

District Survey Form

JUL 30 1984

1 <u>DISTRICT</u> McKinley Boulevard Historic District	<u>SURVEYOR</u> DCD	<u>SHSW STAFF</u>	
	<u>CITY</u> Milwaukee	<u>COUNTY</u> Milwaukee	<u>SURVEY</u> West Side

FILM ROLLS/NEGATIVES

<u>STREETS:</u>	<u>NUMBERS:</u>	<u>STREETS:</u>	<u>NUMBERS:</u>
See Attached			

2 BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundaries of the McKinley Boulevard Historic District are described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the north property line of 2712 West McKinley Boulevard and the west curb line of North 27th Street; then south to the south property line of 2713 West McKinley Boulevard; then west along the south property lines of properties with frontage on McKinley Boulevard to the east curb line of North 34th Street; then north to the north property line of 3330 West McKinley Boulevard; then east along the north property lines of properties with frontage on McKinley Boulevard to the point of beginning, in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

3 BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The district includes both sides of McKinley Boulevard between North 27th and North 34th Streets, and expands north and south to the alleys on either side of McKinley. Characteristic of boulevard development between 1890 and 1915, the district is distinguished from the adjacent neighborhoods by a landscaped esplanade down the middle of the roadway. The residences are large, most architect-designed, and exhibit a high level of craftsmanship and materials. To the north, south and west of the district, the residential fabric changes in character to smaller houses, on smaller lots, with less attention to architectural design, details and craftsmanship. The east boundary is North 27th Street, a

4 SOURCES OF INFORMATION major four lane arterial, which McKinley Blvd. dead ends into.

A. City of Milwaukee Building Permits

B. Flower, Frank. History of Milwaukee. Chicago: Western Historic Co., 1881 p. 1002 (1896) General Ordinances of the City of

C. Milwaukee, Chapter 25, Sec. 61-66, pp. 734-35.

(1906) General Ordinances of the City of

D. Milwaukee, Chapter 25, Sec. 79-83, pp. 230-31.

Gregory, John G. ed. History of Milwaukee,

E. Wisconsin. Vol. II. Milwaukee: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1931 pp. 1060-61.

5 MAP REFERENCE Acreage: 12.6 acres
USGS quad: SW/4 Milwaukee 15 min.
scale: 1:24000

UTM references:	H.
A. 16422820/4766340	I.
B. 16422820/4766240	J.
C. 16422100/4766240	K.
D. 16422100/4766350	L.
E.	M.
F.	N.
G.	O.

6 OPINION OF NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY
date: _____ initials: _____

eligible not eligible unknown
 national state local



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
WISCONSIN

Rec'd JUN 27 1985

7 Description

General character, building types, styles, environment, important natural and man-made features, qualities that distinguish district from surroundings, nature of intrusions and generally excepted properties.

MCKINLEY BOULEVARD HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Character:

The McKinley Boulevard Historic District is a seven block residential neighborhood that includes the blocks on both sides of McKinley Boulevard, to the alleys, between North 27th and North 34th Streets. The district is situated in the northwest corner of the West Side survey area on flat, even terrain. Unlike Highland Boulevard the alignment and spacing of the blocks is consistent with the overall city street grid, but the district is distinguished by a landscaped esplanade that is forty feet wide down the middle of the roadway. The boulevard plan was an intentional effort by the Milwaukee Common Council to create public thoroughways that would reduce traffic volumes and create links to parks and other parkways. To emphasize this change in character, McKinley, which is discontinuous, is referred to as an "avenue" east of North 26th Street and as a "boulevard" west of 27th Street.

The district is exclusively residential in character and is comprised of 93 buildings. There are 86 residences, six carriage barns and one nursing home. There are no intrusions or non-contributing buildings and only one vacant lot. The buildings are either 2 or 2-1/2 stories in height and are constructed of either wood or brick with some terra cotta, stucco, cut and cast stone used as trim. The residences were all originally built as either single-family or duplex houses, but beginning in the 1930s many of the larger residences converted to multi-unit dwellings. This phenomenon along with the conversion of 3014 West McKinley into a nursing home has not detracted from its visual character.

Because the district is virtually intact, it represents an accurate image of an early 20th century neighborhood that developed within a short period of time. The district was built to 95% capacity between 1901 & 1910 with over half of the residences built between 1906 and 1909. This development pattern resulted in not only a streetscape of consistent setbacks, but little deviation in the architectural styles and house forms used. The variations that do occur are a result of the lot size. The blocks between North 29th and North 32nd Streets were subdivided with slightly wider lots. This enabled larger houses to be built, often with a carriage barn. This part of the district is the most diverse in terms of style and form. At the west end of the district between North 32nd and North 34th Streets, all of the housing was originally built as duplexes. Here the fabric is the most dense as well as the most repetitious in form and design.

Generally, the houses are sited on the front half of the lot with ample front yards and extensive backyards. Formal landscaping is almost non-existent on most houses, but that which does occur is limited primarily to foundation shrubbery and an occasional mature deciduous or conifer tree. Almost always at the rear of each lot is a garage or carriage barn that is reached from the alley, but in some cases it is reached by a side drive from the street. Between the side walk and the curb is a small parkway that was once planted with a row of elm trees. Dutch elm disease killed these trees and the easement is now planted with young maple and locust trees. The esplanade is largely a grassy area that is planted with trees and formal bush and flower combinations to produce a park-like setting. The esplanade is maintained by the city.

Architectural Character

The architectural character of the district is determined by a mix of early-twentieth century single-family and duplex houses. The Queen Anne house form of the 1890s was used to a large

8 Significance

Areas of significance

architecture: Late Nineteenth Century
Early Twentieth Century
Residential Architecture

history: Community Planning/Landscape
architecture

Period of significance: 1895-1930

Historical development and statement of significance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The McKinley Boulevard Historic District is significant for both its architecture and its historical associations. It is architecturally significant for its fine early twentieth century domestic architecture. It is historically significant as part of an early city planning phenomenon which created a system of landscaped boulevards to serve as links between the major parks and to restrict undesirable traffic. This resulted in residential streets that were distinguished from the established street grid and featured high quality residential architecture. The city's boulevard system was later incorporated into a county-wide park and parkway plan proposed by the eminent Charles B. Whitnall.

Architecture

The architecture of the district illustrates a sampling of the major styles used in residential designs in the first decade of the twentieth century. Represented in the district are examples of the Arts and crafts, Colonial Revival and Neoclassical styles. It also illustrates how Milwaukee's German-born and trained architects interpreted the prevailing American architectural trends to satisfy their own and their clients' aesthetic needs for substantial, solid-looking, well-constructed buildings. Though not as "Teutonic" in character as other Milwaukee German-American neighborhoods, the district possesses a building stock that exhibits a high level of craftsmanship and a particular quality that distinguishes it from the great body of West Side building fabric that lies adjacent to it. The list of architects who designed houses in the district is a Who's Who of German-American architecture firms in Milwaukee: Henry Messmer & Son, John Menge, Jr., Fred Graf, Otto C. Uehling, Charles F. Ringer, Charles Tharinger, Julius Leiser and Charles Holst, and Herman W. Buehning and Gustave A. Dick.

Because the district was built to near capacity between 1901 and 1910, there is only one general period of architecture represented. In form, the majority of the residences are rectangular boxes with massive cross-gabled roofs that were highly adorned with a variety of architectural details representing different styles. A full porch often extends across the front of the house repeating the same motifs found on the body of the house. This was true of the larger single-family residences as well as the duplex houses. Throughout the district, there was a strong tendency to employ elements from the Arts and Crafts style. A style of architecture that stressed honesty in construction and materials, it was popular with German-Americans seeking an "old World" look for their homes. The end gable designed with half-timbering and stucco, for example, was common in the district, probably because it was reminiscent of the German medieval half-timbering.

The other principal design influences in the district were derived from the Colonial Revival and the Neoclassical. The Colonial Revival adapted well to the basic rectangular house form favored in the early 1900s and lent itself to frame construction. Even so, the Colonial Revival was not a widely popular style in Milwaukee. The Edward Wild House (1903) at 2932 West McKinley (MI 105-5) represents one of the best preserved examples of the style in the district. An example of the Neoclassical style is the Willits/Sternemann House (1903) at 3112 West McKinley (MI 105-16).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (Continued)

- F. Milwaukee City Directories, 1900-1930.
- G. Milwaukee Sentinel Index, 9/21/1852; 10/7/1852; 6/26/1848; 9/21/1852; 10/7/1852; 11/2/1861; 7/7/1864; 4/25/1866; 6/2/1873; 4/18/1886; 4/19/1886; 4/25/1866; 5/8/1887; 5/22/1890.
- H. Simon, Roger D. The City Building Process: Housing and Services in New Milwaukee Neighborhoods 1880-1910. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978.
- I. Stover, Frances. "Trotting Races at Cold Spring Park." Historical Messenger, X (June, 1954), 10-13.

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Continuation Sheet: MCKINLEY BOULEVARD HISTORIC DISTRICT

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extent in many of the structures, but the overall designs looked forward to the Arts & Crafts, Prairie, Georgian Revival and Neoclassical styles of the period. A characteristic of the district was the tendency to incorporate Teutonic inspired features into the designs. This reflected not only the ethnic heritage of the district, but the German-oriented backgrounds of the architects who prepared the plans.

The building fabric in the district is very consistent. There are common setbacks, a sameness in height and bulk, and similar materials were often used. These factors have produced a well-blended streetscape that gives the appearance of architectural homogeneity. This was partly because of the street's very short development period and the fact that the styles that were used borrowed heavily from similar design features. Even though a broad range of architectural styles is absent, there are enough variations of the represented styles that McKinley Boulevard is one of the city's best streets of early 20th century residential architecture.

The oldest structure in the district is the Edwin F. Rohn House at 2908 West McKinley (MI 104-36). Built in 1901, it set the trend in house design that would dominate future construction. It is a basic 2-1/2 story, rectangle with a massive cross-gabled roof. The facade is highly ornamented with Neoclassical and Arts & Crafts elements. The stuccoed gable end is designed with half timbering indicative of the emerging Elizabethan Revival style. At the attic level is a band of three windows divided by Corinthian order pilasters. Across the front of the house is a full porch with a modillioned cornice supported by battered porch posts. The house was designed by the architectural firm of Messmer and Son, which also provided plans for a significant number of other residences in the district.

In subsequent years the half-timbered/stuccoed gable end would appear in a large number of district's residences. Identified with the Medieval Revival movement of the 1890s, there was a boldness in their design that appealed to the Germanic home owner. Other examples of this mode include the Henry Has House (1902) at 2920 West McKinley (MI 105-4), the Fred Lichfeldt House (1907) at 2923 West McKinley (MI 122-28) and the Richard Bucholz House (1905) at 3120 West McKinley (MI 105-20). In these residences the gabled ends were the dominate design feature. The bodies of these structures exhibited a wide range in their treatments. There was a significant use of masonry materials including brick, stone and terra cotta. The George Zimmermann House (1905) at 3102 West McKinley (MI 105-14) was a departure from the front gable form. This residence is a side-gable block with two massive dormers facing the street. Built entirely of masonry construction, except for the wood trim, this structure is one of the few examples of this type in the district.

The other stylistic influence in the district were the Colonial Revival and the Neoclassical. Though not as prolific as the residences that used Medieval motifs, their presence in the district reflected the major architectural trends of the period. Because the basic rectangular box could be adorned in almost any style, the Colonial Revival

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was the next most popular decorative choice. The gable end was often sheathed with either clapboards or shingles and with modillions in the eaves and a Palladian style window in the attic. Full porches extended across the front of the house supported by classical order columns. The Edward Wild House (1903) at 2932 West McKinley (MI 105-5) exemplifies the Colonial Revival design trend found in the district. A more formal adaptation using the same details is the Neoclassical Willits/Sternemann House (1903) at 3112 West McKinley (MI 105-16). Distinguished by a Ionic order pedimented portico, it is one of the few temple front residences in the city.

Pivotal/Contributing/Non-Contributing Buildings - McKinley Boulevard Historic District

The attached list classifies all of the buildings in the district as pivotal, contributing or non-contributing buildings.

Pivotal buildings are structures that fall within the period of significance for the district, which was from 1900 to 1930 when it was a prestigious residential area, and are essential to the maintenance of the district's historic character. Generally these are the most representative or architecturally distinguished buildings, and/or possess the greatest known historical significance.

Contributing buildings are structures that were built within the districts period of significance and contribute to the historic character of the district as representative examples of the architecture of the period and/or for their associations with people or events of minor or unknown historical historical significance.

There are no con-contributing buildings in the district.

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Community Planning and Landscape Architecture

The establishment of the boulevard system in Milwaukee served several civic purposes. As needed landscaped public open area, they provided breathing space in densely-built residential areas and served as linkage between the municipal parks. By prohibiting undesirable traffic, they encouraged a better class of residential construction along their lengths. Designated by Common Council Ordinance, the boulevards had landscaped esplanades down the middle of the roadway, and vehicles carrying heavy loads, such as building materials, dirt, manure and farm produce were banned from using them. The esplanades were constructed at the expense of the abutting property owners, but subsequent improvements and maintenance was undertaken by the city Department of Public Works.

The boulevard plan was one of the more ambitious early efforts at city beautification by the municipal government. Seen as an adjunct to the establishment of the municipal park system that had begun with the construction of Washington Park (1892) on the West Side and Lake Park (1895) on the upper eastside, the Common Council declared Highland Avenue between North 27th and North 35th streets as the city's first boulevard in 1896.

The next boulevards created after Highland were McKinley Boulevard between North 27th and North 34th Streets, and Newberry Boulevard between Lake and Riverside Parks in 1906. Both figured prominently in achieving the city's goal of creating much needed open space in the tightly developed street grid that had resulted from the city's pre-Civil War subdivision codes.

These first boulevards were the precedent for the county-wide park, parkway and boulevard system proposed and executed under the guidance of Charles B. Whitnall after 1923. As a result of his efforts, Milwaukee has one of the largest systems of parks, parkways and boulevards of any major city in the county.

A characteristic common to all of the boulevards, with landscaped esplanades, was their development into exclusive residential streets lined with costly residences. This created unique pockets within the established street grid that could be distinguished from the adjacent residential areas. McKinley Boulevard was no exception to this phenomenon.

Associated History

Prior to the development of McKinley Boulevard as a residential street it had been part of a larger tract of land known as Cold Spring Park. As one of the largest and longest-lived private parks on the West Side it covered the equivalent of 16 city blocks between North 27th and North 35th Streets, and West Juneau Avenue and West Vliet Street. Although the 60-acre tract was two miles from the central city it was accessible from

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two plank roads. A grove of trees stood on the grounds and the whole area was surrounded by a forest.

Throughout its early history, Cold Spring Park was importantly associated with the sport of horse racing. Published references to racing at the site go back to at least 1848 when trotters were said to have run there. The Wisconsin Regional Agricultural and Mechanical Association used the park for a race track in 1866. For a few years the Milwaukee Driving Park Association, which had been organized on March 4, 1877, also met there, but people failed to patronize the club to the extent expected and it eventually dissolved. Driving clubs were popular in the 1860s and 1870s among the well-to-do. Members would hold invitational meets throughout the year at which trotting races took place.

A hotel, the Cold Spring House, located adjacent to the park, accommodated visitors and drivers before and during races. It was notorious for its gambling, cockfights, cortesans, and dances.

The size and location of Cold Spring Park made it ideal for other uses in addition to horse racing. It was the location of the second annual fair and exhibition of the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society held in Milwaukee, October 6th through 9th in 1852. The first State Fair had been held in Janesville in 1851 and thereafter became an annual event, except for a three-year lapse during the Civil War between 1861 and 1863. For the Fair, Cold Spring Park was graded and the entire area enclosed with a board fence. The fence followed the perimeter of the race track while the interior was devoted to exhibition tents and cattle pens. The spring and three newly-dug wells supplied water for animals and visitors. Benches were placed among the trees to accommodate fairgoers. An estimator 10,000 to 20,000 people were said to have attended. Besides agricultural items, displays were set up by manufacturers to promote new products. Subsequent fairs were held at Watertown, Janesville, Madison and Fond du Lac, as well as Milwaukee. When in Milwaukee, the fair alteres between sites on today's Wisconsin Avenue and Cold Spring Park, which was used in 1870, 1871, 1872, 1876, and from 1886 to 1891.

During the Civil War, Cold Spring Park became the site of Camp Washburn, housing the 2nd Calvary, 30th Infantry and 39th Regiment. This was one of three sites in Milwaukee chosen for military encampments during the Civil War. Requirements of camp life resulted in the construction of barracks, a suttler's shop, a guard house, and auxillary structures. Muddy ground forced the 30th infantry to move to Camp Reno near the lake-front in 1864. In September, 1865 the camp structures were destroyed by fire in November of that year. By April 1866, the Wisconsin Agricultural and Mechanical Associations was again operating the park as a race track.

Cold Spring Park disappeared after 1891, when it was subdivided into house lots. The land had descended from Michael Dousman to his married daughter, Mrs. E.B. Wollcott, in 1854. The Wollcott's transferred the parcel to their daughter marion, wife of Col.

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Theodore Yates who in turn sold half of the park to her husband in 1887. Although the Wisconsin Agricultural Society had been considered a likely purchase of the tract to provide a permanent home for the State Fair, this did not materialize because Yates' asking price of \$4,000 per acre was more than the Society could afford. Yates had indicated a reluctance to sell to the Society anyway due to pressures for housing development in the area. Yates eventually sold the acreage and it was subdivided and built over beginning in the late 1890s. McKinley Boulevard was laid out through the center of the old Cold Spring Park as the focal point for the new subdivision.

A survey of city directories revealed that during its peak from 1900 to 1930, the district was overwhelmingly German-American in its ethnic composition. Most of the residents worked in or near the central business district. These were upper-middle income residents whose economic mobility allowed them to live great distances from the job centers in what was considered to be a suburban setting at the time. Downtown was easily reached by the electric streetcar line which had been in operation since 1894. The families who lived in the district were characteristic of the general West Side demographic patterns. City directories revealed that a large percentage of the district residents had previously lived in the area west of North 17th Street between Kilbourn and Highland Avenues. Their previous neighborhoods, almost exclusively German-American, contained a mixture of social and economic classes. As the succeeding generations prospered, new neighborhoods like McKinley Boulevard became increasingly segregated based on income, occupation and social standing. Ethnic association still held strong, however. This was the case on McKinley Boulevard which attracted the upper-middle income German-American business executive and professional class of the early twentieth century.

Among the residents who lived in the district were a number of businessmen who were presidents of their own small companies. These included Theo Sternmann, 3002 West McKinley, a wholesaler of leaf tobacco; Edward Wild, 2932 West McKinley, a wholesaler of crockery; and Fred Leypoldt, 2801 West McKinley, whose company produced carbolineum wood preserver. The professionals who resided here included attorneys Leopold Hammel, 3009 West McKinley, and Fred Westfahl, Jr., 3001 West McKinley; and bank manager Charles H. Mueller, 2902 West McKinley. In addition there lesser merchants such as jeweler Edwin F. Rohn, 2903 West McKinley, furniture dealer Dewey, 2817 West McKinley, and baker Huldrick Franke, 3019 West McKinley. A number of building contractors also lived here including Richard Buchholz, 3120 West McKinley, Henry Hase, 2902 West McKinley and George Zimmermann, 3102 West McKinley.

McKinley Boulevard Historic District Pivotal Structures

West McKinley Boulevard

2801	123/3
2802	104/30
2815	122/36
2824	104/33
2902	104/35
2908	104/36
2914	104/37
2920	105/3
2921	122/28
2932	105/5
3001	122/25
3002	105/10
3009	122/24
3019	122/22
3102	105/22
3102	105/14
3112	105/16
3120	105/20
3133	122/14

McKinley Boulevard Historic District Inventory

West McKinley Boulevard

2712	C	104/26
2713	C	123/7
2718	C	104/27
2719	C	123/6
2725	C	123/5
2726	C	104/28
2728	C	104/29
2801	P	123/3
2802	P	104/30
2810	C	104/31
2811	C	123/2
2815	P	122/36
2816	C	104/32
2821	C	122/35
2824	P	104/33
2827	C	122/34
2830	C	104/34
2831	C	122/33
2902	P	104/35
2903	C	122/32
2907	C	122/31
2908	P	104/36
2914	P	104/37
2915	C	122/30
2920	P	105/3

West McKinley Boulevard Cont.

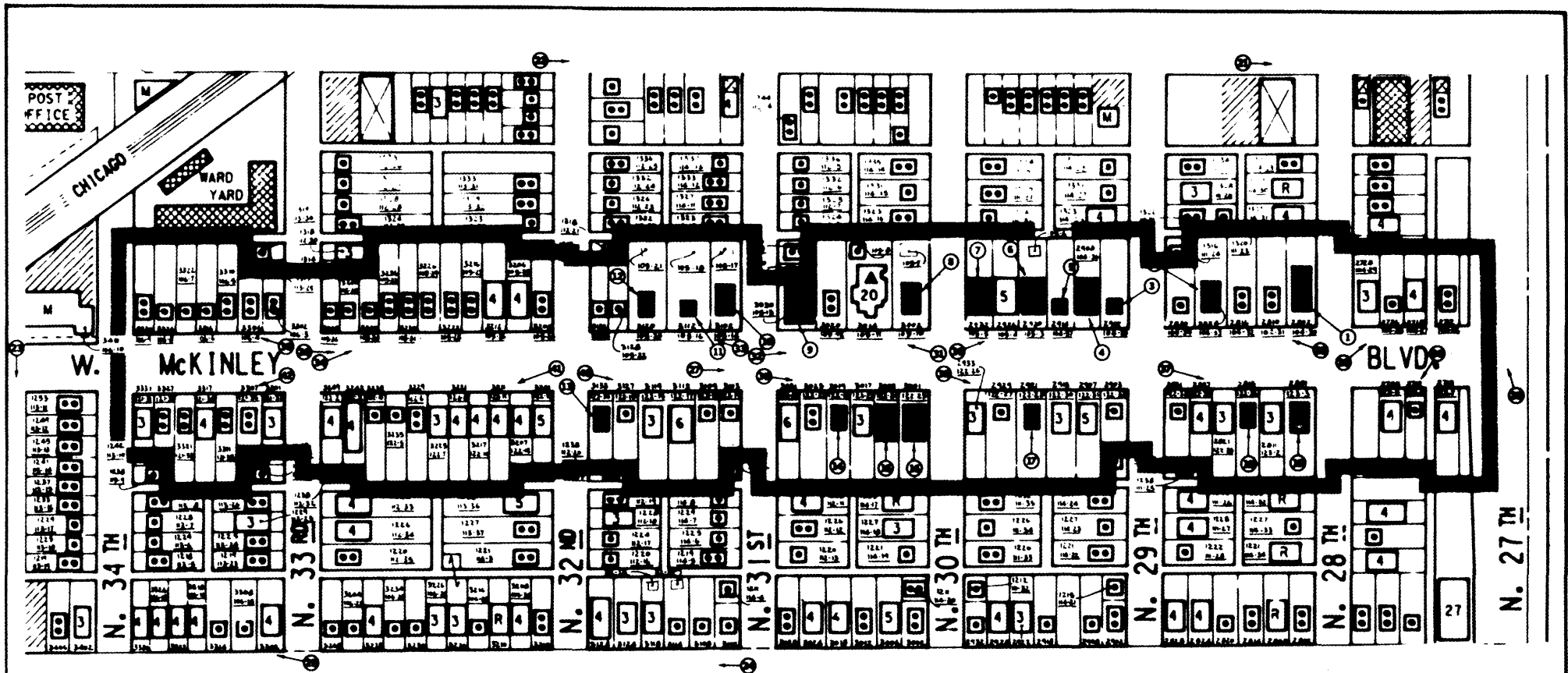
	C	105/6
2923	P	122/28
2926	C	105/4
2929	C	122/27
2932	P	105/5
2933	C	122/26
3001	P	122/25
3002	P	105/10
	C	105/7 (carriage house)
3009	P	122/24
3014	C	105/11
	C	105/8
3017	C	122/23
3019	P	122/22
3020	C	105/12
3023	C	122/21
3030	C	105/13
3031	C	122/20
3102	P	105/14
	C	105/17 (carriage house)
3103	C	122/19
3109	C	122/18
3112	P	105/16
	C	105/18 (carriage house)
3113	C	122/17
3119	C	122/16
3120	P	105/20
	C	105/21

West McKinley Boulevard Cont.






3127	C	122/15
3128	C	105/22
3132	P	105/23
3133	P	122/14
3200	C	105/24
3201	C	122/13
3206	C	105/25
3207	C	122/12
3211	C	122/11
3212	C	122/11
3216	C	105/26
3217	C	122/10
3221	C	122/8
3222	C	105/28
3225	C	122/7
3226	C	105/29
3229	C	122/6
3230	C	105/31
3235	C	122/5
3236	C	105/32
3239	C	122/4
3240	C	105/34
3243	C	122/3
3244	C	105/35

West McKinley Boulevard Cont.

3248	C	105/36
3249	C	122/2
3301	C	121/37
3302	C	106/3
3306	C	106/4
3307	C	121/36
3310	C	106/5
3311	C	121/35
3316	C	106/6
3317	C	121/34
3321	C	121/33
3322	C	106/7
3326	C	106/8
3327	C	121/32
3330	C	106/9
3331	C	121/31



LEGEND (WITHIN BOUNDARY)

-  PIVOTAL STRUCTURE
-  CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
-  NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
-  PHOTO CODE
-  ADDRESS

MC KINLEY BOULEVARD HISTORIC DISTRICT