

Description and History
Highland Park Civic Center
20 and 28–30 Gerald Street
Highland Park, Wayne County, Michigan

Prepared for the Steven C. Flum, Inc. and the City of Highland Park

by

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HIGHLAND PARK CIVIC CENTER

Location

The Highland Park Civic Center consists of two structures: the Fire Department Headquarters, located at 20 Gerald Street, and the Municipal Building, at 28–30 Gerald Street, in the city of Highland Park, in Wayne County, Michigan. The site is sometimes referred to as the Highland Park Municipal Complex.

The Highland Park Civic Center is located at latitude: 42.40562, longitude: 80.09604, North American Datum 1983. The coordinate represents the center of the facade of the Fire Department Headquarters. It was obtained November 1, 2013 by plotting its location on the 1:24000 Highland Park, MI USGS Topographic Quadrangle Map. The accuracy of the coordinate is +/- 12 meters.

Significance

The Fire Department Headquarters building, completed in 1911, also served as the village hall, and later city hall, of Highland Park until the dedicated Municipal Building opened in 1927. Together with the now-demolished Police Department Headquarters located at 25 Gerald Street, these structures served as the seat of government of Highland Park throughout most of its history. Their development reflects the growth of the community during a period of extreme economic prosperity in the 1910s through the mid-1920s, and they remained in use during a gradual population decline that began around 1927 and continued into the twenty-first century.

The Fire Department Headquarters, designed by Albert E. Williams, was extensively remodeled shortly after the construction of the Municipal Building, likely by the same firm that designed the latter building. The Municipal Building is noteworthy for its Classical Revival architecture by the Detroit-based firm of Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr.

The Highland Park Civic Center appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as it retains a high degree of “integrity,” as defined in the National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, and meets National Register criterion A: association “with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” as well as C: representing “the work of a master . . . that possess[es] high artistic values.”

Description

The Highland Park Civic Center is located near the geographic center of Highland Park, a 2.97 square mile city of over 11,000 residents, bordering the cities of Detroit and Hamtramck in southeast Michigan. It is located one block east of Woodward Avenue, a major thoroughfare.

The Fire Department Headquarters and Municipal Building face north onto Gerald Street, which is paved with concrete and terminates in a cul-de-sac at the east end of the civic center. To the north, across Gerald Street, a newly-constructed fire station replaces the 1917 Police Department Headquarters building, demolished in 2012.

A parking lot and garage for city-owned vehicles is located across an alley to the south of the Municipal Building.

Fire Department Headquarters

The westernmost of the two remaining buildings, the Fire Department Headquarters, was completed in 1911. It is two stories, or thirty-six feet, tall, exclusive of its central tower, and occupies a total footprint of 5,685 square feet, including an addition to the rear.

With no basement, the structure sits on a crawlspace which is now connected to the Municipal Building to the east. The building is clad in reddish-brown, common-bond brick with extensive limestone details. A single-story hose tower extends above a flat roof.

The facade is divided into three bays, with three segmented, aluminum overhead doors on the first floor. Two of these doors are topped by fixed, wooden, twenty-pane transoms while the westernmost opening has been enlarged to accommodate a slightly taller door. Double-hung, wooden sash windows are located on the second floor; three in the central bay, and two in each end bay. They are bordered by limestone surrounds and mullions. The door frames and window frames and sashes are painted a bright red.

The entire first story of the facade is faced with limestone. Classical Revival details on the facade include thick limestone quoins at each corner which support a broad limestone architrave, topped by a frieze and a denticulated cornice featuring alternating lion heads and acanthus leaves—an entablature identical to that on the adjacent Municipal Building. The frieze bears the words “CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT” in serif lettering in relief, and above the first floor the word “HEADQUARTERS” is also engraved into the limestone surface.

The building is topped with a gravel-ballasted, tar-impregnated membrane roof. A parapet running around the building roof is defined by the limestone cornice on the front (north) facade, limestone coping on the building’s original section, and terracotta coping on the building’s rear (south) section. A hose tower, centered on the building’s roof, is faced with reddish-brown brick and contains a pair of rectangular openings on each elevation, with limestone mullions, surrounds, and sash and lintel courses.

Several sources indicate that the building’s present-day appearance was arrived at only after a series of extensive modifications that occurred over approximately two decades. A photograph published in the *Detroit Free Press* at the time of the building’s completion in 1911 depicts a facade vastly different from what is visible today, as well as a two-story central block that is only four bays deep—significantly shallower than its present configuration.¹

¹ “Highland Park New Municipal Building Will Be Dedicated Saturday,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 17, 1911.

Originally, the building's facade was divided into five bays, and its fenestration and architectural details were markedly different than today. In this earlier configuration, the central bay projected slightly from the facade, featuring a central entranceway several steps above grade. Instead of three vehicle entrances, only one is shown in the 1911 photograph: a pair of glazed, hinged doors located to the west of the central bay. The two easternmost bays contained rectangular window openings on the ground floor, while all five windows on the second floor were topped by semicircular heads. A bracketed cornice existed instead of the present-day Classical entablature, and the building was capped by a central tower, flush with the facade, which no longer exists.

Within the first few years after its construction, the rear of the building was expanded to the south, according to a 1915 Sanborn map.² The original single-story rear section appears to have been increased to two stories, and a single-story rear addition further extended the building to the south. The original depth of the building's second story can be distinguished today by a limestone belt course at the cornice level that does not continue beyond the northernmost four bays, or approximately fifty feet.

The 1915 Sanborn map also depicts the structure's single-story addition as extending with a slight ell to the east, overlapping with the footprint of the 1926 Municipal Building. A 1926 site plan, however, drawn prior to the construction of the new Municipal Building, clearly shows the Fire Department Headquarters as occupying its present-day footprint, showing that the rear ell had been demolished—and possibly the entire rear section reconstructed—prior to this date.³ Today, this rear section remains clearly differentiated from the front half of the building by a slight difference in brick color, as well as a difference in structural systems. Load-bearing brick walls and concrete columns with plaster-covered steel beams and concrete floors define the front section, but in the rear, while load-bearing walls are also brick, joists and floors are wood. The load-bearing walls on this rearmost section have partly collapsed, and the roof and floors have caved in, revealing a load-bearing, brick-clad interior partition that once served as an exterior wall.

After the 1927 completion of the new Municipal Building allowed the city's administrative offices to be moved out of the older building, the interior was modified to house additional fire equipment. Interior partitions on the first floor of the building's two-story section were eliminated to create a single room occupying a majority of the space. Walls in this section of the structure are generally plaster and wood lathe on masonry or clay tile, with expanses of glazed brick on the first floor. This interior renovation may have occurred concurrently with the remodeling of the building exterior, including the alterations to the facade as well as the addition of the present-day hose tower.

The floors throughout the building are terrazzo, hardwood, or composite floor tile, in some areas covered with carpet. The first floor ceilings are cement plaster applied to metal lathe or directly to the floor structure above. Drop acoustic ceilings have been added in many areas. Many of the original finish details remain, including wood trim and casings as well as interior doors.⁴

² *Insurance Maps of Detroit Michigan* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915), 10:73.

³ Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr., "City of Highland Park Municipal Building" (construction drawings, City of Highland Park archives, 1926).

⁴ Steven C. Flum, Inc., "Condition Assessment Report: City of Highland Park Fire Department Headquarters

The building has suffered significant deterioration since it was vacated in 2005. A 2013 report by Steven C. Flum, Inc., details damage done by a recent fire as well as by water infiltration, which has weakened the structure of the building due to rust and freeze-thaw action. The building systems have also been significantly damaged due to theft and vandalism. The report summarizes the building as presently “in fair to poor condition” but nonetheless retaining “the character of the original firehouse,” appearing “much as it did during its occupancy.”⁵

Municipal Building

The Municipal Building, sited approximately twelve feet to the east of the Fire Department Headquarters, was completed in late 1926 or early 1927. Like its neighbor, it is also two stories, or thirty-six feet, tall. It occupies a U-shaped footprint of 10,252 square feet.

The Classical Revival building sits upon a full, fenestrated basement and is faced with reddish-brown, common-bond brick with limestone details. The symmetrical facade consists of a projecting central block, seven bays wide flanked by two side wings, each three bays in width. Centered on the facade is the building’s main entrance, several stone steps above grade, a doorway with a 21-light wood transom window above. A stone pediment above the doorway features dentils and acanthus-leaf decoration similar to that on the cornice of both the Municipal Building and the Fire Department Headquarters; centered on the pediment is an oval-shaped cartouche bearing the letters “HP.” The general symmetry of the facade is broken only by a doorway directly to the west of the building’s central block; it bears a simple rectangular surround in limestone, with the words “MUNICIPAL COURT” in relief. All windows are double-hung, wooden sash, and painted white.

The building’s foundation is faced with limestone, a material which also defines quoins at the building’s corners, rectangular window surrounds, and keystones above each window. A broad frieze reads “MUNICIPAL BUILDING” and “CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK” in relief, above which are stone dentils as well as a lion-head and acanthus cornice identical to that on the Fire Department Headquarters. This cornice is constructed of terra cotta, although its color and texture matches the limestone elements elsewhere on the facade. The building is topped with a gravel-ballasted, tar-impregnated membrane roof.

Centered on the south (rear) elevation, lighting the main stairway, is a large wood window with a semicircular head. Stone belt courses also adorn the south elevation. A rectangular smokestack atop the west wing rises from a mechanical room that serves both civic center buildings.

On the interior, walls are of clay tile. Terazzo flooring and marble details in the entrances and lobby remain intact.

Vandalism and theft have degraded the building’s interior fixtures. Water infiltration and associated freeze-thaw cycles have damaged the structure, especially in the northeast portion of the building.⁶ Overall, the Municipal Building “retains much of [its original] character” and “still

Building” (2013), 10.

⁵ Ibid., 12–3.

⁶ Steven C. Flum, Inc., “Condition Assessment Report: City of Highland Park City Hall Building” (2013), 10.

appears much as it did during its occupancy,” according to a conditions assessment by Steven C. Flum, Inc.⁷

History

Village and City of Highland Park

The city of Highland Park is an enclave within Detroit, sharing part of its eastern border with the city of Hamtramck, itself also an enclave. Highland Park began as a small village to the northwest of Detroit in the nineteenth century, then rapidly grew in the 1910s and 1920s after the construction of a large Ford Motor Company plant. Since its economy became intertwined with the automotive industry, it suffered drastic population losses as the industry gradually abandoned the city.

The region around the city of Detroit, founded in 1701, was sparsely populated well into the 1800s. Mixed Potawatomi and Ojibwe villages were scattered throughout what was to become southeastern Michigan until 1807, when the area was ceded to the United States.⁸ Potawatomi reservations remained near Walled Lake and Orchard Lake until 1827. By 1840, partially due to the expansion of white settlement, the remaining Indians were forced to flee or were forcibly removed from the entire area.⁹

It is within this context that the area that would later be known as Highland Park was settled. The site that was to become the village was swampy, with only a ridge (the highland that eventually gave the area its name, later leveled when Woodward Avenue was constructed) suitable for habitation. In 1812 Judge Augustus B. Woodward purchased land on the ridge and platted a village which he humbly called Woodwardville in 1825.¹⁰ Farmers, almost exclusively Protestants from New England, began to settle on the ridge. Despite Woodward advertising his new village, few people arrived and Woodwardville was a failure.¹¹ In 1836 Judge Benjamin F. Witherell then attempted to establish a new village on the ridge named Cassandra, but due to the consequences of the Panic of 1837 his efforts were unsuccessful.¹² Still, a few families stayed, and in 1873 the settlement, now called Whitewood, opened its first post office.¹³ Within the next fifteen years its name changed to Highland Park.

On June 27, 1889 the village of Highland Park was established within the township of

⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁸ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, et al., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 102.

⁹ Ibid., 134–8.

¹⁰ The land was held by the federal government, but it gave Detroit permission to sell it to help pay for new civic buildings after being ravaged by a fire in 1805. Clarence Hooker, *Life in the Shadows of the Crystal Palace, 1910–1927: Ford Workers in the Model T. Era* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), 8.

¹¹ Thomas E. Davis purchased Woodward’s land after his death. Clarence M. Burton et al., *History of Wayne County and the City of Detroit, Michigan* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1930), 1:436–7.

¹² Walter Romig, *Michigan Place Names: The History of the Founding and the Naming of More Than Five Thousand Past and Present Michigan Communities* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 102–3.

¹³ It closed two years later, but a new one, located in John T. Mott’s general store, opened in 1876. Hooker, 8–9.

Greenfield.¹⁴ This was made possible partly through the efforts of Captain William H. Stevens. Born in New York in 1819, he lived in Wisconsin and Michigan before making a fortune mining silver in Colorado. After he returned to Michigan in 1887, he pushed Senator Thomas W. Palmer to grant Detroit land north of Highland Park. Sewers were dug in that area, which caused the swampy land in Highland Park to be drained. Stevens' efforts lead to an increase of settlers, and the beginnings of small-scale industry.¹⁵ In 1888 waterworks were constructed, and the next year the first school was opened.¹⁶

The village would remain quite small until the construction of the Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant. Largely designed by Albert Kahn, the "Crystal Palace" (as it was known for its numerous windows) was begun in 1909 and completed the following year.¹⁷ The impact of the factory where the Model T was built is difficult to overstate. Methods developed there revolutionized the automotive industry: the first continuous production assembly lines were established starting in late 1914 along with the Five Dollar Day, and it helped institutionalize the concept of "Scientific Management," which created stark white and blue collar distinctions still popular in the modern corporate world.¹⁸ Highland Park had a population of only 427 in 1900. In 1910, just after the Ford plant was begun, it had grown to 4,127. It then increased more than six-fold by 1915 to 27,170, and to 46,499 by 1920; almost all that growth had been the result of the Ford plant.¹⁹ By 1923 the Ford plant had approximately 62,000 workers, more than half of all automotive industry workers in the Detroit area.²⁰

Highland Park grew and diversified. In 1918 it was incorporated as a city, with Royal M. Ford as its mayor. As a typical satellite of Detroit, its population was largely homogeneous before 1910. Then immigrants, especially from Canada and England, began to arrive,²¹ and one of the first mosques in the United States was built there.²² Many civic buildings were constructed in this period. A new village hall (the building that later became the Fire Department Headquarters) was dedicated in 1911,²³ but it was soon seen as inadequate,²⁴ and a new, larger Municipal Building was built next to the old in 1927.²⁵ The McGregor library was dedicated in 1926.²⁶ Unlike many villages and towns surrounding Detroit, Highland Park avoided annexation (much of Greenfield

14 Romig, 266.

15 The McAlpine Shoe factory was the first in Highland Park, constructed in 1891. Hooker, 10–3.

16 Highland Park Historical Society, *Progress on Parade: A Century in Highland Park, Wayne County, Michigan; One Hundred Years, 1818–1918* (Allene and George Fisher Studios, 1939[?]).

17 The plant was designed by Albert Kahn, Ernest Wilby, William B. Mayo, and Edward Gray. Hooker, 26; and Allan Nevins and Frank Ernest Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 451–7.

18 Frederick Winslow Taylor created the concept of "Scientific Management," sometimes called "Taylorism." Hooker, 21–2.

19 Ibid., 55 and 133.

20 Oliver Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 293.

21 Zunz, 354–9.

22 The mosque may have been built in 1919 (though perhaps two years later). Willis F. Dunbar and George S. May, *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 512.

23 "Highland Park New Municipal Building Will Be Dedicated Saturday."

24 See the history of the municipal buildings below.

25 "New City Hall is Dedicated," *Detroit Free Press*, July 22, 1927.

26 City of Highland Park, Michigan, *City of Highland Park: Comprehensive Master Plan 2001* (Highland Park: 2001), 9.

Township was absorbed by 1920).²⁷

Highland Park's economic reliance on large corporations helped spur growth, but also created challenges. In the short term, the lightning pace of growth caused severe housing shortages, with many automotive workers living in squalid conditions; this was especially true for recent immigrants and African American employees.²⁸ In the long term, the city and its tax base became beholden to corporations like Ford. Even before Ford's Highland Park assembly plant was fully operational, Henry Ford himself saw it as inadequate and desired to construct a larger plant in order to fully control the raw materials and supplies needed for production. Ford purchased land in River Rouge for such a plant in 1915.²⁹ At first the plants worked in concert, but in 1927, with the end of the Model T, the final assembly line at Highland Park was shut down and production moved to the Rouge plant.³⁰

With Ford's shift to the Rouge plant, Highland Park's population immediately dropped, though the longer term repercussions were cushioned by the growth of the Chrysler corporation and the production needs of World War II. Census data shows the city's population peaking in 1930 at 52,815, but this was down from an estimated 65,000 in 1927.³¹ Although not nearly as large as Ford, the Maxwell Motor Company was Highland Park's second largest employer in 1920, with a large plant on Oakland Avenue.³² That same year Walter P. Chrysler joined the company and in the next few years reorganized it; in 1925 the Chrysler Corporation came into being as an agglomeration of Maxwell Motor and several other companies.³³ The needs of U.S. war production in the 1940s also helped stabilize the population and economy, with automotive plants in Highland Park being used to make matériel.³⁴

World War II provided only a temporary reprieve: in the coming decades problems with deindustrialization, urban sprawl, and racism combined to undermine the growth of the previous decades. These problems were certainly not unique to Highland Park, and especially affected Detroit and Hamtramck as well.³⁵ Chrysler stayed in Highland Park and constructed new buildings for its headquarters, designed by Minoru Yamasaki, in the late 1960s and early 1970s.³⁶ But Ford ceased any remaining production at its plant.³⁷ Competition for jobs exacerbated racial

27 Zunz, 290. It is difficult to determine the number of times the annexation of Highland Park by Detroit has been proposed or attempted. Norman Kenyon notes that attempts were made in 1910, 1922, and 1924. "A City within a City: How Highland Park Welcomed, then Fought Off Detroit's Deadly Municipal Embrace," *Detroit Free Press*, May 13, 1951. There were certainly others continuing throughout the twentieth century (e.g. in 1919; "Council Would Annex Suburb," *Detroit News*, February 14, 1919).

28 Hooker, chapters 5 and 7.

29 Ibid., 139.

30 Allan Nevins and Frank Ernest Hill, *Ford: Expansion and Challenge, 1915–1933* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 524.

31 Kenyon, "A City within a City;" and "Highland Park Census 52,817," *Detroit Free Press*, May 6, 1930.

32 Hooker, 65.

33 Cars under the Chrysler name were first produced in 1924. Charles K. Hyde, *Riding the Roller Coaster: A History of the Chrysler Corporation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 21–9.

34 Allan Nevins and Frank Ernest Hill, *Ford: Decline and Rebirth, 1933–1962* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 179; and Zunz, 293–7.

35 Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

36 Hyde, 211.

37 After World War II tractors had been partially made there. Nevins and Hill, *Ford: Decline and Rebirth*, 340; and *City of Highland Park: Comprehensive Master Plan 2001*, 10.

tensions, and the expansion of the freeway system (the Davison, bisecting Highland Park and completed in 1942, was the first modern depressed freeway in the United States) gave white people an easy means to flee to the suburbs.³⁸

Despite new developments along Woodward Avenue in the 1970s,³⁹ Highland Park's population continue to drop in the coming decades. This was precipitated by Chrysler's closing of its Highland Park operations. The company first announced a new technological center in the northern Detroit suburb of Auburn Hills in 1986. By 1990 the company shifted 5,000 employees from Highland Park to the new center. Two years later it was announced that the company's headquarters would move there as well. In 1996 Chrysler abandoned Highland Park, providing the city only with some temporary reparations.⁴⁰ The buildings on the old site were demolished, though several smaller companies moved into the newly created industrial park.⁴¹

The tax base of Highland Park continued to shrink. In 2001 the governor of Michigan, John Engler, imposed an emergency financial manager on the city. The following year the first emergency financial manager, Ramona Henderson-Pearson, laid off most city workers and later closed several municipal buildings, including Highland Park's recreation center and the McGregor library.⁴² By 2005 both the Municipal Building and Fire Department Headquarters buildings on Gerald Street were abandoned. Two more emergency financial managers followed Henderson-Pearson: Arthur Blackwell II in March of 2005, and Robert Mason in April of 2009.⁴³ In July of 2009 the city regained control of its finances.⁴⁴

Development of Municipal Center

The village of Highland Park's first municipal building (which would later become known as the Fire Department Headquarters) was dedicated on December 23, 1911.⁴⁵ The building, designed by Albert E. Williams at a cost of \$25,000, housed most of the village government. A fire hall occupied the western side (the village's fire department was established that same year).⁴⁶ Offices of the village clerk and treasurer were located in the eastern section, and a council chamber and offices for other officials were on the second floor. A police station and jail with two large cells were also included. Records from the old village hall were probably moved there within the next year.⁴⁷

38 Sugrue, 259–66.

39 *City of Highland Park: Comprehensive Master Plan 2001*, 10–1.

40 Hyde, 284–5 and 304–5.

41 *City of Highland Park: Comprehensive Master Plan 2001*, 12.

42 Angel Cecil, "Highland Park Manager Lets Go of Most Employees," *Detroit Free Press*, March 1, 2002.

43 Michigan Department of Treasury, *Blackwell Named Highland Park Financial Manager*, 2005, accessed October 30, 2013, http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1755_1963-113330--,00.html; and id., *Mason Named Highland Park Financial Manager*, 2009, accessed October 30, 2013, http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1755_1963-213134--,00.html.

44 City of Highland Park, Michigan, *City of Highland Park: Comprehensive Master Plan 2010* (Highland Park: 2010), 8.

45 "Highland Park New Municipal Building Will be Dedicated Saturday."

46 Ellen Hathaway, *The History of Highland Park* (Highland Park: The Highland Park Board of Education, 1957), 50.

47 "Highland Park New Municipal Building Will be Dedicated Saturday;" and "Civic Building is Thrown Open," *Detroit Free Press*, December 24, 1911.

The building was constructed only one year after the completion of the Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant, at a time when the village's population was rapidly growing. It was apparently inadequate in size: by 1913 the village council had already finalized plans to expand the building to the rear as well as to construct a smaller, frame building to its east;⁴⁸ actions which were completed by 1915.⁴⁹ By 1916 the village government was considering plans to build a new facilities. Grand plans were suggested that would create a district with a new police station, village hall, hospital, library, and "comfort stations."⁵⁰ There was debate over whether do this on Gerald Street near the current village hall, or on Grand Avenue between Woodward Avenue and John R.⁵¹

The 1916 plans, however, do not seem to have gone into effect as a whole. While a new police headquarters was constructed in 1917 across from the village municipal building on Gerald Street, in 1919 there were renewed calls for a new, larger municipal building for the newly incorporated city.⁵² By 1920, however, plans appeared to be set aside once again, as Mayor Edgar F. Down stated that most buildings needed by Highland Park were completed or nearly completed, although a new city hall would eventually be desirable.⁵³ That same year the city's planning commission rejected another monumental plan for a five million dollar civic center, believing that a piecemeal approach would be more sensible. The current city hall would be remodeled into a fire station and municipal court building, and a new city hall would be constructed elsewhere.⁵⁴ Although this gradual approach was adopted, the specific plans for the old municipal building and a new city hall changed. The rear of the building was again remodeled at some point between 1915 and 1926.⁵⁵

It was not until 1927 when the city's new Municipal Building was finally dedicated before a crowd of thousands.⁵⁶ It was designed by Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich Jr. Eurich himself represented the firm at the building's dedication ceremony, suggesting that he may have been the principal designer.⁵⁷ The new building's cost, according to differing sources, was estimated to be from around \$200,000 to over \$250,000.⁵⁸ Placed on the eastern side of the old city hall in an area formerly occupied by single-family homes, as well as several smaller, municipally-owned structures⁵⁹, its construction was probably started in the fall of 1926.⁶⁰ Larger than the old city hall, it housed most of the city's governmental offices. Those of the comptroller,

48 "Change Plans For Fire Equipment," *Detroit Free Press*, July 16, 1913.

49 *Insurance Maps of Detroit Michigan*, 10:73.

50 "H. P. Proposes Big Municipal Center," *Detroit Free Press*, February 24, 1916; and "Suburban: To Begin Action on Civic Center," *Detroit Free Press*, July 18, 1916.

51 "Offers Plans for New Civic Center," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1916.

52 "Highland Park Council Would Build City Hall," *Detroit Free Press*, January 11, 1919.

53 "Hail to Highland Park—A City within a City," *Detroit Free Press*, September 26, 1920.

54 "City Planners Oppose Center," *Detroit Free Press*, September 21, 1920.

55 Burrowes and Eurich, "City of Highland Park Municipal Building."

56 "Highland Park Dedicates its New Home," *Detroit News*, July 21, 1927; and "New City Hall is Dedicated."

57 "New City Hall is Dedicated."

58 Accounts differ on the cost: the *Detroit News* fixed it at \$200,000 ("Highland Park Dedicates its New Home"), while the *Detroit Free Press* stated it was more than \$250,000 ("New City Hall is Dedicated").

59 *Insurance Maps of Detroit Michigan*, 10:73.

60 Again, accounts differ as to when the construction began: Hathaway believed it to be in the fall of 1925 (*The History of Highland Park*), the *Detroit news* noted it was in the fall of 1926 ("Highland Park Dedicates its New Home"), while the *Detroit Free Press* gave the date as early 1927 ("New City Hall is Dedicated"). A cornerstone reading "ANNO DOMINI 1926" is included in the blueprints. Burrowes and Eurich, "City of Highland Park Municipal Building."

treasurer, and city clerk were located on the east end of the first floor. The city's water department and printing office were in the basement, while the second floor housed the mayor's office, the council chamber, and the legal, engineering, building, electrical, plumbing, and assessor's departments. The western section of the first floor was separated from the rest of the building and housed the court.⁶¹

The old city hall building was soon extensively remodeled into what came to be known as the Fire Department Headquarters. Although the fire department had already occupied part of the old city hall, it now used almost the entire building, save for a few offices on the second floor housing the city's health department.⁶² The exact date of the remodeling is not known; however, since plans to convert the old city hall building were already underway, it is likely that the work commenced shortly thereafter.⁶³ A similarity in architectural details suggests that alterations to the Fire Department Headquarters were also performed by Burrowes and Eurich. According to a representative of Albert Kahn Associates, in 1937 further alterations were completed by their firm.⁶⁴

Of four Highland Park fire stations, the headquarters building also served as Station No. 1, which responded to all of the fires in the city. In 1984 the Fire Department and Police Department were merged into a Public Safety Department, with operations based in the Police Department Headquarters building at 25 Gerald Street. The police and fire functions, however, were again separated in 2005.⁶⁵

The Civic Center remained in use through the remainder of the twentieth century. The city offices moved out of the Municipal Building in September 1996, but the court functions remained. The headquarters of the Public Safety Department was moved into the Municipal Building in 1999 when the Police Department Headquarters building was vacated. The Municipal Building, however, was in turn vacated in 2001 when Emergency Financial Manager Ramona Henderson-Pearson moved its functions to the Robert Blackwell Municipal Building on Woodward Avenue.⁶⁶

The Fire Department Headquarters was vacated 2005. Both buildings have since remained vacant. In 2012 a fire, likely due to arson, started in the hose tower of the Fire Department Headquarters.⁶⁷

Albert E. Williams

Albert E. Williams, architect of the original municipal building (now the Fire Department

61 "Highland Park Dedicates its New Home."

62 "New City Hall is Dedicated."

63 The Detroit Free Press also notes that plans to remodel the old city hall were already in place. Ibid.

64 The exact nature of this work is unknown. Steven C. Flum, personal communication with the authors.

65 Devan Anderson of Steven C. Flum, Inc., obtained this information via interview with Chief Derek Hillman and Captain Patrick R. McClelland, on September 19, 2013. Steven C. Flum, personal communication with the authors.

66 Devan Anderson of Steven C. Flum, Inc., obtained this information via interview with Brenda Green, city clerk, and Janice Bibbs, city treasurer, on September 12, 2013. Steven C. Flum, personal communication with the authors.

67 George Hunter, "Official: Arsonist Hits Old Firehouse in Highland Park," *Detroit News*, June 17, 2012.

Headquarters), was born in Bristol, England on September 14, 1877. As a child he relocated to Windsor, Ontario, with his parents in 1888. His father worked as a building contractor. He received a public school education, graduating from the Windsor Collegiate Institute, and began his career as a draftsman for the Detroit firm of Speir & Rohns. He also worked briefly for the architect S.C. Falkenburg.⁶⁸ From 1900 to 1905 he worked in partnership with his brother, William T. Williams, in the firm of Williams Bros., Architects.⁶⁹ Subsequently, he established an independent practice, which continued to exist at least into the 1920s.⁷⁰ He worked from a home office at 140 Elmhurst in Highland Park.⁷¹

Notable works by Williams in Detroit included the Belle Isle Creamery at 3600 E. Forest Avenue (now demolished) and the Redford State Savings Bank;⁷² he also designed a number of apartment, manufacturing, and commercial buildings throughout the city. Perhaps his most significant works are two churches in Windsor, Ontario: Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church (now Our Lady of the Rosary), completed in 1907 on Riverside Drive in Walkerville,⁷³ and Immaculate Conception Church (now Holy Family Chaldean Catholic Church), completed in 1904 on Marentette Avenue.⁷⁴ He also designed several public school buildings in Windsor.⁷⁵ The original design of what is now the Fire Department Headquarters building, heavily remodeled in the 1920s, no longer serves as a significant example of Williams' work.

In 1915 Williams joined a number of local architects including John Donaldson, Maxwell Grylls, Albert Kahn, George D. Mason, and H. Augustus O'Dell in lobbying the Michigan legislature to require the licensing of architects. Their efforts were successful, resulting in the passage of the Registration Act on April 23 of that year.⁷⁶

Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr.

Original construction drawings credit the design of the Municipal Building to "Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr., Architects."⁷⁷ Similarities in building details suggest that the two designers were also responsible for the post-1927 remodeling of the facade and conversion of the previous municipal building into the Fire Department Headquarters. Burrowes (1874–1953)⁷⁸ and Eurich (1876–1942),⁷⁹ longtime partners, were prolific architects who designed a number of noteworthy buildings in southeast Michigan.

A 1926 booklet advertising the work of Burrowes and Eurich emphasizes the firm's specialty in

68 George S. Koyl, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1955), 606.

69 Clarence M. Burton, William Stocking, and Gordon K. Miller, *The City of Detroit, Michigan, 1701–1922* (Detroit: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), 739.

70 "Biographical Directory of Architects in Canada," Robert G. Hill, accessed October 25, 2013, <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/>.

71 Koyl, 606.

72 Burton, Stocking, and Miller, 739.

73 Koyl, 606.

74 Burton, Stocking, and Miller, 739.

75 Ibid.

76 "The Story of AIA Michigan," accessed October 25, 2013, <http://aiamichigan.wildapricot.org/Resources/Leadershp%20Retreat/AIA%20MI%20History.pdf>.

77 Burrowes and Eurich, "City of Highland Park Municipal Building."

78 Jean M. Fox, *Marcus Burrowes: English Revival Architect* (Farmington Hills: Farmington Hills Historical Commission, 1992).

79 According to Eurich's grave marker, located at Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit.

residential architecture, particularly in the Tudor Revival style, providing numerous examples of private homes in affluent neighborhoods in Detroit, Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Farmington, and Bloomfield Hills. Municipal commissions include the Divie B. Duffield and Gabriel Richard branch libraries in Detroit as well as a municipal building for Springwells Township (later Fordson and now part of Dearborn), which remain in use, and Wayne County Training School in Northville Township, which has been demolished. Burrowes and Eurich are also responsible for Brookside School and the Greek Theater at Cranbrook in what is now Bloomfield Hills.⁸⁰

Marcus Burrowes was born in Tonawanda, New York, and worked in Ottawa, Ontario before moving to Detroit to work for Albert Kahn and later Stratton and Baldwin before he began to practice independently. He began a partnership with Frank Eurich, Jr. in 1920.⁸¹ Burrowes moved from a home in Detroit to a house that he himself designed in Farmington in 1924.⁸² He retired to London, Ontario, where he died in 1953.

Frank Eurich, Jr., “a westerner by birth,”⁸³ resided in Toledo, Ohio⁸⁴ before attending Cornell University, from which he graduated in 1899. In 1907 he established a partnership with John T. Rowland, also a Cornell alumnus,⁸⁵ in Jersey City, New Jersey, and later worked in Hackensack, New Jersey. With Rowland, he designed the Scottish Rite Temple as well as the Masonic Temple in Jersey City, New Jersey, in addition to several school buildings. Eurich was a member of the American Institute of Architects.⁸⁶ He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit.

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⁸⁰ Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr. *A Monograph of the Recent Work of Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr., Architects* (Detroit, 1926).

⁸¹ National Register of Historic Places, Herman Strasburg House, Wayne County, Michigan, National Register #93000771.

⁸² Burrowes and Eurich, *A Monograph of the Recent Work of Marcus R. Burrowes and Frank Eurich, Jr., Architects*.

⁸³ Henry F. Withey and Elise Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Directory of American Architects (Deceased)*, (Los Angeles, 1956), 200.

⁸⁴ “Freshmen at Cornell: They Want Their Canes—The Question of Supremacy Not Decided,” *New York Times*, March 2, 1896.

⁸⁵ “Cornell Alumni Notes,” *Cornell Alumni News*, April 17, 1907.

⁸⁶ Withey and Withey, 201.

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This report was prepared by Timothy Boscarino and Michael Webb on behalf of Steven C. Flum, Inc. and the City of Highland Park.

Project Information

This project was completed pursuant to an agreement with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. Timothy Boscarino, who meets the federal Professional Qualifications Standards for history, architectural history, and historic preservation planning, and Michael Webb, who meets the federal Professional Qualifications Standards for history, prepared the written portion. Steven C. Flum, AIA, prepared the attached measured drawings. Timothy Boscarino completed the enclosed exterior photography, and Steven C. Flum produced interior photography.