

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100003226

Date Listed: 12/10/2018

Property Name: Grande Ballroom

County: Wayne

State: MI

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

12-10-2018
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Area of Significance

Commerce is hereby deleted as an area of significance.

The commercial importance of the street level businesses is not established in the narrative, and the commercial aspect of the ballroom, either as a dance hall or as a rock venue is not established.

Section 8: Period of Significance

The Period of Significance is hereby amended to 1928; 1966-1972.

The beginning of the period coincides with property's architectural significance under Criterion C. The period 1966-1972 represents the building's significant association in Entertainment/Recreation and Social History as an epicenter for Detroit's rock and roll countercultural scene, beginning with the opening and closing of the MC5's primary career. While peaking in 1970 as a venue, the Grande ballroom continued to be a local venue for bands

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up until the final MC5 show at the end of 1972. The Grande Ballroom is recognized by both industry insiders and the casual fan as an exceptionally important venue in the city's rock and roll history.

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Grande Ballroom

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 8952-8970 Grand River Avenue

City or town: Detroit State: Michigan County: Wayne

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

<u>Brian D Conway</u>	<u>10/22/18</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>SHPO</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

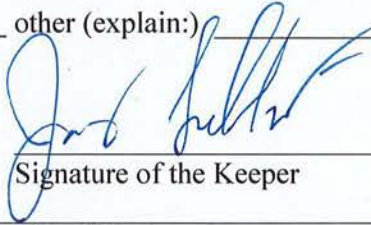
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

12.10.2018
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION/CULTURE: music facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Mediterranean Revival

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—

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Tile

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Grande Ballroom (pronounced Grand-ee) is a two-story reinforced concrete-frame commercial building designed in the vocabulary of the late nineteenth and early twentieth revival styles, employing Spanish Revival and Mediterranean Revival stylistic influences. The building is square in plan, the first floor containing store spaces while the second contains the ballroom. The first-floor storefronts have been much altered from their original design and are now covered by plywood boards or filled in with cement block, but the second story remains largely intact, if in a state of disrepair. The second story walls are faced with yellow-buff brick pierced by round-arch window openings with limestone friezes, with repeating arch patterns in their lower edges, below low tiled parapets that give the impression of a Spanish Revival or Mediterranean Revival tiled roof, and cap the two street-facing facades of the building. The ballroom's three street-facing corners feature a slightly projecting tower, with stone quoined corners below a low octagonal cap. A star feature of two squares superimposed at a forty-five-degree angle and containing an urn design occupies the center on each face. Each tower is topped by a low tiled hip roof with flagpole rising from its peak. An entrance located at the rear end of the side street façade leads up to the second-story ballroom with its dance floor and stage and ornamental plasterwork largely intact despite years of disuse.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Grande Ballroom is a two-story commercial and ballroom building located at 8952 Grand River Avenue, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan. The building stands at the northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Beverly Court in the Petoskey-Otsego neighborhood. The block on which the building is situated is of a right triangle shape and bounded by Joy Road to the north, Beverly Court to the southeast, and Grand River Avenue to the southwest. Aerial photography

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depicts the Grande Ballroom situated within a larger neighborhood in the form of an equilateral triangle bounded by Grand River Avenue, Joy Road, and Mackinaw Street.

Grand River Avenue is a seven-lane wide roadway that runs on a northwest axis from downtown Detroit to the suburbs and beyond. It intersects with Joy Road which proceeds to northeast on an approximate forty-five-degree angle, and to the south at nearly ninety degrees. Beverly Court is a two-lane side street lined with early twentieth-century residential development. The intersection of Grand River Avenue and Joy Road is the historical commercial center of the Petosky-Otsego neighborhood.

Historical aerial photographs show that commercial structures lined Grand River Avenue as late as 1961 (the last year they are available for this area of the city). Likewise, historical streetscape photographs depict the stretch of Grand River Avenue between Beverly Court and Joy Road at the time the Grande Ballroom was constructed. In 1928 two-story marquees for the Grande, the Riviera Annex theater, the Mirror Ballroom, and the Grand Riviera Theater lined the north side of the road. Power lines for Detroit's elaborate streetcar system spanned the roadway. Multi-story buildings and smaller marquees and placards lined both sides of the street. A photograph that appears to have been taken in the late 1950s depicts four full lanes of traffic traveling east and two traveling west. The streetcar lines are gone, but the density of development remains. As of 2018, many of these buildings have been demolished, and many of those that remain have suffered from prolonged disinvestment. Those that were demolished were either replaced with contemporary buildings or the lots were left vacant. While the blocks opposite the Grande Ballroom are almost completely vacant, the block on which the ballroom sits is reasonably occupied, if significantly altered from its historical appearance. According to the 1950 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map two one-story buildings (8974 and 8986-8994) were located adjacent to and north of the Grande Ballroom. These buildings replaced earlier, two-story buildings, one of which housed the City of Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No. 42. These utilitarian, mid-twentieth century buildings are likely those that stand there today. Further north, the two-story S. S. Kresge Building at 9008-9014, constructed circa 1927, is also extant. Between these two buildings was the three-story entrance and lobby to the Riviera Annex Theatre. The site of the Annex theater is now a gated parking lot. The remainder of the block to the north has been demolished, and the several lots are now solely occupied by what is either a defunct gas station or diner.

Historically, residential development flanked the Grande Ballroom and the rest of the commercial district to the north and south of Grand River Avenue until Interstate 96 was constructed in the 1970s. The highway separated the residential areas to the south of Grand River Avenue from the commercial strip. The housing stock dates from the first quarter of the twentieth century.

While the residential areas contain mature foliage, the commercial areas along Grand River Avenue are largely devoid of vegetation, excepting the occasional shrub or tree, overgrowth in vacant lots along Grand River Avenue, and the community garden in the vacant lot to the south of the ballroom building, opposite Beverly Court.

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Exterior

The original exterior descriptions are based on architectural drawings by Charles N. Agree, dated May 1928. Current details are based on photographic evidence.

The Grande Ballroom is situated on a northeast-southwest axis (simplified hereafter to cardinal directions), with the façade facing south toward Grand River Avenue, a secondary elevation facing east toward Beverly Court, the north elevation facing toward a paved alley, and the west elevation abutting the adjoining one-story building. The building sits at the lot line.

The building is nearly square in form. The 1928 building permit indicates the north and south elevations measure 132 feet. The east and west elevations measure 125 feet. The façade and secondary elevation are divided into seven bays, with the first and seventh bay on both the façade and east elevation containing a tower, resulting in towers at the south, east, and west corners. While the towers are integrated into the south and west corners, the building extends slightly beyond the tower at the east corner. On the first story, the first and second bay on the façade were combined into a single retail space, identified as Store #1 on architectural plans. Excepting Store #1, the remaining bays were visually and structurally separated by either one- or two-foot-wide columns faced in stone.

The first floor was designed as commercial spaces that fronted Grand River Avenue, though two of the spaces had secondary access on Beverly Court. According to architectural plans, the commercial spaces were numbered one through six, with the western-most store identified as "Store # 1." The eastern-most store at the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Beverly Court is identified as "Store #6." Each storefront employed low-profile granite bulkheads, large plate glass display windows, prismatic glass transoms, and recessed entries with tile flooring. Entrance doors were constructed of wood with plate glass panels. A wood-framed plate glass transom window surmounted the doors. Stores #2, 3, and 4 were accessed by a single entry door, and recessed approximately four feet. Store #1 had a double-door entry, and was recessed similarly to Stores #2-4. Store #5 had, arguably, the grandest storefront entrance of this building, as it was recessed more than twelve feet, and its entry doors were divided by an approximately four-foot projecting display window centered in the entry. The entry to Store #6 was set on an angle and faced the intersection of the Grande River Avenue and Beverly Court.

Along the east (Beverly Court) elevation, display windows for Store #6 mimicked the storefronts along Grand River Avenue. Stone-faced columns were placed every fourteen feet until meeting the east tower. Granite bulkheads, plate glass windows and prismatic glass transoms filled the openings between the columns. In the fifth bay, a secondary entrance to Store #5 was located in the center of the bay. This entrance was recessed about four feet and had a tile floor.

The first and second floors are separated by a stone architrave and storefront cornice, and differ markedly in their appearance, and in the employment of materials and architectural style. Where as the first floor was a decidedly contemporary design, the second floor exercises the Spanish Revival style. As such the second floor utilizes yellow buff brick, stucco, limestone, ceramic tiles and wrought iron. The prominent towers are also set apart from the rest of the second floor

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by their form and materials. Whereas the second floor of the main building is faced in yellow buff brick laid in Flemish bond pattern, the towers are faced in stucco and quoined with smooth stone blocks. Brick recovered from the east interior wall during a 2016 archaeological investigation was stamped, J.A.M., and produced by John A. Mercier Brick Company, a prominent Detroit brickmaking firm that had been organized in the 1920s. Mercier Brick was actually the second brick-making company Mercier established, the first being Mercier-Bryan-Larkin Brick Company in 1910. It is not clear if all brick used to construct the Grande Ballroom is by the Mercier company.

Between the two towers on the second floor of the south (Grand River Avenue) façade are five round arch window openings. The window openings are spaced equidistant between the towers. Each window sits on a three-panel carved stone sill and is capped by a carved stone hood. Wrought iron balconettes projected from each window, as well as those in the towers. As designed, the windows were of leaded glass set in wood sash. One of the windows contains a carved limestone tympanum featuring opposing winged griffins between a crowned shield in the arch. The tympanum is missing in every other second floor window. Beneath the windows in each of the corner towers, a limestone plaque contains four script letters: "CDSW." These letters, specified on the original 1928 blueprints, are said to represent the first and last initials of Harry Weitzman's three children: Clement, Dorothy and Seymour Weitzman. The roofs of the towers and the building between the towers are clad in ceramic tile. Metal supports that once held the ballroom marquee protrude from the south tower. Flagpoles topped by six-inch balls extend from the roof of each tower. Carved stone medallions featuring an urn and scrolls are centered above the windows of each tower. The medallions are flanked by smaller square medallions.

The tower of the ballroom at the southeast corner of the building is finished in a manner similar to the others. However, the south façade of the tower still retains two large projecting metal brackets that once held a large vertical sign reading "Ballroom" with a horizontal sign at its base reading "Grande." The sign was later replaced with a smaller neon sign reading "Grande" and "Dancing" that then hung in place for many years. There are five windows between the towers along the east façade. The tower at the building's east corner facing Beverly Court is similar to the other two, but contains the entrance door to the ballroom. Above the ballroom doors, two round metal stanchions that originally held an overhanging marquee still remain.

Adjacent to the ballroom entrance doors on the Beverly Court façade is a window that historically was used as an external ticket sales window. The yellow-buff brick of the east façade wraps around to the alley façade for a length of about three feet.

The remainder of the north (alley) façade is faced in red common brick set in a running bond pattern. The alley displays irregular fenestration, suggestion that function superseded form. First floor windows were historically covered by wrought iron guards. Several of the wood paneled access doors were also covered by wrought iron guards. The original fire escape remains in place on the alley elevation. The windows of the second floor did not employ iron guards, but were filled with leaded glass. All doors and windows sat on four-inch stone sills. Exposed concrete pillars and beams extended from the west façade in irregular intervals. It is likely the

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pillars corresponded to the partitions of the retail spaces. As of 2013 some of the doors and windows have been filled with concrete block, but some of the wrought iron guards remain. Many of the stone sills are present, but some have been broken or removed entirely.

While the second story exterior is relatively unchanged from 1928, the exterior of the first floor has seen significant change from the original design. Historical photographs suggest that a significant redesign of the first-floor storefronts occurred in the late 1930s or early 1940s. This broad date range is supported by building permits issued by the city of Detroit. A photograph from October 1946 shows that the storefronts had already been redesigned, or modernized, by then. On the façade, three of four store fronts were faced in white panels (at least two storefronts utilized different types of panels). The granite bulkheads and prismatic glass transoms were no longer visible, but, based on the condition of the building 2017 that the panels were applied to the original structure, and that original materials were removed at a later date.

The storefront at 8956 Grand River Avenue had been remodeled in a manner different from the others, and reflected an Art Deco or Art Moderne influence. Rather than white panels, this storefront featured two relatively narrow columns of dark enamel panels at the outer edges of the storefront with a wider white space between. The low-rise granite bulkheads and original, rectangular display windows had been replaced by the aforementioned cladding, and the windows, though rectangular, employed rounded edges.

The 8952 store appears to have been the most significantly modified. In addition to the covering or removal of the transom, the store itself had been expanded by modifying the entrance to accommodate two display windows on the east and south sides. The corner support column was either replaced or covered with a rounded, accordion-style column, surmounted by a corresponding semicircular display sign. While the original granite bulkheads appear to be present, the height of the windows had been reduced by utilizing a superficial bulkhead. The entry door appears to have been altered as well. Significantly, three of the four display windows along the east elevation had been filled with brick, including the transom area. The fourth, northernmost, window appears to remain but in a modified condition.

As of 2017 the first-floor storefronts on both the façade and east elevation retain little physical integrity from either the building's 1928 construction or later modifications. The original architrave remains intact, but below that, very little remains intact. The complete signboard panels of the 8970 space remain, as does its undulating cornice. Remnants of the panels from the signage band of the 8960 space also remain. No evidence of the prismatic glass transom remains, all of the window spaces on the façade have been filled with brick or concrete block and partially covered with plywood. In 1986 the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, through its Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, provided fifty thousand dollars to the City Temple Seventh Day Adventist church to undertake unspecified rehabilitation of 8960.¹ The 8970 storefront appears to have been clad in white brick laid in roman bond, which, along with the fenestration of this space, suggests some use of the space beyond the period of significance. The east elevation is entirely filled with concrete block, except for the structural

¹ *Detroit Free Press*. November 13, 1986.

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pillars. The pillars, however, do not retain their stone cladding. Notably, the brick that filled the former display windows in the circa 1940s photograph has been replaced with concrete block. The entry to the second-floor ballroom is filled with steel doors, and the adjacent (north) ticket sales window has been filled with brick and concrete block. Many of the windows and doors on the north elevation (alley) have been filled with various materials. However, the original fire escape remains in place.

While the second story retains many of its original features and fenestration, some significant elements have been lost. The wrought iron balconettes that fronted each window have been removed. All but one tympanum has been removed or lost. All of the leaded glass windows have been removed. The grand marquee has also been removed, as has the ballroom marquee on the east elevation.

Interior

Ballroom

The following description describes the 1928 interior of the ballroom as delineated in architectural drawings by Charles N. Agree in May 1 1928 and the condition of the ballroom as document in photographs between 2009 and 2018. Little is known about the interior of the ballroom and any modifications that might have been made. Oral history interviews with those who operated the ballroom in the 1960s may add significant understanding to how the ballroom may have changed, beyond paint, during those years.

The interior of the Grande Ballroom is reached via the entrance in the tower on the southeast facade at the east corner on Beverly Court. Through the entrance was a roughly ten-by-twenty-seven-foot foyer with Zenitherm flooring on a wood base. To the north (right) was a short stair that led to a landing. The stairs then turned to the west (left) and proceeded to the dance floor. The treads and risers were constructed of terrazzo with marble stringers. The staircase led up to a promenade and dance floor. This entrance is inaccessible as of 2018.

The promenade was arranged in a U around the dance floor with various spaces around the U between promenade and the exterior walls of the building, and provided for circulation through the various spaces of the second floor. Beginning at the east corner of the building and moving clockwise, was a ladies' room, or lounge. This space was separate from the ladies' restroom and does not appear to have any lavatory facilities. Adjacent to this lounge was an extensive check room, where patrons could store clothing and personal items while dancing. In the southeast corner of the ballroom, and adjacent to the check room, was a men's lounge. Oddly, while the women's lounge had a cement floor, the floor of the men's lounge was covered in terrazzo. The promenade stretched between the southeast and southwest corners of the building, where, at the southwest was the ladies' restroom, roughly twelve feet wide by twenty-one feet long. A small janitor's closet was adjacent to and north of the ladies' restroom. A storage room, roughly seven feet wide by twenty-two feet long extended north from the janitor's closet until it reached the stage. Steps and an access door provided access to the stage. Opposite the storage room was a musicians' room, roughly seven feet wide and twenty-three feet long. In the northwest corner of

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the building was the men's restroom, roughly twelve feet wide by twenty-five feet long. Interestingly, access to the men's restroom was made via the musician's room or through a designated smoking room that fronted the men's restroom from the promenade. From the smoking room the promenade stretched to the stairs at the northeast corner of the building. All of these rooms have been altered and eventually destroyed by weather, vandals, and scappers. Some original fabric remains, in some spaces (men's room urinals, for example), but significant losses of historical material have occurred.

The dance floor was separated from the promenade by a series of double rounded arch openings set in larger blind arches placed between plaster-covered hollow columns on the north, south, and east sides of the dance floor. Wide rectangular pilasters flanked each twin opening on the promenade side, while cabled columns and pilasters supported the arches on both the promenade and dance floor sides of the arches. Capitals were made of opposing fantastical bird-like creatures with rams horns separated by various floral shapes.

At the northeast and southeast corners of the interior arch system are rounded walls punctuated with rectangular openings. Wrought iron grilles originally filled the openings. Aligned with the second arch on both the north and south sides of the promenade, five-foot-square ornamental plaster grilles were placed in the ceiling to obscure ventilation fans. As of 2008, the grille on the north side was intact, while the south grille is partially intact. Significant sections of the promenade ceiling have either deteriorated or been destroyed.

Access to the dance floor was made through the outer two openings on each side, while wrought iron railings were placed between the inner two arches. Incredibly, the wrought iron railings remain in all of the arches. All of the arched openings were embellished in an eclectic Moorish-influenced, Art Deco style. Architectural plans indicate strips of Zenitherm flooring extended from each pilaster across the promenade to the exterior walls, and across the arch threshold. Many of the ornamental columns and capitals have been at least partially destroyed, either by vandalism or the effects of exposure to the weather, though a few remain.

The sunken dance floor is accessed by two steps down from the promenade through several of the arches. The dance floor proper is constructed of maple and covers five thousand square feet. Similar to other ballroom dance floors, the Grande's dance floor was a sprung. That is, the dance floor was laid over a subfloor constructed of shock-absorbing material, usually wood battens in a basket weave. This type of subfloor allows the floor to flex to absorb the movements of the dancers, then return that energy to the dance floor, and thus the dancers. Drawings do not indicate the material used to create the subfloor, but they do indicate a space of three and a half inches between the dancefloor and the concrete structural floor.² While the dance floor is largely intact, sections have deteriorated and are in a poor state of repair.

Much like the ornamental grilles in the promenade ceiling, four round ornamental plaster grilles were placed in the ceiling near the four corners of the dance floor, with a much larger grille in

² "Ball Room & Store Bldg." Sheet No. S-2. Chas. N. Agree, Architect. May 16, 1928.

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the center of the dance floor ceiling. Each of these grilles hid ventilation fans. As of 2009 the corner grilles were intact, as well as most of the large central grille. Other sections of the plaster ceiling have collapsed or been destroyed.

The stage is located at the west end of the dance floor. The stage is roughly twelve feet wide (east-west) at the widest part, and twenty-four feet long (north-south). The front of the stage is curved in a soft undulating form, and connected to curved wood stairs consisting of four steps at the north and south ends of the stage. Above the stage the proscenium remains largely intact. The proscenium is defined by an upper and lower plaster "rope." The original decorative paint was, at one time, covered in white paint, but that paint has deteriorated, revealing what may be the original proscenium artwork.

Research by Wayne State University indicates the plaster used to cover the walls and craft the decorative elements of the ballroom are made of a mixture lime plaster, mixed with animal and plant fibers (hair and straw, respectively).³

At some point, the men's and women's lounges and check room on the east side of the ballroom were reconfigured to house offices, a coat check, and a concession stand. It is unclear if that occurred prior to the 1966 rock-era, or if it came earlier as ballroom dancing faded. What is known is that some minor alterations occurred in 1969. In the fall and early winter of 1969 the old wax "and anything else" on the floor was scraped off, then the floor was painted white and coated in plastic. A foil arch that stretched over the stage was taken down, and underneath was discovered old, rotting velvet. The velvet was removed, and a long-forgotten mural was revealed. That mural, along with others, was to be restored. The bathrooms were also replumbed at that time.⁴

In the northeast tower was the entrance to the ballroom. Inside the double wood doors was a small carpeted vestibule. Through a set of interior doors was a foyer that led past a ticket office and to the stairs to the ballroom. The foyer floor was terrazzo. The stairs were constructed of concrete with terrazzo treads and risers. The stairs led to a landing that appears to have corresponded to the foyer in materials and design. Another set of stairs then led to the ballroom on the second floor.

In the northeast corner of the building, and to the north of the ballroom entrance were an office (thirteen feet by ten feet), a ticket office (four feet by ten feet), and a closet. It is unclear if either of these rooms had been altered, or what their current condition might be.

Storefronts

Very little is known about the exteriors of these stores and even less of the interior spaces on the first floor of the building, or how they evolved over time. What can be known with some certainty is what is contained on architectural drawings by Charles Agree. Few newspaper

³ Krysta Ryzewski. *Grande Ballroom Archaeological Survey*. October 5, 2016.

⁴ Mike Gormley. "New-old Grande Something to See." *Detroit Free Press*, December 26, 1969.

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reports were made concerning the business that occupied the first floor, and as the pace of change quickened as the decades wore on, it is likely many changes were made to accommodate the various organizations that occupied the spaces.

Agree designed the building to contain six stores, oriented toward south toward Grand River Avenue. Each of the stores were separated by four-inch gypsum partitions. Most of the stores appear to have had access to the basement, but only Store #1 and Store #5, as indicated on Agree's drawings, had finished sales space in the basement.

Store #1/ W.T. Grant Company (8970 Grand River Avenue)

This store occupies two bays (east-west) at the western end of the building, and had a depth of seven bays (north-south). It appears to have been specifically constructed for the W. T. Grant Company, as their name appears on the drawings. It is worth noting that W. T. Grant is the only company name that appears on the 1928 drawings.

Architectural drawings dated May 1928 indicate this store was approximately thirty-nine feet wide and 125 feet in length. On either side of a recessed entry were merchandise display areas. Here the floors were made of oak. Several feet into the store, and slightly west of center was a wood stairs that led to the basement. The stairs were six feet in width and descended twenty steps to the lower level. The remainder of the first-floor sales floor was wood. At the rear of the store was a second wood stairs and a freight slide. A double, wood-paneled service door on the north (rear) façade of the building appears to have provided direct access to the freight slide.

The basement contained a number of spaces, including a sales floor that occupied approximately four of seven bays. The sales floor was made of wood, while the walls and ceiling were covered in plaster. The rear three bays contained the stock room, the freight slide, a L-shaped wood stairs that rose seventeen steps to the first floor, a cloak room (six feet by nine feet), a girls' restroom (sixteen feet by ten feet), a "fixture" room (six feet by seven feet), a candy room (six feet by seven feet), a men's lavatory (five feet by seven feet), a women's lavatory (seven feet by twelve feet), and a fan room. The girls' rest room floor was covered in wood, while the men's and women's restrooms were covered in terrazzo. The rooms at the north end of the basement were arranging in an almost complete square, with the southwest corner used as a receiving bench and desk.

Shortly after the store closed on Saturday, September 6, 1957, a fire in the basement of the store destroyed twenty-five thousand dollars of merchandise, and resulted in smoke and water damage to the first and second floor windows. It was reported that the adjacent Maas Bros. store suffered smoke damage. Company advertisements in the following years suggest that the company did not rebuild the store.

In August 1968 a building permit was issued to "replace front windows with 8" masonry." The permit notes that the space was to be used as "retail stores and warehouse." It is unclear what wares were being housed in the building or where in the building they were being housed. It is

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possible that this permit was issued in relation to the white, Roman-bond brick now faces the storefront.

Stores #2-4 (8960/8964 Grand River Avenue)

Architectural drawings suggest Charles Agree designed these spaces to accommodate two stores, but historical photographs and city directories suggest these spaces were combined early on, if not during construction.

Agree's drawings indicate that an unfinished basement was present under all three stores. It is not clear if the first tenant, Beverly's, or the subsequent tenant, Maas Bros., used the basement for sales space. In fact, the drawings indicate that five of seven bays were open, "unassigned space," with a concrete floor. The northern (rear) two bays appear to have been a shared L-shaped storage room with a cement floor. Access to the storage room was made by a single door in the center of a wall that stretched the width of this space at the fifth bay. Steel stairs were at the north wall of the basement and adjacent to the boiler room.

On May 15, 1942, the City of Detroit issued a building permit for a "new store front per plan." It appears the modifications to the 8960 were approved by the city inspector, as the permit is marked "O.K." with a date of August 9, 1943. This is likely the time when the storefront was modernized with white panels. Advertisements placed by the company circa 1947 indicate the store was "air-cooled," suggesting an upgraded ventilation system.

Store #5 (8956 Grand River Avenue)

The retail space at 8956 was designed for the third store of A. E. Burns & Co. In addition to the main floor, a basement space was also constructed for the company. The main floor sales space was sixteen feet by one hundred feet. Indirect lighting installed behind display shelves was reflected by a "cone-like" ceiling. Displays cases were created by the American Show Case company.⁵ A steel stairs, finished in Mastic flooring led to the basement sales space. The stairs was surrounded by a railing constructed of iron balusters capped in a wood handrail.

The basement of Store #5 is L-shaped, with a deep horizontal member. The vertical member extends approximately eighty feet north to south, slightly more than four structural bays, while the horizontal member of the L extends forty feet for slightly more than two bays, then continues at a width of twenty feet for the remainder of the space. This space was intended as finished sales space for the Store #5, and had Mastic flooring and plaster walls and ceiling. A stairs located in the second horizontal and vertical bays rose eighteen steps to the first floor.

The City of Detroit issued a building permit on February 8, 1937, to remodel the storefront at a cost of three thousand dollars. Harry Weitzman is noted on this permit. The, in November 1955, the City of Detroit issued a building permit to "alter [the] store front," at a cost of 950 dollars.

⁵ "Detroit's Third Burns Store Opening Today." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

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It is unknown at the time of this nomination if the store was damaged in the 1967 uprising, but on February 29, 1968, the City of Detroit issued a building permit related to a change in occupancy of the 8952 space. The permit notes that a "Beauty School" was to be located here.

Store #6 (8940/8950/8952 Grand River Avenue)

Along the south and east windows was a strip of oak flooring, about three feet in width, likely used for merchandise display. Tile flooring ran almost the full the length of the store, from the entrance at the corner of Grand River Avenue and Beverly Court to just beyond the secondary entrance on the east elevation. On either side of the tile floor was terrazzo. A steel stairs was positioned at the north, near the west corner of the store. It descended twelve steps to the basement.

The basement space of Store #6 did not extend the full width of the building. Rather it began at the third structural bay of the basement and extended through the fifth bay. The entire space was roughly nineteen feet wide by almost fifty feet in length. A steel stair was slightly north of center of the fourth bay, and rose twelve steps to the first floor. It appears that two toilets were located in the southeast corner of this space. This space appears to be utilitarian, as the floors were cement and no other materials are noted on the 1928 drawings.

Other Interior Spaces

The building's Boiler Room (thirty feet by twenty-seven feet) was located in the basement, and partially in the L of the storage room below Stores #2-4 and extended behind Store #5. Adjacent to the boiler room to the east was the Coal Room (twenty-six feet by fourteen feet), which was located in the northeast corner of the basement. A Meter Room was located between the Coal Room and the basement of Store #6, and contained water and gas meters for the building.

Integrity

There has been a significant loss of integrity to the ballroom due to the ravages of use, abandonment, time, decay, weather, and scrapping. The first-floor retail spaces had been modified from their original appearance in the 1930s or 1940s, and possibly again after that, as exemplified by what would have been the former W.T. Grant store at 8970 Grand River Avenue. The lower walls of the storefront were altered from the 1940s modernization to be faced in white brick laid in Roman bond. What appears to be fenestration suggests this brick was not intended to fill the storefront. The other storefronts have been filled in with cement block or covered with plywood.

A 2016 archaeological survey led by Dr. Krysta Ryzewski of the Department of Anthropology, Wayne State University resulted in an extensive description of the physical state of the interior of the Grande Ballroom building. Photographs document the extensive loss of materials, design, and workmanship.

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Ryzewski's investigation revealed that the first-floor retail spaces have been extensively altered and damaged, though the structural supports of interior retail spaces remain. The walls that separated the stores have been removed, and "all that remains of the intact infrastructure are stable concrete staircases to the basement and second floor ballroom."⁶

On the second floor, sections of decorative plaster archways that separate the promenade from the dance floor are partially intact, as are sections of the decorative ceiling. The stage is also present. Certain lights remain and, remarkably, stencil decorations that may date to the opening of the ballroom.⁷

Over the years the windows on the second floor had been removed by scrappers, those seeking a "trophy," or destroyed by vandals. For some time the window openings were left open, leaving the ballroom exposed to the whims of the weather. Likewise, portions of the ceiling and roof have collapsed into the ballroom, further exacerbating deterioration. As of September 2017 all windows and openings have been closed by plywood boards, providing some protection from the elements to the interior of the building.

Similarly, the setting of the ballroom has changed somewhat, significantly from 1928, and still from 1966. Many of the buildings that once surrounded the Grande Ballroom have been demolished or extensively altered. The entire block to the east has been demolished, as has the entire block between to the south, opposite Grand River Avenue between Hillsboro Street and Dailey Street. Some substantial buildings remain, however. To the west of the ballroom, the 1927 Kresge building, the 1928 Kelly Furniture Company building, a 1929 Detroit Bank and Trust Co. branch, and a 1948 F. W. Woolworth Company store, all remain to the east of the Grande Ballroom. The four-story, 1926 Business Institute building and a four-story, 1940s commercial building are north of the ballroom on Joy Road. A two-story, 1922 commercial building is a short distance to the southeast. Most of the residences on Beverly Court are extant. The scale and massing of these remaining buildings provides some sense of the commercial and social activity of the area in the 1920s and later.

While the building is in a poor state of repair, Charles Agree's design is still recognizable. The form, plan, and structure of the Agree's original design is largely intact. The design intention is still evident, and enough of the materials remain that one can still derive a sense of the space as it was in 1928 and in the mid-1960s.

The Grande Ballroom retains sufficient integrity in terms of location, feeling, and association. Indeed the aspect of association is arguably the most significant for the ballroom. While a 1928 ballroom may be eligible the National Register, the Grande Ballroom's association with Detroit's musical and countercultural history are potentially one-of-a-kind. One may still walk around the promenade, move across the ballroom floor, and stand before the stage where people danced to numerous bands for over sixty years, and thousands of young adults kicked out the jams with the most rebellious band of 1960s America.

⁶ Krysta Ryzewski. *Grande Ballroom Archaeological Survey*. October 5, 2016.

⁷ Ibid.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928

1966-1969

Significant Dates

1928

1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Agree, Charles N. (architect)

W. E. Wood Co. (contractor)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Grande Ballroom (pronounced Grand-ee) is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A as one of the few remaining examples of Detroit's numerous early twentieth-century ballrooms. The Grande Ballroom operated as a public venue for dancing from the date of its construction in 1928 until traditional ballroom dancing declined in popularity in the middle of the decade. At the height of the ballroom era the Grande was one of nearly two dozen such venues throughout the city of Detroit. Most were lost to fire or have been demolished, and those that remain are, like the Grande, in a tenuous state of repair. The Grande Ballroom also represents the explosive growth of the Grand River and Joy Road area of Northwest Detroit in the 1920s. This area, for several years, was the fastest growing area of the city at a time when Detroit was one of the fastest growing cities in the United States.

The Grande Ballroom is also eligible under Criterion A at the local level of significance during the period 1966 to 1972 when it was the foremost rock n' roll venue in Detroit. Local musical acts that gained national and international prominence and were influential in the rock and punk genres began their careers at the Grande, including the MC5, Mitch Ryder, the Psychedelic Stooges (with Iggy Pop), Alice Cooper, the Frost, and the Amboy Dukes (with Ted Nugent), SRC, and the Rationals, among others. During the mid-1960s the Grande Ballroom was the epicenter of the Avant Garde Detroit rock scene, and the favored venue of many national and international acts playing in the city, including the Who, Fleetwood Mac, Janice Joplin, Grand Funk Railroad, Savoy Brown, Led Zepplin, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Cream, and many others.

The Grande Ballroom is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance as a prominent site in the 1960s counterculture movement in Detroit,⁸ on par with those in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York, and was the favored musical scene of Detroit's hippie, beatnik, and other subcultures of the 1960s. The ballroom's musical and entertainment significance is inextricably linked to the individuals associated with the operation of and performances at the ballroom, who were leading figures in the countercultural movement in Detroit, and whose writing, art, and music "ignited fires in the brains of kids everywhere."⁹

The Grande Ballroom is also eligible under National Register Criterion C at the local level of significance as an extant example of the Spanish or Mediterranean Revival style of the 1920s, when that style was at its height, as well as one of only two ballrooms designed by Detroit architect Charles N. Agree. Though suffering considerable interior deterioration, the form, scale, massing, exterior architectural detail

⁸ Eric Ehrmann. "MC5." *Rolling Stone*. January 4, 1969.

⁹ Byron Coley. "Exit interview with JOHN SINCLAIR (2003), introduction by Byron Coley." *Arthur*. September 2003. <https://arthurmag.com/2010/10/06/exit-interview-with-john-sinclair-2003/>.

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The Grande Ballroom's meets Criteria Consideration G because of its primary significance is derived from its association with the development of rock and roll music in Detroit and as a significant extant site of the countercultural movement in Detroit between 1966 and 1972. The Grande Ballroom also meets Criteria Consideration A as it is owned by a religious institution (Chapel Hill Baptist Church). The Ballroom is not currently used for religious purposes and derives its primary significance from its association from its history as a significant rock and roll venue and as a countercultural site despite its current ownership by the Chapel Hill Baptist Church.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Ballroom Era in Detroit

During the first half of the twentieth century social dancing at ballrooms and dance halls was a prominent recreational activity in many cities. Likewise, many hotels built ballrooms for their guests. In the 1920s, on stages across the country, orchestras and bands played while men and women danced the Fox Trot, the Charleston, the Samba and other Latin dances, the Waltz, and others. Beginning in the 1930s, jazz and swing music captivated many dancers, especially younger dancers, in cities everywhere, and the dances of the 1920s and earlier were largely supplanted by the Lindy Hop, Collegiate Shag, and the Jitterbug.

By the late 1920s Detroit was well supplied with large, dedicated ballrooms. The premier ballroom in Detroit was the now-demolished Graystone on Woodward Avenue near West Canfield Avenue. The Graystone, constructed in 1922, was the city's largest ballroom, opulent in its design, and located near downtown and the theater district. It catered to an older, established crowd and booked all the major big band acts as they toured the country. The Graystone billed itself as "Detroit's Million Dollar Ballroom," and it could handle three thousand patrons on its floors and balconies. The Graystone hosted every important jazz musician in the country as well as every major big band. The Graystone was also home to two nationally-recognized house bands, McKinney's Cotton Pickers and Jean Goldkette's Orchestra. Goldkette's organization ultimately spawned jazz legends such as Bix Beiderbecke, Hoagy Carmichael, Jimmy Dorsey, and Tommy Dorsey, while the McKinney band featured noted jazz arranger Don Redman.

Other nearby ballrooms near the Graystone on Woodward Avenue, included the Arcadia (1913) and Crystal (1919). The Palais de Danse (1919) was on Jefferson Avenue at the Detroit River a few blocks from the Belle Isle Bridge. In its newspaper advertising, the Palais de Danse asserted: "Strictly censored. Highest Standard." The new ballrooms as opposed to common dance halls, offered a level of safety, elegance, and decorum that dance halls did not. The Jefferson Beach Pavilion (1928) at the Jefferson Beach Amusement Park on Lake St. Clair at Nine Mile Road was a large dance hall on the far east side that was accessed by the Lakeshore Bus Line. Also on the east side was the Vanity Ballroom (1929) and the Pier Ballroom (1914) at Electric Park, an amusement park at the foot of the Belle Isle Bridge. The Pier Ballroom was billed as "a ballroom of refinement" and catered to audiences of relatively high social standing.

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The Eastwood Gardens dance hall (1925) was located in an amusement park at Gratiot and Eight Mile Road. The Walled Lake Casino served the dancers who patronized the popular summertime vacation area 40 miles northwest of the city center. If Detroiters took a special excursion boat ride out to Canada's Bob-Lo Island amusement park eight miles south of Woodward Avenue in the Detroit River, they could dance at the Bob-Lo Pavilion (1914), which claimed to be the second largest in the country. Smaller scale dance halls and ballrooms operated around town as well. The Mirror Ballroom (near the Grande Ballroom), the Monticello (1928), and others occupied second stories of retail buildings.

Grand River Avenue and Joy Road



Grand River Avenue between Beverly Court and Joy Road circa 1930. Detroit Fire Department Engine Co. 42 and marquees for Riviera Annex Theater, the Mirror Ballroom, and the Grand Riviera Theater at right. Grande Ballroom would be at right behind photographer. Courtesy of the Detroit News Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

The construction of the Grande Ballroom in the autumn of 1928 is the product of the twin forces of a widespread, popular interest in ballroom dancing, and the physical growth of the city of Detroit, particularly its growth northwesterly from the city center as illustrated by the development of the Petosky-Otsego neighborhood and the commercial development centered on the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Joy Road, approximately five miles from downtown Detroit.

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Residential growth for the area was planned as early as 1887 when the plat for the Ravenswood subdivision, north of Joy Road, was filed with the city. Several years later, in 1913, William L. Reed submitted a plat for a subdivision at "1/4 Section 50 of the 10,000 Acre Tract,"¹⁰ south of Joy Road. Reed's subdivision was centered on Grand River Avenue and Reed Avenue (now Beverly Court). The plat map shows sixteen parcels facing south toward Grand River Avenue, and thirty-three parcels on either side of Reed Avenue between Grand River Avenue and Joy Road to the north, with an alley separating the commercial parcels from the residential parcels. In anticipation of that growth the city of Detroit purchased a parcel of land on Grand River Avenue, near what would be Beverly Court, for 5,800 dollars for the Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No. 42. At the time the parcel was purchased, some councilmembers opposed objected to paying such a high price "for a piece of land out in the country."¹¹ By the late 1920s more than 230,000 people lived within one mile of the Grande Ballroom,¹² and when the city sold the land in 1927 it was valued at 170,000 dollars.¹³

This residential growth coincided with tremendous commercial growth. Commercial growth of what was then the northwest end of the city began in earnest in 1925 with the construction of the Grand Riviera theater, "one of the most beautiful neighborhood theaters in the world" at that time.¹⁴ The Grand Riviera cost more than one million dollars to construct and its auditorium could seat over three thousand people. The theater attracted a "great number"¹⁵ of people to the neighborhood to the extent that a second theater, the Riviera Annex Theatre, was constructed a short distance to the east, near the site of the Grande Ballroom. The Annex theater was constructed in 1927, and was located on Grand River Avenue, just to the north of where the Grande Ballroom would soon be constructed. Both the Grand Riviera and the Riviera Annex were designed by noted theater architect John Eberson, and ushered in an era of tremendous growth in the neighborhood.

Just west of the Riviera Annex and near the west end of the same block, the Mirror Ballroom was constructed in 1927. The ballroom provided a venue for more active recreation, and together with the two theaters accounted for more than two million dollars in entertainment facilities within a two-block area.¹⁶

In addition to recreation, local and national chains such as Grinnell Bros., D. J. Healy, Cunningham Drugs, Burns Shoes, Sanders, S. S. Kresge, and F. W. Woolworth, as well as several banks, established branches of their operations in this fast-growing district. Still more independent and chain stores followed.¹⁷ By 1928 the area was "probably the fastest-growing

¹⁰ "William L. Reed's Subivision."

¹¹ "City to Realize \$164,000 on Land." *Detroit Free Press*. May 11, 1927.

¹² "Detroit's Third Burns Store Opening Today." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

¹³ "City to Realize \$164,000 on Land." *Detroit Free Press*. May 11, 1927.

¹⁴ "Rapid Progress of Section Cited." *Detroit Free Press*. April 24, 1927.

¹⁵ "Rise of the West Area Recalled." *Detroit Free Press*. December 15, 1929.

¹⁶ "Rapid Progress of Section Cited." *Detroit Free Press*. April 24, 1927.

¹⁷ "Rise of the West Area Recalled." *Detroit Free Press*. December 15, 1929.

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shopping center in the city of Detroit,"¹⁸ and so congested with traffic that the parking areas in front of the stores along Grand River Avenue were used for additional driving lanes during rush hour.¹⁹ Traffic counts suggested that more than 34,000 cars passed by the ballroom building every day,²⁰ not including those that traveled by streetcar. So congested was this area that, in June 1932, John Miller, a grocery chain executive, frustrated with being late to work and returning home, offered to pay for the installation of a traffic light at the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Beverly Court. The city council considered the matter and offered to find a second-hand traffic light as a means of saving money for Miller.²¹

Indeed, the entire city of Detroit seemed to be in a building boom. Since 1923 one skyscraper (ten or more stories) was constructed in the city every sixty days, and by 1928 the city had 120 such buildings.²² In addition to the Grande Ballroom, a number of significant buildings were constructed in 1928, including the Fox Theatre (NHL), Fisher Building and Fisher Theater (NHL), and the Detroit Zoo (NRHP).

The Grande Ballroom 1928-1965

The Grande Ballroom was designed by noted Detroit architect Charles N. Agree, and was one of his earliest entertainment projects. Agree had previously been involved in large residential projects and had designed several apartment and apartment hotel buildings in the city. Blueprints and a photograph taken during construction indicate the building was constructed for Harry W. Weitzman, a local real estate investor and surety bond agent. Some local history has suggested the building was initially constructed for Edward J. Strata and David Davis,²³ local real estate agents and developers, and then almost immediately sold to Weitzman. However, building permits and architectural drawings indicate Weitzman as the owner. A permit issued on July 9, 1928, includes both Agree and Weitzman. A later permit, issued in 1937, notes Weitzman by name, suggesting he was involved with the building for many years after its construction.

The *Michigan Contractor and Builder* (MC&B) announced in its April 7, 1928, issue that Agree was preparing plans for a two-story building at the intersection of Grand River and Beverly Court. The building was to be 125 feet by 132 feet, and to be constructed of stone and brick, with a tile roof. The multi-use building was planned for a number of commercial spaces and a ballroom. Paul Strasburg and J. L. Wood were noted as lessees.²⁴ Later that month, Agree had

¹⁸ "Joy Road Zone Spreads Fast." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

¹⁹ "Grand River Avenue Traffic Delays Prove Need of Rush Hour Parking Ban." *Detroit Free Press*. September 23, 1928.

²⁰ "Detroit's Third Burns Store Opening Today." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

²¹ "Traffic Light is all His Own." *Detroit Free Press*. June 11, 1932.

²² "1 Skyscraper Each 60 Days." *Detroit Free Press*. October 28, 1928.

²³ Some earlier histories suggest Davis's given name as Edward, but the city directories of the 1920s and newspaper accounts suggest his given name is David.

²⁴ "Detroit Architects' Reports: Preparing Plans." *Michigan Contractor and Builder*. April 7, 1928.

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completed the plans and was taking figures.²⁵ In June 1928 the contract to construct the Grande was awarded to the W. E. Wood Co.²⁶

Prior to the construction of the Grande Ballroom, the northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Beverly Court was occupied by the Ninde Methodist Church, which occupied parcels three through eight. The Ninde church had merged with another local Methodist congregation in 1927 and had moved to a larger facility, and desired to sell the property. The City of Detroit issued a permit for demolition on May 11, 1928, and then a building permit for six stores and a hall on lots two through eight of the Reed subdivision on July 9, 1928, at a cost of 267,000 dollars. In August of that year the real estate firm of Strata & Davis announced it had negotiated a twenty-year lease for the 8956 Grand River Avenue storefront, valued at 250,000 dollars.²⁷ The lease was for the new branch of the A. E. Burns & Co. shoe store, their third in Detroit. To celebrate the opening a special four-page section was published in the October 19, 1928, issue of the *Detroit Free Press*. The front page featured a photograph of the Grand River Avenue façade of the Grande Ballroom building which indicates the first tenants of the storefronts as the Burns outfit, Beverly's, and W. T. Grant Co.²⁸ These stores, as well as the ballroom itself, joined a growing commercial district that now included stores for "practically every article of merchandise necessary in maintaining a home and equipping a family."²⁹

Opening night for the Grande Ballroom was announced in the *Detroit Free Press* for October 27, 1928. The ballroom billed itself as "newer, smarter, more beautiful,"³⁰ and an opening night advertisement stated that "Ballroom Grande" was "a most beautiful dance place. Built with the idea of giving the dancing public a finer, smarter and cleaner place to dance." The "famous dance band," The Victors played for the crowd who paid an admission of fifty cents for ladies and seventy-five cents for men.³¹ That there was no special announcement for the ballroom akin to the Grand Riviera is less an indication of any lack of glamour than it was a statement of the quality of ballrooms and theaters in the city in 1928. Grandiose had become commonplace. It is also an indication that the Grande was just one of many ballrooms in the city, and the location of the building in a fast-growing corridor at a time of significant construction in Detroit did not make for compelling news.

Despite its understated opening, the Grande was in high demand throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s as a wide variety of educational, social, fraternal, and religious organizations hosted dances at the Grande, social events, reunions, fund-raisers, and holiday balls. While most organizations were located in Detroit some came from a considerable distance for their events.

²⁵ "Detroit Architects' Reports: Taking Figures." *Michigan Contractor and Builder*. April 21, 1928.

²⁶ "Detroit Architects' Reports: Contracts Let." *Michigan Contractor and Builder*. June 2, 1928.

²⁷ "Firm Reports Leases Involving \$750,000." *Detroit Free Press*. August 19, 1928.

²⁸ "Announcing the Grand Opening of A. E. Burns & Co. New Northwestern Show Store." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

²⁹ "Joy Road Zone Spreads Fast." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

³⁰ "Grand Opening at Grande." *Detroit Free Press*. October 26, 1928.

³¹ "Ballroom Grande Opens Tonight." *Detroit Free Press*. October 27, 1928.

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In the late 1920s and early 1930s groups from Michigan's "thumb" region, seventy-five to one hundred miles to the north, held several reunions and relief dances at the ballroom. In 1929 alone some three thousand people came from Huron and Sanilac counties, a considerable distance to the north in Michigan's "thumb" came to dance the Grande.³² Then, in 1931 a group from Saint Clair County, also in the thumb region of Michigan, held a dance at the Grande to fund relief measures in response to the Great Depression.³³ These three northern counties, along with their neighbors in Tuscola County held a reunion dance at the Grand in 1934.

More common, however, were public dances during the city's fall dance season. While many orchestras from Detroit and around the country played at the Grande Ballroom throughout the 1930s and into the 1950s, one of the more notable bands was Lowry Clark and His Orchestra. Clark spent his early career in Illinois before moving to Detroit in the mid-1930s, where he became "a favorite with Detroit Dancers."³⁴ While the band played at other venues in Detroit and throughout the state, the Grande Ballroom appears to have been their home of sorts. In the later 1930s and pre-war years of the 1940s, Clark was regularly advertised as playing at the Grande, and the September 13, 1950, issue of the *Detroit Free Press* noted that Clark and his orchestra were to open the dancing season for the eighth consecutive year, suggesting that band was a featured act. Moreover, Clark's retirement announcement in the May 9, 1952, issue of the *Detroit Free Press* noted that he had played at the Grande Ballroom for twenty-one years.³⁵ In addition to leading the orchestra, Clark also played saxophone and sang.

The ballroom had been leased by Paul Strasburg since its construction in 1928. Strasburg was a third-generation dance instructor, and operated the Grande and Vanity Ballrooms in addition to the Strasburg Dancing Academy on Sproat Street, near Woodward Avenue. The academy was established by Strasburg's grandfather, Herman A. Strasburg Sr., and later led by his father before his father's death in 1916, at which point Paul Strasburg led the academy.

Although World War Two resulted in a decline in dancing throughout the city, the Grande continued to host events. While the number of advertised dances declined throughout the early 1940s, local newspapers published a number of employment advertisements for the ballroom, indicating a consistent, if perhaps diminished, business.

After the war had ended and the great many millions of Americans returned to peacetime life, ballrooms again became a popular pastime. In February 1946, Ralph Bowen, "Detroit's most popular dance band leader," Hair Experts spokesperson, and regular at the Graystone Ballroom, played for a week at the Grande. Lowry Clark appeared with a new band, and special dance nights sponsored by various organizations were regularly held once again. Guest bands also appeared at the Grande throughout the early 1950s and into the 1960s. Noted jazz trumpeter Clyde McCoy and his band played in April 1951, and, perhaps an indication of the changes that would come later in the decade, Freddie Shaffer and his "all-girl" orchestra opened the twenty-

³² "Huron County Club is Planning Dance Soon." *Detroit Free Press*. March 31, 1929.

³³ "Ex-Thumb Folk Organize Relief." *Detroit Free Press*. January 6, 1931.

³⁴ "Rita Rio is Closing Turn on Saturday." *Detroit Free Press*. May 20, 1938.

³⁵ "Party to Honor Retiring Bandman." *Detroit Free Press*. May 9, 1952.

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third weekend dance season in September 1951.³⁶ In the mid-1950s musical and dancing tastes began to change as the Fox Trot and Waltz made room for more “exotic” styles as the Rumba and Cha-Cha. Longtime band leader Lowry Clark retired in May 1952, and the next generation of band leaders Don Pablo, Bobby Rodriguez, and Panchito shared time with Warney Ruhl, Ralph Bowen, Buddy Morrow, Russ Weaver, and other traditional orchestras. In 1954 the Grande Ballroom announced new programs including a weekly “Mamborama” and a “Motor City Ball for all Michigan residents.”³⁷

It was not only musical tastes that were changing, however. The urban population that supported the large and glamorous ballrooms began moving to the suburbs, and, perhaps more importantly, other forms of entertainment became available. Television and radio challenged dancing for time and attention, automobiles supplanted street cars as a means of transportation, and the ease of access and proximity to the ballrooms was lost in favor of cruising and shopping centers.

In response, ballrooms either changed how they conducted business or ceased to operate. The famed Graystone Ballroom closed in 1957, having succumbed to not only accumulating debt, but a rapid decrease in attendance. Describing the changes that led to the Graystone’s closing, a December 1957 article in the *Detroit Free Press* noted that:

once music filled the ballroom five nights a week as more than 1,000 couples swung through the fox trot and the Lindy hop. Then it was four nights a week. Then Three. Then just Wednesday and Saturday. Then Saturday night, they stopped the music.³⁸

Francis M. Steltenkamp, general manager of the Graystone Ballroom, attributed the declining interest to the fact that “young people nowadays watch television, or go to house parties, or sit in their cars and listen to the radio.”³⁹ What Steltenkamp did not know was that these changes were just the beginning of a fundamental shift in entertainment. The coming musical revolutions of Motown and rock ‘n’ roll would further alter the entertainment landscape.

Despite the loss of the Graystone and the waning interest in ballroom dancing in general, the Grande Ballroom somehow managed to survive. While the number of dancing nights at the Grande declined, weekend and holiday dancing continued late into the 1950s. In fact, the ballroom held a twenty-eighth anniversary party when the fall dancing season opened in mid-September 1956,⁴⁰ and when the Graystone closed the following year, an advertisement for the Grande informed “former Graystone dancers” that stags and couples could still dance at the Grande on Friday and Saturday nights.⁴¹ In 1958 Don and Helen Hill taught group classes how to Mambo, Cha-Cha, and Fox Trot, and Pat Costello taught them Swing and the Tango.

³⁶ *Detroit Free Press*. September 13, 1951.

³⁷ “Grande Opens.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 17, 1954.

³⁸ “Debts Close Doors of Famed Ballroom.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 3, 1957.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ “Re-Opening Fri., Sept. 14.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 13, 1956.

⁴¹ “Attention Former Graystone Dancers.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 6, 1957.

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In the late 1950s and early 1960s the influence of Latin music and dances is evident in advertisements for the Grande Ballroom. An advertisement in November 1960 encouraged readers to “make a date the Latin way” and dance to the sounds of the Andy Gonzalez Orchestra and the vocal stylings of Ollie Tenilado. Remarkably, rather than steadily fewer nights of dancing, the Grande was open Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, with “Latin rhythms” every Wednesday night.⁴²

While group dance classes were again offered in 1963, fundamental changes had occurred by the fall of 1964. The building was sold to Gabriel Glantz, and the Grande Ballroom was renamed the Palladium Dance Hall.⁴³ Glantz, an attorney and entrepreneur, was involved in numerous ventures, only one of which was ownership of the Grande Ballroom. Glantz and his associates later came to own the Eastown Theater, rival to the Grande for a short time, and the Michigan Palace (the former Michigan Theater, located downtown in the Michigan Building).

In 1965 the ballroom appears in local newspapers as the Soul City Bar,⁴⁴ and in 1966 as the Soul City U.S.A. ballroom, still as the Palladium,⁴⁵ and the Celebrity Dance Hall.⁴⁶ This two-year period in the history of the ballroom has been little documented, which suggests that the decline of ballroom dancing had finally caught up with the Grande, and the transition to a modern teen dance hall would not be smooth. Indeed, for a few weeks in June 1966 the venue was operated by local disc jockey “Frantic Ernie” Durham. While the venue was popular, Durham failed to obtain a license for the hall, and when neighbors complained of “rowdyism, drinking, gang fights and vandalism” the hall was shut down.⁴⁷ Durham moved his dance operation to the Gold Room at the Twenty Grand, and it appears the Grande sat vacant for the next few months.

Though a prominent and formidable ballroom dancing venue in the first half of the twentieth century, the time for stately waltzes, orchestras, and even the Latin rhythms of just a few years earlier had come and gone. Motown was hot, rock ‘n’ roll was ascendant, and it was the intensity of the next several years that brought international renown to the Grande Ballroom.

⁴² “Make a Date the Latin Way.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 7, 1960.

⁴³ “Teens Accused in 2 Stabbings.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 1, 1964.

⁴⁴ Patrick J. Owens. “Is TULC Swinging to Cavanagh?” *Detroit Free Press*. April 8, 1966.

⁴⁵ “Three Dances at the Palladium.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 3, 1966.

⁴⁶ “Teen Dances Banned.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 16, 1966.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

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"This Is Where It's At:" The Grande Ballroom, 1966-1972



Artwork created by Gary Grimshaw for re-opening night of Grande Ballroom, October 7, 1966; copyright protected; limited use permission.

While Detroit's popular musical history is dominated by Berry Gordy's Motown Records and the incredible number of artists that produced "the sound of young America," the city has also played a significant role in the development of American rock 'n' roll and its variants. While there were many venues in the city for teens and young adults to dance and hear live popular music, there was not yet, in mid-1960s Detroit, a concert venue like the Fillmore Auditorium in

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San Francisco, California. Instead, Detroit disc jockeys played Top-40 records, and bands played covered songs of the same. That changed in late October 1966 when Russell J. Gibb reopened the Grande Ballroom as a psychedelic rock music venue.

On a visit to San Francisco, California, in early 1966, Gibb attended a performance (perhaps on June 24, 1966) by the Byrds at the Fillmore Auditorium. The Byrds, led by Roger "Jim" McGuinn and David Crosby, had established themselves with now classic rock songs, "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Turn! Turn! Turn!" The Byrds' performance took place in the midst of a "socio-musical revolution" happening at that time in San Francisco.⁴⁸ The development of the rock music scene in 1966 was a "continuation of that San Francisco folk-cult of an earlier era," yet different in that the hippie movement of the mid-1960s was larger, "less academically oriented," more middle class, radical, and curious about what they considered exotic cultural and spiritual values. The music developed out of an established folk and blues music scene and took on a harder edge that reflected the social and political zeitgeist of the hippie movement. As important to the San Francisco sound was the visual art that promoted the performances and accompanied the bands.⁴⁹

In the May 6, 1966, issue of *Billboard* Elwood described a scene similar to what Gibb might have experienced at the Fillmore: "rock bands played, all manner of dancing went on... black light, strobe light, full-wall liquid visuals... the works... it was a taste of things to come and the kids dug it."⁵⁰ Taken in by it all, Gibb made contact with the owner and obtained the source of the strobe lights and other resources. He then returned to Michigan intent on establishing a similar venue in Detroit.

A short search for a building in which to host this venture led Gibb to the Grande Ballroom. Though urged to look elsewhere he entered into a rent-to-buy contract with the building's owners. Now that a location was secured, Gibb next sought out a musical act that could bring the new rock spirit to the ballroom. Through Harold Ovshinsky, publisher of the *Fifth Estate*, a local "anarchist, anti-capitalist, and anti-authoritarian, anti-profit"⁵¹ newspaper, and John Sinclair, the music and literary editor for the newspaper and a leading voice in Detroit's counterculture movement, Gibb came in contact with the MC5.

The MC5 (informally, the 5) had formed in the early 1960s as the Motor City 5, and had played at various halls, school dances, and record hops during the band's first few years. The new band members Rob Tyner, Wayne Kramer, Dennis Thompson, Michael Davis, and Fred Smith had been neighbors in the downriver (south of Detroit) community of Lincoln Park. They had relocated to Detroit and lived in a burgeoning arts district near Wayne State University. There they had come in contact with John Sinclair through the Detroit Artists Workshop, which had

⁴⁸ Philip Elwood. "Psychedelic Rockers: Musical Revolutionaries." *Billboard*. May 6, 1967. <https://books.google.com/books?id=BCgEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=RA1-PA3&dq=%22strobe%20light%22%20fillmore&pg=PA40#v=onepage&q&f=false>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "About us." *fifth estate*. www.fifthestate.org/about/. Accessed July 12, 2018.

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been established in 1964. The 5 had sought out rehearsal space at the workshop, which was located near the university (first at 1252 West Forest Avenue, and later at 4857 John C. Lodge Service Drive, both no longer extant), and about four miles east of the Grande Ballroom. At first rebuffed, Rob Tyner eventually persuaded Sinclair to let the band use their space.

The MC5 billed themselves as an “avant rock” band and played a mix of cover songs and original material. More importantly they played with the energy, creativity, and originality that Gibb desired and was absent from most bands in the area. Gibb hired the band as the Grande Ballroom house band. Though they were initially unpaid, the band viewed this a chance to bring their music to a larger audience.

Through Rob Tyner, lead singer of the MC5, Gibb was introduced to artist Gary Grimshaw, a “pioneering concert poster artist,” according to *Billboard* magazine.⁵² Grimshaw was living in the same apartment building as Tyner. Gibb needed a way to promote the performances at the Grande, and Grimshaw’s art jived with the scene Gibb sought to create. Grimshaw’s opening night poster featured a seagull in flight, and dynamic text that proclaimed, “Detroit’s First Participatory Zoo Dance” that was presented “in the San Francisco Style.” Opening weekend was October 7 and 8, 1966, and featured the MC5 and another local group, the Chosen Few, seagulls were admitted free. In addition to his other artistic accomplishments, Grimshaw was the principal poster designer for the Grande Ballroom. Grimshaw was joined by Carl Lundgren in 1967, and the two worked together to produce concert posters until 1969.

A brief article in the *Detroit Free Press* the day the “Grand-De Ballroom” opened stated the new young adult club “will be going every Friday and Saturday night with the wild sounds of today’s music” as well as “other way-out goodies.”⁵³

Some of those “goodies” were the psychedelic lightshows produced by Trans-Love Energies Unlimited (TLE) and the Magic Veil Light Company. Several members of the TLE community set up overhead projectors and movie players at the back of the ballroom to project amoebic shapes, a rainbow of colors, and old movies.

Lorraine Alterman, *Detroit Free Press* Teen Writer, who later wrote for *Billboard* as well, responded to the Grande Ballroom experience like this:

Pow! Wham! Bang! Zow! That’s how the new op-pop scene at the Grande Ballroom... hits you. No doubt about it – it’s the grooviest, most exciting teen spot in town. If you’re 17 or over and don’t hit the Grande... you are out of your skull... the Grande has that big, big spark of imagination that sets it apart from any other club around.⁵⁴

⁵² Gary Geff. “Psychedelic Rock Poster Artist Gary Grimshaw Dead at 67.” *Billboard*. <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/5869661/gary-grimshaw-dead-psychedelic-rock-poster-artist-dies>. Accessed February 9, 2018.

⁵³ “The Scene at a New Club.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 7, 1966.

⁵⁴ Lorraine Alterman. “Teen Club That’s Absolutely Wow.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 21, 1966.

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Not only did the Grande have that “big, big spark,” but it was the epicenter of “a whole new lifestyle and music that was sweeping the country.” It was the “birthplace of high energy Michigan music.”⁵⁵

Alterman then described what it was like walking into the ballroom:

You enter by walking up a wide staircase. On the landing the ticket taker is perched on a motorcycle. Next to him are pots of phosphorescent makeup. Paint a big flower on your face or stripes on your hands. When you get inside they'll glow in alive pinks, greens, blues. Step up a few more stairs. The wild vibrant sounds of today's music hits you... Then you're inside the big ballroom lined with fluted marble columns. There in a past era your parents danced to the big bands. But now it's today and today hits with the force of a blast furnace... the walls are a light show projected from the rear of the ballroom. Huge multi-colored bubbles and amoeba-like shapes are changing, rolling, dancing on the walls. Maybe an old Clark Gable flick is flashed over it. Fantastic!⁵⁶

Frank Bach, stage manager of the Grande Ballroom and associate of John Sinclair and TLE, recalled in 1971 his impression of that first night at the Grande:

we heard it and felt it and it started to change us, just as it was going to shape the lives of literally millions of our sisters and brothers in the months and years to come. If you were one of the hundred or so people that were at the Grande you HAD to hear it, because the band on stage that night was smashing out the kind of rock and roll that eventually had to find that name it HAD to be called high energy because it made you stop whatever you were doing and get up and move and dance in it and with it. I didn't even know how to dance back then myself, but by their second set the force of the music had me down off the light show platform and jumping around and shouting with the band that called themselves the MC5.⁵⁷

This was the first such club in Detroit, and it clearly made an impact on those who attended. It provided a place for older beatniks, younger hippies, and everyone in between who felt a dissatisfaction with “the neatly manicured lawns of suburbia,” “traditional middle class values,” and “the condition of society” in the mid-1960s.⁵⁸

Because of this appeal and its proximity to the artist community at Wayne State University, the Grande Ballroom became the favored location for Detroit's hippie and counterculture

⁵⁵ Frank Bach. “Rock and Roll Dope.” *Ann Arbor Sun*. June 25-July 1, 1971.

⁵⁶ Loraine Alterman. “Teen Club That's Absolutely Wow.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 21, 1966.

⁵⁷ Frank Bach. “Rock and Roll Dope.” *Ann Arbor Sun*. June 25-July 1, 1971.

⁵⁸ Loraine Alterman. “Our Hippies-What They Say and Do.” *Detroit Free Press*. May 19, 1967.

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community. The allure of the Grande was facilitated in large measure by the involvement of John Sinclair, the Detroit Artists Workshop, Trans-Love Energies (TLE), and the associated artists and musicians, as well as frequent discussion in countercultural publications, *Fifth Estate* and *Warren-Forest Sun* (later *Ann Arbor Sun*). While bands played at other venues around the city, the energy of the crowds, the proximity of the bands to the patrons at the Grande, and the sense of total involvement with what was happening on the stage was one of the aspects of the ballroom that set it apart and above the other locations. Between October 1966 and July 1967 the Grande featured local bands. Most often the MC5 were joined by the Chosen Few, Prime Movers, the Who?, and South Bound Freeway, among others. Soon, however, Gibb was able to bring well-known national and international acts (and those that would soon be so) visiting the city to the Grande. Tom Wright, former road manager for the Who, came to work for Gibb and provided a significant connection to many English rock bands that performed at the Grande.

Nearly every weekend hundreds and thousands of people packed themselves onto the dance floor to experience “the high-energy rock scene exploding at Detroit's Grande Ballroom.”⁵⁹ That scene and the energy therein was due in large measure to the MC5.

Tom Greenwood, writing in the *Detroit Free Press* many years later, observed that while the Grande “was a dark, dirty, drug-filled reservoir jammed mostly with suburban kids who had a lot of tough questions for adults,” it was also the place in Detroit for “rip-saw rock that punched you in the chest and left your ears roaring for days. Groups like the MC5 kicked out the jams... while The Who trashed guitars and thrashed the audience’s ability to hear.”⁶⁰

Motor City Rock and Roll

Every major city or region in the United States has had, at one time or another, its own distinctive musicians or sound or genre. Some, like Detroit, have both generated its own sound (like Motown), and taken a genre and filtered it through the history, people, and zeitgeist to create something similar yet truly distinctive. In much the way jazz was transformed by Chicago, rock ‘n’ roll in Detroit took on the three-hundred-years of history of the city and was changed in very distinctive ways.

Indeed, tumult seems to have been born into Detroit, as Julius P. Bolivar observed in 1837:

Founded in the strife for sovereignty between the English and French governments, [Detroit] became at an early day, a point of central influence and action. ‘No place in the United States... presents such a series of events, interesting in themselves, and permanently affecting, as they have occurred, its progress and prosperity. Five times its flag has changed, three different

⁵⁹ David Fricke. “Fricke’s Picks.” *Rolling Stone*. July 10, 2008.

⁶⁰ Tom Greenwood. “A Wilted Flower Child.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 10, 1993.

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sovereigns have claimed its allegiance... twice it has been besieged by Indians, once captured in war, and once burned to the ground.⁶¹

The city's incredible industry, the artistic and architectural achievements, its long history as well as the legacy of racial discrimination and the emerging counterculture of the 1960s all poured into the rock 'n' roll music that came from the city. By the mid-1960s that sound took on an edge, velocity, and energy that was seldom found in other cities. That sound, for a few brief years, was led by the MC5. According to Frank Bach, former manager of the Grande Ballroom:

“the 5 were more than just a good rock and roll band they played every note and sang every word with as much meat energy that they could find in their bodies... The music was so high that it had to take you with it to a realization of the message of total joy and liberation which the lyrics told you about: ‘Kick out the jams, [expletive removed]!’”⁶²

Yet, outside of Michigan and the Great Lakes region, the MC5 had to fight against the “uptight honky biz” that considered the obscenities of their music to be dangerous to American society.⁶³

Detroit, the Counterculture, and the Grande Ballroom

As much as the Grande Ballroom was a venue for music, it was also a venue for people who rejected, or thought about rejecting, the status quo, or who were frustrated and angry with social, racial, and political events occurring at that time. While the generation that came of age during the Great Depression and World War II understandably sought out the peacefulness and stability that suburban development and postwar consumer abundance represented, and gladly conformed to white, middle class values, some of the young people who came of age in the 1960s desired something else. They valued certain freedoms, and despised certain rules and systems that seemed to benefit some and oppress others. According to John Sinclair, “the general cultural values in this country have evolved to a stage where they have to do entirely with jobs and products. If you don't have a job, you aren't a human being.”⁶⁴

In the early and middle 1960s events occurred that began to crystallize these feelings of disenchantment. Significant, global events like the Cuban Missile Crisis and the so-called space race brought feels of uncertainty, if also optimism and wonder in the case of the latter. The United States intensified and escalated its long involvement in Viet Nam, and as the war grew increasingly controversial with the American people, especially young people, it became a point of significant protest throughout the country.

In 1963 John F. Kennedy was assassinated; Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, which largely initiated the mid-twentieth century feminist movement, was published; the Southern

⁶¹ Julius P. Bolivar. “History of Detroit.” *Directory of the City of Detroit*. 1837, p. 6.

⁶² Frank Bach. “Rock and Roll Dope.” *Ann Arbor Sun*. June 25-July 1, 1971.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Eric Ehrmann. “MC5.” *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 1969.

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Christian Leadership Conference began a campaign against racial segregation in which thousands of African Americans were later arrested while protesting segregation; the 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed; and civil rights activist Medgar Evers was assassinated in Mississippi. Through their words and leadership Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. galvanized untold thousands against the injustices endured by people of color.

As the 1960s progressed there were “signs that a serious rejection of Western values was underway with the emergence of a college-age population in the United States.”⁶⁵ With ties to the Civil Rights movement, and the earlier Beatnik generation, the 1960s counterculture movement produced both political activism, some of it radical, and the “liberated sector,” known more commonly as the “hippies.” In Detroit this countercultural movement was centered on Plum Street, west of Wayne State University. There the radical *Fifth Estate* newspaper was published, and the Detroit Artists Workshop (DAW), of which John Sinclair was a founding member promoted a new vision for America. DAW, a creative collective, organized music (primarily jazz) and poetry performances and artistic exhibitions, among other things, notably the Artists Workshop Press. The press produced publications that communicated and furthered ideas of the counterculture. By 1966 DAW had evolved to become Trans-Love Energies Unlimited (TLE). Founded by Sinclair, Tyner, Grimshaw, and others, TLE served as booking agents for bands, operated the Magic Veil Light Company, the Artists’ Workshop Press, Warlock Studios, Detroit LEMAR, the *Fifth Estate* and the *Sun* newspapers, and provided other services on a non-profit or cooperative basis. TLE expanded the reach of the DAW by incorporating rock ‘n’ roll into the type of music it promoted, and by providing numerous other services. TLE provided the visual effects, lightshows, and graphics for the Grande Ballroom. It was a synergistic relationship. Russ Gibb and the Grande received these services and TLE promoted its counterculture, communal message to a wider audience. TLE also promoted their message through books, pamphlets, newspapers, events like the April 1967 Love-In on Belle Isle, and through the management and promotion of musical acts like the MC5.

So much of the social, cultural, political, and economic frustration of growing up in Detroit, Michigan, and in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s is expressed in the music and performances of the MC5. Eric Ehrmann of *Rolling Stone* observed in 1969 that MC5 drummer, Dennis Thompson played “with such fierceness because he has, along with the rest of the 5, experienced twenty years of repression in the middle-class rut. He says this with every pulsation of the band.”⁶⁶

In his article Ehrmann captured the impact the 5 had on those uninitiated souls who attended their shows in the sentiments expressed by two students at Michigan State University after the 5 put on a show there. “A straight fraternity type... commented: ‘Jeez, they sure are crazy, but their music really gets to me... it is really hard for me to identify with anything after hearing

⁶⁵ James L. Spates. “Counterculture and Dominant Culture Values: A Cross-National Analysis of the Underground Press and Dominant Culture Magazines.” *American Sociological Review*, 1976, 41, p. 868-883.

⁶⁶ Eric Ehrmann. “MC5.” *Rolling stone*, January 4, 1969.

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this.” Then, “a quiet little girl” added, “I’m so useless. What will happen to me when the revolution comes. They have so much energy. I’ll never do anything.”⁶⁷

Grande Days

As the Grande Ballroom developed into an important Detroit music venue, and as rock and roll emerged as a new Detroit sound, a week-long rebellion in July 1967 altered the city in significant ways. While the powers that be considered Detroit to be a model city in terms of race relations and anti-poverty programs, they were unable to see that:

thousands of the city’s residents live in a nightmare world of slums where rats abound and old-fashioned stoves ward off winter in Dickensian squalor... thousands sit before the television set and watch the panoply of an abundant society unfold, at the very moment cockroaches scurry under the couch... [and] good, decent families have to pay... for squalid apartments that are hardly fit for human beings.⁶⁸

The pressing inequality of these conditions, combined with unequal access to housing, to jobs, and to justice created deep frustrations and resentment. One individual interviewed toward the end of the rebellion stated simply, “we want to be equal.”⁶⁹

In the end more than one thousand buildings were damaged and destroyed, and hundreds of stores were looted. Yet it was not just residents of the city who were involved. Indeed, “cars full of sightseers and looters” – black and white – “clogged side streets” around the affected areas.⁷⁰ Early estimates suggested more than 250 million dollars in property damage.⁷¹

Yet the Grande Ballroom, well within the zone of the uprising, was remarkably untouched by those involved in the looting or destruction (the fate of the first-floor stores is unknown). In fact, Chuck Thurston of the *Detroit Free Press* found that many of the city’s nightlife venues had not been damaged. Indeed, there were “burned out blocks at Grand River and Joy Road,” but the second floor of the ballroom building and the nearby Riviera Theater remained virtually untouched.⁷²

Russ Gibb reopened the Grande Ballroom on August 4, 1967, just four days after the end of the rebellion. The August 4 show featured local artists, but within a few short weeks, major national acts began to appear at the Grande. The Chambers Brothers appeared on August 27, 1967, and

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ George Walker. “The Riot: A Quiet Look at What It Is.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 26, 1967.

⁶⁹ Lacy McCrary, Tom Suchan and LaRue Heard. “Prisoners Tell Why They Rioted.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 30, 1967.

⁷⁰ “Neighborhoods Burn as Residents Watch.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 24, 1967.

⁷¹ David C. Smith. “Losses are Pile as High as the Ashes.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 30, 1967.

⁷² Chuck Thurston. “City’s Nightlight Landmarks Escape Serious Damage.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 29, 1967.

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Vanilla Fudge, “a Psychedelic-symphonic”⁷³ rock band based in New York played the Grande in December 1967. The Fudge, “a group unlike any other”⁷⁴ reached number six in 1967 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart with their version of “You Keep Me Hangin’ On,” a track that was written by the renowned Motown writing team of Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Eddie Holland, and first performed in 1966 by Motown artists, The Supremes.

In the March 1, 1968, edition of the *Warren-Forest Sun*, an anonymous author wrote of the developing rock scene in Detroit, noting:

Detroit is turning into ROCK CITY before our eyes, and we love it! All over the country groups are being “discovered,” and cities like Boston are being hailed as “the new San Francisco,” and San Francisco goes on as the new Liverpool, and meanwhile the scene in Detroit just gets scarier and scarier and no one seems to pay it any notice. The kids here are just beginning to find out how heavy the Detroit music scene is, though, as week after week bands come into the Grande from near and far and the kids can hear them and see them in front of everyone, naked on the stage, and find out that the music business is really about MUSIC, after all, and all the fantastic promotion jobs in the world can't cover it up.⁷⁵

Between February and November 1968 the number and quality of local, national, and international bands that played at the Grande reads like the roster of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and several other notable performers: Amboy Dukes, which included Ted Nugent; B.B. King; Blood, Sweat & Tears; Buddy Guy; the Byrds; Canned Heat; Cream; Creedence Clearwater Revival; Chuck Berry; the Doors; Frank Zappa; the Grateful Dead; Big Brother and Holding Company, the Jeff Beck Group; John Lee Hooker; Pink Floyd; Savoy Brown; Sly and the Family Stone; Steppenwolf; the Steve Miller Band; Three Dog Night; Van Morrison; the Velvet Underground; the Who; and the Yardbirds. On one mid-July weekend in 1968 alone, the Grande featured Fleetwood Mac, Pink Floyd, the Who, the Thyme, Jagged Edge, and the Psychedelic Stooges, all for two dollars and fifty cents.⁷⁶

Integral to the Grande Ballroom experience was the MC5. The band did not just perform, but set out to create “a total destroy experience.”⁷⁷ The “totally insane” MC5 were “the most exciting rock and roll band to be found on earth,” one that embodied the archetypal Detroit rock and roll band.⁷⁸ Under Sinclair’s management and Tyner’s artistic leadership, the 5 developed into the “quintessential late-1960's rock band, playing anarchic live concerts of music with a pounding beat, distorted guitars and radical exhortations delivered in... Tyner's howling voice.”⁷⁹ As

⁷³ “Vanilla Fudge: Music to ‘Feel’ By.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 27, 1967.

⁷⁴ Mike Gormley. “Taking Apart the ‘Fudge’: Can They Survive Now?” *Detroit Free Press*. October 4, 1968.

⁷⁵ “Rock & Roll Crusader.” *Warren-Forest Sun*. March 1, 1968.

⁷⁶ Tom Greenwood. “A Wilted Flower Child.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 10, 1993.

⁷⁷ Eric Ehrmann. “MC5.” *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 1969.

⁷⁸ “MC5.” *Creem*. June 1969, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Jon Pareles. “Rob Tyner, Singer with MC5 Group in 60s, Dies at 46.” *New York Times*. September 20, 1991.

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Tyner himself wrote in 1991, “we were Punk before Punk. We were New Wave before New Wave. We were Metal before Metal. We were even “M.C.” before Hammer.”⁸⁰

The 5, however, was more than just music. They were, as Sinclair often stated, a “whole thing.” The band developed a culture that “inspired a lot of people in that community to relate to each other in the same term as the 5.”⁸¹ They also played numerous benefits for a variety of causes, which the band considered to be the “primary duty of any bona fide rock and roll band.”⁸²

Equally important was the MC5 as the “propaganda machine” of TLE (and eventually the White Panther Party). The band provided TLE with a means of bringing about a “total assault on the culture” to effect a social, political, and cultural revolution through rock ‘n’ roll.⁸³ Sinclair and the MC5 “felt, in terms of a cultural revolution, you had to overturn the popular culture—television and movies, radio—and instead institute something that led people into a new era. A life where people cooperated, where they helped each other, where people gave from their heart, where creativity was rewarded.”⁸⁴ The energy the band put into their music, the connection with their audience, and their dedication to their fans resulted in the 5 becoming “more a religion than just a band.”⁸⁵

In March 1968 Columbia Records recorded Big Brother and the Holding Company’s performances at the Grande. The recordings were used several years later on a live album for Janis Joplin, the band’s lead singer. The album, *Joplin In Concert*, was released in 1972, and featured live tracks performed at various times, including two tracks recorded at a performance at the Grande in March 1968, “Down on Me” and “Piece of My Heart.” The performances chosen for by the record demonstrate the stature of the Grande, as it was one of just three rock venues (the other a Canadian music festival) chosen to represent Joplin’s work.

Rock critic Lester Bangs’ review of the album for *Rolling Stone* suggests Joplin’s Grande performances may have been chosen for the album because, while much of the music on the album was “rather second rate,” the recording of “Down On Me” shows “everyone is having a ball... Janis, the band, the audience, all feeding off of each other and giving back as much as they can of what they get. James Gurley's guitar solo ... directed with a kind of joyous fury at an audience who couldn't get enough of it.”⁸⁶ The environment that Bangs described was precisely the reason the Grande became a pre-arena destination for so many influential bands.

The summer of 1968 would be a pivotal year for the MC5, and subsequently the Grande Ballroom. By this time the MC5 had established a regional following, and were admired by their

⁸⁰ Rob Tyner. *Kick Out The Jams*. Elektra Entertainment. 1991.

⁸¹ “MC5.” *Creem*. June 1969, p. 5.

⁸² *Ibid*.

⁸³ Mathew Bartkowiak. “Motor City Burning: Rock and Rebellion in the WPP and the MC5.” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*. Vol. 1 No. 2, 2008.

⁸⁴ Ann Larabee and Mathew Bartkowiak. “Interview with John Sinclair.” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*. Vol. 1 No. 2, 2008.

⁸⁵ “MC5.” *Creem*. June 1969, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Lester Bangs. “Janis Joplin: In Concert.” *Rolling Stone*. June 8, 1972.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/in-concert-19720608>

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fans for their “devastating stage shows.”⁸⁷ The band also became increasingly political and antagonistic toward established power structures. After their performance at a protest rally in Grant Park in Chicago, Illinois, during the 1968 Democratic National Convention, the 5, Sinclair, Lawrence “Pun” Plamondon, and other members of TLE formed the White Panther Party in response to what they witnessed in Chicago, and in solidarity with the Black Panther Party. According to Plamondon, the WPP:

was a radical political party that combined the discipline and militancy of the BPP [Black Panther Party]; the economic development program of the Nation of Islam; and the theatrics and media manipulation of the YIPPIES! All guided by the principles of Marxism/Leninism as practiced in the Russian, Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions, using culture and art, spearheaded by rock n roll, to bring about a revolutionary change in America.⁸⁸

In the eyes of the Federal Bureau of Investigation the WPP was “a national white, hippie-oriented revolutionary organization” that had “a history of advocacy of violent action, reckless alliances with revolutionary groups and individuals throughout the country.”⁸⁹

This revolutionary attitude in a revolutionary time propelled the band forward and brought them national attention. Elektra Records sent Artists and Repertoire man Danny Fields to Detroit to hear the MC5. Fields saw them whip a capacity crowd... into near hysteria.”⁹⁰ The record company signed the band September 1968, and on October 30 and 31, 1968, the band recorded their first album, *Kick out the Jams*, live at the Grande Ballroom. The album’s title song was similar to a phrase heard by Tyner shouted by patrons at a local jazz club as a way to offer their encouragement to the musicians. The 5 first used the phrase as a challenge to English groups visiting the Grande to put more energy into their performance – or get off the stage.⁹¹ Oftentimes, the MC5, playing before a headlining band, “would steal the show with their own brute power.”⁹² The phrase quickly evolved from a challenge to a rallying cry of the band’s fans.

⁸⁷ John Sinclair. “Back in the Day: An Abbreviated Memoir of Ann Arbor 1968-1975.” Ann Arbor District Library. https://aadl.org/freeingjohnsinclair/essays/back_in_the_day. Accessed August 5, 2018.

⁸⁸ Pun Plamondon. “Interim Report on the Background of Pun Plamondon and the Founding of the White Panther Party circa 1968.” Ann Arbor District Library. https://aadl.org/freeingjohnsinclair/essays/interim_report_on_the_background_of_pun_plamondon. Accessed August 6, 2018.

⁸⁹ United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Detroit, Michigan, *White Panther Party, also known as Rainbow Peoples Party* (May 11, 1972).

⁹⁰ Robert Palmer. “Walk on the Wild Side.” *Rolling Stone*, October 5, 1995.

⁹¹ “Wayne Kramer of the MC5 Reveals the Secrets of Kick Out The Jams.” CBC Radio. August 15, 2018. Accessed: August 21, 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/wednesday-august-15-2018-jon-m-chu-the-beaches-and-more-1.4784863/wayne-kramer-of-the-mc5-reveals-the-secrets-of-kick-out-the-jams-1.4785113>

⁹² James Thompson. “MC5: Kickin’ out the Jams.” *Goldmine*. March 10, 2000.

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In September 1968 the MC5 and the Psychedelic Stooges were signed by Elektra Records. The record company quickly set out to produce the 5's first album. It was to be a live album which was virtually unheard of for a debut album on a major record label. Yet, the MC5 thought a live recording at the Grande Ballroom was the only way to capture the energy of their music. The record company agreed, and the 5 recorded their album at the Grande over the course of two shows on October 30 and 31, 1968. Rob Tyner recounted in the liner notes of the 1991 compact disc reissue of *Kick Out The Jams* that this moment at the end of October was what the band had "been working for all our lives, when the MC5 will unleash sonic fury and devastate the cosmos with mega-bursts of thunder."⁹³ The 5's live album "marked the first time that a unique cultural form has been captured in its own midwestern environment," meaning that it was not produced in a studio in New York or California.⁹⁴ That environment – the Grande Ballroom – was a symbiotic and synergistic experience with the MC5.

When *Kick Out the Jams* was released in February 1969 it was an immediate success but also instantly controversial. The album peaked at number thirty on the Billboard 200 chart, and sold approximately 100,000 copies. At the same time, the album contained profanity in the song lyrics and in the song text, most notably in Rob Tyner's notable opening exhortation of the title track. This resulted in the album being restricted in some Detroit-area stores (and likely other cities as well) and unavailable in others. In fact, the police issued warnings to store owners throughout metropolitan Detroit about selling the albums, and store owners and clerks in neighboring communities were arrested and fined for selling the album to teenagers. Then-prominent Detroit retailer, J. L. Hudson Co. refused to sell the album, a move that infuriated the band and ultimately led to their split from Elektra. A review of the album in the *New York Times* stated that the MC5 "played at a volume often beyond the threshold of pain." The review went further stating, "one must be prepared to accept as a valid criterion in rock raw strength and barely bridled energy... few groups have explored the possibilities offered within rock itself. The Who and the MC5 play pure rock with high energy and happy feeling."⁹⁵ Locally, writers in *Creem* magazine noted that the band had "developed a new musical language" to deal with the raw strength and energy noted by the *Times*.⁹⁶ *Rolling Stone* later characterized the band as "the rock and roll froth on a head of energy—killer energy swelling up in this destroy industrial center, this noisy nowhere land in midwest America."⁹⁷

Even though 1968 was a significant year for the Grande Ballroom and for rock and roll in Detroit, there were seeds of change in the cultural scene that fueled the rise of the Grande as a significant music venue. In the spring and summer of 1968 John Sinclair, Leni Sinclair, Pun Plamondon, Gary Grimshaw, the MC5, and the rest of the Trans-Love Energies community left Detroit for Ann Arbor, which at the time was a hotbed of political activism, and perceived to be more welcoming to organizations like TLE, and tolerant of its own student radicals. The entire

⁹³ Rob Tyner. *Kick Out The Jams*. Elektra Entertainment. 1991.

⁹⁴ Eric Ehrmann. "MC5." *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 1969.

⁹⁵ Mike Jahn. "MC5 Plays Basic Rock." *New York Times*. June 21, 1969.

⁹⁶ "MC5." *Creem*. June 1969, p. 5.

⁹⁷ "They wanted to be bigger than the Beatles. Manager John Sinclair wanted them to be bigger than Mao. How a revolution fizzled." *Rolling Stone*. June 8, 1972.

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collective was still involved with the Grande, and the MC5 continued to appear there regularly, but TLE had grown weary of constant harassment and surveillance, threats, and property damage in Detroit.⁹⁸

In May 1969 the Who, “British rock’s toughest and most innovative group”⁹⁹ began a tour of the United States in support their now-legendary rock opera album *Tommy*. The tour began with a three-night stop at the Grande Ballroom beginning on May 9, 1969, and was arguably the high-point of the Grande Ballroom as a venue for rock and roll in Detroit. Each successive night of their live performances saw larger crowds, and each night set attendance records at the Grande. *Tommy*, the fourth album from the band, was written by Pete Townsend, and told the story of a deaf, dumb, and blind boy – Tommy. According to Albert Goodman, then-professor at Columbia University, the album, “for sheer power, invention and brilliance of performance outstrips anything that has ever come out of a rock recording studio.”¹⁰⁰ Since that time the album has been performed by various operas, orchestras (including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra), ballet companies, and adapted into both a film and a Broadway musical.

Despite these achievements and milestones, times continued to change. In late 1969 Elektra Records parted ways with the MC5, the MC5 parted ways with Sinclair, TLE, and the WPP, and Sinclair himself had been arrested and incarcerated (along with other leading members of the WPP) in July 1969. The Eastown Theater opened as a competing rock venue and Gibb started to book shows at the Grand Riviera Theatre, just north of the Grande Ballroom. The financial guarantees and higher fees required to secure acts continued to increase, as did a promoter’s requirement for the size of a venue. In Detroit, larger theaters and sports arenas like the Detroit Olympia arena (built at the same time as the Grande Ballroom and also on Grand River Avenue) and Cobo Arena were much larger and therefore more financially lucrative, and thus able to book shows with the more popular acts of the day, drew those acts, audiences, and ultimately money away from the Grande. At the same time many acts that had cultivated their Detroit audiences at the Grande had also outgrown its limited space.

What is more, Gibb turned his attention away from the Grande and started to organize large outdoor festivals along the lines of the now-famous Woodstock Music and Art Fair held in Bethel, New York, in August 1969. His first foray was the three-day Goose Lake International Music Festival held in Leoni Township, Michigan, a few miles east of the central Michigan city of Jackson. The Goose Lake festival occurred in August 1970 and featured a roster of the day’s top musical artists, including Rod Stewart, Jethro Tull, Chicago, the James Gang featuring Joe Walsh, alongside Detroit’s best rock bands, Bob Seger, the MC5, The Stooges, Detroit featuring Mitch Ryder, Brownsville Station, Savage Grace, Third Power and SRC. Festival planners estimated that around sixty thousand people would attend the festival, but by the end, some 200,000 people had attended.

⁹⁸ Leni Sinclair. “1520 Evicted.” *Ann Arbor Sun*. September 4-17, 1971.

⁹⁹ Albert Goldman. “A Grand Opera in Rock.” *Life*. October 17, 1969.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*.

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Around 1970 Gibb closed the Grande Ballroom as a regular venue,¹⁰¹ but made the ballroom available to rent for 450 dollars per day and union-scale wages for musicians.¹⁰² For the next two years the ballroom hosted special events, benefits, and fund-raisers. Notably, a benefit for John Sinclair was held at the Grande Ballroom in January 1970. Nearly two thousand people attended the benefit in support of Sinclair. Yet, this was a fraction of the number that later attended the John Sinclair Freedom Rally at Crisler Arena at the University of Michigan in December 1971. The Sinclair rally in Ann Arbor also demonstrated that the center for the counterculture movement had largely shifted to Ann Arbor by that time.

Events at the Grande Ballroom were organized by various promoters through December 1972. Fittingly, the MC5 briefly reunited when they were hired to perform a final show (for both the ballroom and the band) on December 31, 1972. Then, the lights went out and the bands left, and the Grande days and the wonder there to see came to an end.¹⁰³

At some point in 1973 the former rock and roll palace was turned into a roller-skating rink, known as Astro-Dome Skating. The rink was short-lived, however, and no longer appeared in directories by 1977. After 1977 any occupation or use is harder to ascertain, as city directories appear to blend listings for 8952 with the ballroom and the corner storefront.

“A World that was Destined Never to be.”

The end of the Grande Ballroom was multifaceted, and strangely tied to both the success and failure of Detroit’s music scene. From its inception as a rock venue until about 1970, the Grande was able to accommodate most musical acts. The unique environment of the ballroom undoubtedly played into its favor. Increasing consumer interest in major local, national, and international acts, and the changing economics of the music industry, however, led to a need for larger capacity venues that could produce correspondingly larger profits. The Grande had become obsolete, a victim of the success it facilitated.

The decline of the Grande happened so suddenly it seemed to take some by surprise. Author David Carson observed that Detroit seemed of the verge of becoming the next big music scene.”¹⁰⁴ Yet it somehow failed to materialize as many seem to have expected. Wilson Lindsay, writing in the *Detroit Free Press* in March 1971 asked, “Where Has the Detroit Sound Gone?” Lindsay pointed out that in just a few short years, a once promising local music scene had largely evaporated. He observed the causes as some bands having left the state, others having broken up, and venues – including the Grande – closing. Ancillary businesses like booking agents soon followed. In the same 1971 *Detroit Free Press* article Lindsay quoted Hank Malone, former disc jockey at WRIF/WXYZ, an FM radio station in Detroit, who suggested that the downfall of the “Detroit Sound” was due in part to the “crumbling aspects of

¹⁰¹ George Knemeyer. “Midwest Makes Music Gains as Rock Ballrooms Blossom.” *Billboard*. October 3, 1970.

¹⁰² “People’s Ballroom Progress.” *Ann Arbor Sun*. September 4-17, 1971.

¹⁰³ Paraphrase of “Grande Days” by Rob Tyner. 1990.

¹⁰⁴ David Carson. *Grit, Noise, and Revolution: The Birth of Detroit Rock ‘n’ Roll*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

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the whole hippie-culture scene... that rock and roll and the culture [were] so entwined," that when one falls apart, so does the other.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Dave Marsh, stated pointedly in the October 1971 issue of *Creem*, that, "the time is past for taking rock AS revolution seriously..."¹⁰⁶ For the MC5, the success of *Kick Out the Jams* was not replicated with their second and third albums, *Back in the USA* (1970) and *High Time* (1971). Disappointing sales led to a split with Atlantic Records. By 1972, the band was on its own again, searching for its own identity, still ready to make musical statements. The question, as *Rolling Stone* asked, was anybody listening.¹⁰⁷

Writing in 1976 sociologist James L. Spates observed that by the mid-1970s the hippies and political radicals, "seem to have all but vanished. Their once flourishing communities... have returned to their pre-late 1960s demographic structure and virtually all hippies who remain in them are living a life style more akin to down-and-out skid row types than the ideal" that promulgated cooperation, expression, communalism, autonomy, art, and being over doing. In Detroit, arrests in the late 1960s of significant countercultural figures further dampened the local movement. By the mid-1970s it was all over.

In his liner notes for a 1991 compact disc reissue of *Kick Out The Jams*, Rob Tyner stated that the album "is a microcosm of the times that spawned it... this music expresses the frustration and future shock of the sixties... a portrayal of the struggle to create a world that was destined never to be."¹⁰⁸ Tyner's words can be applied not just to the album, but to the MC5, to the Grande Ballroom, and to the culture that spawned it all. The three – band, ballroom, and culture – are inextricably linked.

Today only a handful of Detroit's ballrooms remain standing: the Vanity, the Monticello, the Crystal, and the Oriole Terrace (originally built as the Duplex Theater in 1915). The Grande is in a similar condition as the Vanity and Oriole Terrace, stable, but deteriorating due to lack of heat, investment, and protection from the elements. In 2005 the Monticello Ballroom benefited from state grants and now has first-floor tenants. The Crystal Ballroom underwent a complete reconstruction and reopened as the Crystal Lofts opening in 2008. The Grande Ballroom's significance to Detroit's musical history goes far beyond that of the remaining ballrooms, as it was the site of a short-lived but intense musical and social revolution where thousands testified to the Detroit sound and witnessed the city's urbanized, industrialized rock lead the way for the later punk, alternative, heavy metal, and grunge bands that followed.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Lindsay, Wilson. "Where Has the Detroit Sound Gone?" *Detroit Free Press*. March 5, 1971.

¹⁰⁶ Dave Marsh. "MC5: Back on Shakin Street." *Creem*. October 1971, p. 38.

¹⁰⁷ "They wanted to be bigger than the Beatles. Manager John Sinclair wanted them to be bigger than Mao. How a revolution fizzled." *Rolling Stone*. June 8, 1972.

¹⁰⁸ Rob Tyner. *Kick Out The Jams*. Elektra Entertainment. 1991.

¹⁰⁹ Tom Greenwood. "A Wilted Flower Child." *Detroit Free Press*. January 10, 1993.

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Subsequent History

In 1995 the Boston, Massachusetts, PBS affiliate WGBH co-produced the documentary series, *Rock & Roll: An Unruly History*, on the history of rock music. The series featured *Rolling Stone* contributor, former rock critic at the *New York Times*, and author Robert Palmer, who, in a companion piece to the series, placed the MC5 alongside the Doors, the Stooges, and the Velvet Underground as significant bands in the development of American punk rock.

In 2011 Fender Musical Instruments released a special-edition Stratocaster that replicates the stars-and-stripes look of the guitar that Wayne Kramer used while a member of the MC5.

In the 2012 documentary of the Grande Ballroom, *Louder Than Love*, John Sinclair stated that “whatever happened in Detroit in those days relative to rock and roll music was centered on the Grande Ballroom,” and blues legend B. B. King recalled that when he played at the Grande, the crowd stood up and yelled and screamed, and that he “had never been treated that well before.” In the same documentary, Lemmy Kilmister, founder of the English rock band Motörhead, revealed that the music of Detroit, and the MC5 in particular, were of significant influence in the development of the band.

In a 2013 interview with rock musician Ronnie Wood of the Rolling Stones, Alice Cooper stated that the Detroit is the “best rock city in the United States,” with Wood adding that it all “started at the Grande Ballroom.”¹¹⁰ That same year *Rolling Stone* magazine identified the MC5 and Iggy Pop (in the 1960s with the Psychedelic Stooges) as “critical precursors”¹¹¹ in the development of punk rock in particular, and rock music generally.

Gary Grimshaw passed away in 2014. Not only a renowned rock poster artist, he was a veteran of the Vietnam war, active in the White Panther Party, and served as art director for the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival (1972-1973), *Creem Magazine*, Detroit’s rock ‘n’ roll magazine (1976-1984), and ArtRock, a concert poster producer (1988-1991). In 1999 the *Detroit Free Press* included Grimshaw in its list of Michigan's 100 greatest artists and entertainers of the twentieth century,¹¹² a list that included Aretha Franklin, Albert Kahn, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Charles and Ray Eames, Marvin Gaye, and of course the MC5. In 2014 the Detroit Historical Society hosted an exhibition of Grimshaw’s posters.

¹¹⁰ Ronnie Wood. “Alice Cooper on 1960s 1970s Detroit.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkRlEaHukL8>.

¹¹¹ “Detroit Rock City: The local legends who defined the sound of the city.” *Rolling Stone*. July 29, 2013. Accessed August 27, 2018.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/detroit-rock-city-19976/soul-254418/>.

¹¹² “Michigan’s Greatest Artists and Entertainers.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 12, 1999.

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Rhino Entertainment, the catalogue development and marketing division of Warner Music Group, noted that the band “inspired a thousand hard-rocking imitators,” and “the phrase ‘kick out the jams, [expletive]!’... alone would have secured their permanent status as music icons.”¹¹³

The MC5 have been nominated to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2003, 2017, 2018, and 2019. Though not yet inducted, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame itself has stated that “with the most anti-establishment credentials in rock and roll (the f-bomb was their go-to expletive) the MC5 prefigured much of American punk rock. Forty-five years after their historic finale at Detroit’s Grande Ballroom on New Year’s Eve (1972), the Motor City 5 are about as ballsy as it gets.”¹¹⁴ Were they inducted, the MC5 would join other Michigan rock musicians, including Bob Seger, Alice Cooper, and the Stooges.

Much like the role of Detroit and Michigan in the development of American architectural Modernism, the history and significance of the Grande Ballroom has been largely forgotten, yet these two movements, that could not be further apart, had a significant impact throughout the United States and around the world. The history unappreciated, unvalued, and left to a relatively few individuals. Indeed, Bob Talbert of the *Detroit Free Press* had observed in 1977 that “the move from Motown to Rock City... dates back to the rebellious days of the MC5 and the Grande,” when Detroit, and thus the Grande, “probably rocked harder... than anyone will ever know.”¹¹⁵ This nomination is a testament to that history.

¹¹³ “5 Things You Might Not Know About The MC5.” Rhino.

<https://www.rhino.com/article/5-things-you-might-not-know-about-the-mc5>

¹¹⁴ “MC5.” Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. <https://www.rockhall.com/nominee/mc5>.

¹¹⁵ Bob Talbert. “Detroit’s a Mother for Rock and Roll.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 1, 1977.

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Grand River Avenue near Clarendon Street, looking east, with marquees for the Grande Ballroom and Grand Riviera Theater in background at right. Undated. Courtesy of Detroit News Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

From the time of its construction until the mid-1960s, the Grande Ballroom building housed several commercial spaces on the first floor of the building, along Grand River Avenue and Beverly Court. The occupants of these spaces served a growing and evolving section of the city during a period of tremendous growth for the city of Detroit. Local and national stores sought access to this expanding market, and as times changed so did many of the merchants. By the mid-1960s, however, the area was in decline, and by 1971 “about 50 percent of the businesses [had] closed down.”¹¹⁶

The 1930-1932 City directories suggest the storefronts were addressed (east to west) as 8940, 8956, 8960, and 8970 when the building was constructed. By 1936 the 8940 address no longer appears, and in its place is 8952. The 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance map for the building

¹¹⁶ Hugh McCann. “Black Department Store to Open.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 24, 1971.

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provides both original and revised addresses, and notes the storefronts as historically being addressed as 8950, 8956, 8960, and 8970, and the revised addresses as 8956, 8960, 8964, and 8970. Additionally, 8952 is occasionally listed for one of the retail spaces, the Grande Ballroom, or both. Bresser's Directories in later years provide addresses of 8952, 8956, 8960, and 8970, which more closely correspond to the pre-revision addresses.

8940/8950 (8952) Grand River Avenue

This space, situated at the southeast corner of the building, was initially occupied by the Economical Drug Co., a drug store that had some fifty stores in Detroit. The Economical Drug company was established by Nate S. Shapero in 1918 in Detroit. A second store was opened in 1920, and still others quickly followed. By 1931 Shapero operated more than forty stores and sought to expand its operations. That same year, Economical merged with another local drug store chain, the Cunningham Drug company, which had been established by Andrew Cunningham in the late 1880s. While Cunningham had operated primarily in the downtown area of the city, Economical operated in the neighborhoods. Rather than compete, the two companies merged, and operated for several years as Economical-Cunningham drug stores. By 1935 the company operated more than seventy stores. In 1937, the company changed its name to "Cunningham Drug Stores, Inc." The company still exists today, but is much smaller and has been bought and sold several times, and is no longer associated with Detroit or Michigan. It is not clear when or why the drug store left 8952, but by 1936 Economical-Cunningham had been replaced by Lord's Jewelers, which remained here until 1942, when advertisements appeared for a Grand Jewelers store at 8952. Grand Jewelers, "the home of the blue-white diamond," and "Detroit's largest credit jewelry chain institution,"¹¹⁷ had been in business for twenty-one years at that point and maintained several locations around Detroit. Just a few years later, however, the jewelry store had been replaced by Jack & Jill, a children's clothing store operated by Ernest & Lillian Golumbia. In August 1948 the company announced the opening of a children's shoe department and offered "carefully supervised x-ray fitting,"¹¹⁸ and later opened a men's shop at 8956. Both stores remained at their locations until June 1966 when they were liquidated, likely in response to a series of burglaries.

In 1973 the storefront was occupied by Blondie Brown's University of Beauty and Charm, and then next year a hair weaving specialty shop. Then in 1977 the 8952 storefront was occupied by Pastor George Bogle who operated the House of Prayer, and perhaps the Evangelechoes. Bogle remained at 8952 through the 1980s.

8956 (8960) Grand River Avenue

At the time of construction, 8956 was leased by the A. E. Burns Shoe company. The Burns outfit announced the new northwestern branch store with a special four-page section in the *Detroit Free Press*. It was the company's third store. The special section provides some of the details of the store. The L-shaped designed provided entrances to the main floor on both Grand

¹¹⁷ "Grand Jewelers." *Detroit Free Press*. December 24, 1942.

¹¹⁸ *Detroit Free Press*. August 29, 1948.

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River Avenue and Beverly Court. The main floor provided sales space for both men's and women's shoes. The basement was "colorfully decorated for the kiddies," and spaces were planned for a play room and barber shop.¹¹⁹ A fourth Burns shoe store was added the following year at the Vanity Ballroom on the east side of downtown Detroit. The Vanity was designed and developed by Charles Agree and his partners in the Metropolitan Holding Company, which included Edward Strata.

Arthur Eliot Burns had established a shoe firm in 1912 after graduating from the University of Detroit and working for R. H. Fife. Shoe Company. In 1918 Burns bought his partner's interest in the firm and established the A. E. Burns Company.¹²⁰ Between 1918 and 1928 Burns opened a second store, and in 1928 opened the Grand River Avenue store.

It appears that within two years of opening at the Grande Ballroom building, the Burns shoe concern had left this space, as advertisements at that time indicate the store was occupied by the Foot Saver Shoe Shop, and that Burns operated fewer stores, the Grand River address not among them. The Foot Saver was replaced within a few years by the W. L. Douglas Shoe Company, a national chain from Brockton, Massachusetts. Also within this time, the barbershop (or perhaps a salon) noted in the A. E. Burns articles had been implemented, as the 1936 city directory shows the space occupied by the Douglas company and James Symon's Grande Beauty Shop. By 1937 W. L. Douglas had eight stores in Detroit.

After the Douglas company left the store it was taken over by the House of Jackets, and then the Jack & Jill shop that had been at 8952 for several years expanded to this location. While Jack & Jill sold children's clothes from 8952, this store was designed as a men's clothing store and operated under the name of Jack & Jill High College Shop. The Jack & Jill men's store was liquidated along with the children's store in June 1966. The 1968 city indicates 8956 was occupied by Les Coiffeurs Beauty salon. By the early 1970s the store is vacant or otherwise left off of city directory listings entirely until 1975 when Revelation True Faith appears there for one year. According to city directories 8956 has been vacant since 1976.

8960 (8964) Grand River Avenue

At the time of construction, 8960 was occupied by Beverly's, a dress shop associated with Harry Weitzman and Charles N. Agree. According to city directories Beverly's had been replaced by Lord's in 1930, and Allen's, a ladies' furnishings store, in 1931, but by 1932 the space appeared as vacant in the city directory. The Maas Bros.¹²¹ department store appears to have leased the space shortly thereafter. The 1939 city directory lists the Standard Beauty Shop sharing the address with Maas Bros, suggesting, like the Douglas company, Maas Bros. may have had a salon space within its store.

¹¹⁹ "Announcing the Grand Opening of A.E. Burns & Co. New Northwestern Shoe Store." *Detroit Free Press*. October 19, 1928.

¹²⁰ Clarence M. Burton. *The City of Detroit, Michigan, 1701-1922*, vol. 3.

¹²¹ Available evidence suggests that this is not related to the Maas Bros. retail chain prominent in Florida.

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Maas Bros. was established by brothers Earl D. and Royal S. Maas of Massillon, Ohio, in February 1930.¹²² By the late 1930s the brothers had established a Maas Bros. store in Flint, Michigan, and then the store at 8960 Grand River Avenue in Detroit. In 1954, after the death of Royal Mass earlier that year, his heirs sold their interest in the store to George S. Pearlman, who had been a partner in the store since 1943.¹²³ Advertisements dated to 1961 and 1967 suggest the Detroit and Flint Maas Bros. stores remained in business until those dates, respectively. The store then appears as vacant in city directories until 1971.

In 1971 the *Detroit Free Press* reported that the former Maas store became home to “Detroit’s first black-owned-and-operated department store,” Bargain Center, Inc. The store was a special project initiated by Montgomery Ward company.¹²⁴ The store, however, appears to have folded rather quickly and was replaced in 1973 by the Detroit Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), which provided job training and education to unemployed individuals. OIC seems to also have been short-lived as it does not appear in later (after 1974) city directories.

8970 Grand River Avenue

From 1928 until 1957 this space was occupied by a branch of the W. T. Grant Co., a mass-merchandise department store founded in 1906 in Massachusetts. The company operated nearly five hundred stores by the mid-1940s, and more than one thousand by the time it filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations in the mid-1970s. The branch at 8970 Grand River Avenue was one of five stores in the Detroit area,¹²⁵ and was operated by the company until a basement fire in 1957. The company did not rebuild the store, and in subsequent city directories it appears as either “vacant” or is not listed.

Architecture

Architectural Significance

The Grande Ballroom is significant as a local example of the Mediterranean Revival architectural style, popular in the United States in the early twentieth century. The upper story of the ballroom exhibits characteristic features of the style with its low-pitched tile parapet that in this case provides the impression of a clay tile hipped roof; corner towers; round arch, multi-pane windows; light brick cladding, reminiscent of stucco; and though no longer present, wrought iron balconettes were historically incorporated into the design. The first-story exterior was designed in a commercial vernacular style, but has been altered and is currently in a state of disrepair. The architectural details of the interior continue to reflect Mediterranean influences, including the use of spiral columns and wrought iron railings. Similarly, the exterior courtyards or loggias present in Spanish Colonial or Mediterranean revival buildings prevalent in the American south and west are present here, albeit in modified form, in the interior promenade.

¹²² “Ohio Incorporations.” *Chillicothe Gazette*. February 25, 1930.

¹²³ *Detroit Free Press*. November 11, 1954.

¹²⁴ Hugh McCann. “Black Department Store to Open.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 24, 1971.

¹²⁵ *Detroit Free Press Roto*. December 2, 1956.

Grande Ballroom
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Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean revival styles were popularized by elaborately designed hotels in Florida in the late nineteenth century, and later by the buildings of the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, California, in the mid-1910s. The exposition brought further attention to, and interest in, these styles, which would have been viewed as exotic, or, at a minimum, evocative of warmer climates. Yet, while seemingly out of place in the colder, northern climate of Michigan, the Spanish Colonial Revival style and its derivatives were viewed as both fashionable, indicative of modern, progressive tastes, and called to mind the coastal environments with historical Spanish colonial connections.

Yet, architectural tastes were not limited to Spanish- or Mission-influenced styles of Florida and the American West. Interest in “exotic” architectural styles was prevalent throughout the United States through the 1920s and into the 1940s, and architects borrowed freely from these faraway cultures. For example, when the Fox Theatre (NHL) was completed in 1928 the building was described as having borrowed “the artistic beauties of Burmese, Hindu, Persian, Chinese and Mexican architecture.”¹²⁶ The 1927 Fisher Theater (Fisher Building NHL) borrowed from Mayan culture, and the 1929 Vanity Ballroom (NRHP), also designed by Charles Agree, incorporated Aztec themes.

Significant non-residential examples of the Mediterranean Revival style in Detroit include the 1923 Detroit Yacht Club (NRHP), the 1929 Grosse Pointe Yacht Club (NRHP), and the now-demolished 1926 Chateau Frontenac Apartments. It was in this social and architectural milieu that Agree designed the Grande Ballroom.

Charles N. Agree and Charles N. Agree, Inc.

The Grand Ballroom is significant as an example of noted Detroit architect, Charles N. Agree’s approach to recreation and entertainment facilities in the 1920s and 1930s. The ballroom marked the beginning of a departure for Agree from the large-scale apartment and hotel buildings with which he had established his practice. Equally important, the Grande Ballroom was the first ballroom and second entertainment and recreation building he designed. The first, the one-and-a-half-million-dollar Hollywood Theater was designed in 1926. The four-story, brick theater building could accommodate four thousand patrons (the theater was demolished in 1963). While Agree designed numerous neighborhood theaters throughout the 1930s and 1940s, he only designed one more ballroom, the Vanity Ballroom in 1929.

Charles Nathaniel Agree (1897-1982) was born in Petroplovsk, Kamchatka Krai, Russia, in the far east of the country, on the coast of the Bering Sea. Agree arrived in the United States with his parents in 1904, and moved to Michigan in 1908 from Stamford, Connecticut. After graduation from Cass Technical High School in Detroit, Agree served in the Army Engineer Corps during WWI. After the war ended Agree received his architectural education at the University of Michigan and at the Detroit Institute of Technology. Prior to establishing his own

¹²⁶ “Splendors of New Fox Theater Revealed.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 23, 1928.

Grande Ballroom

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firm in 1919, Agree worked for several local firms: Williams Bros., F. Swirsky & Co., and W. E. N. Hunter. The first years of Agree's career produced numerous apartment and apartment hotel buildings in Detroit, including the "magnificent" Whittier Hotel, which the *Detroit Free Press* deemed "so novel, so original," and the "finest of its kind,"¹²⁷ and the massive Wiltshire Court apartments, both in 1923. The Whittier was one of his largest and most important projects of the 1919-1930 period, during which Agree also produced a number of small-scale apartment buildings, including the 1924 Euclid-Linwood Apartments and a 1923 three-story apartment building on Maplewood and Grand River Avenue, about six blocks east of the Grande Ballroom. Agree also received commissions for hotels and apartments in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Buffalo, New York

Shortly after the construction of the Grande Ballroom building, Agree, Edward Strata, and others formed the Metropolitan Holding Company, a real estate development company. The first project for the newly-formed organizations was the construction of the Vanity Ballroom.¹²⁸ Interestingly the vanity involved many of the same individuals and companies as the Grande. Paul Strasburg leased the second-floor ballroom for a dance school, while Cunningham Drugs, later to join with Economical Drugs, A. E. Burns Shoe company, and the Beverly Shop occupied the first-floor commercial spaces.¹²⁹

By 1942, Agree's firm had designed a wide range of buildings: theaters, stores, apartments, hotels, warehouses, factories, schools, and so on. By this time, however, the firm specialized in store buildings, particularly those for many of Detroit's neighborhood retailers. Many of the buildings for prominent, Detroit-based retailers, Federal Department Stores and Winkelman's were designed by Agree's firm, as were many local Woolworth stores. Detroit's Kinsel and Cunningham Drug Stores buildings and other major retailers including Michigan-based Kresge (later Kmart) as well as Kroger, Wrigley, and Big Bear Super Markets also commissioned stores by Agree.

Charles Agree was joined by his son, A. Arnold Agree, in 1953. Like his father, the younger Agree was educated at the University of Michigan, from where he had graduated in 1948. In 1958 the firm moved its offices from the Book Tower in downtown Detroit to a modern office at 14330 West McNichols Road, closer to the inner-ring suburb cities of Southfield, Royal Oak, and Huntington Woods. The firm's relocation coincided with a turn in the focus of the firm.

In the middle years of the twentieth century, as Americans availed themselves of their greater mobility, the Agree firm designed shopping centers and larger suburban malls throughout metropolitan Detroit area, greater Michigan, and around the country. In the 1950s the firm was responsible for several shopping centers in metropolitan Detroit, the first being the Sheldon Shopping Center in Livonia,¹³⁰ and followed by the Eastgate Shopping Center in Roseville; the Belmont Shopping Center in Detroit; the Tech Plaza Shopping Center in Warren; and the Frandor Shopping Center in Lansing. In the 1960s the work the firm did on the early shopping

¹²⁷ "Palatial Hotel in Indian Village." *Detroit Free Press*. February 18, 1923.

¹²⁸ "Realty Development Company Organized." *Detroit Free Press*. April 21, 1929.

¹²⁹ "New Business Block Fills Great Demand." *Detroit Free Press*. June 16, 1929.

¹³⁰ "Pontiac Mall---Architect Dream." *Detroit Free Press*. March 25, 1962.

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Name of Property

County and State

centers led to many commissions for the shopping center's larger, regional sibling, the mall. The first of these regional malls for the Agree firm was the Pontiac Mall in Waterford Township (1962). Pontiac was followed several others, including the Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield (1968); including the Oakland Mall in Troy (1968); and the Lansing Mall, Lansing (1969). The firm's work in Michigan led to others around the country, including the Cordova Mall in Pensacola, Florida (1969); the Panama City Mall in Panama City, Florida (1974), and the Acadiana Mall in Lafayette, Louisiana (1979).

W. E. Wood Co.

The contractor for the Grande Ballroom, the W. E. Wood Co., was established in 1909 by William E. Wood and associates, and constructed many prominent buildings and structures throughout the United States and Canada. Among the company's works are the state office building and library (1919, now the Lewis Cass Building, NRHP 1984) in Lansing, Michigan; the Rackham Education Memorial Building (1921, NRHP 1983), the Book Tower parking garage (1928, NRHP 1982), Ambassador Bridge terminal buildings (c. 1929), and Ponchartrain Club (c. 1929, NRHP 2016) in Detroit; numerous school buildings in both Michigan and Canada; and buildings in Muncie, Indiana, Fort Worth, Texas, and Oakland, California, for the General Motors Corporation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Agree, Charles N., Architect. *Ball Room & Store Bldg*. Architectural Plans. May 1928.
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- Ehrmann, Eric. MC-5. *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 1969.
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- Warren-Forest Sun*, various issues 1967-1968.
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2007.

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Wayne Co., Michigan
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Friends of the Grande

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .40

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.364868 Longitude: -83.128480
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Grande Ballroom
Name of Property

Wayne Co., Michigan
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The east 9 feet of Lot 2, also Lots 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 on the North side of Grand River Avenue in the William L. Reeds Subdivision according to the plat thereof. Recorded in Liber 29, Page 90, Plats, Wayne County Register 14/168.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are the legal boundaries of the several parcels on which the building is situated.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator
organization: Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
street & number: 735 Michigan Avenue
city or town: Lansing state: Michigan zip code: 48909
e-mail: walsht@michigan.gov
telephone: (517) 373-1630
date: August 10, 2018

name/title: Leo Early
organization: Friends of the Grande
street & number: 22634 Michigan Avenue
city or town: Dearborn state: Michigan zip code: 48124
e-mail: leobearly@gmail.com
telephone: (313) 565-1550

Grande Ballroom
Name of Property

Wayne Co., Michigan
County and State

date: August 10, 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Mark Childress

Date of Photograph: August 6, 2017

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0001.tif

Grand River Avenue Elevation, Beverly Court - right, camera facing northeast.

2 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

Grande Ballroom

Wayne Co., Michigan
County and State

Name of Property

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Mark Childress

Date of Photograph: August 6, 2017

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0002.tif

Beverly Court Elevation, Camera facing west

3 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Mark Childress

Date of Photograph: August 6, 2017

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0003.tif

Alley elevation, Camera facing west-northwest.

4 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Harry Arnold

Date of Photograph: December 19, 2017

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0004.tif

Aerial perspective, Grand River and Beverly Court lower left, camera facing northwest.

5 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Harry Arnold

Date of Photograph: December 19, 2017

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0005.tif

Aerial perspective of building and Grand River Avenue – Beverly Court intersection, camera
facing -90 degrees vertical, Grand River Avenue at bottom.

Grande Ballroom
Name of Property

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6 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Beau Kromberg

Date of Photograph: October 5, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0006.tif

Grande Ballroom second level, dancefloor, camera facing north, stage at center is on
northwest wall.

7 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Leo Early

Date of Photograph: January 21, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0007.tif

Ex: Grand River elevation, Ballroom level window and tympanum, camera facing northeast.

8 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Leo Early

Date of Photograph: January 21, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0008.tif

Ex: Ornate column at promenade perimeter of dance floor, stage at northwest wall, camera
facing northwest.

9 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Leo Early

Grande Ballroom

Wayne Co., Michigan
County and State

Name of Property

Date of Photograph: January 21, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0009.tif

Southeast wall of dance floor, promenade columns, spotlight portal in far office wall with
Beverly Court windows at far extent, camera facing southeast.

10 of 10

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Name of Photographer: Leo Early

Date of Photograph: March 5, 2006

Location of Original Digital Files: Friends of the Grande Archive, 22634 Michigan Avenue,
Dearborn, Michigan 48124

MI_Wayne County_Grande Ballroom_0010.tif

Ballroom dance floor ceiling rosette.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

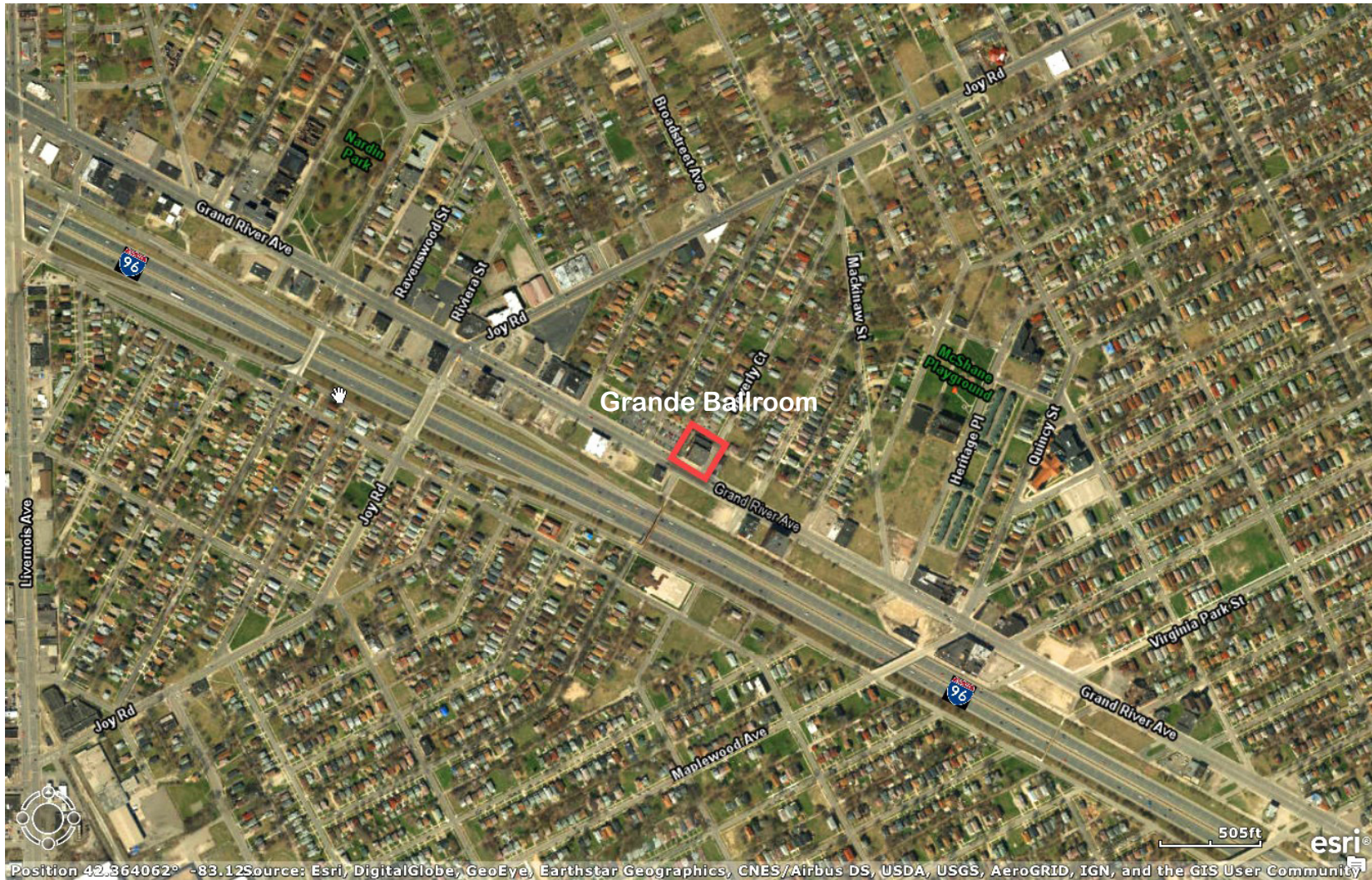


Grande Ballroom

8952-8970 Grand River Avenue, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 42.364868/-83.128480





Grande Ballroom

8952-8970 Grand River Avenue, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 42.364868/-83.128480





FUTURE HOME of
CHAPEL HILL







Mega Millions \$223 million
Power \$369 wed thurs sat













National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Grande Ballroom

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: MICHIGAN, Wayne

Date Received: 10/31/2018 Date of Pending List: 11/16/2018 Date of 16th Day: 11/30/2018 Date of 45th Day: 12/17/2018 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003226

Nominator: Other Agency, SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 12/10/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The primary significance of the Grande Ballroom lies in its 1960s association with rock and roll and the counterculture. Featuring the MC5 as the "house band", the venue became "The" place in Detroit for local, regional, national, and international acts to play. In 1969, The Who debuted "Tommy" to US audiences in the Grande Ballroom. The Grande, for a short heyday, was the midwest counterpart to the Fillmore West and Fillmore East as 'go-to' venues. It is one of the few early "ballrooms" left, executed in an elegant revival style, sadly deteriorating currently.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

**Certified Local Government
National Register Nomination Review Report**

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan State Housing Development Authority



- * **Complete and return to:** National Register Coordinator, Michigan State Historic Preservation
- * Office, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, 735 East Michigan Avenue, PO Box
- * 30044, Lansing, Michigan 48909

Name of Property: Grande Ballroom
Address: 8952-8970 Grande River Avenue, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
Owner: Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Date Complete Nomination Approved by the SHPO: August 10, 2018

The Certified Local Government (CLG) agrees with the SHPO to expedite the review period for this nomination.

YES (date of agreement) 9/13/18 NO

Gene J. Egan 9/13/18
Signature of CLG Commission Chairperson Date

Signature of Elected Chief Official Date

Date(s) of commission meeting(s) when the nomination was reviewed: 9/13/18

Date of written notice to property owner of commission meeting: 8/27/18

The CLG provided the following opportunities for public participation in the review of this nomination:

Were any written comments received by the CLG? YES NO

Attached.
Was the nomination form distributed to CLG commission members? YES NO

Was a site visit made to the property by CLG commission members? YES NO
If yes, when? _____

Did the CLG seek assistance of the SHPO in evaluating the eligibility of this property for the National Register? YES _____ NO X

VERIFICATION of Professional Qualifications of Commission in accordance with 36 CFR 61, Appendix 1, of Michigan's Certified Local Government Program.

List those commission members who meet the 36 CFR 61 qualifications required to review this type of resource.

Commission Member	Professional Qualifications
1. <u>Keith Dye</u>	<u>Historian</u>
2. <u>Louis Fisher</u>	<u>Architect</u>
3. <u>Melanie Bazil</u>	<u>Historian</u>
4. <u>Victoria Byrd-Olivier</u>	<u>Historic Preservationist</u>
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____

Was an outside consultant used? YES _____ NO X

If yes, provide the name and list the 36 CFR 61 qualifications the person meets:

- ✓ The CLG Commission finds that the property meets the following National Register criteria of significance:
A and C
- ✓ The CLG Commission finds that the property meets the National Register standards of integrity.
YES X NO _____
- ✓ Recommendation of CLG Commission:
APPROVAL X
DENIAL _____ (specify reasons on a separate sheet of paper)

Signature of Chief Elected Official Date

Date of transmittal of this report to the SHPO 9/14/18

Date of receipt of this report by the SHPO _____

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Jolene Kijorski <jkijorski@preservationdetroit.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2018 8:27 AM
To: historic@detroitmi.gov; Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Letter of Support - Grande Ballroom
Attachments: Grande Ballroom Letter of Support - Google Docs.pdf

Categories: NR

Hello,

Please find the attached letter of support for the Grande Ballroom Nation Register Nomination from Preservation Detroit.

Best Regards,

--

Jolene Kijorski
Executive Vice President, Board of Directors

Preservation Detroit
PO Box 6624, Detroit, MI 48202-9998
(313) 530-3855 | www.preservationdetroit.org

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Honoring Detroit's Rich Architectural
and Cultural Heritage Since 1975



September 11, 2018

Historic Designation Advisory Board
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Ave, Suite 218
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Historic Designation Advisory Board,

We are writing this letter in support of the National Register nomination of the Grande Ballroom at 8952 Grand River Avenue in Detroit.

We strongly encourage the nomination be submitted to the National Park Service for official listing on the National Register. The ballroom's long-standing history in the music scene and architectural styling are significant in highlighting and preserving the neighborhood's history and provide insight into life in Detroit in the 1920's and beyond.

Additionally, the Grande Ballroom continues to act as a community resource, bridging multiple entities together to excavate, capture, and restore the history of the ballroom. Adding the Grande Ballroom to the National Register can only propel historic preservation and neighborhood growth further.

Sincerely,

Jolene Kijorski
Executive Vice President
Preservation Detroit
8801 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Cristina Parks <cwysling@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2018 11:34 PM
To: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: The Grande Ballroom

Categories: NR

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very excited to hear of the Grande Ballroom's nomination into the National Register of Historic Places. This venue is a true piece of music history that Detroit should hold close having recently demolished Easton Theater. We are so lucky to still have the very venue that has built on or contributed to the hippy movement, rock and roll and punk rock, so few places can claim to have revolutionized music in so few years. This is a building that is not only important to those of Detroit, but the entire country and beyond as many musicians from all over built and refined their craft here. Please help with the passing of the nomination so that the Grande can be restored and Detroit can keep this important piece of its history alive.

Thank you,
Cristina Parks

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Drew Drialo <drew@elclubdetroit.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2018 9:42 PM
To: historic@detroitmi.gov; Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: The Grande Ballroom | National Register of Historic Places

Categories: NR

Hi,

I am reaching out in support of registering “the legendary” Grande Ballroom as a Historic Place in the City of Detroit. The Grande Ballroom created waves across our cultural landscape, pushing forward with the spirit of Detroit and rock & roll music. The energy was passion fueled, raw and real. The influence of booking acts like The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zepelin, MC5, The Stooges, Janis Joplin and so many more — impacted so many in such powerful ways that it’s even carried on to inspire me since the age 24, when I first learned about it. I am 28 now. The Grande Ballroom is a very important part of our cities legacy.

Best,

Drew

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Marilyn Davis <marilyn.davis50@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2018 1:43 AM
To: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: The Grande Ballroom - National Register Nomination

Categories: NR

To the State of Michigan National Register Nomination for The Grand Ballroom under Chapter 25, Section 2, of Detroit City Code "Historic Landmark and Districts":

I would like to nominate The Grande Ballroom located at 8952-8970 Grand River Ave Detroit MI 48204 in Wayne County Michigan at the NW corner of Grand River and Beverly Ct for a number of reasons that will be explained below:

The Grande Ballroom is a private property building that functioned as a dance and music Ballroom from the mid 1920's to ~ 1972. There were times that the building was closed for various reasons. It currently is not being used and is in disarray. It has Architectural Classifications from the late 19th and 20th centuries used for revivals and concerts. It's a 2-story Commercial building designed in the late 19th Century & early 20th Centuries revival style with the 2nd floor containing the Ballroom. The location on Grand River is significant as Grand River is one of the major arteries / roads / "spokes" in the original road design when Detroit was 1st settled.

I personally worked at The Grande Ballroom in the Coat Check room (when the Coat Check room was needed) for ~ 18 months for the owner/operator, Russ Gibb. I used my nickname during my employment "Mik Bell". I was born in Detroit MI in 1950, & the name I was given at birth is "Marilyn Sue Bell". At the time I worked at The Grande (1968-1970) I lived with my parents at 18944 Shiawassee Detroit 19, Mich. I was paid with the tips I was given by the customers whose coats I hung up and protected while they enjoyed the concerts. I enjoyed the concerts also. I will never forget this days & nights!

The Grande Ballroom had a very significant, profound and lifelong affect on me and thousands of Baby Boomers and other people's lives that came to dance and listen to wonderful music! It was THE place to go to hear the BEST Rock & Roll music from all over the world. And it wasn't expensive to get in! Many world renowned acts like - The Who, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Fleetwood Mac, Janis Joplin, Grand Funk Railroad, Chambers Brothers, Cream, LED Zepillin and the Byrds, etc...would NOT play at any other venue in the USA unless they played at The Grande Ballroom 1st! It was just their most popular venue and the epicenter of talent noted above and the local talent from the Detroit area such as The MC5, Alice Cooper, Mitch Rider, Bob Seger, Iggy POP, Amboy Dukes w/ Ted Nugent, The Rationals, and so many more many more bands.

I read the 62 pages (twice!) of the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service/ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form OMB No. 1024-0018 & wasn't sure how to complete the form and hope this is the proper way to nominate The Grande Ballroom with this email to request that the Grande Ballroom be SAVED! It falls under the categories on the Form for:

Applicable National Register Criteria A - Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criteria Considerations A - The building is currently owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

The Grande Ballrooms historic value is a one-of-a-kind historical tribute to the rock and roll era of the years 1966-1972 +/- that were very unique and contributed to not only the changing culture in the USA, the State of Michigan and the

City of Detroit, and the World but The Grande was part of the significant changes in the music business too. Most major popular bands were influenced by Detroit rock & roll bands from that period of time - mostly the MC5.

I believe The Grande Ballroom is eligible for National Register Nomination under Criteria A as one of the few remaining examples of Detroit's early 20th Century Ballrooms. The Grande Ballroom operated as a significant Public Venue from 1966-1972. It was THE foremost rock and roll venue in Detroit and possibly the United States. International mega bands were drawn to Detroit's Grande Ballrooms epicenter, and have expressed to the media that the MC5, The Stooges (Iggy Pop), and Ted Nugent were major influences in their music. There is no doubt that 1966-1972 was a major period of significance to the entire music scene.

Accolades must be given to owner/operator Russ Gibb for having the vision for The Grande Ballroom after visiting California's Fillmore Ballroom in June, 1966 and coming back to Detroit and opening up The Grande Ballroom and making it better than the Fillmore! I can't say enough about The Grande Ballroom, the music and Russ Gibb! I am also a member of Friends of The Grande headed by Leo Early who is also someone doing terrific work on keeping the Grande Ballroom Alive!

If any further information is required for my request to allow my vote to put The Grande Ballroom up for a National Register Nomination please contact me at the information below ASAP. If a "Form" is needed, please attach to an email to me & I will return ASAP. Thanking you in advance for your time.

Regards,
MARILYN S DAVIS

Marilyn S Davis
5662. Lake Geneva Dr
Lk Worth FL 33461-6137
561-586-4109 - landline
561-267-6989 - cell
marilyn.davis50@icloud.com

Sent from my iPad

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Joan Doherty <jodo12@optusnet.com.au>
Sent: Thursday, September 06, 2018 2:28 AM
To: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grande Ballroom

Categories: NR

To the Board members,

I am writing to express my support of adding the Grande Ballroom in Detroit to the Register of Historical Places. Detroit has always been renown for producing internationally acclaimed musicians and as the birthplace of Motown. It can also be claimed that it was also the birthplace of punk rock with the Grande Ballroom and the MC5 as the "midwife."

Many of the big bands such as The Who, Cream, Rod Stewart and countless others to this day remember the Grande as the best venue they ever played. It frequently gets mentioned when they are being interviewed. It was the epicentre of the counter culture movement for the youth in Detroit and Michigan at large. It was a magical place.

It would be a shame to lose such an icon.

Regards,
Joan Doherty

Deborah Goldstein - Fwd: Grande Ballroom Preservation

From: cc-historic Mailbox
To: Reinhardt, Jennifer, Goldstein, Deborah
Date: 9/13/2018 11:54 AM
Subject: Fwd: Grande Ballroom Preservation

>>> Rich Scannella <drums@icloud.com> 9/6/2018 8:24 PM >>>
 To whom it may concern,

My name is Rich Scannella, I'm an educator at Rider University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. In addition, when I'm not teaching I'm also a touring and recording drummer. I'm writing on behalf of the historic Grande Ballroom in Detroit, Michigan. I can't really say enough about it's significance, but please allow to try.

As one who is extremely interested in history and also deeply concerned with it preservation, the Grande holds not only an integral part of Detroit history, but to the larger music establishment as well. The chronicles contained in its walls tell a rich story of some of the greatest music ever made. From its inception in 1928 to its eventual closing in 1972, the Grande has hosted the pinnacle of music greats from the big bands to rock, jazz, and blues.

During its late 1960's heyday, the venue was the epicenter of Detroit rock and roll, severing both the immediate community as well as surrounding areas. The ballroom was every bit as important to the development of popular music and culture as the Fillmore auditoriums were to New York and San Francisco. The ballroom also serviced the burgeoning youth culture as the young people of Michigan along with the rest of world fought for civil rights, gender equality, and peace. So important was it that international bands touring the Midwest considered Detroit paramount to its performance itinerary, the reason being the Grande.

When venues such as the Grande Ballroom cease to exist we are not only losing a fine establishment that can benefit a community much in need of its assistance, but we are also losing and being deprived of what shapes and defines both our history and our culture. To lose this wonderful building would be a massive loss for the combined community, city, and state.

Author Leo Early (who I've copied in this email) gives substantial evidence to the Grande's importance in his book 'The Grande Ballroom-Detroit's Rock and Roll Palace.' I echo Leo's sentiments, and further state that to persevere this building is to save a venue that still can serve an important part of the community going forward today. Perhaps not in the exact same capacity as the past, but to become an important part of the neighborhood none the less.

Over the summer I had the opportunity to see this historic landmark up close, and was awestruck by its weathered beauty. A local in passing car stopped and also corroborated the Grande's intrinsic value. He enthusiastically stated its importance to the neighborhood saying "you have to save Grande!" My thoughts exactly.

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the meeting being held on behalf of the Grande Ballroom, but please know that I will be there in spirit. I am hopeful the meeting is a productive and creative one to moving closer to seeing this amazing venue once again occupy the place of importance it once held.

If I can be of any service in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you and best wishes.
 Rich

https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http://www.richscannella.com&d=DwIFaQ&c=0CE5Q2m55ppZ9yr4GfXRSDDa5PUr8XSADpFvi9wiGhY&r=3U86hmq-A_wqk_6inuANy3bPZTlibcS18X5oJefJE6Q&m=s4EJ2geTsuhpQAvW9-SEQUY-TQJkpB2nNuPFqwUPkGM&s=OPDQix1W3yZepivSzCzGfavKZInYU7BbCSOEaN_oqM&e=p_609.221.8584

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: talger@cinci.rr.com
Sent: Sunday, September 09, 2018 8:48 PM
To: historic@detroit.gov
Cc: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grande Ballroom nomination

Categories: NR

To whom it may concern,

Please approve the nomination of the Grande Ballroom to the National Register of Historic Places.

It was a marvelous building to visit, and the concerts we attended were magical experiences. The friendships forged in that building are still growing strong after all these years. It was a significant venue in my life and in the lives of so many Detroiters.

We all hope that you give this the serious consideration that this wonderful old structure deserves.

I thank you for your time and the Grande thanks you also.

Toni Alger

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: cklockner@mi.rr.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2018 11:29 AM
To: historic@detroitmi.gov
Cc: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grande Ballroom

Categories: NR

I am writing in support of adding The Grande Ballroom to the National Register of Historic Places. The Grande was the home of rock and roll in Detroit in the 60's and early 70's. Historic bands got their start playing at the Grande. We have music running through the streets of Detroit right into this historic building. I have driven by the Grande many times and have brought out of town friends to gaze at her fading beauty. This building holds so many memories for myself and many others not of my generation. My mom has memories of dancing at the Grande as well. Wonderful memories that should be preserved. As beautiful historic buildings all over Detroit are being saved and given new life. Let us save this wonderful Detroit building, The Grande Ballroom.

sincerely,
Cathy Klockner

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Damia P. Taylor <theprayerwarrior@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2018 8:14 PM
To: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grande Ballroom

Good Evening,

This is a request to certify The Grande Ballroom on Grand River Ave. as a historic site.

Humbly Submitted,

Mrs. Taylor

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: patricia GEE <nonigee@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2018 9:52 AM
To: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grande Ballroom

Categories: NR

I would like to urge you to vote for the historical designation of the Grande Ballroom, once a popular & renown Rock & roll and Jazz mecca in Detroit. We want to preserve it for the historical significance it represents to our Detroit community. Your vote would preserve its once greatness & hopefully help to restore it to a functioning building that our community can benefit from. Sincerely Patricia Gee

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: Tom <tearly@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2018 11:17 AM
To: Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grand Ballroom Nomination

Categories: NR

I urge you to designate the Grande Ballroom, in Detroit, Michigan a National Historic Place.

Thank You for your consideration

Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)

From: David Miller <kermit.miller@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2018 9:32 AM
To: historic@detroitmi.gov; Walsh, Todd (MSHDA)
Subject: Grande Ballroom

Categories: NR

To all in charge..

Hi

My name is David Miller. I worked at the Grande Ballroom as the MC and production manager from 1967-71. There is so much musical history there and good energy I would highly recommend that you all make this an official historic building.. This was the second major music venue to open in the country shortly after the Fillmore in San Francisco . The Grande was the place to play for the new musical revolution that started taking off at about that time in 1966. Besides having a previous history in the 1920s and 30s as a place to go and dance and listen to great ballroom music it again made its historical mark with the psychodelic and free music of the 60s

It well deserves a place in the History books and preserved as the legendary landmark it truly is. Besides all that , the ghost will like it. No joke. I'd be happy to tell my ghost experiences while working there!

Thank you all

David Miller
505-270-0055

City of Detroit Historic District Advisory Board

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center

2 Woodward Avenue - Suite 204

Detroit, MI 48226

March 1, 2017

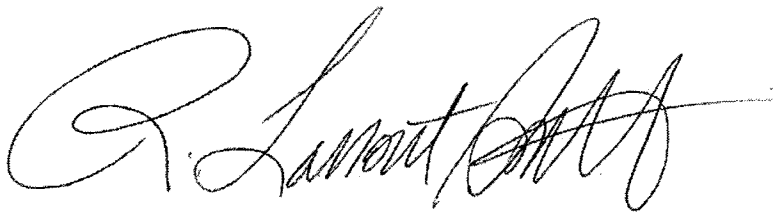
Dear Board Members,

Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church has reviewed all historic nomination documents and answered all questions related to the nomination our historic property, The Grande Ballroom at 8952 Grand River Avenue.

We understand that historic registry status would be a benefit to such a property and any larger redevelopment efforts. We acknowledge that Historic status in no way prevents or hinders the sale, renovation or re-use of such a property.

We would like to recommend that the City of Detroit Historic Advisory Board and the State of Michigan Historic Preservation Office proceed with the nomination of the Grande Ballroom property to the National Historic Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. LaMont Smith II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. R. LaMont Smith II

Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church

5000 Joy Road

Detroit, Mi. 48206



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

EARL J. POLESKI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 22, 2018

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Grande Ballroom, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Disc one contains the nomination file, signed cover page, and any correspondence. Disc two contains photographs of the nominated site.

All owners and appropriate elected public officials were notified and provided at least thirty (30) days to comment on the above proposed nomination in accordance with National Register regulations. The City of Detroit's Certified Local Government National Register Nomination Review Report, and all written comments concerning this nomination, submitted to us prior to our forwarding this nomination to you, are included in the correspondence file on disc one.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 373-1979 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC/taw

