingering reminder that Jackson was a transportation hub when trains ruled the economy. The former bank towers, now the Elaine Apartments and offices for Jackson County, and Jackson City Hall, clearly demonstrate the influence a few organizations had over city, including its skyline. Small buildings, like the old grocery store at S. Mechanic and Cortland remind us that real people lived here, with the same needs that the residents of today experience.

But, the buildings of Jackson are more than just physical reminders of its past, they can be the key to the city's future. The first step in recognizing the value of the building stock in the downtown area is this study. But this is only the first step.

NRHP nomination of those buildings identified as eligible, either individually or as contributing elements in a historic district, can provide economic incentives for their rehabilitation and restoration in the form of a federal tax credit. Inclusion in local historic districts opens the door even wider, providing an opportunity for a 25-percent tax credit on buildings restored following the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

More importantly, studies have shown that one of the key elements drawing both new businesses and residents to an area, is the presence of a historic buildings. One member of the much touted "creative class" noted that their reasons for returning to the city to live and work were the search for "established neighborhoods, historic architecture and ethnic mix" (Florida 2002:232). He expanded, saying, they were seeking places that are themselves a challenge and where they can help craft the future, or more simply "we want a place that's not done."

Historic buildings can also draw tourists to a community. In 1999, tourists spent 11.5 billion dollars in Michigan for transportation, lodging, food, and recreation (Michigan Historic Preservation Network 2002:12). Key among the tourist destinations were those locations that have heritage tourism events and/or sites such as historic site visits, historic district walking tours, and tours of both public and privately held historic structures, including hotels and bed and breakfasts. Several Jackson area locations have already been included in the Automobile National Heritage Area, but the potential exists to develop even more tourism destinations.

