

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 16 1984**
date entered **SEP 13 1984**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District

and/or common Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District

2. Location

street & number West Main, Washington, N. Kidd Streets *roughly* *Sts from Dexter to Library Sts.* N/A not for publication

city, town Ionia *and* N/A vicinity of Congressional District 9

state Michigan code 26 county Ionia code 067

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ionia County Register of Deeds

street & number Ionia County Courthouse

city, town Ionia state Michigan

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Michigan State Survey Data has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Michigan History Division

city, town Lansing state Michigan

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District consists of Ionia's central business district which developed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district contains a total of eighty-five structures, seventy of which contribute to its visual and historic character. Most sites in the district are located along four blocks of two east-west streets--West Main and West Washington Streets, from Dexter Avenue on the west to Library Street on the east--and along two blocks of three intersecting streets--Steele, Depot, and Kidd Streets. The district includes as well one structure on Dexter Street. Of the eighty-five sites in the district, most are commercial buildings. While these create the predominant character, churches, houses, and governmental buildings also contribute significantly to the district's visual and historical character.

The district is located on the north side of Grand River at the foot of steep bluffs and parallels the river. The area is largely bounded on the east, west and north by old residential areas and on the south by parking lots, industrial plants, and cleared land.

All but a few district structures are commercial blocks which stand side by side and directly on the sidewalk line. The commercial buildings are generally two (sometimes three) stories in height, constructed of buff or red brick or the locally quarried pink sandstone, and exemplify Late Victorian and early twentieth-century architectural tastes. Most structures are modest in scale, but a number have broad, several-storefront-wide facades. The district has a predominantly Late Victorian character, and many structures have elaborate metal roofline elements and corbelled, panelled, or arcade-like, brick cornices. However, several early twentieth-century lodge halls, a Classical Revival bank, and Art Deco theater are also present.

In addition to its commercial structures, however, the district also contains, at its east end, where the downtown adjoins the residential area, an institutional area containing historic county courthouse, city hall, post office, and church buildings--all of them architecturally distinguished late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings set in grassy lawn areas.

The key visual landmarks in the Ionia Downtown Historic District are: The Ionia Armory (site 42), built in a picturesque, crenellated English Gothic style, though diminished in appearance by the unfortunate removal of the crenellation and upper portion of its tower; three commercial buildings at 409, 411, and 413 West Main Street (Sites 46, 47, 48) which are of individual design and retain much of their original cast-iron storefronts; a two-story commercial building at 340 West Main Street (site 19), notable for its

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handsome, pink sandstone facade; the Italianate commercial block at 332-336 West Main Street (site 20); the Silver-Graff Building (Site 58) with its twin bell-roofed towers; the handsome and essentially unaltered Ionia County National Bank Building (Site 30) with its limestone facades and temple design; St. John's Episcopal Church (site 85), an unusual Victorian Gothic building; and the Ionia County Courthouse (Site 40) constructed of Ionia sandstone in an eclectic style with prominent Renaissance Revival motifs.

Many of the buildings in the district were built of buff-colored brick which was manufactured locally and appears throughout Ionia in all types of buildings. Several buildings, generally of more ambitious design, have facades of Ionia sandstone--a mostly pink, variegated sandstone quarried locally and quite striking in appearance. Of the commercial buildings in the district, most have lost their original first-story storefronts over the years; yet, for the most part, the upper stories of the buildings remain substantially unchanged, and the late nineteenth/early twentieth-century character prevails in the district.

The following structures, unless designated "non-contributing," contribute to the visual and/or historic quality of the district:

Washington Street, South Side

1. 439 W. Washington: House, ca. 1900. Two-story with low-pitch hipped roof, buff brick facades, segmental window heads, and an L-plan, free-classic porch.
2. 423 W. Washington: Zion United Methodist Church, 1885. Romanesque Revival; buff brick facades; medium pitch gable roof; square tower at center of front facade with louvered windows. Tower now lacks its original tent roof. Designed by Frank L. Fox.
3. 419 W. Washington: Modern commercial building. One-story, brick and aluminum facades. Non-contributing.
4. 200 block W. Washington: Firehouse, 1883-84. Two story; flat roof; red-painted brick facades; varnished wood doors. One-story addition on east side.

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5. 100 block W. Washington: St. John's Parish House (originally St. John's Episcopal Church), 1842. Greek Revival, rectangular plan, one story with low pitch gable roof, entablature molding and cornice returns; red-painted clapboard facades with white trim.

W. Main Street, North Side

6. 434-438 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1870. Three two-story structures now made into one at ground level. Buff brick facades. Outer two units appear to have been built around center unit.

7. 430 W. Main: Modern commercial. One story; wood and aluminum facades. Non-contributing.

8. 426 W. Main: Commercial, late nineteenth century. Two-story, brick facades now aluminum-clad. Non-contributing.

9. 420-424 W. Main: Sagostini Block, ca. 1885. Italianate commercial. Two-story, three-unit building with yellow-painted brick facades, red-painted metal main and storefront cornices, incised-decoration window caps.

10. 418 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca 1885. Two-story with similar cornice and window cap detailing.

11. 416 W. Main: Commercial-functional, ca. 1920. One-story, red brick facade, metal cornice.

12. 414 W. Main: Commercial, late nineteenth century. Two-story building now entirely faced in front in vertical board siding. Non-contributing.

13. 410-412 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1885. Two-story, two-unit, grey-painted brick facade; lacks metal cornice.

14. 406-408 W. Main: Elks Building, 1908-1909. Neo-classical, three-story, structure; buff terra cotta facade with monumental Ionic pilasters. Little-altered storefronts in first floor.

15. 402 W. Main: Late Victorian Commercial, circa 1890. Three-story, single unit with segmental-arch-head windows and brick window caps; beige-painted brick facade stripped of cornice.

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16. 350 W. Main: Late Victorian Commercial, circa 1890. Two-story, brick facade, elaborate metal cornice.
17. 346 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1870. Two-story structure with tan-painted brick facade and bracketed wooden cornice.
18. 342 W. Main: Art Moderne Commercial, circa 1940. One-story store, brick and glass facade, black Carrara glass trimmings.
19. 340 W. Main: Late Victorian Commercial, circa 1890. Two-story structure with magnificent coursed ashlar, pink Ionia sandstone facade; metal cornice; ornate window caps. The building is a key visual landmark in downtown Ionia.
20. 332-36 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1885. Two-story, three-unit block with buff brick facade, metal cornice, ornate metal window heads.
21. 330 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1875. Two-story grey-painted brick facade; arcaded and corbeled brick frieze; wooden entablature above store front; round-head windows with brick caps.
22. 328 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1875. Identical to 330 W. Main except facade is painted yellow and store front now lacks wooden entablature.
23. 326 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1890. Two-story, coursed-ashlar, Ionia sandstone facade with round-head windows; modest metal cornice.
24. 318-324 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1885. Two-story, four-unit block with brick facades, a bracketed, modillioned, and dentiled metal cornice and incised-decoration stone window caps. Numbers 318 and 320 each have three bays, while 322 and 324 have two.
25. 316 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1880. Two-story, green-painted brick facade with round window heads; flush cornice has dentil band.
26. 314 W. Main: Jimos Brothers Block, circa 1905. Mildly Classical two-story, limestone-trimmed, white glazed brick facade; cornice forms a low central gable.

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27. 312 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1870. Two-story with round-head windows and paneled frieze with dentil band cornice.
28. 310 W. Main: Italianate Commercial, circa 1870. Two-story with brick window caps and paneled frieze with dentil band cornices.
29. 306-308 W. Main: J.C. Penney Co. Building, circa 1925. Large, two-story, functional, buff brick structure.
30. 302 W. Main: Ionia County National Bank Building, 1913. Neo-Classical, two-story, temple front structure with full pediment and entablature. Two-story, engaged, limestone columns of Roman Doric order in front facade. The bank is a key visual landmark.
31. 230 W. Main: First Security Bank (originally the Wagar Building), 1979 remodeling of an 1890 commercial block. Originally a three-story block, the Wagar Building was reduced to two stories in 1952 and extensively remodelled in 1979. Non-contributing.
32. 226 W. Main: Commercial, circa 1875. Three-story; beige-painted brick facade; round windows with brick hood moldings intact on third floor; first and second floor facades extensively altered.
33. 224 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1885. Three-story structure with buff brick facade and notable gabled metal window hoods; lacks cornice.
34. 218-222 W. Main: Masonic Temple Building, ca. 1925. Large three-story, brown brick structure with central marquee entrance flanked by storefronts on the first floor. The functional facade contains banks of transomed, double-hung windows.
35. 212 W. Main: Late Victorian commercial, ca. 1890. Two-story, two-unit block with white-painted brick facade; segmental-arch-head windows with brick and stone caps.
36. 206 W. Main: Tower Building, 1887. Two-story, two-unit Late Victorian commercial block with rock-faced pink sandstone facade, high central gable and a high gabled, pyramid-roof corner tower. The main cornice, gable coping, and tower cornice and gable are of metal. The structure is a major visual landmark.
37. 200 W. Main: commercial-functional, early 20th century. One-story, brick structure with angled corner entrance.

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38. 116 W. Main: First Baptist Church, Gothic Revival, 1872. Buff brick facades; square corner tower with broached spire. Orry Waterbury, builder.

39. 110 W. Main: Sessions House, ca. 1890. Rambling, Queen Anne-style, brick structure, with shingled gables; now used for county offices.

40. 100 W. Main: Ionia County Courthouse, eclectic-Renaissance Revival, 1885. David W. Gibbs, architect. Individually listed in the National Register, the courthouse has two full stories, in addition to full basement and attic stories, and a massive, hipped roof. Ornamental gables form pediments on all four sides and those on the north and south sides rise above porticoes. Facades are of Ionia sandstone, both smooth- and rock-faced. The white-painted cupola is constructed of timber and galvanized sheet iron. Standing well back from the street in the center of a large grassy plot, the courthouse is a key visual landmark in the district and city.

41. 100 block W. Main: Ionia County Sheriff's office and jail. 1956. Two story, modern facility. Non-contributing.

W. Main Street-South side

42. 439 W. Main: Ionia Armory, 1908-09, Two-story structure with red brick facades, limestone belt courses, arched corbel table at cornice and corbelled turret window at corner; heavy archivolt doorway. The original crenellated parapet and third story of turret have been removed. Designed by architect E.A. Bowd of Lansing. Key visual landmark.

43. 425 W. Main: Victorian commercial, ca. 1879. Two-story, three-unit, brick block; fine corbelled brickwork in cornice includes a blind arcade band. Windows have round heads with brick caps. Some cast iron elements remain at storefront level.

44. 423 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1875. Three-story; beige-painted brick facade. Heavy metal cornice with corner finials. Windows have round-head moldings and original curved mullions.

45. 415-421 W. Main: commercial-functional, ca. 1920. Two-story, with red brick facade, limestone belt course, and classical metal main cornice.

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46. 413 W. Main: G. Liverton building, 1886. Three story, Italianate commercial building with pink sandstone facade and heavily embellished metal cornice. Large, segmental-head windows are set between sandstone colonettes. Two vertical cast-iron members are visible at storefront level. The building is a key visual landmark.

47. 411 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1890. Two-story, beige-painted brick facade with original cast-iron store front mostly intact. Cornice has modest dentil band. Key visual landmark.

48. 409 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1885. Two-story, white painted brick facade with original cast-iron store front. Cornice parapet has corbelled and panelled brickwork and metal cornice bearing the name "J. Waidelick." Key visual landmark.

49. 405 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1870. Very large, three-story, brick, corner block with eleven windows across the facade; bracketed wooden cornice. Windows have round hood moldings.

50. 351 W. Main: Greek Revival commercial, ca. 1855. Two-story structure with low-pitch gable roof forming pediment on front (north) facade. Grey-painted clapboard facades with corner pilasters and entablature molding. Second story of front facade projects over first story and is supported on large wooden corbels. A prominent building in visual terms.

51. 343 W. Main: Commercial, modern. Broad, one-story supermarket, with enameled panel facade. Non-contributing.

52. 341 W. Main: Commercial, modern. One-story, with buff brick facade. Non-contributing.

53. 333 W. Main: Twentieth-century commercial. ca. 1925. Two-story, two-unit block with red brick facade, banks of transomed double-hung windows, and a paired, low-slope, gable roofline with a metal cornice.

54. 325-329 W. Main: Geo. W. Webber Block, 1879. Long, two-story, three-unit block with beige-painted brick facade, ornate bracketed cornice and round-corner windows with elaborate carved stone caps.

55. 323 W. Main: Commercial-functional, ca. 1915. Two-story, brown brick facade with brick, limestone-trim parapet.

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56. 321 W. Main: Logan Building, 1887. Two-story, Victorian commercial building with smooth, coursed ashlar, pink, Ionia sandstone facade. Richly detailed Eastlake metal cornice has ornamental pediment and iron cresting.

57. 319 W. Main: Late Victorian commercial, ca. 1895. Two-story, red brick facade with limestone sill and lintel courses; brick corbel table under high metal cornice. Windows are capped above lintel level with blind, round-head relieving arches and keystones.

58. 313-317 W. Main: Silver-Graff Building, 1894. Two-story, two-unit, Late Victorian commercial building with rock-face, random ashlar facades. A second-story bay window near either end of the facade rises to form an octagonal tower with a bell-shaped roof. The bay windows, towers, cornices, and parapets with their rich encrustation of Queen Anne and Romanesque trim are all of metal. The block is a key visual landmark.

59. 311 W. Main: Commercial, late nineteenth-century, two-story building, completely obscured by aluminum false front. Non-contributing.

60. 309 W. Main: Commercial, ca. 1890. Two-story with buff Roman brick facade, sandstone lintel course. Lacks cornice detail.

61. 307 W. Main: W.C. Page & Co. Block, ca. 1885. Two-story Late Victorian block with yellow-painted brick facade, metal window hoods, brick corbel table at cornice.

62. 303 W. Main: Italianate, commercial, ca. 1875. Two-story with white-painted brick facade, round-head windows with hood moldings, brick corbel table at cornice; metal cornice removed.

63. 301 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1875. Similar to 303 W. Main, but with fine metal cornice which extends along its north and east sides and is continued on the facade of 109 South Depot Street.

64. 225-231 W. Main: Webber Block, 1900. Three-story, four-unit, Late Victorian commercial block with brick facades and sandstone trim. A round metal-sheathed tower rises from the second story to the roof at the building's northwest corner. Conical tower roof and roof balustrade have been removed. The building is a very prominent visual landmark.

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65. 217-223 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1885. Two-story, four-unit block with yellow-painted brick facade and console-bracketed, metal cornice. Westernmost bay on second story now houses a large "picture window."

66. 213-215 W. Main: Italianate commercial, ca. 1880. Three-story, two unit building with beige-painted brick facade, sandstone quoins, elaborate incised-detail metal cornice, and round-corner and round-head windows.

67. 205-211 W. Main: Ionia Theatre, ca. 1929. Low, one-story complex containing theater and four commercial units with red brick and limestone facade. The theater entrance, with its metal marquee and large neon sign, is Art Deco in style.

68. 115 W. Main: Modern commercial, ca. 1950. One-story; buff brick facade. Non-contributing.

69. 111 W. Main: Michigan Bell Telephone Building, ca. 1960s. One-story; buff brick facade. Non-contributing.

70. 101 W. Main: Moose Temple, 1904. Two-story, functional red brick building with pilaster and fanlight-trimmed, Georgian Revival entrance; sandstone ornamentation; granite foundation at exposed basement level.

Dexter Street-East side

71. 120-122 N. Dexter Street: Ionia Hotel, ca. 1890. Three-story residential building with buff-brick facades, red brick lintel course, sandstone water table, bracketed, metal cornice.

Steele Street-West side

72. 109 N. Steele: Commercial, late nineteenth century. Two three-story buildings of unequal height now combined after extensive alteration. Non-contributing.

73. 115 N. Steele: Commercial-functional, ca. 1920. Two-story, two-unit (with a third unit attached on south side). Red brick facade, modern shed awning.

74. 117 N. Steele: Commercial. One-story, covered with vertical wood siding. Non-contributing.

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75. 121 N. Steele: Commercial, ca. 1900. Two-story, two-unit; white painted brick facade.

Depot Street, west side

76. 113-115 S. Depot: Italianate commercial, ca. 1885. Two-story, two-unit with brown-painted brick facade, metal cornice.

77. 109 S. Depot: Italianate commercial, ca. 1880. Two-story, two-unit, with white-painted brick facade; metal cornice identical to that of the adjoining building at 301 W. Main Street.

Depot Street, east side

78. 114 N. Depot: Sentinel Standard Building, 1929. One-story commercial building with symmetrical, red brick facade, arched recessed entryway, and transomed, double-hung windows.

79. 118 N. Depot: Commercial, ca. 1890. Two-story, grey-painted brick facade with original, unadorned lower story and handsome corbelled brick cornice. All door and window openings have segmental-arch heads.

80. 122 N. Depot: Plaza Hotel, ca. 1880. Two-story, two-unit, Late Victorian commercial-residential building with brick facades and corbelled cornice detailing and segmental-arch window caps of brick. A metal upper cornice has been lost.

Kidd Street, west side

81. 105-107 N. Kidd: Commercial, ca. 1940. One-story, two-unit, stucco-covered. Non-contributing.

82. 111 N. Kidd: Perrone Building, 1948. Two-story, red brick facade. Non-contributing by virtue of its age.

83. 117 N. Kidd: U.S. Post Office, 1911, James Knox Taylor, architect. Very handsome Neo-classical building with limestone facades; engaged Ionic columns on east facade. The structure is one of the most notable early twentieth-century post office buildings in Michigan in architectural terms.

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Kidd Street, east side

84. 114 N. Kidd: City Hall, 1908-09. Two-story structure with hipped roof. Red brick facades with smooth-face sandstone window trim and belt courses, standing on rock-face, random ashlar base; metal cornice and frieze; and one-story, classical entrance porch.

85. 120 N. Kidd: St. John's Episcopal Church, 1882. Victorian Gothic; cruciform-plan with gable roof; square-plan tower on west facade with jerkinhead roof. The church has buff brick facades, decorative brick corbelling, and wooden fascia detailing. This is a key visual landmark.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 19th and 20th Century **Builder/Architect** See item 7, inventory entries, 2,38,40 42, and below

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District is significant as an unusually fine concentration of Late Victorian and early twentieth century commercial, public, religious, and institutional structures, located essentially along a single street, which exemplify a broad range of architectural tastes and a high standard of design and which often utilize fine, locally produced building materials. The district has historic significance as the historic core of Ionia and the home of county government and of many of Ionia's leading institutions throughout the city's history.

In 1832 Samuel Dexter of Herkimer County, New York travelled throughout the Michigan Territory, seeking a suitable location for future settlement. He entered his claim at the U.S. Land Office, then at White Pigeon in southern Michigan Territory, for 320 acres which lay north of the Grand River in the newly created Ionia County. (Ionia County was formed--on paper--by the Michigan Territorial Legislature in 1831.) Dexter then returned to New York and spent the winter of 1832-33 recruiting settlers. His party, which numbered about sixty-three persons, arrived at its destination on May 28, 1833 after more than a month of difficult travel. The settlers celebrated their arrival with a large meal held at the future site of the Ionia Armory.

A band of about 500 Ojibway Indians led by Chief Cobmoosa occupied the site when Dexter's party arrived. The Indians aided the settlers, providing temporary shelter and sharing crops. Log houses were built during the first summer, and within a year the first frame house in Ionia was built for Dr. W.B. Lindon, Ionia's first doctor. Samuel Dexter built a sawmill near the present armory, and a mill pond was located directly to the north. The mill's power was first supplied by water from the West Creek which formerly crossed Main Street near the present site of Dexter Street. (Now the West Creek flows under ground.) Dexter's sawmill also doubled as Ionia's first gristmill.

Ionia's commercial activity developed primarily along West Main Street with the area around the mill being the most active. The West Creek also provided power for industries located in Ionia in the late 1830s. Among these were a furniture factory, established by Samuel B. Worden, and a brewery operated by John Lloyd.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Branch, Rev E.E. History of Ionia County, Michigan. Indianapolis, B.F. Bowen, 1916
Ionia Centennial, 1973 (in Ionia Public Library)
Ionia Sentinel-Standard (Sesquicentennial Edition), April 22, 1983.
See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property About 18 acres

Quadrangle name Ionia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	6	5	7	3	3	0	4	7	6	0	5	0	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

B

1	6	6	5	7	9	7	0	4	7	6	0	6	0	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

C

1	6	6	5	7	6	9	0	4	7	6	0	3	7	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

D

1	6	6	5	7	4	0	0	4	7	6	0	3	8	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

E

Zone	Easting						Northing							

F

Zone	Easting						Northing							

G

Zone	Easting						Northing							

H

Zone	Easting						Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Form

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J.M. Davis

organization Resource Analysts, Inc.

date April, 1984

street & number 233 Winslow Road

telephone 812-334-0303

city or town Bloomington

state Indiana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Jonathan M. Bigelow

title Director, Michigan History Division

date

Aug 9, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

9-13-84

for *Allores Byer*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Page 1

After a three-year rivalry with nearby Lyons for the county seat, the Ionia community, then known as Washington or Ionia Center, became the official Ionia County seat (in 1835 or 1836). Samuel Dexter donated land (one half of the present courthouse square) to the county as the site of its buildings. A frame courthouse was built there sometime in the 1840s. The first village plat was recorded in July of 1841. It extended from Dexter Street on the west to the county lot on the east (now Library Street), and from Washington Street on the north to Front Street on the south.

The opening of a federal land office in Ionia in 1836 created a new demand for hotels, taverns and stores. Among the earliest hotels was the Eagle Hotel or Bailey House, located at the southwest corner of Main and Kidd Streets. To the west of the Eagle Hotel was Ezekiel Welch's Tavern. Osmond Tower, later owner of the Tower Building (site 35), had an early manufacturing shop across the street from the Eagle Hotel. The best known of the early stores was Mosemans Grab-Store, located at the northwest corner of Steele and Main Streets.

The Detroit, Lansing and Muskegon Railroad reached Ionia in 1859, and, ten years later, some of Ionia's business leaders--including J.C. Blanchard and Osmond Tower--organized Ionia's second railroad, the Lansing, Ionia and Pentwater. In addition to quickening Ionia's general commercial activity, the railroads allowed for a state-wide market for Ionia sandstone. At the height of Ionia's railroad expansion--the 1870s--Ionia had eight hotels as well as several boarding houses, and in 1873 the City of Ionia was incorporated.

The oldest existing structures in the Ionia Downtown Historic District are the Greek Revival building at 351 W. Main (site 50) and the St. John's Parish House (site 5). The remainder of buildings date primarily from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many are linked, at least in name, to some of Ionia's prominent early citizens. Osmond Tower, railroad speculator and manufacturer of fanning mills, replaced his home and shop on West Main Street with the Tower Building (site 36) in 1887. George Webber, lumberman, landholder and president of Ionia Second National Bank, had at least two commercial blocks built on West Main Street; the Webber Block (site 64) still bears his name. The Moose Temple (site 70) was originally the Morse-Babcock Building, named in part for Judge Allen B. Morse, an Ionia citizen who was appointed to the Michigan Supreme Court in 1885 and who served as U.S. Consul at Glasgow at the appointment of President Grover Cleveland.

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The pink Ionia sandstone found throughout the district was quarried east of the town at the Ionia Stone Quarries co-owned by John C. Blanchard, prominent Ionia lawyer and first president of the Ionia Village Board. Much of the buff brick, common throughout Ionia, was manufactured at William H. Vander Heyden's brickyard. Vander Heyden, from New York State, established a brickyard near Ionia and later purchased a local brickyard from Thomas Cornell. Vander Heyden's son Fred continued the business well into the twentieth century.

Of the four church buildings in the district, two belong to St. John's Episcopal Church (sites 5 & 85). They stand on land donated to the congregation by Samuel Dexter in about 1840. The first Episcopal services in Ionia were conducted in 1836 and the original church (site 5), which now stands behind the later building, was constructed in 1842. It is a simple, towerless, Greek Revival structure. The present buff brick, Gothic-style church was built in 1882.

The First Baptist congregation was organized in Ionia in 1834 and was the first denomination of any kind to become established in Ionia County. The present church (site 38), completed in 1872, was built by Orry Waterbury in the Gothic style. It replaced a smaller church dating from 1846. German immigrants founded the Zion Methodist Church in 1858. The present church (site 2) was built in 1885 after the designs of Frank L. Fox.

The Ionia County Courthouse (site 40) is the largest and most architecturally significant structure in the district. Before the present structure was erected, the site contained a frame building and a bandstand which faced Main Street. The desire for better accommodations for the county offices led to a public decision which favored the erection of a new courthouse. The Building Committee of the Ionia County Board of Supervisors, headed by Chauncey Waterbury, choose David W. Gibbs (1836-1917) of Toledo, Ohio as the architect. Among Gibb's significant related works are the courthouses in Huron, Henry, Union and Fayette counties in Ohio, and the Wyoming State Capitol in Cheyenne (1888). Gibbs charged a fee of \$600.00 for his design of the Ionia County Counthouse. Although he visited the site prior to construction, his involvement thereafter was minimal. In the midst of the construction schedule, the contractor, Claire Allen of Ionia, declared bankruptcy. The task of completing the courthouse then fell to Chauncey Waterbury, who absorbed the blame for the structure's high cost and delayed completion. The courthouse cost \$57,000 without furnishings--\$12,000 in excess of

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the projected cost. Public anger over the matter soon abated, however, and the courthouse came to be recognized as a public landmark.

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Page 1

Portrait and Biographical Album of Ionia and Montcalm Counties. Chicago:
Chapman Brothers, 1891.

Schenck, John S. History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties, Philadelphia:
D.W. Ensignard Company, 1881.

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Page 1

Boundary Description and Justification:

Beginning at the SE corner of Dexter and Washington Streets, thence easterly on Washington St. to Steele St., thence southerly to an alley behind buildings fronting on the north side of Main St., thence easterly to Depot St., thence northerly to Washington St., thence easterly to Library St., thence southerly to Main St., thence westerly to Hudson St., thence southerly to an alley behind buildings fronting on the south side of Main St., thence westerly to Depot St., thence southerly to Railroad St., thence west to the back lines of the lots facing on Depot St., thence north to the back lines of the lots facing on the south side of Main St., thence westerly to the western boundary of the Ionia Armory, thence northerly to the southern boundary of the Ionia Hotel, thence westerly to Dexter St., thence northerly to point of beginning.

This tract is bounded north and east on residential areas, south on parking lots and a warehouse/industrial area, and west on Dexter Street, which has modern gas stations, fast-food restaurants, ect., and, beyond Dexter, a residential area. The district includes all of Ionia's historic commercial core, except for a section south of Washington between Steele and Depot which contains modern buildings and parking lots.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia County
MICHIGAN

Working No. AUG 16 1984
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.5.85
Date Due: 9-13-84 / 9-30-84
Action: ACCEPT 9-13-84
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

Tonia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Tonia County
MIC HIG A N

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



G.W. FRENCH

FULLER'S

JOHNSON'S SHOES

340-332 W. Main St.
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from southwest
Photo 1 of 11



WESTERN
AUTO

R. L. JONES
JEWELLER

DONIA SWEEPER SHOP

SHERWIN
Williams

SALE
SAVE 18%
SALE
SAVE 18%

Wall-paper
SALE
SAVE \$100

318-332 W. Main St.
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from southeast
Photo 2 of 11



300 Block of W. Main St.
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from southeast
Photo 3 of 11



First Baptist Church
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from southwest
Photo 4 of 11



IOWA COURT COURTHOUSE
Completed in 1881, the Iowa Court Courthouse is one of the finest examples of the High Victorian Gothic style in the United States. The building is made of granite and is a landmark of Des Moines. It was designed by the architect George A. Fernald and is a National Historic Landmark.

Ionia County Courthouse
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from south
Photo 5 of 11



AMERICAN LEGION POST 37

American Legion
GRAND MARKS POST 37

BINGO
TUESDAY 7:30 PM

7up

LOCAL

BREW

Rod's BAR

Rod's

COOPER AND SON
MASTER-PLUMBER

COCA-COLA

AMERICAN LEGION



400 Block of W. Main St., south side
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from northwest
Photo 6 of 11



409-413 W. Main St.

Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District

Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983

Neg: Michigan History Division

208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from north

Photo 7 of 11



405 W. Main St.
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co. MI.

Resource Analysts, Inc. Nov 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capitol Ave.

View from northeast
Photo 8 of 11



300 Block of W. Main St., Southside
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co., MI

Resource Analysts, Inc., Nov. 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capital Ave.

View from northwest
Photo 9 to 11



HOME TOWN BAKERY

6500N

CLOVES - 10¢ PK
POP BILLS
SANDWICHES
CANDIES

THE IONIA THEATRE
1000 N. WASHINGTON ST.
IONIA, MICH. 48846

Ionia Theatre and 200 block of W. Main St.,
south side
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co., MI

Resource Analysts, Inc., Nov. 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capital Ave.

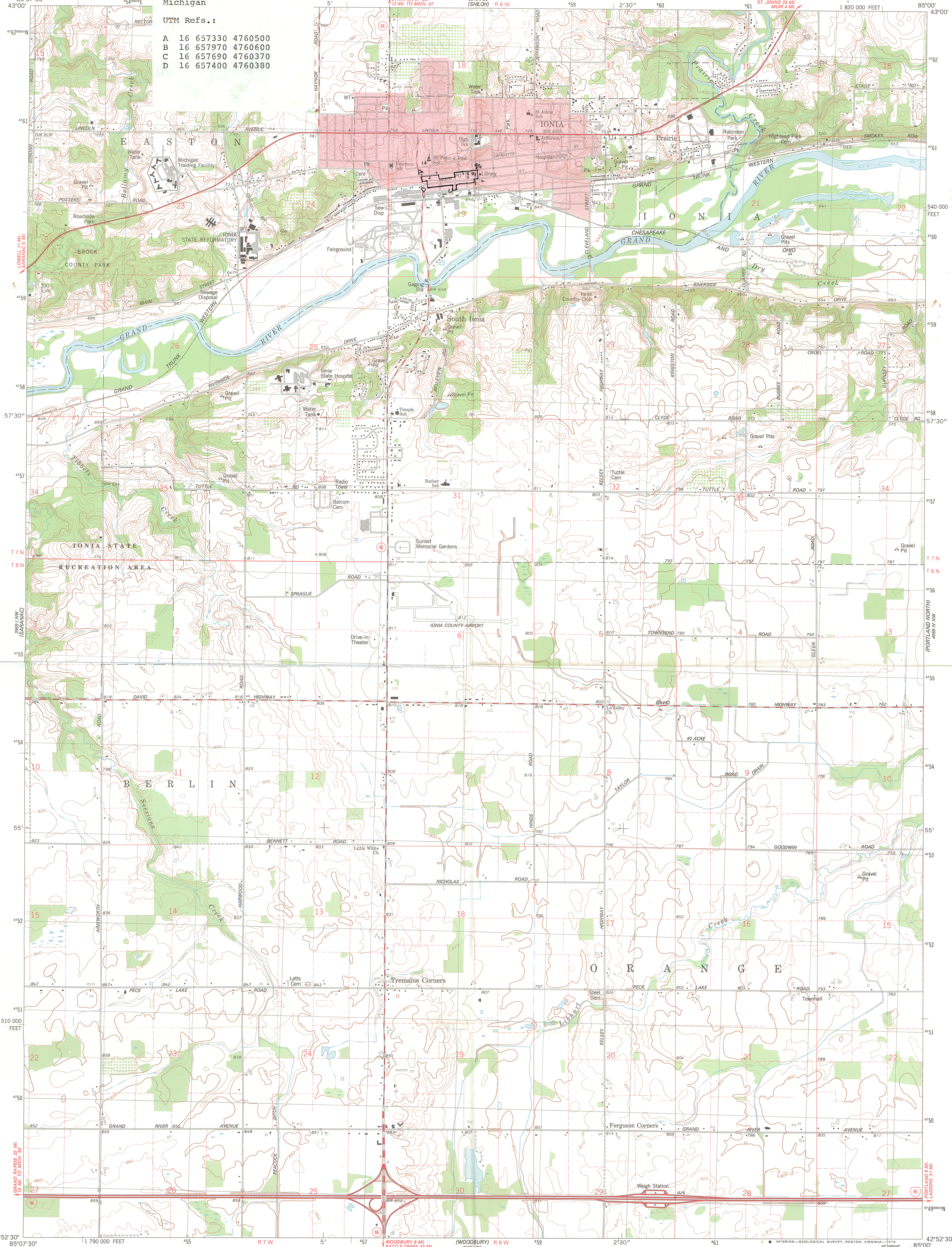
View from northeast
Photo 10 of 11



St. John's Episcopal Church
Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District
Ionia, Ionia Co., MI

Resource Analysts, Inc., Nov. 1983
Neg: Michigan History Division
208 N. Capital Ave.

View from west
Photo 11 of 11



UTM Refs.:

A	16 657330	4760500
B	16 657970	4760600
C	16 657690	4760370
D	16 657400	4760380

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs

taken 1974. Field checked 1975. Map edited 1978

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Michigan coordinate

system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)

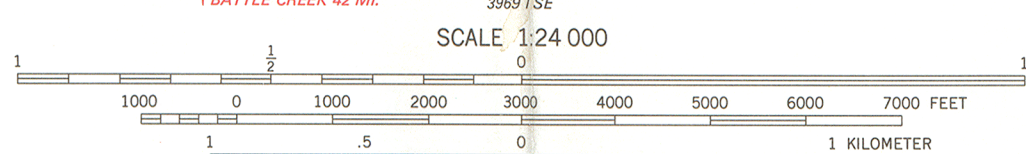
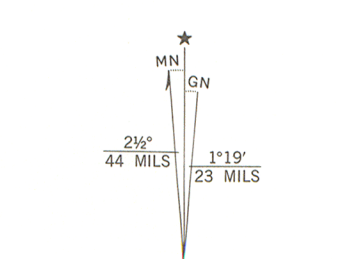
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16

1927 North American datum

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

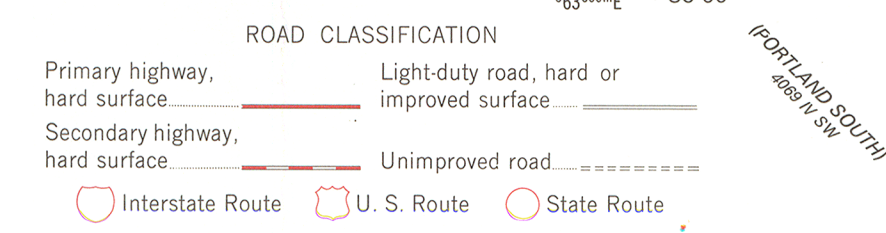
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where

generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



IONIA, MICH.

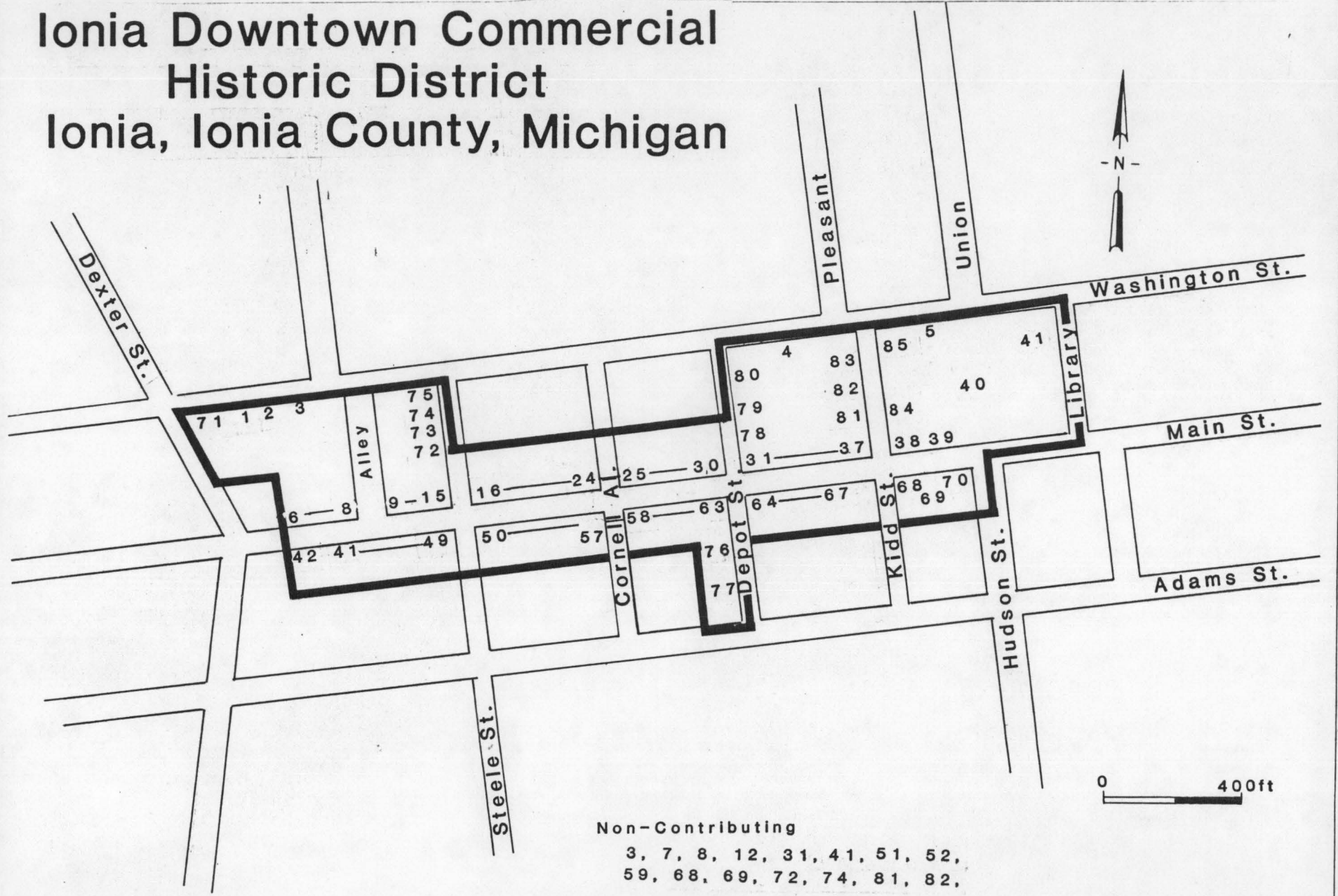
NE4 IONIA 15' QUADRANGLE
N4252.5—W8500/7.5

1978

AMS 3969 1 NE—SERIES V862

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND BY THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DIVISION
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District Ionia, Ionia County, Michigan



Non-Contributing
 3, 7, 8, 12, 31, 41, 51, 52,
 59, 68, 69, 72, 74, 81, 82.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RICHARD H. AUSTIN

SECRETARY OF STATE



LANSING

MICHIGAN 48918

MICHIGAN HISTORY DIVISION

ADMINISTRATION, PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH, AND HISTORIC SITES

208 N. Capitol Avenue
517 — 373-0510

STATE ARCHIVES

3405 N. Logan Street
517 — 373-0512

MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

208 N. Capitol Avenue
517 — 373-3559

August 8, 1984

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Supervisory Historian
National Register of Historic Places Branch
Interagency Resource Management Division
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed are National Register of Historic Places nomination materials for the Ionia Downtown Commercial Historic District in Ionia, Michigan. I certify that the intent-to-nominate notification requirements have been fulfilled. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register. All notarized statements of objection and written comments concerning this property submitted to us prior to the submission of this nomination to you are enclosed.

Please direct all questions concerning this nomination to Robert O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator (517/373-0510).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha M. Bigelow".

Martha M. Bigelow, Director
Michigan History Division
and
State Historic Preservation Officer

MMB:ROC:jl
enclosure