

**A PHASE III ARCHITECTURAL
RESOURCE SURVEY: THREE
DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS,
LANSING, MICHIGAN**

**A CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STUDY
PREPARED FOR SUBMISSION TO THE CITY OF LANSING
AND THE MICHIGAN STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER**

**GREAT LAKES RESEARCH, INC.
ARCHAEOLOGY / CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

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SURVEY: THREE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS,
LANSING, MICHIGAN**

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GLR REPORT No. 2000-09

SUBMITTED TO:

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15 SEPTEMBER 2000

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ABSTRACT / MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This survey was undertaken as the third phase of survey work that was necessary to inventory the architectural resources of three distinct areas within downtown Lansing, Michigan. Significant research into these areas was initiated with the *Lansing's Central Neighborhood Survey* (Schneider and Sommers 1986), a reconnaissance level survey which documented the majority of the older neighborhoods in downtown Lansing. This survey was extended in the late 1990s as the *Lansing Architectural Survey II* (City of Lansing 1998), which provided reconnaissance level surveys of nine individual areas, and intensive level surveys of eight areas. Based on recommendations presented in the latter report, and the needs and requirements of the City of Lansing, Great Lakes Research, Inc., of Williamston, Michigan, was contracted to provide intensive level survey data for three of the previously defined areas. These included the *River Point Neighborhood*, (2) the *North Capitol Neighborhood*, and (3) the *Michigan School for the Blind*.

Based on the results of these inquiries, all three survey areas, or parts thereof, were recommended as eligible for nomination as National Register of Historic Places Historic Districts.

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SECTION 1.0 - INTRODUCTION

This survey was undertaken as the third phase of survey work that was necessary to inventory the architectural resources of three distinct areas within downtown Lansing, Michigan (Figure 1). Significant research into these areas was initiated with the *Lansing's Central Neighborhood Survey* (Schneider and Sommers 1986), a reconnaissance level survey which documented the majority of the older neighborhoods in downtown Lansing. This survey was extended in the late 1990s as the *Lansing Architectural Survey II* (City of Lansing 1998), which provided reconnaissance level surveys of nine individual areas, and intensive level surveys of eight areas. Based on recommendations presented in the latter report, and the needs and requirements of the City of Lansing, Great Lakes Research, Inc. (GLR), of Williamston, Michigan, was contracted to provide intensive level survey data for three of the previously defined areas. These included the *River Point Neighborhood*, (2) the *North Capitol Neighborhood*, and (3) the *Michigan School for the Blind*. The current study outlines the results of those surveys.

Buildings were found significant under the themes of Architecture, Commerce and Industry, and Education. The context narratives, which give a detailed account of each theme relative to Lansing, are heavily drawn from the contexts presented by Schneider and Sommers (1986) and the City of Lansing (1998), but are updated with current research relative to the three specific neighborhoods.

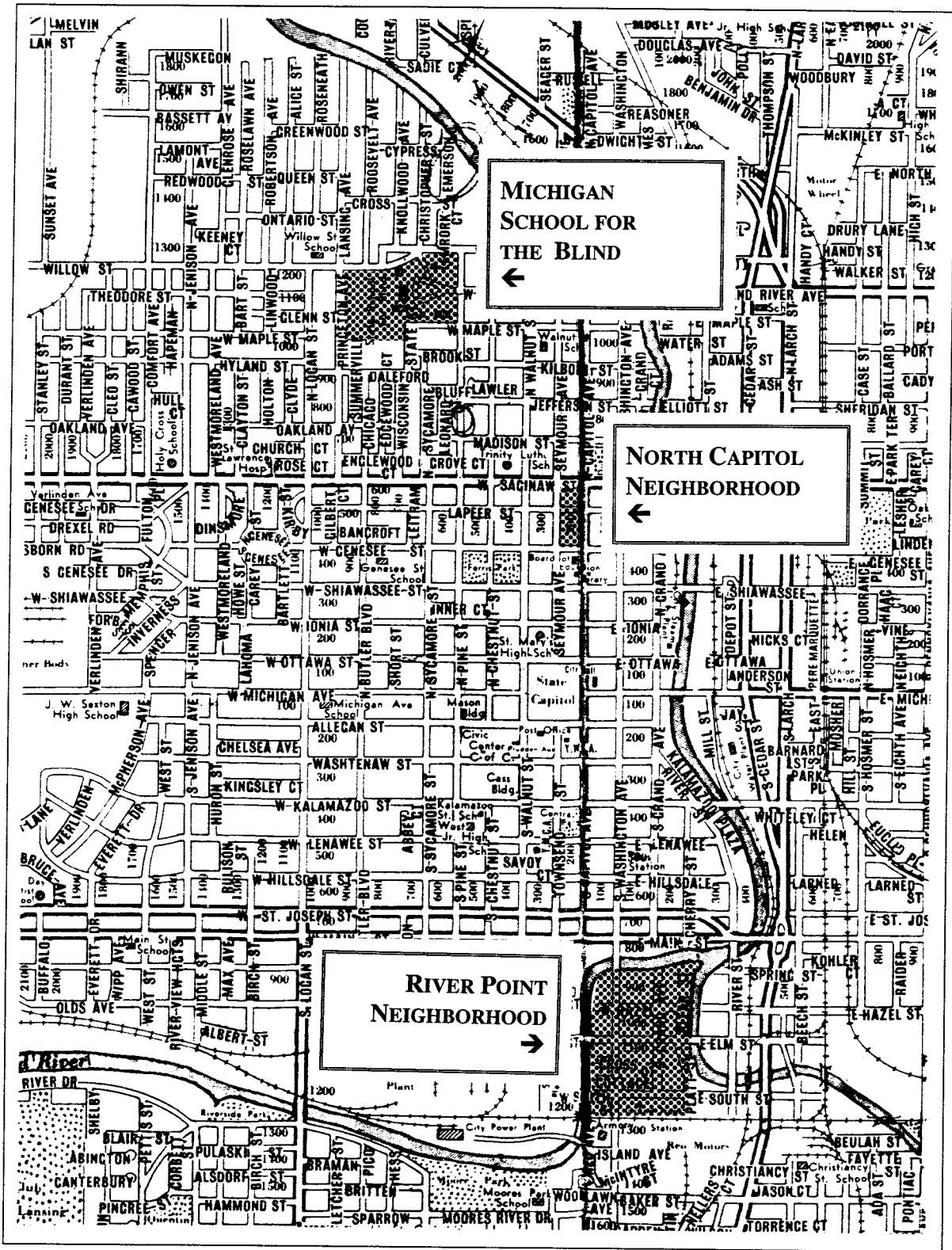


Figure 1. General location of three study areas: (1) River Point Neighborhood, (2) North Capitol Neighborhood, (3) Michigan School for the Blind.

SECTION 2.0 – RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Project Objective

The project objective was to conduct an intensive level inventory of historic and architectural resources within three specific neighborhoods in downtown Lansing, and to enter this information on a computerized survey record within the *Ruskin* database program, with the results to then be available for utilization by the City of Lansing and the State Historic Preservation Officer. For planning purposes, the three survey areas were defined as follows (Figure 1):

- **River Point Neighborhood** Located on the near south side of Lansing, just south of the confluence of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers. Bounded on the west and north by the Grand River, on the east by the Red Cedar River, and the Grand Trunk Western RR tracks on the south (Section 3.0).
- **North Capitol Neighborhood** Located just north of the Capitol Building. Bounded by Saginaw on the north, Capitol on the west, Genesee on the south, and Seymour on the west (Section 4.0).
- **Michigan School for the Blind** Located on the near north side of Lansing. Bounded by Willow on the north, Pine on the east, and Princeton on the west. The southern boundary is irregular but includes Maple and State (Section 5.0).

2.2 Methodology

All resources were surveyed at the intensive level. Properties were then evaluated using the National Register of Historic Places' *Criteria for Evaluation*. Resources considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as individual sites or parts of districts were researched further. All work was done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, specifically, the *Guidelines for Identification - Performing Identification and Guidelines for Evaluation - The Evaluation Process*.

Archival Research

Before field documentation began, preliminary research provided surveyors with a basic orientation to the city's development - so that they would know what to expect and look for out in the field. Maps, public records, newspaper articles, and the State Library of Michigan revealed dates of settlement, early major industries, historic transportation routes, and architectural styles and construction methods common to the region. Evaluation of this information led to the genesis of the historic context theme narrative list.

