



Washktenaw/Hill Historic District

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

FEBRUARY 4, 1980

FINAL REPORT

Introduction - November 1979

In 1972 City Council appointed the Washtenaw/Hill Historic District Study Committee at the request of the Historic District Commission and the Washtenaw Neighborhood Association. For several reasons - lack of Commission staff, competition from other potential historic districts such as Liberty Street and the Old West Side, as well as lack of strong pressure from the neighborhood itself - the Study Committee never met until recently.

In the spring of 1979, the Hays family, facing the sale of their home at 1555 Washtenaw, renewed pressure for an historic district. Given the large size and vulnerable corner location of the property, the family felt that the kind of controls embodied in an historic district ordinance offered the best means of protecting both the house and grounds from unsympathetic changes, additions, or even demolition.

Since it was felt that the original study committee had too little neighborhood representation to be really effective, a series of meetings was held with neighboring property owners to determine the extent and nature of the proposed historic district and the best method of accomplishing such a goal. Those present came to the following conclusions:

1. City Council would be asked to add several names to the original list of members;
2. The District would be worked out in two successive phases - Phase I will consist of the "core" properties at the intersection of Washtenaw and Hill - 1547 and 1555 Washtenaw, and 1310, 1410, and 1530 Hill; Phase II will include a much larger area extending further along both Washtenaw and Hill and taking in the area bounded by Hill, Forest, Cambridge, and Washtenaw.

This approach was recommended because there would be only five properties in the Phase I district, all are single family residences with owner-occupants actively in favor of a district. This situation alone will greatly ease the process of creating a district. Three of the five Phase I buildings have already been documented as Ann Arbor Historic Buildings and information on the other two is readily available from the owners.

Another factor in the two-phase approach is that the original members of the study committee are concerned about further delay which would be necessitated by working out a much larger district all at one time. They believe that seven

years of patience to date deserves more immediate attention, particularly with the present concern over the future of the Hays House.

The final consideration is that this "core" district will serve as a guide and an inspiration in explaining the advantages of being part of an historic district to property owners in the larger, Phase II area. This should be especially effective with the many fraternities, co-ops, and churches.

Washtenaw/Hill Historic District Study Committee

Rosemarion Blake
Sam Breck
Julie Casa
Mary Hathaway
Edward Hays
Frances Hays
Elizabeth Hayden
Winifred Favreau

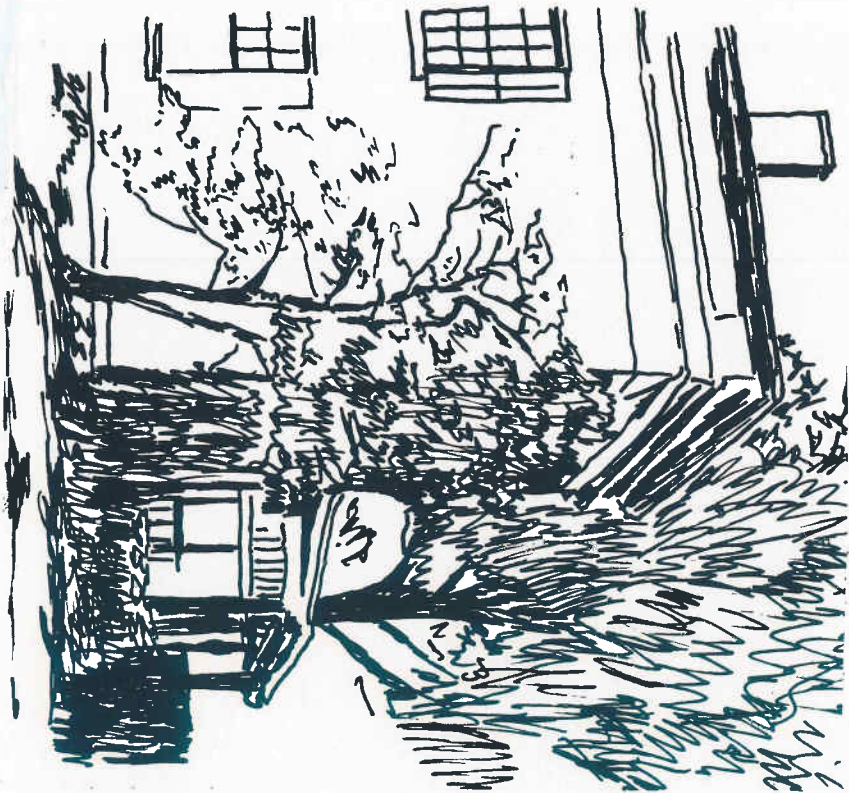
William Heldreth
Theodore Hensei
Raleigh Morgan
Richard Neumann
Janet Newman
Marjorie Reade
William G. Shepherd
Bret Waller

The Washtenaw/Hill

Historic District

PHASE I

The five houses in the Phase I part of the Washtenaw/Hill Historic District do indeed form the core of the neighborhood. The histories of each structure, which follow in chronological order, help to illustrate how the houses are linked to each other and to the history of Ann Arbor.



The Baldwin/Hall House - 1530 Hill

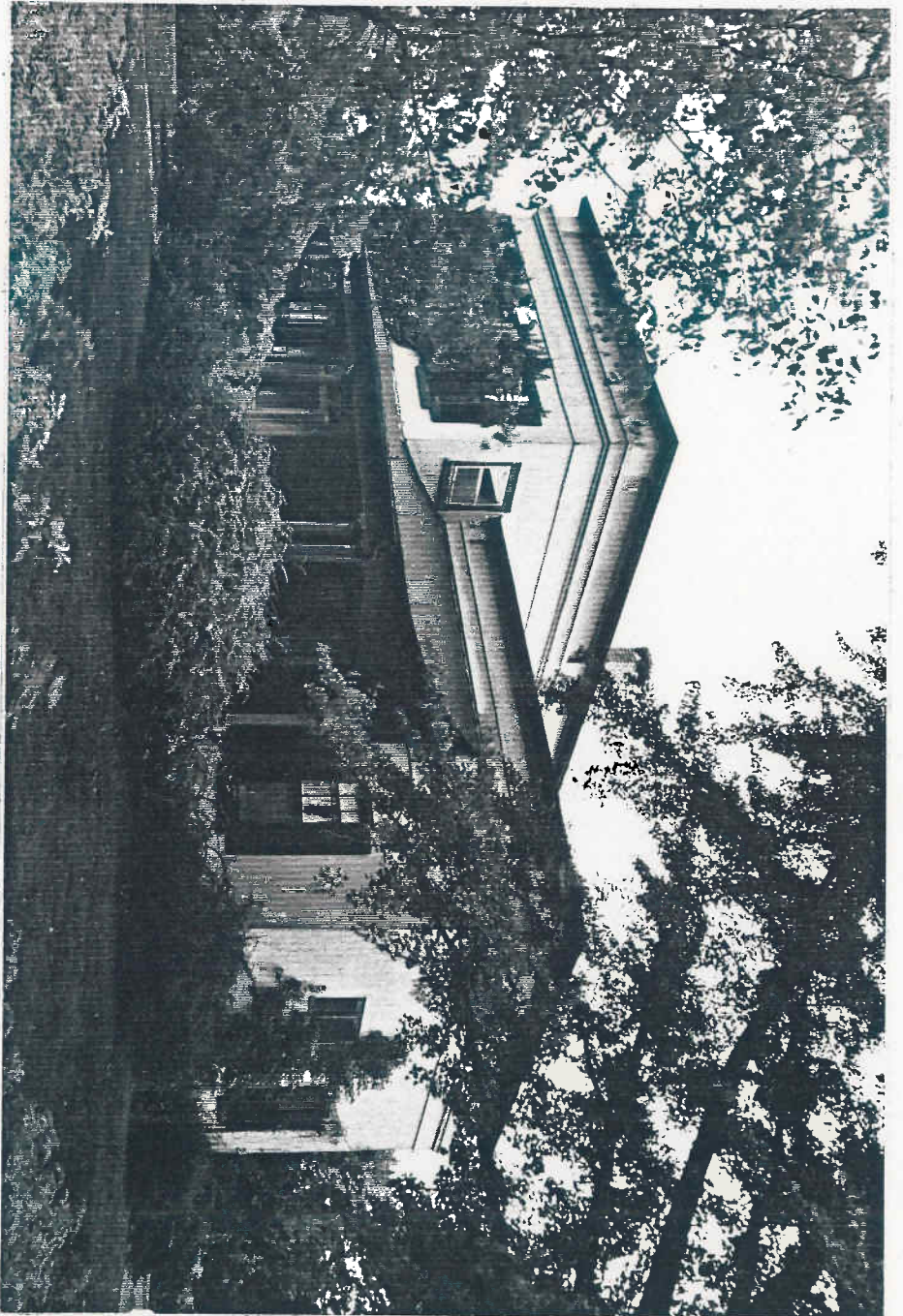
There are two possible stories on the origin of this house. The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXIX, 1932, contains an unattributed article which states that this house was built in 1860 by Daniel E. Wines, father of Levi D. Wines, for Deacon J. D. Baldwin, at a cost of \$100 cash and unenumerated quantities of farm produce and wood. However, the house is of the Roman type "country residence" style, very much in architectural vogue during the late 1840's, and there is no record that Baldwin moved his family during their early years, and for these reasons we think it was built when Baldwin first came to Ann Arbor in 1847, and was probably remodeled in 1860 when his daughter, Mary, was married to Joseph Baker Davis, a well-known professor of civil engineering. We do know this wedding was a grand affair.

J. D. Baldwin came from Onandaga County, N. Y., by way of Detroit where he had been engaged in the hardware and leather trade. He purchased 154 acres of land outside the city and established a flourishing fruit and berry farm, and was thereafter, until his retirement, very active in the development and showing of Michigan fruits and a leader in the Washtenaw Pomological Society. His mother, Susan Dorr Baldwin, was the daughter of one of the soldiers who, disguised as an Indian, threw overboard that shipment of tea in the Boston Harbor - the Boston Tea Party. J. D. Baldwin was married to Elizabeth F. Hubbard and they raised four children in the Ann Arbor residence, Eugene C., James C., Mary, and Charles C.

Much of his acreage was forested - the portion along the Ypsilanti Road (Washtenaw Avenue) where the First Presbyterian Church now stands was known as "Baldwin's Picnic Grove". Water for his home and farm came from a spring a short distance up what is now Hill Street (in those days Myrtle Avenue and later Spring Street).

In 1876 he sold his home and most of an 80 acre piece of land, bounded by what is now Baldwin, Wells, Forest, and Hill Streets, to Israel and Olivia Hall, who later subdivided the farm, keeping nearly three acres in the core of their block for their garden. With great foresight, they placed the restrictions on the property, including the general set-back, which gives such grace and character to the area.

The house was first occupied by the Hall's son, Eugene, a contractor and builder. In 1885, the Hall's youngest son, Louis, and his bride Elizabeth, moved into the old Baldwin house. The original pink brick of which the house was constructed had already been stuccoed over and Mrs. Hall soon added the fireplaces and the sloped roof porches. She had the entry changed and the fan light in Georgian revival



style was added. Louis Hall became a prominent member of the Dental School faculty of the University of Michigan. They raised four children: Douglas, Louis, Richard, and Elizabeth. The family was involved in ambulance and other service in World War I, and son, Richard, was the first American soldier to die in that war.

The Hall's daughter, Elizabeth, married J. R. Hayden, professor of Political Science at the University. Now a widow, Mrs. Hayden still lives in the family home with her niece, Mrs. Winifred Hall Fravreau, daughter of Douglas Hall.

The extensive old-fashioned garden to the rear of the house still gladdens the heart of the visitor.

Date of Construction: 1847-48
First in City Directory: 1868
Present Owner: Elizabeth Hayden

