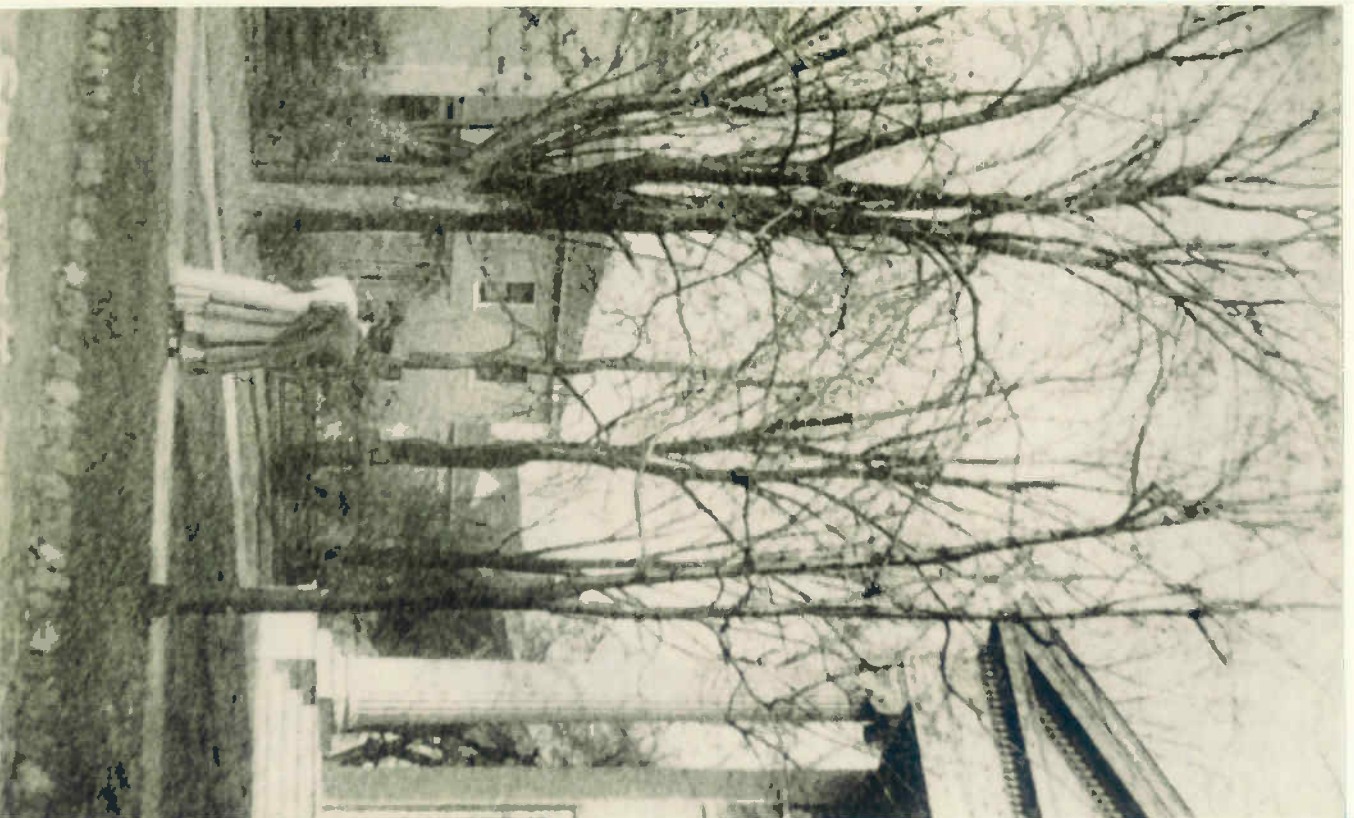


The Ann Street Historic Block

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Division Street Historic District
Study Committee
March, 1979



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Background

In March of 1977 several property owners and residents of the Near Northeast Neighborhood petitioned the Historic District Commission to explore the feasibility of designating certain areas and structures as historic landmarks. They recognized that their neighborhood has a special quality derived from the architectural character of its buildings, the scale of its streetscapes, and the continuity of residential use, all of which had evolved from the time of Ann Arbor's beginnings. In July, 1977, City Council responded by appointing the Division Street Historic District Study Committee and charged it with determining the feasibility of extending the present Division Street Historic District to include the 500-600 block of East Ann Street as well as other adjacent areas.

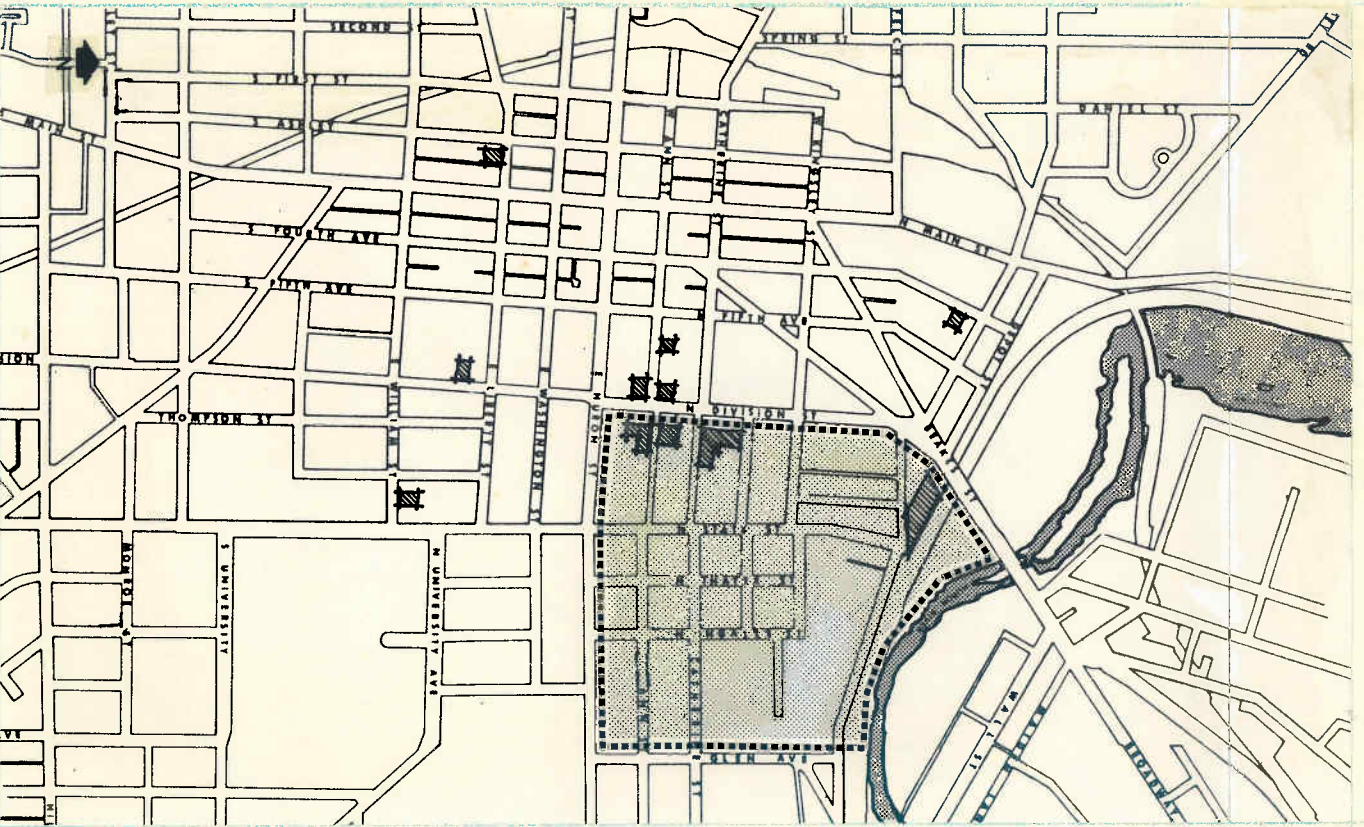
Careful consideration of the entire study area led the Committee to see the 500-600 block of East Ann Street as a single unit, unique in its historic value. Within a broader area of historic merit and adjacent to the Division Street Historic District are structures of outstanding historic significance that require more time for a complete evaluation. This consideration has prompted a two part study. This Report is Part One of the recommendations of the Division Street Historic District Study Committee and pertains to the 500-600 block of East Ann Street and 123, 127 and 203 North State Street. The Committee is continuing its review of the larger study area and will, at a future date, submit Part Two of its report covering the entire area.

Accompanied by the proposed "Ann Street Historic Block" Ordinance, this Report explains the recommendations of the Study Committee for the preservation of this historic streetscape and residential environment. It is the understanding of this Committee that this Report will be used whenever it is necessary to clarify the intent of the Ordinance, and to assist the residents and property owners of the block in understanding the provisions and intentions of the Ordinance.

Division Street Historic District Study Committee

The members of the Division Street Historic District Study Committee are:

Cappy Bilakos	Mary Hathaway	Eleanor Pollack
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Sam Breck	William Haldreth	John Satarino
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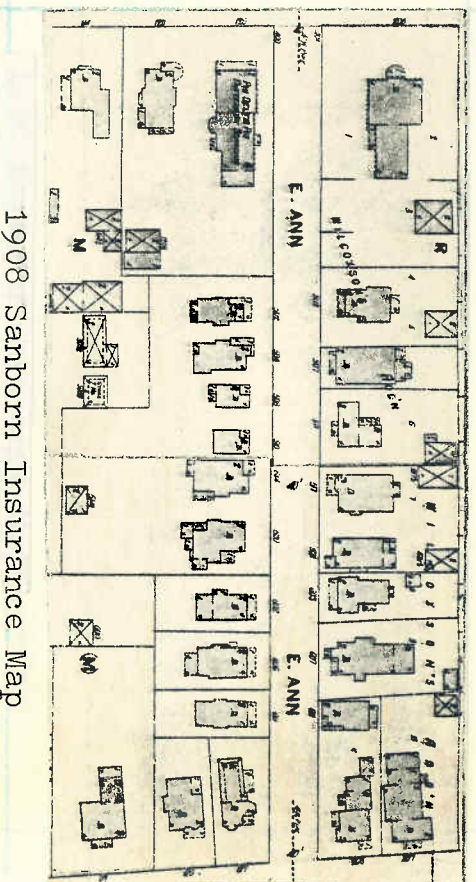
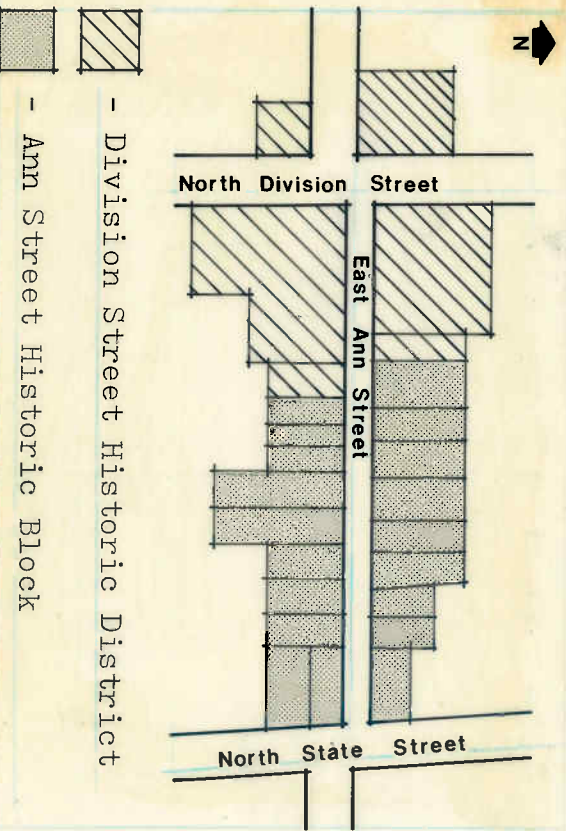


The Ann Street Historic Block

This Report specifically relates to the 500 and 600 block of East Ann Street and 123, 127 and 203 North State Street and recommends that the houses on this block be designated a landmark as the "Ann Street Historic Block".

Throughout the Study Committee's examination of the near northeast neighborhood, nineteen houses have stood out as a single, special unit--unique in its historic association, its architectural value, and the character of its street-escape. Together with the adjacent landmarks of the Division Street Historic District, these nineteen structures form the most compact and intact unit of historic and architectural distinction within one of the oldest residential enclaves in this city. Preservation of the Ann Street Historic Block is essential to the maintenance and restoration of the surrounding neighborhood.

Running eastward from the intersection of Ann and Division, the Ann Street Historic Block forms a logical extension of the core properties of the Division Street Historic District. The intersection, with landmark buildings on all four corners, acts as an impressive gateway to the narrow street beyond. At the other end of the block, Ann Street jogs sharply around a large 1920's apartment building before widening and continuing eastward to the hospital complex. Set off by these definite visual boundaries at its



ends, this densely spaced, small scale block of nineteenth-century houses is in strong contrast to the large commercial structures and parking lots on Huron to the south and the less compact, more diverse character of Catherine Street to the north. While the City Hall and parking lots have altered the residential quality of Ann Street to the west, the Ann Street Historic Block has retained most of its original houses and has remained essentially unchanged for over seventy years. Its spatial character is unique due to the rhythm, setback, scale, height, material, and texture of the buildings which combine to form the street-escape. Its variety of architectural styles creates a sense of locality and character. The "Ann Street Historic Block" is a 'special' place.

Ann Street was platted in 1824 and, like the city, was named after Ann Allen. She was the wife of John Allen, one of the founders of Ann Arbor. The street originally extended from First Street to Division Street. The north portion of the section east of Division, first owned by John Allen, was later purchased by George A. Sedgwick, the first mayor of Ann Arbor when it became a city in 1851. Mayor Sedgwick resided in a house then located on what became the northeast corner of Division and Ann. The property to the south was owned until 1850 by Judge Robert S. Wilson, who built the large Greek Revival house on Ann and Division in 1843. In 1857 this area, then owned by William S. Waynard and Henry W. Welles, was surveyed and Ann Street was continued to State Street along a compath between their properties.

The houses at 511 East Arn and 127 and 203 North State are visible on the 1866 bird's-eye map of Ann Arbor. All but one of the homes on Ann Street between Division and State date from before 1900.

This relatively short time span, however, contains a variety of architectural styles ranging from Greek Revival and Italianate to Queen Anne and colonial revival, all of which reflect the aesthetic ideals of their period. This reflection is due, in part, to the fact that many prominent citizens built their homes along Ann Street, following the lead taken by an older generation of city notables who built their homes at the corners of Ann and Division Streets. Doctors, lawyers, businessmen, clergymen and members of city government, including four mayors, built their homes here and through the years these buildings have continued to be occupied as residences. This consistency and stability of use has, in turn, helped to maintain and preserve the original character of the block.

Nineteen properties are contained in the "Ann Street Historic Block". Individually distinctive in their details, the buildings have certain unifying elements. Situated with narrow setbacks on a street only nineteen and one-half feet in width--the narrowest remaining nineteenth-century Ann Arbor street--they are all frame structures covered in clapboard and shingles and supported by field stone foundations. With the exception of 511, every house has at least one gable facing the street. All are two stories in height, and all have front porches, most of them original. Many of the structures are defined as either "outstanding irreplaceable architectural value," of "the highest local significance," or contributing "to the cultural heritage and visual character of the community" according to the 1973 Historic Architecture Survey of the Downtown Area.

Most of the buildings on the block have retained their original appearance, although some have had trim removed or have been covered with inappropriate siding. This report proposes specific Preservation Standards and Restoration Recommendations designed to promote proper maintenance, encourage restoration, and prevent deterioration for all properties on the block on a uniform basis. The standards are similar to those now in effect for the Division Street Historic District buildings except that standards for the Ann Street Historic Block apply to the exterior front and side facades only.

It is not just the individual significance, but the composite value of these buildings which must be stressed. Because of the unusually tight spatial relationships of this small collection of buildings, changes to the exterior of any one structure will have a direct and immediate impact on all the others. Each property contributes toward defining the street space. Loss of a single building or major changes which are not compatible with the character of individual structures or of the streetscape as a whole will detract from the remaining buildings and disrupt the harmony of the block. The special feeling of time and place

1866

