

Welcome to Flint...

Flint is similar to many other northern cities, where a community developed because of its proximity to natural resources. Flint was born around the river, with its shallow crossing and along a trail formed by Native Americans centuries ago. Yet Flint is unique because it has seen several industries come and go throughout its history, and still it survives. First, there was lumbering, then carriage manufacturing and finally, the automobile industry. The city that was the birthplace of General Motors has experienced triumph and tragedy, perhaps as no other city has. But like other cities, Flint's architecture is a portal to its own unique identity.

Our built environment is more than a shelter or convenience. Our buildings become "placemakers" in the human experience of daily life. They can alert us when to turn a corner or identify where we are in the world. Architecture is a powerful force in both our conscience and subconscious. It manipulates our senses to excite, inspire, intimidate or comfort and console us. Architecture affects every aspect of our daily life and in doing so, it becomes so much a part of our daily routine that we are oblivious to it.

Members of the Flint-area chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) were invited to submit their favorite Flint buildings. Our committee then selected the buildings they thought would be most appropriate for our first architectural guide. The AIA Guide to Flint Architecture is by no means all-inclusive, and due to space constrictions, many worthy buildings have been omitted and will be addressed in future versions of the guide. We do hope you enjoy the examples of Flint's architecture which were chosen.

It is the hope of AIA Flint that this guide will heighten the awareness of Flint's built environment for resident and visitor alike. As AIA members and design professionals, we know that design matters and that good design can and will bring about more livable communities for all.

Enjoy,



Ron Campbell, AIA
AIA Guide to Flint Architecture
Committee Chair

For additional information or group tours, please contact
Flint Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
800-253-5468 or www.flint.org.



Ameritech Building

502 Beech St.

Architect: Unknown, 1927-1928

In preparation to meet the growing demand for telephone service in Flint by converting from operated assisted calls to an exchange based on electro-mechanical switching, Bell Telephone Company commissioned the design of a larger Art Deco-style building to house its new, state-of-the-art equipment. Built just two years after the Paris Exhibition from which Art Deco takes its name, the building is a mature example of the architectural style. The building features a chevron parapet and ornamental window frames, painstaking details for an area that was built to hold racks of stepping relays. The original façade is visible at the corner of Kearsley and Beach Streets, with additions on both the south and west sides of the building.

Bishop Airport Terminal

G-3425 W. Bristol Rd.

Architect: Reynolds, Smith and Hills, Inc., 1993



Flight is the natural theme for the new, larger terminal: the roof consists of a series of air foils stepping up into the air, the ticket and baggage claim areas are located in a large, glass-enclosed space. Passengers rise above the service areas on an escalator to a lounge, restaurant and airport offices; from there, an enclosed walkway leads to the boarding gates in a separate structure. Jetways load from the second level. The ground level features additional gates to load commuter aircraft. The separate passenger boarding building allows baggage and fuel trucks full access to aircraft passing under the walkway.



Capitol Theater

140 E. Second St.

Architect: John Eberson,
1927-1928

Noted theater architect John Eberson of Chicago originated the "atmospheric" theater. During Hollywood's Golden Era, atmospheric theaters would further enhance the experience of theatergoers by creating the impression of outdoor settings featuring ancient and exotic places inside the building. For Flint's premier theater, the only one in Flint listed in the National Trust Guide to Great American Movie Theaters, the theme was a Roman garden. Beneath its domed sky-blue ceiling are twinkling stars and "wisps" of clouds produced by a fog machine, with seating for 2000. Facades of palaces, castle towers and hanging gardens adorn the theater's interior. The exterior is comprised of buff-colored brick set off by terra cotta piers, colonnades and roofline cresting. In the original publicity materials, the theater was described as being designed in the "15th century Hispano-Italian Style."



Citizens Bank Building

328 S. Saginaw St.

Architect: Unknown, 1928;

Weather Ball – 1956

A corporate image was achieved with the Greek Revival design of the main branch, which was then duplicated for smaller branch locations throughout the City. Today, only two of the branch buildings remain. The granite sculpted elements of the buildings included volutes, festoons and medallions with Grecian urns on the

corners. The new corporate identity for the bank, the Weather Ball, was installed in 1958 and, through several stylized graphic interpretations, has become a recognized logo for the bank throughout Michigan.

Cornwall Building

624 S. Grand Traverse Ave.

Architect: Elijah Meyer, 1883

This Italianate structure was designed for Er Milner, a successful Flint lumberman. The beautifully detailed building is richly dressed with fine woods inside and out – the elaborately carved front doors are made of solid walnut and windows are framed in shutters of British Honduran mahogany. Architect Elijah Meyer also designed Michigan's State Capital building in Lansing.



Court Street United Methodist Church

225 W. Court St.

Architect: Nelson G. Lyons, 1893-1894;
addition - Gazall, Reno, 1988

The Court Street United Methodist Church has been located at this site for over 150 years. The first church, built in 1842 in the New England style, was destroyed by fire; a second, larger church was

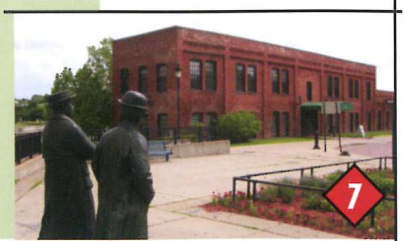
built in 1861. A rapidly growing membership led to the decision in 1888 to tear this building down for yet another larger building. The new gothic-style building was constructed of brick, with a slate roof and cut-stone trimmings. Once again, fire struck and destroyed this building in 1892. Yet another new building was constructed, in the same gothic style of the last building and with the same architectural features. The newest sanctuary seats 1,200 and is one of Flint's largest. It also contains eight stained glass Beatitude windows, each depicting an important element of local religion, arts or culture, including Flint's planetarium, an emblem of the College and Cultural Development Center, the lamp of knowledge, an open book, scale of justice and the Ten Commandments.

Durant Dort Carriage Factory

310-311 Water St.

Architect: Unknown, 1886

Restoration - Gerald J. Yurk
& Associates



This building is one of the few remaining, and the only historically restored example of the late 19th century industrial architecture, in the area. The larger of the buildings, a two-story brick structure, was constructed in 1887-1888 as the first factory built for the rapidly expanding Flint Road Cart Company. The smaller one-story structure was the original factory for the company that would eventually become General Motors. The red brick masonry walls, heavy timber framing and evenly spaced double-hung windows were common characteristics of industrial architecture until the early 1900s, when Albert Kahn pioneered a radically new style of industrial structure.



Durant Dort Office Building

315 W. Water St.

Architect: Unknown,
1895-1896

Restoration - Chambers
& Chambers/SSOE

The original company office building is a rectangular, two-and-one-half-story brick structure, topped by a hip-roof that is broken by pedimented dormers. Exterior ornamentation is simple except for a sandstone watertable along the base of first story windows and a bay window at one end that balances a simple paired column entrance porch at the other. Recognized as the birthplace of General Motors, it is the only building in the county designated as a National Landmark Historic Structure.

Elks Lodge

142 W. Second St.

Architect: Malcomson and
Higginbotham, Snyder, H.V.
& Son, 1913-1914



Listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, this lodge was the gathering place for many of Flint's leading industrialists, including W.C. Durant, founder of General Motors. The design is influenced by the Italianate style popular during the late 19th and into the 20th century. The rectangular structure has brick walls topped with red semi-glazed tile, and a decked hip-roof with copper eaves troughs. The broad, symmetrical three-part façade has a central entrance and features large round-head windows set in square-head stuccoed panels on the second story. Large fanlight windows pan the northwest side of the building and are framed by five bay-shaped brick arcades. Interior changes have been sensitive to the building's character, and many original features remain.

A Guide to Flint Architecture



East Court Street Neighborhood

Court and East Court Streets;
West of Dort Highway, East of Cropo
Street Various architects, 1920s-1960s

One of Flint's premier neighborhoods, the East Court Street area offers an array of

architectural styles dating from the 1920s through the 1960s. Many ranch and international style homes from the 1950s and 1960s dot the tree-lined streets and share the streetscape with Colonial Revival homes of the 1940s. The neighborhood also features one of the most concentrated groupings of 1920-1940 Tudor Revival homes in Michigan. You can also see one of the few remaining Lustron homes (2205 East Court) and, if you look closely, you'll spot the watchful eye of the cherub perched high in his rooftop domain.

Flint Cultural Center

1120 E. Kearsley St.

Architects:

Smith, Hinchman & Grylls

*Master Plan; Whiting Auditorium;
Longway Planetarium; Flint
Institute of Art*

S.A. Nurmia/Louis B. Kingscott

Flint Public Library

Mackenzie Knuth & Klein, *Bower Theatre*

Ellis, Arndt & Truesdell, *Flint Institute of Music, Sarvis Center*

Gazall-Krapek, *Sloan Museum*

THA Architects Engineers, *Flint Youth Theatre/Longway addition*



Flint's Cultural Center was designed in the International style: its character is vividly expressed through the exposed and emphasized structural elements. The openings in the framework are enclosed with large glass panels dividing the space between inside and out. Large, glazed brick "sheer" walls provide elements of color for both interior and exterior spaces. The floor surfaces "float" over the landscape, and frames of chrome and aluminum trace and define the lines and forms of the building's architecture.

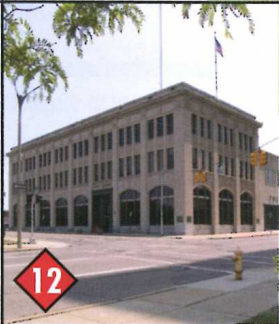
Flint Journal

200 E. First St.

Architect: Albert Kahn, 1924

Intricate stone carvings adorn the facades of the Journal building located at Harrison and First Streets. Above each of the arched windows along Harrison Street, the relief figures in the round medallions represent knowledge, research and literature. Along the north side of the building, these figures are repeated and joined with sculptured reliefs representing science, art, music, printing and

engraving. Rectangular reliefs on either side of the round medallions represent the attributes of a free press — vigilance, wisdom, truth, accuracy and industry. Below the upper floor windows are reliefs of the marks of prominent printers from Europe's 300-year printing history. In 1978, a mural by Blue Sky titled "Overflow Parking" was painted on the building's east elevation, characterizing late 20th century American society.

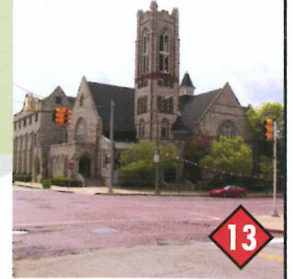


First Presbyterian Church

746 S. Saginaw St.

Original architect Lawrence B. Valk, 1884;
Church House, 1928; Gym and Classrooms, 1954
North addition - SSOE, 1984

The original building was constructed from some of the finest materials available for a total of \$46,000. Built of limestone from the Bayport quarry near Sebawaing, Wisconsin, the church is trimmed in Ionia limestone with a base relief of terra cotta. The interior makes extensive use of ash, cherry and basswood that complements the Tiffany stained glass windows.



Flint City Hall

1101 S. Saginaw St.

Architect: Beyster and Associates, Inc.,
1955

The International style of design is expressed through the exposed structural framework and large expanses of glass that form the

"skin" of the building. Here, the exterior framework has been extended outside the enclosure of the building. The large expanses of glass serve as curtain walls, panelized and set in from the framework. The structural steel elements are faced and hidden in marble. Large, marble slab-style sheer walls form the faces of the building at either end, with glass curtain walls serving as the front and back of the structure. A domed auditorium, covered exterior walkways and massive brick tower complete the futuristic vision common throughout the 1950s.

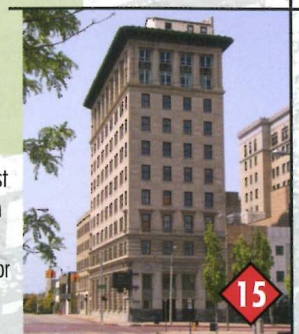


Genesee Bank Building

352 S. Saginaw St.

Architect: Hodgson Brothers, New York,
New York, 1919-1920

The expanding Genesee County Savings Bank acquired First National Bank in 1917, and the new building was built on the site of what was interchangeably called the First National Bank at Flint or the Bank Branch Two. The exterior surfaces of the building depict the functionality of the interior uses. The banking room, the mezzanine and the first floor are covered in articulated limestone blocks, with cornices that emphasize the length of the building. The rental office floors are of smooth limestone with plenty of windows and natural light. The top two floors consist of a colonnade around the executive offices. A deep cornice crowns the building.



Genesee County Courthouse

920 S. Saginaw St.

Architect: Frederick D. Mason Associates,
1925-1926; addition/restoration -
CHMP Vitetta, 2000

The courthouse is a massive, rectangular, five-story example of Neo-Classical Revival design. This concrete-frame building is faced in Indiana limestone and is divided into three horizontal bands via its detailing. A classical cornice tops a two-story high base. The structure is facade with monumental Ionic columns extending across the central section of the façade. The columns support a high classical entablature that terminates in a massive flat-topped parapet.



A Guide to Flint Architecture

Halo Burger and Vernors Mural

800 S. Saginaw St.
Architect: Unknown, 1929;
mural by artists John Gonsowski
and Keith Martin, 1932

The stucco exterior, red tile inset details and red tile roof are typical of the Mission style-architecture of this building, originally built as a Vernors "Soda Pop Shop." The space currently occupied by the parking lot was once the Vernors Gardens outdoor dining area. The Vernors mural on the wall facing the building was completed in 1932 and depicts the characteristic Vernor's gnomes making their ginger ale and preserving it in wooden barrels, working against a backdrop of castles.



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Kettering University Student Center

1700 W. Third St.
Architect: TMP Associates Inc., 1969

This building serves as the social center of Kettering University (formerly General Motors Institute). This deceptively large building seems to float over the campus on a

dominating site at the head of the athletic fields. The plaza steps down the sloped site in a series of paved and foliated levels. Paired brick pillars support the top two stories. Glass curtain walls open the first two floors to views of the plaza. An exposed concrete "belt" wraps the pillars at the second floor. From the third and fourth floors, a concrete flair provides an eave, and three short pilasters, which rise and are capped by windows at the top floor, set off the floors. The building is topped with an equipment penthouse. A carillon is set at the top of a steel and brick tower at the north side of the site.



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McLaren Hospital Addition

401 S. Ballenger Hwy.
Architect:
Lewis J. Sarvis Architects, 1947-1949
West addition - Perkins & Will, 1992-1993

Almost lost beneath a multitude of renovations and expansions as the hospital expanded west, the original International style design is once again a dominant façade in Perkins & Will's most recent addition on the west. This handsome high rise structure utilizes a warm gray curtain wall panel set in a clear aluminum frame, which subtly organizes the central portion of the west façade. Two masonry "towers" with lighted masts frame the central portion of curtain wall, and separate the curtain wall's high rise ends.



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Mott College Campus Regional Technology Center

1401 Court St. (faces Robert T. Longway Blvd.)
Architect: SSOE, 2001



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The Regional Technology Center is a pioneer in the development of technical educational facilities. Described as 'Art Deco meets the Jetsons,' the design was achieved through the use of glass facades, scored ground face block, a 3-story atrium with hand-crafted aluminum panels, flowing waves of perforated metal, futuristic sculpted furnishings and art and plenty of splashes of bold color.

Mott Foundation Building

503 S. Saginaw St.
Architects: Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, 1929-1930;
facade restoration - THA Architects Engineers

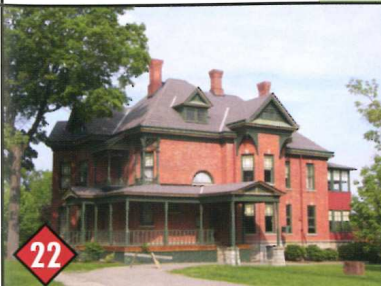
Flint's first and most prominent Art Deco high rise was designed by Smith, Hinchman & Grylls (SmithGroup), the oldest practicing architectural firm in America. Launched as a modern style movement at the 1925 Paris Exposition des Arts Decoratifs of Industriels Modernes, Art Deco took on a distinct character of its own in America. Utilizing the latest advances in technology and materials, the style was hallmarked by geometric shapes and streamlined simplicity. The extent of the Art Deco influence can be seen in everything from the stylized limestone reliefs to the interior handrail brackets.



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Michigan School for the Deaf Superintendents Cottage

1301 W. Court St.
Architect: Unknown, 1894



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The superintendent's cottage construction was started in 1889 and completed in 1894, and is the oldest building on the campus of the Michigan School for the Deaf. With the exception of the brick and masonry work, all of the work on the cottage was done by the deaf students who worked at the school's cabinet shop. The two-and-one-half story brick Queen Anne-style structure is topped by a multi-gabled roof and rests on a fieldstone foundation. A large, pillared porch wraps around two sides of the house and projects outward into a porte-cochere. Various projecting bays, balconies, and porches feature decorative windows, gable ornaments, lace-like brackets and planed brick decoration. Inside, the formal dining room has carved woodwork in the ceiling and metallic-finish wallcovering.

Michigan School for the Deaf Faye Hall

1401 W. Court St.
Architect: Unknown, 1913-1914;
restoration - Gazall, Lewis Architects

This structure, currently used by The Valley School, was originally built as a classroom dormitory structure for students at the Michigan School for the Deaf, replacing an earlier building which had burned. Made of brick with stone trims and tile roof, the design of this structure was influenced by the Federal and Greek revival styles. The position of this majestic structure set back along the long wooded drive adds to the sense of grandeur the hall conveys.



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Nash House

307 Mason St.

Architect: Unknown, 1890

This home was once the home of the automotive industry leader Charles J. Nash. The two-and-one-half-story Queen Anne-style cottage with highly pitched roof appears rather ordinary now that it has been stripped of the ornamentation which once embellished it. The second and the upper half-story are covered with shingles, and a porch with bracketed columns runs around the front and sides.



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Northbank Center

Metropolitan Building/Industrial Savings Bank Building

432 N. Saginaw St.

Architect: Davis, McGrath & Kiessling, 1922-1923; restoration - Gerald J. Yurk and Associates

The facade of this 12-story structure followed the design philosophy of high-rise construction of the period, viewing a building as a column with a base, shaft and capital. Reportedly designed after the Ancient Temple of the Four Winds in Athens, Greece, the first four floors are decorated with Grecian motifs and create a base for the rest of the building. The middle floors provide the simple brick and limestone shaft and the upper two floors crown the capital with large copper anthemions and lion's heads. The Saginaw Street façade sports large Corinthian columns.

Paterson House

307 E. Third St.

Architect: W. A. Paterson, 1907; restoration - Grainger and Associates Architects

Constructed in the Tudor style, this home was constructed for the builder's son, William S. Paterson, a Flint carriage maker. The elder Paterson used slate on the roof, forming several intersecting hip structures with shed dormers. The entry foyer opens to a grand staircase with a leaded glass window at its mid-floor landing. The first floor of the home is finished in rich cherry wood, with bay windows setting off the main drawing room. The building now serves as offices for Grainger and Associates Architects.



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Paterson Building

118 E. Third St.

Architect: Unknown, 1931

This three-story masonry structure exhibits the flair of the Art Deco period of its construction, with stylized geometric trims, as well as being reminiscent of the Art Nouveau period, with its floral-patterned panels. Strong vertical piers emerge from a base of marble, rising to a decorative stone cornice cap. Storefront glazing spans the piers at the base. Windows and doors are embellished with ornate stone panels carved with designs inspired by both the Art Deco and Art Nouveau periods. Art Deco lettering is carved into the stone above the building's entrance, and a stone bay carries a detailed flagpole.

Phoenix Building

801 S. Saginaw St.

Architect: George Pelham, 1966

The phoenix is a bird from mythology, said to have been reborn from the ashes after perishing in a fire, and the law practice of Palavin, Palavin & Powers chose the name for their new office building when they rebuilt after a fire. The law partners hired Detroit architect George Pelham, and the new building was modeled after an existing one the firm had designed. The building consists of two "masses": the first, a cube, set on back of the site, has large glass areas on both north and south sides. The second is a lower level that opens to a sunken plaza, with two office floors floating above. Marble for the building was imported from the Italian Alps; window framing and exposed steel are painted different colors as a contrast to the starkness of the marble.



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River Front Park

Saginaw Street Crossing of the Flint River

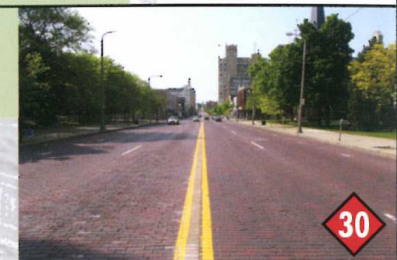
Architect: Lawrence Halprin, 1977-1978

Internationally-acclaimed architect and urban planner Lawrence Halprin of San Francisco designed the miles of park, fountains, bridges, falls, a fish ladder and an amphitheater as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood control project. Working from conceptual designs developed with input from the public, Halprin executed the design in his trademark style of layering bold flat surfaces of concrete, softened by landscape and water features, which invite human interaction and play.

Saginaw Street

Architect: Native Americans original designers

Dating back at least 300 years, Saginaw Street is one of the oldest thoroughfares in the United States to bear its original name. The road was upgraded in 1829 from a Native American trail to a military road that linked Detroit with ports to the north. Evolving from a footpath to the brick pavement seen today, the road surface has been gravel, logs, planks and wood blocks one foot thick. The first brick surface was laid in 1899. The street was rebuilt in 1936 and predicated to "give 50 to 70 years of service" in addition to making Flint's Main Street "one of the most durable and beautiful pavements in Michigan" according to then-Highway Commissioner Murray Van Wagoner.

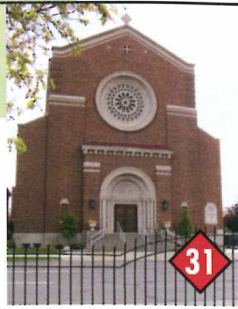


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St. Matthew's Church

706 Beach St.
Unknown architect, 1919

This Catholic Church, of Romanesque style, is built mainly of reddish-brown brick with limestone trim accenting the door and window openings, set off by a red tile, angular roof. Windows on the sides of the church have arched tops, a key feature of the Romanesque style.



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St. Paul's Episcopal Church

711 S. Saginaw St.
Architect: Gaden Lloyd, 1873

This Gothic revival structure is constructed of native limestone from a Flushing quarry. The stone was hauled from its bed near the river and over frozen winter roads to the construction site. Master Builder W. A. Patterson, a Presbyterian, hand-wrought and donated the iron cross which crowns its spire. In 1915,

during the parish's 75th anniversary, a new parish house was built and the Five Sister Chapel was also added to the church. The church contains some of the finest stained glass windows in the Flint area, with many of Tiffany stained glass. The structure's original deteriorating slate roof was replaced in 2000, along with additional restoration work.



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University of Michigan – Flint

303 Kearsley St.
Various architects and years

In 1944, the University of Michigan opened a University Extension Office in Flint, and in 1956, the University of Michigan – Flint was established as the Flint College of the University of Michigan. It moved from the campus of Mott Community College campus to its present site in 1976. The river front campus master plan was completed by Sasaki Associates of Boston in the early 1970s. Since that time, many local and internationally recognized architects have been represented in the campus' growth. Among the impressive list are: French Hall & Theater, Sedgewick Sellers, Flint; University Center, Ulrich Franzen, New York, New York and THA Architects Engineers, Flint; Recreation Center and Murchie Science Building, William Kessler and Associates, Detroit; landscape and site master plan, JJR/SmithGroup, Ann Arbor; Thompson Library, Gunnar Birkerts, Birmingham, Michigan; William S. White Building, SSOE, Troy, Michigan. University Pavillion Architect: Collaborative Inc.

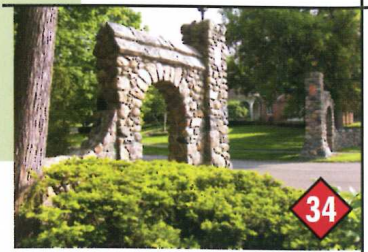


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Woodcroft Neighborhood

Miller Road and Parkside Dr.
Various architects, 1927-1950s

In 1927, a horse-riding stable located on this property was sold and the land subdivided. The neighborhood grew to the west, with the earliest houses built near the corner of Miller Road and Parkside Drive in 1928. The Great Depression slowed the construction of new homes, and many of the lots in the neighborhood were not filled until the 1950s. Residents of the neighborhood included Flint business leaders and General Motors executives.



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Woodside Church

1509 East Court St.
Architect: Eero Saarinen, 1950-1952

Internationally acclaimed architect of the St. Louis Arch, Washington D.C. Dulles Airport and New York TWA terminal was influenced by his father, Eliel, for the design of Woodside. The architectural-engineering of the church was carried



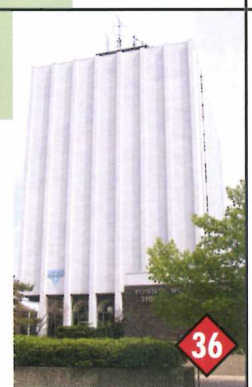
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out by Swanson and Associates. Saarinen's influence in the design is unmistakable. The church is a distinctly modern building with a simple yet massive steeple, pedestrian-friendly curved canopy and ground-hugging education wing, all characteristic of Saarinen's style.

YWCA

310 Third St.
Architect: McKenzie, Knuth, and Klein, 1967-1968

The YWCA's modern design consists of a flat, horizontal base structure, with a centrally located main tower structure. The tower's height is emphasized by the vertical design of the granite, marble and glass exterior. The main floor, the base, is larger than the multi-story tower and finished in brick and granite. The foundation level rises above the grade of the ground and is made of ribbed, textured concrete. The entrance, centrally located under the tower, is highlighted with three arched openings, accented by asymmetrical designs of aluminum, glass and blue glazed brick panels.



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