

RS100004660

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Northland Gardens

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Westland Avenue, Westhampton Road, Rutland Drive, and Westover Road between Southfield Road and the John C. Lodge Freeway

City or town: Southfield State Michigan County: Oakland

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Brian D. Murray

Signature of certifying official>Title:

SHPO

1/7/2020

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :
or Tribal Government

State or Federal agency/bureau

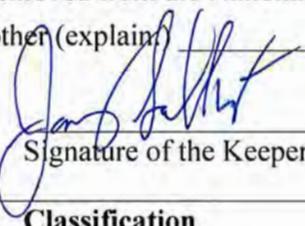
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain) _____


Signature of the Keeper

1.24.2020

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>97</u>	<u>21</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>97</u>	<u>21</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Contemporary

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK

WOOD: Weatherboard

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Northland Gardens is a 47.8-acre residential neighborhood located north of Eight Mile Road between the John C. Lodge Freeway and Southfield Road in the City of Southfield, Michigan. Platted in 1956 by the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the neighborhood was built out between 1956 and 1976, with two additions in the 1980s and five additions between 1993 and 2005. The subdivision contains 118 houses in total, the majority rendered in the Ranch style with modern Colonial Revival and Contemporary variations. The subdivision has a very high degree of integrity, with only a few more recent intrusions and virtually no significant alterations to the original houses.

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Narrative Description

SETTING

Northland Gardens is a neighborhood of the City of Southfield, and is located just north of Eight Mile Road, the boundary between Southfield and the City of Detroit. To the east, the John C. Lodge Freeway (M-10) cuts southeast to northwest, while to the west, the neighborhood is bordered by the Southfield Freeway (M-39) and Southfield Road (service drive). Built on formerly agricultural land, the neighborhood was designed as a residential suburb in the period just before Southfield incorporated as a city and at the beginning of the city's era of rapid expansion in the 1960s. To the east lies the former Northland Mall; to the west, opposite Southfield Freeway, lies an earlier residential neighborhood, Westhampton subdivision. To the north is another earlier subdivision, Magnolia, while to the south is a commercial development along Eight Mile Road. The commercial development wraps around to the west side of Northland Gardens but terminates at Westland Avenue.

Northland Gardens lies on an irregularly shaped parcel within a square approximately 900 feet north to south and 3,142 feet east to west. There are three entrances to the subdivision. Rutland Drive enters from the south through the commercial development at Eight Mile Road and from the north through the Magnolia neighborhood, while from Southfield Road, Westland Avenue enters from the west directly into the neighborhood. There are four named streets within the subdivision. Westland Avenue is the northernmost street, and it runs in a straight east-west line across the entire neighborhood. Westhampton Road departs Westland at a right angle heading south on the western side of the development and curves east at the southern edge of the neighborhood, crosses over Rutland Drive, and then gradually curves north again to end at Westland Avenue. Westover Road runs east-west paralleling Westland from Westhampton until it reaches Rutland Drive. Rutland Drive enters the neighborhood from the south and runs north-south until it reaches Westover Road, where it turns sharply east, then curves back to the north to meet Westland and cross into Magnolia neighborhood at the north end of the development. Cul-de-sacs are located at the southwest curve of Westhampton Road, the southeast curve of Rutland Drive, and at the eastern terminus of Westland Avenue. The cul-de-sacs are circular or oval with concrete curbs and centers planted with manicured lawn and trees.

The roads and cul-de-sacs are asphalt, and concrete sidewalks line the streets, with the exception of some areas on the north side of Westland Avenue. The houses in Northland Gardens have garages and private driveways. Many have semi-circular driveways. Frequently on corner lots, the garage and driveway face the side street and there is a semi-circular drive on the main entrance side. Sidewalks on individual lots vary from traditional walks leading from the public sidewalk to the front doors, to sidewalks leading from the driveway to the front door. The houses along Westhampton that back onto the church and commercial buildings along Southfield and Eight Mile Roads have six to eight-foot privacy fences.

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The vegetative character of Northland Gardens is mature and domestic in nature. Houses have primarily manicured lawns with varying levels of decorative plantings ranging from simple bushes to more elaborate tended flower beds and gardens. Most yards have one or more trees, deciduous and/or coniferous, both in the front and back yards, that provide both visual interest and shade. Signs with small planted beds mark the entrance to the subdivision at Westhampton and the south end of Rutland.

The individual lots are chiefly rectangular with wedge or irregularly shaped lots on curves and around the cul-de-sacs. Several houses sit on double lots. The houses are generally placed on the center of the lot, although as a rule the front yards are larger than the back. The footprints of the houses in Northland Gardens are typically irregular. While most have a basic rectangular or square shape, they often have intersecting blocks, offset garages, porches, and other protrusions. A good example of this is 17384 Westover Road, which has a series of asymmetrical projecting and receding sections, particularly on the front elevation, as well as different eave heights. There are also a number of L, U, or T-shaped houses.

The majority of the houses in Northland Gardens are in the Ranch style, a popular style in the mid twentieth century that was widely used for residential buildings from modest, mass-produced tract houses to sprawling high-style designer homes. The Northland Gardens houses fall somewhere in the middle range. Although the houses share many of the classic characteristics of the style, no two houses are alike, and they are relatively large and of very high quality in both their design and materials. All have attached garages.

Ranch houses are typically long, low one-story irregularly-shaped buildings with asymmetrical masonry facades and low-pitched roofs with wide eaves. Northland Gardens houses exhibit a variety of roof forms, although all are clad with asphalt shingles. They are typically side-gabled or hipped roofs, although cross-gables and cross hips are also common. Some mix both gables and hips; the house at 17172 Westhampton, for example, has a side gabled main roof with both front gabled and hipped sections at the front elevation. Many houses have graduated roofs: slightly raised roof sections, sometimes denoting a change in function (e.g. house to garage). This is clearly seen on houses such as 16349 and 17556 Westland. Gable returns are also evident on a number of houses, including 17153 Westhampton, 21128 Rutland, 16395 Westland, and even wrap-around returns on 17448 Westover. Another characteristic roof feature is a canted gable end, that can take the form of an angled gable or a graduated gable end, both projecting beyond the plane of the main gable. Examples are seen at 17366 Westhampton, 17050, 17501, and 17556 Westland, and 17319 Westover. Some houses, particularly those with Contemporary stylistic influences, have exposed rafter ends, for instance 17141 Westhampton and 17319 Westland. Wide chimneys are very common.

The main cladding material is brick masonry in a variety of colors ranging from black to deep red, multi-colored red, brown, yellow, beige, pink, white, etc. Occasionally a dark mortar is used on the lighter colored bricks for contrast. Decorative brick is often seen, frequently panels or entire walls of stacked bond or repetitive ornamental patterns, such as within the end wall of 21106 Rutland Drive, or under the windows of 17501 Westland. Contrasting sections of wall

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cladding are also very common, particularly in entry or porch areas, at the bases of windows, and in the gable ends. Materials used here are typically wood siding in horizontal, vertical, or flat iterations; uncoursed ashlar stone; and fieldstone veneer panels. There is a cluster of the latter at 17432, 17448, and 17465 Westover. Stone or cast stone is used for window sills and sill and belt-courses.

Sheltered entries are a distinctive feature of the Ranch style, and many variations are seen in Northland Gardens, ranging from a narrow, recessed entry to partial and full-width porches. Common configurations include a recessed entry on the flat façade (17319 Westover, 17366 Westland, 17320 Westhampton), an entry set into the ell of the house and garage (21131 Rutland, 17141 Westhampton, 17005 Westland), an entry porch on the corner of the cross gable or hip roof (17319 Westland, 17350 Westover), and a partial width entry porch under the main roof form (17441 Westhampton, 17448 Westover). A particularly noteworthy example of the latter is at 21106 Rutland Drive, where the nearly full-length porch is nestled under the short side of an asymmetrical side gable and partially screened by a concrete screen wall. Other unusual variations include 17385 Westover, where the entry door is flush with the house, but sheltered under a half-round porch with a fan-shaped roof, and 17276 Westland, which has an entry under one corner of the gable end roof. A number of houses also have back porches recessed under the main eaves, such as 17319 Westland. Porches are usually low, with one or two steps, and supports are typically boxed or wrought-iron posts. Entry doors can be single or, less-commonly, double, and many have their original front doors.

Windows in Northland Gardens also exhibit great variety. While there have inevitably been replacements, a number of original windows remain, including aluminum and wood, double-hung, casement, and sliding units, and sliding glass doors. Windows are generally asymmetrical, often with two matching windows on the bedroom wings, a larger window at the dining or living room, and smaller windows at the kitchen and bathrooms. Ribbon windows are seen occasionally, such as at 21152 Rutland. It is common to see windows with their lintels just below the eave line; these are often set within sections of contrasting siding, such as wood, stone, or stacked brick. For example, the windows at 17280 and 17357 Westhampton are both surrounded by stacked bond brick, while 17263 and 17338 Westhampton have horizontal and vertical wood siding surrounds. Many entries have textured or bottle glass sidelights, such as 17345 and 17391 Westland and 17465 Westover.

Although mid-century styles are usually known for their lack of decoration, the houses in Northland Gardens do have some common decorative elements. Wrought iron is seen extensively throughout the neighborhood. The most typical use is on porch supports, for example at 21131 Rutland and 17448 Westhampton. Houses notable for their use of wrought-iron include 17209 Westhampton, where it is used for porch supports, the porch railing, and under the bedroom windows; 17366 Westhampton, which has wrought-iron screens atop partial-height walls flanking the front porch; and 16318 Westland, where its use includes screening over the windows, a porch support and railings, an elaborate window box, and a railing beside the front walk. Concrete screen walls, most notably at 21106 Rutland, are present, as are wing walls extending from the plane of the front elevation, for example 17171, 17366, and 17457

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Westhampton, or at 16332 Westland, where the wing wall extends at an angle to screen the back yard. Finally, geometric patterns on front entry doors are also seen, for example at 17448 Westhampton and 17135 Westland, and, unusually, on garage doors (17337 Westover) and shutters (17299 Westland).

While most of the houses in Northland Gardens are clearly classified as Ranches, some have influences from other mid-century styles, chiefly Contemporary. Another largely California-influenced style, Contemporary houses share some of the common features of the Ranch style – long, low form, low-pitched roof, asymmetrical facades, and recessed entries. The major departure is the roof line; while Ranches more often use hipped or side gabled roofs, Contemporary houses have dramatic front-gabled roofs, often in swooping asymmetrical forms or butterfly and exaggerated slant roofs. The roof lines are further emphasized with exposed rafter ends, triangular or trapezoidal gable-end windows, and wide overhangs. While many Contemporary houses were rendered in brick or stone exteriors, builders could reduce costs by setting the windows within wood-framed cutouts, obviating the need for masonry headers and bases. The Contemporary was also more easily adapted to two-story or split-level forms than the Ranch, allowing for more square footage in the same footprint. Contemporary-influenced Ranches in Northland Gardens most often have a higher-pitched front or side-gabled roof section, often with a porch recessed under one side. Examples include 17228 and 17358 Westhampton, 17016 and 17231 Westland and 17350 Westover. The house at 17457 Westhampton has a front-gabled garage with trapezoidal frieze windows, a common Contemporary characteristic. A few houses are more Contemporary than Ranch, as they have split levels or two stories with asymmetrical gabled roofs, dormers, and other Contemporary traits; these include 17140, 17227, 17519, 17561, and 17575 Westhampton, and 21140 Rutland.

Another stylistic influence in Northland Gardens is the mid twentieth century Colonial Revival. Mid-century Colonial Revival was typically much more restrained than earlier iterations of the style, with minimal architectural detailing, such as a second-story overhang, Georgian or Federal-inspired doorway, or shutters. Colonial-Revival-influenced houses in Northland Gardens range from one-story (17005 Westland, 17433 Westover, and 21128 Rutland) to split-levels (17365 and 17425 Westhampton, both with lower-level garages), to two-story (17160 Westland, 17475 Westhampton). 17530 Westland is notable for its oversized pedimented front entry portico.

Finally, a few houses stand out even among the varied building stock of Northland Gardens. All of the windows on 17320 Westhampton are wood-framed corner windows, a unique occurrence in the neighborhood. The house at 16370 Westland Avenue is not only two stories, but has a full-height truncated A-frame portico, which arguably reflects Alpine or Scandinavian influences rather than the Modern vocabulary of the majority of the resources in the district. In a neighborhood of generous-sized houses, a few are notable for their size. One of these is 17077 Westland, which sprawls over two lots, including a corner lot, wrapping around a large in-ground pool in back yard. This is perhaps what attracted the house's most famous owners, Motown stars Claudette and William "Smokey" Robinson. The other large house is truly the most outstanding in the neighborhood, 16367 Westland, designed in what can be described as

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“Prairie Ranch” style. Also low and sprawling, the one-story house has large expanses of windows, including fixed and corner windows with transoms above shed-roofed extensions, tall, narrow stained glass windows with geometric shapes, a raised monitor roof section with clerestory windows, and large engaged cylindrical towers, the front one covered in multiple-shaded blue tiles.

Seven houses within the neighborhood, built in 1987 or later, are Non-Contributing to the district. They are in a mixture of late twentieth- and early twenty-first century styles, and have either been altered or are not complementary to the character of the district. Their addresses are 17281, 17299, 17505 and 17533 Westhampton, and 17084, 17110, and 17510 Westland Avenue.

INVENTORY

The resources within Northland Gardens contribute to the significance of the historic district if they were present during the Period of Significance (1956 to 1970) and are associated with one or more of the specified areas of significance for which the district is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places: Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Planning and Development, and Social History. Non-Contributing resources are those that were not constructed within the Period of Significance, are not associated with the identified areas of significance, or have been so altered from their original appearance that they no longer retain integrity and cannot convey their significance.

<u>Address</u>	<u>Date Constructed</u>	<u>Contributing Status</u>
21101 Rutland Drive	1958	Contributing
21106 Rutland Drive	1959	Contributing
21128 Rutland Drive	1958	Contributing
21131 Rutland Drive	1957	Contributing
21140 Rutland Drive	1972	Non-Contributing
21152 Rutland Drive	1957	Contributing
17111 Westhampton Road	1976	Non-Contributing
17118 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17121 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17140 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17141 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17153 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17154 Westhampton Road	1959	Contributing
17172 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17173 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17209 Westhampton Road	1963	Contributing
17227 Westhampton Road	1973	Non-Contributing
17228 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17245 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17262 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing

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Name of Property	Year Built	Contribution Status
17263 Westhampton Road	1964	Contributing
17280 Westhampton Road	1966	Contributing
17281 Westhampton Road	1995	Non-Contributing
17299 Westhampton Road	1995	Non-Contributing
17320 Westhampton Road	1976	Non-Contributing
17321 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17338 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17339 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17357 Westhampton Road	1959	Contributing
17358 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17365 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17366 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17383 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17386 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17409 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17416 Westhampton Road	1964	Contributing
17425 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17432 Westhampton Road	1962	Contributing
17441 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17448 Westhampton Road	1963	Contributing
17457 Westhampton Road	1959	Contributing
17475 Westhampton Road	1975	Non-Contributing
17489 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17505 Westhampton Road	1987	Non-Contributing
17519 Westhampton Road	1966	Contributing
17533 Westhampton Road	1959	Non-Contributing
17561 Westhampton Road	1962	Contributing
17575 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17589 Westhampton Road	1956	Contributing
16302 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
16317 Westland Avenue	1963	Contributing
16318 Westland Avenue	1967	Contributing
16331 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
16332 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
16349 Westland Avenue	1960	Contributing
16352 Westland Avenue	1968	Contributing
16367 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
16370 Westland Avenue	1974	Non-Contributing
16395 Westland Avenue	1965	Contributing
17005 Westland Avenue	1969	Contributing
17016 Westland Avenue	1969	Contributing
17020 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17025 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
17050 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing

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17070 Westland Avenue	1980	Non-Contributing
17077 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17084 Westland Avenue	2005	Non-Contributing
17110 Westland Avenue	2004	Non-Contributing
17115 Westland Avenue	1966	Contributing
17135 Westland Avenue	1960	Contributing
17157 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17160 Westland Avenue	1971	Non-Contributing
17180 Westland Avenue	1976	Non-Contributing
17181 Westland Avenue	1972	Non-Contributing
17209 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17230 Westland Avenue	1966	Contributing
17231 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17252 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17255 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17275 Westland Avenue	1967	Contributing
17276 Westland Avenue	1973	Non-Contributing
17299 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17310 Westland Avenue	1960	Contributing
17319 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17336 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17345 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17346 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17367 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17376 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17391 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17396 Westland Avenue	1966	Contributing
17501 Westland Avenue	1963	Contributing
17510 Westland Avenue	1993	Non-Contributing
17521 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17530 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17539 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17556 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17561 Westland Avenue	1976	Non-Contributing
17580 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17610 Westland Avenue	1962	Contributing
17640 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17318 Westover Road	1957	Contributing
17319 Westover Road	1959	Contributing
17336 Westover Road	1957	Contributing
17337 Westover Road	1957	Contributing
17350 Westover Road	1962	Contributing
17357 Westover Road	1975	Non-Contributing
17364 Westover Road	1959	Contributing

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17365 Westover Road	Contributing
17384 Westover Road	Contributing
17385 Westover Road	Contributing
17416 Westover Road	Contributing
17417 Westover Road	Contributing
17432 Westover Road	Contributing
17433 Westover Road	Contributing
17448 Westover Road	Contributing
17464 Westover Road	Contributing
17465 Westover Road	Contributing

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Northland Gardens has a very high degree of integrity. The majority of the houses in the subdivision were built in the late 1950s and 1960s and, aside from the installation of replacement doors and windows, there are virtually no significant alterations to the original houses, except for 17533 Westhampton Road. The few later additions to the subdivision are compatible with the architectural character and setting of this Modern neighborhood, with the exception of several Millennium Mansions built in the 2000s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Social History

Period of Significance

1956-1970

Significant Dates

1956

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Levine, Seymour, Architect

Horner, Fred J., Architect

Nemers and Lipshaw, Builders

Spoon Builders

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Northland Gardens is significant under National Register Criterion A as an important example of a residential neighborhood built during the City of Southfield's rapid expansion following its establishment as an incorporated municipality. It is also significant under National Register Criterion C as a highly intact and cohesive example of a Modern residential neighborhood within a city notable for its concentration and quality of mid-century design. Platted in 1956 by the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the real estate arm of the J. L. Hudson Company, Northland Gardens was the residential component of a larger development that included Northland Center, one of the nation's earliest shopping malls, as well as commercial buildings along Eight Mile Road south of the neighborhood. The subdivision was substantially built out by the late 1960s, although construction continued slowly in the 1970s. The houses, designed mostly in the Ranch style with some other stylistic influences, were of high quality both in terms of design and materials, and have remained remarkably intact since the period of construction. Northland Gardens was one of Southfield's early Modern subdivisions. The Period of Significance begins in 1956, when the subdivision was platted and construction began, and ends in 1970, which marks fifty years from the date of nomination. There are thirteen Non-Contributing resources within the district that were constructed between 1971 and 1980 that conform to the Modern aesthetic of the neighborhood, but are not of "exceptional importance" as defined in National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. These thirteen resources represent a continuation of the Modern aesthetic as illustrated by the district's Contributing resources. Therefore, these thirteen resources, identified in the inventory in Section 7, should be evaluated for significance when they reach the fifty-year threshold. The National Register Bulletin, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, states on page ninety-nine that the Period of Significance for a historic suburb may be extended five or six years beyond the fifty-year period of evaluation, but this extension was not used in his nomination because it could not account for the entire class of resources that have not reached fifty years since their construction and were designed within the Modern vocabulary of the district as a whole.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Community Planning and Development & Social History

Northland Gardens meets the National Register Criteria for listing under National Register Criterion A, at the local level, as an important example of a residential neighborhood built during the City of Southfield's rapid expansion following its establishment as an incorporated municipality. The neighborhood was within the boundaries of a planned residential district, Southfield Park, in the 1920s, which was never executed. In the late 1940s, the site of Northland

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Gardens was part of a large site acquired by the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the real-estate arm of the J. L. Hudson Company, for Northland Center, one of metropolitan Detroit's (and the nation's) first regional shopping centers. Following the opening of Northland Center in 1954, Hudson-Webber platted Northland Gardens in 1956 to encourage residential development and bolster the economic viability of its investment in Southfield. In the early 1970s, Northland Gardens became a popular neighborhood for middle- and upper-middle-class African Americans, who began to supplant the many original Jewish owners in the subdivision. Among the new homeowners in Northland Gardens during this period were Motown stars including Claudette and William "Smokey" Robinson and Ronald White of the Miracles, Bobby Smith of the Spinners, Otis Williams of the Temptations, and Eddie Holland, Jr, of the renowned songwriting team of Holland–Dozier–Holland.¹ The neighborhood illustrates the history of ethnic and racial integration in the city of Southfield.

Early Development of Southfield and Northland Gardens Location

Northland Gardens is located on a portion of the land originally designated as the southwest quarter of Section 36 of Southfield Township, in Oakland County. An 1817 survey of the section noted that the character of the land was level and bushy, with a mixture of oak, ash, beech, maple, and sassafras trees. On an 1822 survey map, Section 36 was within a large area on the eastern side of the township labeled timberland. The township is within the watershed of the Rouge River, and a number of tributaries are shown on some of these early maps, although no creeks are shown in the area of Section 36.²

When the first Euro-American settlers arrived in the county in the early 1800s, the land was already home to several American Indian villages of Neshnabek (Potawatomi). While much of the Neshnabek land in southeast Michigan had been taken by the United States government in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit, the Neshnabek retained several areas of land in Oakland County. These included two villages in Southfield Township, the Seganchewan village in sections 8 and 9 and Tonquish's village in sections 30 and 31, both in the western part of the township. A portion of the Shiawassee Trail, an American Indian road running from just west of Detroit north and west to the Saginaw River, ran through the southwest corner of the township roughly along what is now Shiawassee Street. The 1822 Hubbard map also shows a trail running from southeast to northwest just west of Section 36, but this does not appear on other maps. Both of these land reservations were taken by the United States government in the 1827 Treaty of St. Joseph, in which this land and other tracts were exchanged for consolidated land in Kalamazoo and Saint Joseph counties.

¹ Lamont Dozier, Brian Holland, and Eddie Holland Jr were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1988 for their significant accomplishments in songwriting, first associated with the Motown label (1958 to 1968), and later independently. The trio, according to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, "wrote and produced many of the songs that are most closely identified with Motown," including six consecutive Number One singles.

² Joseph Wampler, "Description of the Soil on the Interior Sectional Lines: Township 1 North, Range 10 East," 1817; Map by B. Hubbard, 1822. Both copies found in "Southfield – Maps" compilation at Southfield Public Library.

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Oakland County was established as a political entity in 1819. The county was originally divided into two large townships, with the future Southfield Township lying in the southern half, then called Bloomfield Township. In 1830, Bloomfield Township was subdivided and Southfield Township was established. On January 31, 1834, John Thomas of Oakland County purchased the south half of the southwest quarter of Section 36, eighty acres, from the United States government.³ While most early EuroAmericans settled on the north and west sides of the township, where the soil was better than the flat and marshy land of the eastern and southern sections, it is possible that Thomas farmed this land, as the 1840 census lists John Thomas as head of household in Southfield Township, engaged in agriculture, with one male 60-70 and one female 60-70 living in the household.⁴

At some point between 1840 and 1864, Thomas' eighty acres were acquired by Sylvester Smith. Born around 1800 in Ireland, Smith was in Oakland County by 1835, where he married Ann Keggney. He was listed as a cooper in the 1850 census, but in subsequent censuses was a farmer. By 1880, the year Smith died, the farm, which had grown to 250 acres (the remainder of the farm was in Redford Township, across the county line in Wayne County), was worth \$10,000. Smith grew wheat, corn, and oats and kept horses, cows, oxen, sheep, and pigs.⁵ Following Smith's death, the farm was inherited by his youngest son, Thomas Louis Smith, who converted the farm to a dairy operation in the early 1900s. While an 1872 plat map showed the farmstead buildings at the southwest corner of the property, at the intersection of Eight Mile Road and Southfield, subsequent plat maps depict the farmstead farther east along Eight Mile Road, perhaps to provide closer access to Smith's farm land across the road. The farmstead was still visible on aerial photographs in 1949 and 1952, including a house near the road, a large barn, and several small outbuildings and perhaps a chicken coop; there may also have been a small fruit orchard west of the house. Thomas Smith and his wife Mary had eight children, five of whom survived him, but it does not appear that any of the children lived or worked on the farm after Thomas Smith's death in 1923. The land continued to appear on plat maps into the late 1940s as the "Thomas Smith Est(ate)," so the surviving children may have leased the 80 acres in Southfield Township as a farm, or perhaps kept it as an investment as it was becoming clear even in the early 1920s that Southfield Township was ripe for suburban development.

Beginnings of Suburban Development in Southfield

The first half of the twentieth century saw the rise of the first automobile-oriented suburbs. Across the United States, the greater affordability of privately-owned automobiles in this period permitted increasing numbers of middle-class workers to move to residential areas in formerly rural areas bordering large urban centers, where they could have larger yards and more privacy than typically available in the cities. The metropolitan Detroit area, home to the country's major automobile manufacturers, would seem a natural place to see this trend. However, while the population of the city of Detroit was indeed expanding quickly in the 1910s and 1920s, in

³ List of original purchasers of land from the government held at Southfield Public Library.

⁴ United States Census, Population Schedule, 1840, Southfield Township, Oakland County, MI. Kenson Siver, *Southfield: The History of Our City in its 50th Year* (Southfield, MI: Johnson Lithograph, Inc, 2008), 22.

⁵ United States Census, Agricultural Schedules for 1860, 1870, and 1880.

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general Detroit felt less development pressure than other urban areas like those on the east coast. Although density was increasing since the city stopped annexing land after 1926, Detroit still covered a relatively large area, with plenty of vacant land left to build the single-family homes that Detroiters preferred. Still, Detroit saw the beginnings of suburbanization in the early twentieth century, particularly in the southern areas of Oakland County, which bordered Detroit's northern boundary. This was bolstered by the anticipated development of eight "superhighways" in the Detroit metropolitan area, with 204-foot rights-of-way. Four of these superhighways, Northwestern Highway (now M-10, the Lodge Freeway), Southfield Road (now M-39, the Southfield Freeway, until it reverts to Southfield Road north of its intersection with M-10), Telegraph Road (US-24) and Eight Mile Road (M-102) were planned to run very close to the future site of Northland Gardens.

With these projected major access roads, areas like Southfield became attractive for suburban development in the mid to late 1920s. In 1925 eighteen local developers joined to form the Southfield Park Improvement Association (SPIA). The SPIA envisioned a model residential district running from approximately 7 ½ Mile (modern-day Pembroke) to 14 Mile Road and 1 ½ miles to either side of Southfield Road, which had already been paved from Michigan Avenue to Birmingham (although not yet at its full highway width). The SPIA claimed that the twenty-one-square-mile Southfield Park development area was the largest of its kind in the country and represented the most advanced ideas in city planning. In addition to taking advantage of the new superhighways being developed in the area, the SPIA's plans included infrastructure improvements such as water, lighting, gas, and electricity, an investment that would be offset by the expected development value of the land, which was estimated at \$100 million. Other amenities planned included business, social, and recreational areas to support the development of "high class homes" within reach of those with a moderate income who wanted a country-like setting that was still easily accessible from Detroit.⁶ In the late 1920s the SPIA laid water mains along the Southfield Road corridor, extended telephone service to the southern part of the district, and was planning to lay sewers when the Depression halted improvements. Residential construction was severely curtailed in the 1930s and early 1940s, first because of the Depression, and then due to labor and material shortages during World War II. There was virtually no mention of Southfield Park or the Improvement Association after 1930, although the name was revived briefly in the 1950s for a proposed incorporated city.

In 1929, Northwestern Highway was officially dedicated at its intersection with Greenfield Road, just south of Eight Mile Road. The ceremony marked the completion of paving on the east side of the highway from Wyoming and Fenkell to Ten Mile Road, and the press accompanying the event noted its importance to the future development of Southfield Park.⁷ A 1930 map showed most of the area around the Smith Estate had already been platted into subdivisions, including the Magnolia Subdivision, just to the north. Platted in 1926, Magnolia was the first planned subdivision in Southfield Township, and the developers built an elementary school, Magnolia

⁶ Southfield is Land of Ideal Homesites," *Detroit Free Press*, April 18, 1926, 34.

⁷ "Nor'western Highway Unit Open to Traffic," *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1929, 6-3. Northwestern Highway was later renamed the James Couzens Highway before it was converted to the Lodge Freeway.

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School, to attract families to the development. Portions of the original Magnolia plat were later incorporated into the present-day Northland Gardens.⁸

Post-World War II Suburbanization and City Planning in Southfield

Following the end of World War II, the Detroit area experienced another period of economic and population growth. Suburbanization, which had begun in the 1920s, accelerated in the late 1940s and continued into the 1950s and 1960s, as the end of the war unleashed over a decade of pent-up demand for housing. A number of factors were involved in the greater interest in the suburbs. Some were simply demographic – this was the time of the baby boom, when the population was rising across the country. Detroit was no exception; its population continued to grow until it reached its peak in 1950, but the city was still contained within its 1926 borders. While vacant land remained available in the city, it was mostly concentrated at the outer edges, not far from the suburbs. As well, many of the incentives for suburbanization present in the 1920s remained relevant in the post-World War II era, such as the affordability and range of the automobile, supported by the expansion and improvement of surface roads and highways, and the availability of cheap, formerly agricultural land where developers could build larger houses on more widely spaced lots. With bigger salaries, more and faster automobiles, and better roads, white middle-class Americans could afford to move out of the cities, with their older housing stock, and into the newly-constructed subdivisions beyond the city.

Suburbanization in the metropolitan Detroit area in the post-war period was largely a white phenomenon, and in many cases whites were not just moving to the suburbs, but away from the minority populations of the city. The United States Supreme Court's 1948 decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer* outlawed racially-based restrictive covenants in property deeds (one of the companion cases in the decision, *McGhee v. Sipes*, was a Detroit case). This triggered a decades-long migration pattern of "white flight" where the entrance of African American families into or even near a white city neighborhood prompted a wave of departures by white homeowners. While racial covenants were also unenforceable in suburban neighborhoods, defacto methods of segregation made it much more difficult for African Americans to move into the suburbs. Strong societal pressure discouraged white developers and property owners from selling to African Americans, and the practice of redlining virtually prevented African Americans from obtaining the low-cost mortgages available to whites.

Southfield Township, a first ring suburb located just north of the Detroit border, began seeing the effects of the suburban housing boom almost immediately after the end of World War II. The township issued only 147 building permits, worth just over \$300,000, in 1944. The following year, those figures nearly tripled with 405 permits, worth over \$1 million, issued. It was not a short term trend; permits continued to increase nearly every year, rising to 1,276, with a value of over \$13.5 million, in 1950.⁹

⁸ Subdivision Plat for Magnolia, 1926, and Northland Gardens, 1956.

⁹ Siver, *Southfield*, 60.

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That same year, the J. L. Hudson Company announced plans to build a regional shopping center in Section 36, the southeastern corner of Southfield Township. It was one of two regional shopping centers planned by the company in 1950. Hudson cited surveys carried out by the company that showed around three-quarters of a million people lived within a twenty-minute drive of the planned regional sites. Many residents of the newly developing suburbs preferred to shop locally for staples such as children's clothing and shoes, so Hudson's recognized an opportunity not being filled by its flagship downtown store.¹⁰ The first shopping center, located at Eight Mile and Kelly Roads in what was then Gratiot Township (Macomb County) on the northeast border of Detroit, was announced in the spring of 1950, to be named Eastland Center. The following October, Hudson's publicized plans for a second shopping center in Section 36 of Southfield Township, to be called Northland Center.¹¹ At the time of the announcement, the company had purchased two parcels in Section 36. The first was a wedge-shaped lot between Eight and Nine Mile Roads, Couzens (Northwestern) Highway, and Greenfield Road, about 309 acres. A second area was one hundred acres fronting on Eight Mile Road between Couzens and Southfield Road. The majority of the latter site was the former Thomas Smith farm, plus an additional twenty-acre parcel between the Smith farm and Couzens. Hudson's president Oscar Webber reported at the time that the company planned to use the entire area for the shopping center, including the development of a "beautiful, well planned residential section."¹²

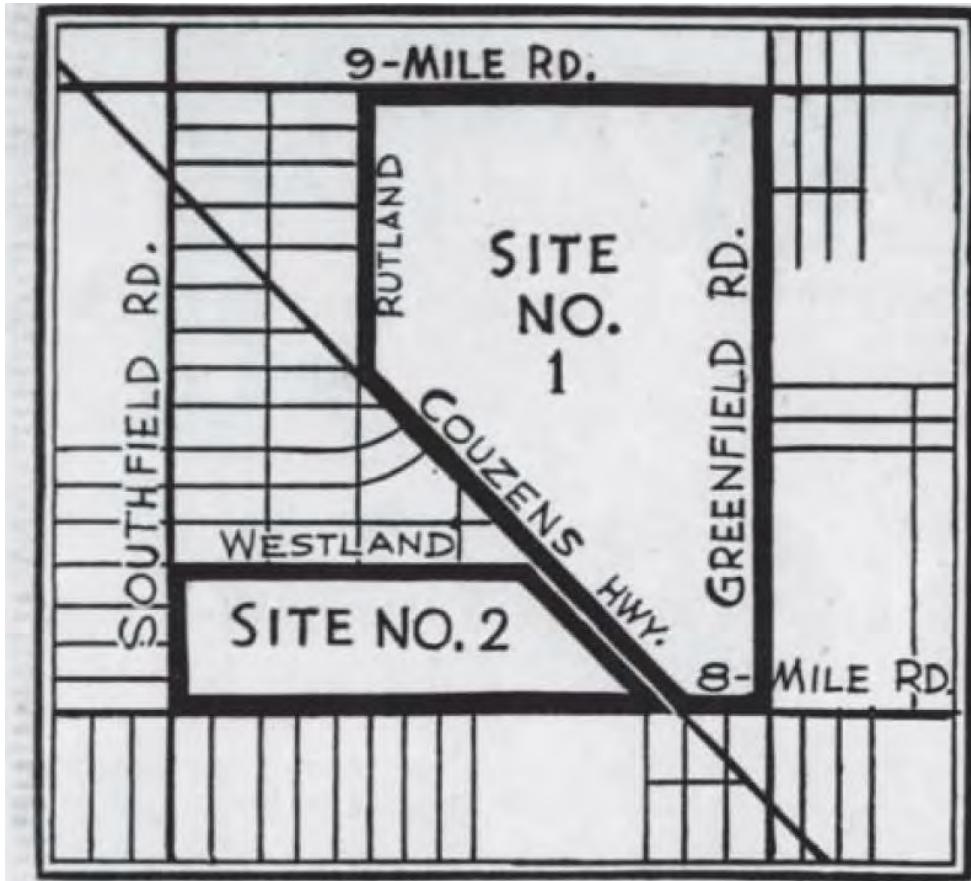
¹⁰ "J. L. Hudson Plans Shopping Center," *Lansing State Journal*, June 4, 1950, 6.

¹¹ Although it was announced first, Eastland was not completed until after Northland Center.

¹² "Hudson's Announces Plans for Southfield Shopping Center," *Four Corners Press*, October 12, 1950.

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PROPOSED SITES FOR HUDSON EXPANSION
Department store plans new regional shopping center

Map of proposed shopping center parcels, from *Detroit Free Press*, October 8, 1950, 14A.

While the layout of the planned center was not released at that time, it seems likely that the larger parcel would be reserved for the shopping center, which would include generous parking facilities, while the smaller parcel was ideal for a residential neighborhood adjoining the Magnolia subdivision as well as commercial development along Eight Mile Road. Planning for the shopping center continued in 1951 and early 1952, with groundbreaking taking place in May 1952. A local Southfield newspaper article on the groundbreaking included an aerial photograph, taken from the west, with the model of the store superimposed to show the scale. The article noted that "the area on the right, where water has collected, will be used to 'pond' storm water running off the huge, paved parking area, until sewers are free enough to take it."¹³ This area was the future site of Northland Gardens. Another aerial photograph, dated April 1952, shows this area much as it had been in 1949. The Smith farmstead was still in evidence, as were other landscape features related to the farm (circular tracks and farm trails). The western third of the property was largely wooded, with a stream or drainage channel extending into the area.

¹³ "Ground Broken for Hudson's Northland Shopping Center," *Four Corners Press*, May 8, 1952.

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Northland Center opened to the public on March 22, 1954. The new development brought enormous visibility to Southfield, which was still an unincorporated township. Southfield Township officials recognized that the township was facing a period of potentially high growth and that careful planning was needed to manage it. In the same month that J. L. Hudson's broke ground for Northland, May 1952, the township completed a population study. At the time, the township was still overwhelmingly rural, with most of its land either vacant or still in agricultural use, and the population was still quite low, at only 18,500 people. The study acknowledged that the 1920s had seen some building, but that due to large tracts of land still available in the city, development pressures on Southfield Township had remained low. The gradual decline of available land in Detroit, combined with low taxes and a more relaxed building code in the township, resulted in higher rates of growth in the 1930s, despite the Depression, but building in the township was greatly restricted during the 1940s by World War II and the accompanying material and labor shortages.¹⁴

The population study concurred that Southfield Township was facing a period of rapid and unprecedented growth over the next ten years due to the township's proximity to Detroit and the rates of growth associated with suburbanization. It estimated the 1960 population at 45,000, with the ideal fully-built up population pegged at 96,000 (the actual population in 1960 was 31,531; Southfield's peak population was 78,322 in 2000, dipping slightly to 73,100 (estimated) in 2016), while unplanned, unchecked growth could result in as many as 300,000 people, much of it from in-migration, especially higher income households, rather than "natural" growth.¹⁵

Density was a significant concern. The study noted that "one of the great attractions of Southfield Township is the amenity of low density living, 'a home in the country,'" but that low density residential development would have to be balanced against the ability to provide water, sewer, and other services. The study recommended concentrating denser residential neighborhoods in the southern part of the township where water and sewer were more available and some areas were already being developed with fifty-foot lots. Northern areas of the township were expected to stay on private wells and sewer longer, with concurrent lower density development. Planning for community facilities such as schools should also be considered while land values were relatively low; house values in the township were by now above the metro Detroit average, and land values were likely to increase as site choices decreased.¹⁶

Given the predicted development, the township also began to look seriously at incorporation, partly for self-preservation. In the early 1950s, several areas within the township attempted to incorporate, with varying degrees of success, and adjacent communities were eyeing parts of the township for annexation into their own cities. The new shopping center at Northland was looking like a particularly ripe economic plum, with the winning municipality due to collect an anticipated \$250,000 in annual taxes. In late 1951 there was an unsuccessful referendum to

¹⁴ Geer Associates, "Population Growth: A Master Plan Study," Prepared for Southfield Township Planning Commission, May 1952. Copy held in folder "Master Plans" at the Southfield Public Library.

¹⁵ Geer Associates, "Population Growth: A Master Plan Study."

¹⁶ Geer Associates, "Population Growth: A Master Plan Study," Prepared for Southfield Township Planning Commission, May 1952. Copy held in folder "Master Plans" at the Southfield Public Library.

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incorporate the southeastern corner of the township as “Southfield Park,” a callback to the unrealized development plan of the 1920s. This city would have included the J. L. Hudson Company’s planned residential community, Northland Gardens, but not the existing Magnolia neighborhood, whose residents opposed the plan.¹⁷

In May 1953 the Lathrup Townsite in the northern part of the township incorporated as Lathrup Village. The following September, the township’s municipal neighbor to the east, Oak Park, attempted unsuccessfully to annex the area around Northland, with area residents voting overwhelmingly against the proposal. The next day, two hundred fifty Southfield Township electors voted in favor of incorporating as a city the six square miles at the southern end of the township bounded by Greenfield, Inkster, Eight, and Nine Mile Roads, although formal incorporation did not take place.¹⁸ In November 1953 Franklin, in the northwestern part of the township, successfully incorporated under Michigan’s Home Rule Village law.

Not surprisingly, Southfield Township officials feared the township would be split into too many small pieces. In addition to piecemeal incorporation and annexation threats, the township was known as a “community without a main street” because it lacked a traditional downtown, although many considered that Northland Center could serve as the business hub of an incorporated city.¹⁹ However, it took another five years before the township officially became a city. In June 1955 the unincorporated township areas (minus Lathrup Village, Franklin, and Bingham Farms, which incorporated as a village in October of that year), voted for city status, but formal incorporation was delayed due to disagreements over the proposed city charter. A second successful vote in September 1957 approved the creation of Southfield as a city, but again minus a large chunk of land for the Village of Westwood north of Lathrup Village (renamed Beverly Hills in 1959).²⁰ Finally, Southfield formally incorporated in April 1958, with an approved city charter and elected city officials.

While the various incorporation and annexation battles were taking place in the 1950s, development continued within the township. As Northland Center opened in 1954, business and residential development picked up in the southern end of the township. The Wayne County Road Commission initiated plans to turn Southfield Road into an expressway to handle the increased traffic heading to Northland and to a new Ford Motor Company office and business development at the southern end of the township.²¹ Homes in the township were featured in shelter magazines, including one decorated and furnished by the J. L. Hudson Company appearing on the cover of *Better Homes and Gardens*’ September 1953 issue, and another on Eleven Mile between Southfield and Greenfield that was a “Builders Show Ideal Home” in 1953. The city of

¹⁷ Siver, *Southfield*, 67; “Oak Park Fails to Win Northland,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 1953, 11.

¹⁸ “Oak Park Fails to Win Northland,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 1953, 11; “City Favored in Southfield Center Area,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 17, 1953, 2.

¹⁹ “Southfield Eyes Status of City,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 1953, 9B.

²⁰ Siver, *Southfield*, 71-73.

²¹ Warren Stromberg, “Southfield to Become Expressway,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1953, 1. Both Northwestern Highway (M-10) and Southfield Highway (M-39) completed their conversions to freeways in the early 1960s.

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Southfield also opened a new high school in 1953, which was attributed to home builders “discovering” Southfield.²²

With construction of Northland Center completed, and runoff storm water now directed into sewers rather than the old Thomas Smith farm, the implementation of the associated residential and commercial area along Eight Mile Road could begin. In May 1956 the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the real estate arm of the J. L. Hudson company, submitted the plat for “Northland Gardens.” It was signed by Oscar Webber, president, and Walter A. Crow, secretary. Webber was the nephew of Hudson founder Joseph L. Hudson. Hudson, who never married, died in 1912 and left the company to the four sons of his sister, Mary Webber. Oscar, the youngest of the Webber brothers, became the general manager of the firm. In 1948 he was named president, and became chairman of the board from 1961 until his death in 1967.²³ The Hudson-Webber Realty Company, originally known as Hudson-Webber Land, was a subsidiary of the J. L. Hudson Company, formed in 1915 to acquire and manage the company’s real estate holdings. This went beyond properties related to the company’s department store; as early as the 1920s, Hudson-Webber was purchasing and developing land in Detroit and surrounding areas for various commercial and residential purposes, such as a subdivision in Hamtramck and a sales and service building along Woodward Avenue. Hudson-Webber also held property for members of the Webber family; in 1919, Joseph Webber transferred his house at 405 East Ferry Avenue to the Hudson-Webber Land Company, who held it until it was sold in 1922.²⁴

The Northland Gardens subdivision was set within an irregularly shaped plot approximately 760 feet from north to south, by 3,142 feet from east to west. Toward the eastern end of the development, the south line of the plat turned diagonally to the northeast for about seven hundred feet before straightening back out to an east-west line. The east end of the plat had five irregularly-shaped lots around a cul-de-sac. Two of those lots, on the north side of Westland Avenue, originally encompassed six lots of the previously platted Magnolia subdivision that were replatted for Northland Gardens. The remainder of the lots north of Westland Avenue remained part of the Magnolia subdivision plat.

Following the opening of a model home at Northland Gardens in September 1956, construction began on a number of homes in the development. By the following spring the roads were laid out and about a dozen homes were completed or under construction, as seen on an aerial photograph dated May 1957, although the developers had left the existing trees on the remainder of the site; some may have been saved during the construction of individual houses.

Aerial photographs show that by 1967 the neighborhood was largely complete. South of Westland Avenue, there were only about fifteen lots open, while the north side of Westland,

²² “Southfield Eyes Status of City,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 1953, 9B.

²³ “Hudson’s Oscar Webber Dies at 78,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 24, 1967, 1-2.

²⁴ “New Corporations,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 5, 1915, 8; “Building Year is \$170,000,000,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 4, 1925, 72; *Annual Report of the Auditor General of the State of Michigan for the Year Ending June 30, 1917* (Lansing, MI: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford, Co., 1917), 378; Francis S. delRosario, “East Ferry Avenue Historic District,” (Historic American Building Survey), Detroit, Michigan, 1984, 5.

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especially east of Rutland Drive, was largely vacant. The rapid development of the neighborhood was a testament not only to the high quality of the homes in Northland Gardens, but also to the increasing popularity of Southfield as a city. The opening of Northland Center had been a seminal event for the city and indeed the entire Detroit metropolitan region, but its placement in Southfield was no accident. It was located just across the boundary of northwest Detroit, one of the last areas of the city to fill in, and where many middle-income families were settling, a ready-made client base. The convergence of multiple highways in this corner of the township facilitated access from all directions. Following the opening of Northland Center and Northland Gardens, the city's incorporation and early planning paid off as more businesses began relocating to the city and housing density increased.

The neighborhood's first residents were overwhelmingly white, but that began to change not long after the subdivision was completed. Southfield was along the route of a characteristic Detroit migration pattern stretching back to the early twentieth century and related to the complex levels of racial and ethnic discrimination present in the region's history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jewish people arriving in Detroit initially settled in the north-south corridor along Hastings Street, which would eventually become Paradise Valley and Black Bottom. Subject to some of the same racial covenants as African Americans, Jewish people were likewise restricted in their ability to move anywhere in the city. However, as African Americans began arriving in greater numbers in the 1910s and 1920s and were segregated into Black Bottom, their Jewish neighbors began moving north and west, primarily into the area around 12th, Linwood, and Dexter Streets from Grand Boulevard up to Davison, as well as the apartment district of Palmer Park. By the beginning of World War II, the Jewish population had continued to move north and west, populating far northwest Detroit. Behind them came a population of middle-class African Americans, who followed the same migration pattern, developing some of the first integrated neighborhoods in the city in the Russell Woods/Nardin Park area. This was possible because there were usually no restrictive covenants and the Jewish owners of properties were comfortable selling to African Americans. This pattern repeated itself in the post-World War II period, when the Jewish community continued to move north and west into the suburbs of Southfield, Oak Park, Farmington, and West Bloomfield. Indeed, many of the original owners of properties in the new subdivisions in southern Southfield like Plumbrooke and Northland Gardens could be identified as Jewish or had typically Jewish surnames. By the early 1970s, black middle-class professionals were likewise moving in larger numbers into the suburbs just over the city line.

In the case of Southfield, the integration of neighborhoods like Northland Gardens, Plumbrooke, and Magnolia, just north of Eight Mile Road, appeared relatively quietly at first; in fact, many residents, both black and white, were attracted to the racially diverse neighborhoods. A 1975 *Detroit Free Press* article about Detroit-based African American drug dealers buying homes in Southfield noted that the city was "one of the few upper class suburbs which is integrated" and quoted a Southfield policeman as saying that "...we've had black professionals living here since the mid-1960s without any trouble."²⁵

²⁵ Kathy Warbelow, "Wealthy Drug Dealers Move to Suburbs," *Detroit Free Press*, May 23, 1976, 3A, 12A.

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Among the early African American residents of Northland Gardens, geographically the first suburb north of the Detroit boundary, were several famous Motown stars, particularly in the early 1970s, including Smokey and Claudette Robinson of the Miracles, who owned 17077 Westland from 1970 to 1973, Ronald and Earlyn White, also of the Miracles, who owned 17358 Westhampton from 1971 to 1977, Bobby Smith of the Spinners, who owned 17561 Westhampton from 1979 to 1985, Otis Williams of the Temptations, who owned 17556 Westland from 1969 to 1974, and Eddie Holland, Jr. a singer and lyricist who penned songs for many well-known Motown stars, who owned 17432 Westover from 1971 to 1975.

However, by the mid-1970s, some residents feared that their integrated neighborhoods were under threat by “white flight.” An experiment in 1975 conducted by the North Suburbs Interfaith Center for Racial Justice and the League of Women Voters found that a large percentage of real estate agents in the region were steering black homeowners to subdivisions south of Ten Mile Road, while whites were advised to buy north of Ten Mile. Coded language suggested to whites that subdivisions like Northland Gardens and Magnolia were “too close to the city” while blacks were told they “would not like” living in Farmington or Birmingham.²⁶ First Baptist Church of Detroit, which had built its new sanctuary next to Northland Gardens, sponsored annual “Brotherhood Teas” so neighbors, white, black, Jewish, and Christian, could meet each other and talk about potential problems. At one such gathering, in 1972, an unidentified board member of the Northland Gardens Homeowners Association noted that “(I)t’s the old blockbusting tactic done backwards...It’s illegal for an agent to solicit sales if you have said you don’t want to sell your house. Pressure, scare – all the old stuff - is still around.”²⁷

In 1977 a group of Southfield homeowners formed the Southfield Federation of Homeowners to counter what they perceived as the increasing segregation of Southfield. They noted four subdivisions south of Ten Mile that were threatened with rapid racial turnover, namely Northland Gardens, Plumbrooke, Magnolia, and the Ravines. Members of the association from those neighborhoods specifically cited the diversity of the neighborhoods as part of their attraction. Barbara Davis, a leading member who lived in the Magnolia subdivision just north of Northland Gardens, said that the association was “fighting to keep our integrated neighborhoods from becoming segregated again.” The new association blamed not the African American homeowners buying into the subdivisions, but “fearful” white homeowners who quickly sold their houses if a black family moved in, and real estate agents who continued to steer home buyers into specific neighborhoods based on their race.²⁸

Although 1970s residential groups like the Northland Gardens Homeowners Association and the Southfield Federal of Homeowners, as well as current homeowners met during the course of this research, cited the diversity of Northland Gardens and neighboring subdivisions as a source of strength, the neighborhood has seen its share of difficult times. Southfield’s population, which had more than doubled between 1960 and 1970, leveled off in the 1970s and 1980s, and the

²⁶ Julie Morris,” Southfield Group Says Racial Line Exists at 10 Mile,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 14, 1975, 3-4

²⁷ Helen May, “Searching for Brotherhood in These Changing Times,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 2, 1972, 25

²⁸ Ken Fireman, “Southfield Group Fights to Maintain Racial Balance,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 9, 1977, 4.

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declining birth rates resulted in the closure of the neighborhood elementary school, Magnolia School, although nearby subdivisions like Magnolia and Northland Gardens worked together to reopen it as a community center. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, residents became concerned about rising levels of crime. Northland Gardens seemed like a particular target, as residents noted that thieves from Detroit would enter the neighborhood, rob homes, and cross back into Detroit before Southfield police could arrive. And for a time, one of Detroit “most notorious and flamboyant dope dealers,” Eddie Jackson, lived in a “palatial compound” at 17533 Westhampton in Northland Gardens (another convicted drug dealer, Courtney Brown, lived next door at 17519 Westhampton). In response, much as they had banded together to fight segregation and save the Magnolia school, residents of Northland Gardens and Magnolia worked together to set up a neighborhood watch and urged police to increase patrols.²⁹

In more recent years, Southfield, like many communities in Michigan, has struggled with fluctuating population levels, and some Northland Gardens residents lost their homes in the financial crisis and recession of the mid 2000s. However, the neighborhood in general remains strong due to its close-knit and diverse group of homeowners, the high quality of the neighborhood’s housing stock and landscape, and efforts by the city to support and maintain high levels of home ownership.

Architecture & Landscape Architecture

Northland Gardens meets National Register Criterion C, at the local level, as a highly intact and cohesive example of a Modern residential neighborhood within a city notable for its concentration and quality of mid-century design. The development exemplifies many of the characteristics of mid-century residential subdivisions, which had their roots in the Picturesque suburbs of the late nineteenth century, and were further refined through the Federal Housing Administration’s development of standards and guiding principles for subdivision layout in the 1930s and 1940s. Generous but not wasteful lot sizes, thoughtfully planned curved streets, and attractive green spaces were all hallmarks of the FHA’s guidance that were realized in Northland Gardens. Overwhelmingly designed in the popular mid-twentieth-century Modern Ranch style, the houses of Northland Gardens use similar design motifs including brick masonry, wide overhanging eaves, and large windows, which keeps them cohesive and complementary, but also differentiated by unique detailing such that no two houses are the same. The quality of the houses, both in design and material, mean that Northland Garden’s building stock has retained its integrity and economic viability to a very high degree.

Planning Northland Gardens

The 1956 plat for Northland Gardens laid out one hundred and four generous-sized building lots, as well as an outlot, along four roads that incorporated gentle curves and cul-de-sacs. This form of layout can trace its roots back to the Picturesque suburbs of the mid- to late-nineteenth

²⁹ Gregory Huskisson, “Southfield Gears Up to Fight Crime,” *Detroit Free Press* (Oakland Supplement), January 19, 1984, 1A, 6A; Judy Diebolt, “Colorful Drug Bust Turns Gray in Tax Court,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1981, 3A.

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century. During that period, city dwellers with the means to do so sought an escape from the increasingly industrial urban centers to the more naturalistic landscapes of areas close enough to the city to make commuting feasible yet far enough away for large lots and plenty of vegetation. Drawing on the principles of the mid-nineteenth century Romantic landscape movement, Picturesque suburbs employed curvilinear streets, irregular lot divisions, and the extensive use of vegetation to create a naturalistic, park-like setting that separated the privacy of residential streets from the busy thoroughfares of commercial districts. Prototypical examples of the Picturesque suburbs, such as Llewellyn Haskell's Llewellyn Park in New Jersey (platted 1857) and Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Riverside subdivision outside Chicago, Illinois (platted 1869), influenced the character of American residential subdivisions into the twentieth century.³⁰

The concepts of Picturesque suburbs were applied at a larger scale in the Garden City planning movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Garden City was introduced by English social reformer Ebenezer Howard in 1898 as an ideal city plan laid out in a series of concentric circles with public and commercial uses in the center and residential zones of mixed income levels, surrounded by an outer ring of industrial, educational, and social institutions connecting the inner rings to outlying agricultural land. Howard's Garden City ideals were adopted by the nascent planning profession in the United States in the early twentieth century as they designed residential suburbs at the outer edges of cities and in the newly developing suburbs where the increasing affordability of the automobile made longer commutes feasible for middle-class workers. The availability of large tracts of formerly agricultural land and favorable zoning practices permitted planners and developers to design an entire subdivision without being tied to an existing dense street grid. Developments were spatially organized into clusters of buildings along hierarchical circulation patterns that emphasized privacy, access to open space, and naturalistic landscaping. Some of the most influential of the early Garden City models in the United States were Sunnyside Gardens in Queens, New York and Radburn, New Jersey, both developed in the late 1920s.³¹ In Southfield, residential developments of the 1920s like Lathrup Townsite and Washington Heights followed a number of these principles, including curvilinear streets, restricted access, and a parklike setting.

Many of the principles of Picturesque and Garden City planning were reinforced in the late 1930s and early 1940s by the United States Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA developed and issued a series of booklets outlining standards for new residential developments that wished to use FHA-backed low-cost mortgages. FHA planners went beyond minimum requirements such as compliance with local ordinances and the financial viability of developers, establishing guidelines and recommendations for ideal layouts, street patterns, integration of parks and playgrounds, and relationship to shopping, schools, and other amenities. Specific features promoted by the FHA included adaptation of the site to respond to topography and natural features, elimination of dead-end streets and sharp corners (less than ninety degrees) at

³⁰ David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs, Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 2002), 38-39.

³¹ Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 41-47.

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intersections, long blocks to eliminate unnecessary cross streets and through-traffic, generous, well-shaped house sites without sharp angles, access to common green spaces, and other features to add to the privacy and attractiveness of the neighborhood. Deep lots like those employed in Nine Mile Gardens were “wasteful,” but lots should have a minimum width of fifty feet or longer to provide adequate side yards for light, air, driveways, and to avoid overcrowding. Corner lots should be wider because they had to comply with setback requirements on two sides.³²

Although not all prospective homeowners obtained FHA-backed mortgages, the FHA’s guidelines proved enormously influential in the planning and development of post-war suburbs. Like the garden suburbs of the early twentieth century, the FHA-influenced subdivisions of the post-World War II period were well suited to the large, formerly agricultural tracts of the suburbs. The larger lot sizes complemented the increasingly popular modern house styles, such as ranches and split levels, that were placed with their long sides facing the street. While early twentieth century garden suburbs had attempted to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic, the new suburbs were far more oriented toward the car. In many cases, the traditional “front walk” from the sidewalk to the front door was eliminated, with foot traffic shifting to the wide driveway and attached garage; residents and their guests either entered the house from the garage or the front walk was shifted to lead from the driveway to the front door.³³

In addition to new models for designing suburbs, the post-World War II era also saw new models for building them. While most early developers had limited their activities to subdividing the land, providing basic utilities, and perhaps building a few models before selling the lots off piecemeal, the early twentieth century saw the rise of the “community builder” and the “operative builder.” Less land speculators and more community planners, the community and operative builders controlled more aspects of the subdivisions, from layouts to home building to deed restrictions. By “exert(ing) control over the character of their subdivisions, (they) attracted certain types of home buyers, and protected real estate values.” In the 1930s, the FHA encouraged the operative builder model to ensure the consistency, attractiveness, and financial stability of neighborhoods backed by its mortgage insurance.³⁴

It is unknown how many residents of Northland Gardens used FHA-backed mortgages, but the planners of the Hudson-Webber Realty Company were clearly influenced by the FHA’s subdivision design principles. While the new neighborhoods just across the Detroit boundary line to the south were still being built to the rectilinear grid with narrow lots and closely placed houses, Northland Gardens featured substantial lot sizes, curving streets, and plenty of green space. It also contrasted with the layout of the 1920s Magnolia subdivisions to the north and west. While those plans included some curving streets and common park space, the lots were still relatively narrow and deep (about 40 feet wide by 130 deep) and the plan conformed to the open street grid. In Northland Gardens, entry to the subdivision was limited to three right-angle points and cross-streets were likewise limited, but the layout had only one dead end, the cul-de-sac at

³² See for example “Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses,” 1936; “Planning Profitable Neighborhoods” (Technical Bulletin No. 7), 1938; and “Successful Subdivisions,” 1940.

³³ Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 70.

³⁴ Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 27, 49.

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the east end of Westland. Of the rectangular lots, widths ranged from 90 to 105 feet and depths from 116 to 144 feet. The wedge-shaped lots on curves or cul-de-sacs had a minimum of 54 feet frontage on the inside curves, widening to 184 feet on an outside corner lot, while depths were similar to the rectangular lots. In addition to the generous lot sizes and mostly private rear yards, the developers also installed amenities like sidewalks and a landscaped center ring in the middle of each cul-de-sac. While a few houses had traditional front walks, particularly on the corner lots, many homeowners opted for no front sidewalk, relying on the wide driveways for pedestrian access to their homes.

While the Federal Housing Administration had favored the operative builder model, Hudson-Webber was a more traditional developer. After building and furnishing a model home, the company generally sold lots on an individual basis either to their final owners, or to a construction company who then built and sold the house to a new owner. As a result, while a little less than half of the development's houses were built between 1956 and 1959, it took another fifteen to sixteen years for the neighborhood to be substantially complete, with at least a few houses built each year until 1976 (seven houses were added between 1980 and 2005 and there are still a few empty lots). Of the one hundred and four lots originally platted, some were combined into double lots. The remaining Magnolia subdivision lots on the north side of Westland Drive were informally incorporated into Northland Gardens. While they were not replatted into the Northland Gardens subdivision as a few lots at the eastern end of the subdivision had been, many of the narrow forty-foot lots were combined into double or triple lots to accommodate larger footprint houses, and built in house designs that related architecturally to the character of Northland Gardens. Finally, lots one, two, and three were originally platted on the far western side of the development north of Outlot A, two fronting on Southfield Road and the third tucked behind them on Westland Avenue. These three lots were never developed as house sites; instead, First Baptist Church of Detroit moved to a newly built sanctuary on this site in the late 1950s.

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The Architecture of Northland Gardens

Michigan was a leading center of Modern architecture and design in the middle decades of the twentieth century, and the city of Southfield has a density of high-quality Modern resources rivaled by few other places in the state. Southfield's strategic geographic location in the first ring of suburbs outside of Detroit, the convergence of several highways in the city, and the availability of large tracts of relatively inexpensive agricultural land drew many businesses to Southfield, and numerous world, national, and regional corporate office headquarters were built in Southfield in the 1950s and 1960s, including Bendix Research Laboratories, Federal Mogul, Reynolds Metals Company, Maccabees Mutual Life Insurance, and E. F. MacDonald Travel. The city aggressively pursued commercial development through proactive installation of utilities and policies that encouraged corporate investment.

These corporations hired many of the state and nation's most well-known architects to design their offices. The Reynolds Metals Company, the nation's second-largest aluminum products manufacturer, selected Minoru Yamasaki, whose firm had just won the AIA Honor Award for the Lambert-St. Louis Municipal Airport Terminal, to design a showpiece regional sales office in Southfield (completed 1959). Giffels and Rossetti designed the award-winning Federal Mogul Staff Office Building (1966), and the Gunnar Birkerts-designed IBM Regional Office Building was constructed in 1975.

To design its flagship regional shopping mall, J. L. Hudson Company hired Viennese architect Victor Gruen. Gruen's plan for Northland Center established the shopping mall archetype and influenced mall design for decades, including the nearby Tel-Twelve Mall, designed by the firm of Charles Agree, Inc. and completed in 1968. Modern architecture in Southfield extended beyond the commercial sector, for example at Shaarey Zadek Synagogue, designed by New York architect Percival Goodman (1961-62), and the luxury high-rise apartments at North Park Towers (1967), designed by Nate Levine.

While Southfield's major commercial, retail, and religious entities hired state or nationally famous architects, high-quality Modern design filtered down to even modest office buildings, schools, churches, and residential neighborhoods in the city, like Northland Gardens.

To sell the lots in the Northland Gardens subdivision, Hudson-Webber built a model home at 17589 Westhampton, at the southwest corner of Westland and Westhampton. Designed by Seymour Levine and built by Nemers and Lipshaw Building Company with interiors by J. L. Hudson's, the house was completed in the summer of 1956. Emphasizing the suburban character of the neighborhood, Hudson-Webber called it the "City-Country House...a house that's just right for those suburban areas that are neither city nor country, but a blending of the two." The one-story, three-bedroom, two-bathroom house was "zoned" to separate the more public living areas from the private bedrooms, and the living room featured a brick fireplace and outdoor terrace. The entry hall had slate floors and stained-glass sidelights. Hudson's finished the kitchen with "(c)abinets of pickled birch (with) translucent plastic panels in which a black linen gauze has been embedded for an unusual decorative effect." The design provided flexibility in opening

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or closing off areas of the house for either more room or greater privacy through the use of louvered doors. While the house avoided large expanses of glass in order to provide greater privacy, the developers noted that it had “an air of tweedy informality, with plenty of room for family activity, that makes it very well suited to modern suburban living.”³⁵

The attention paid to the model house’s layout was intentional. House designers in the mid twentieth century re-envisioned the form and function of the middle-class house. The spatial organization of suburban neighborhoods like Northland Gardens resulted in larger lot sizes and more private space in the back yards. Designers often reoriented house layouts to place family living spaces at the rear of the house with large glass windows or sliding glass doors to reduce the barrier between indoor and outdoor space. They supported the emphasis on the nuclear family unit during the period by prioritizing family living spaces, particularly the living room, over private bedrooms. Kitchens became the showpiece of the home, a space the family was expected to spend time in (hence the rise of the “eat-in kitchen”) and where guests might be invited. This was “better living through design.”

The article promoting the model home had noted that “(s)even builders are cooperating in the development, (and) will build homes in the \$35,000 to \$45,000 range.” It was not known who those builders were, aside from Nemers and Lipshaw, but a few model houses were featured in the newspaper real estate sections, such as 17173 Westhampton, built by Spoon Builders, in 1958, who also built 17339 Westhampton (1957). Similarly, little is known of the architects of Northland Gardens homes. Seymour Levine was recorded as the architect of 17589 Westhampton, and the homeowner of 17310 Westland has the original drawings for the house, designed by Fred J. Horner. However, the homes received little press when they were constructed, and the city does not retain building permits for residential construction from that era.

The model house at 17589 Westhampton was built in the Ranch style, as were most of the houses subsequently built in Northland Gardens. Ranch houses, from modest tract houses to large high styled versions, were the dominant house style for residential architecture in both Northland Gardens and the throughout last half of the twentieth century.

Modern house styles, like Modern architecture in general, were “based primarily on the lack of applied historically influenced ornamentation and a resulting external simplicity or ‘honesty,’ as well as on spatial variation and manipulation made possible by new materials and construction techniques.” The first stage of modernistic house design, in the early decades of the twentieth century, resulted in house styles like Prairie and Craftsman, “elegantly simplified” buildings that still employed decorative touches but in a more organic manner, such as elaborated structural elements. In the middle decades of the century, designers often eschewed non-functional ornament altogether, preferring to create “machines for living” that took advantage of mass-production methods to create rigorously “honest” buildings, exemplified by the International style of architecture.³⁶

³⁵ “City-Country House,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1956, B-7.

³⁶ McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 5, 10-11.

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There were, of course, many gradations within Modernism, from the simple rectilinear glass boxes of the International style to the more elaborate examples of New Formalism. Many Modern house styles employed asymmetrical forms, exaggerated roof pitches, varying wall planes, and non-traditional windows to express their style rather than applied ornament. However, non-functional ornamental details were not uncommon, such as decorative brick walls, textured glass, applied paneling, and exposed rafter ends.

The Ranch originated in California (it was often called the California Ranch in its early years) and, like the Mission style of the earlier twentieth century, it was based on (often romanticized) Colonial southwest precedents. Adapted to the warm climate of the region, the Spanish ranch house was usually one story, long and low to the ground, with adobe walls and flat roofs. The L- and U-shaped plans provided access to a private courtyard that functioned as auxiliary living space, and the wide eaves sheltered the interior from the full sun.³⁷ In the 1930s, California architects like Cliff May (who is often credited with popularizing the style) began building modern adaptations that were suited for the large lots and mild climate of the West, and in the 1940s and 1950s, the architectural press began promoting them.

The Ranch was ideally suited for the growing suburbs of the post-war period. The larger lot and development sizes of the suburbs could accommodate the one-story rambling form of the Ranch, which increasingly included an attached garage, further lengthening the building. In contrast to pre-World War II styles, which focused outdoor living space on the front and side porches, the mid-century suburb emphasized private back yards and patios, which could be larger on the suburban lot. As well, technological developments supported the proliferation of a building form more suited for a warm climate. Multiple-thermostat central heating and residential air conditioning systems were introduced widely after World War II, making year-round residence in a rambling house with large expanses of windows feasible even in the cold climates of the north.³⁸ Designers could adjust the simple and flexible floor plan to different sizes and forms from the most basic tract house to a unique high-end residence. The Ranch style was easily adapted to the requirements of the FHA program, as well. The developers of Levittown, the prototypical American suburb in Pennsylvania, introduced a modified Cape Cod with a Ranch-like exterior in 1949,³⁹ and the mass-produced tracts of Ranches that followed eventually contributed to a late twentieth century backlash against the “cookie-cutter” suburbs full of American Ranches.

Ranch styles were far more likely to be the product of builders than of architects. As architect and historian Alan Hess has noted, it was the home buyers of America who embraced the large family rooms, modern amenities, and low prices of the Ranch, when most architects of the 1950s and 1960s preferred to design in the concurrent Contemporary style (with some exceptions, such

³⁷ Barbara Allen, “The Ranch-Style House in America: A Cultural and Environmental Discourse,” *Journal of Architectural Education* (49:3, February 1996), 156-157.

³⁸ Allen, “The Ranch-Style House in America,” 158.

³⁹ Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 66.

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as Cliff May and others in California and Texas).⁴⁰ Another advantage of the Ranch was that was relatively easy to individualize similar house plans in large neighborhoods. The irregular footprint and asymmetrical plan could be easily and inexpensively varied by bumping out or recessing a section, changing the window size, shape, and placement, varying the proportion of masonry and wood, and changing the porch size or shape.⁴¹

Despite its variability, the Ranch had a number of standard characteristics. In form, it was long, low, and rambling, oriented with its long elevation to the street and covered by a low-pitched roof with wide eaves. The façade was almost always asymmetrical, with projecting or receding sections, an offset front door, and non-matching fenestration patterns. Front entries were usually deeply recessed, often within the ell of the house or under a porch, and smaller than the patio or terrace on the rear of the house. The dominant roof form was cross-hipped or cross-gabled, with a simple boxed eave or plain rafter-tail detail. An attached garage was common, as well as a large private patio or terrace at the rear. Windows varied widely both as to form and material, but there were two prevailing characteristics of mid-century fenestration. The first was large expanses of glass on the rear elevation. As noted above, the focus of outdoor living in the mid-century period, unlike earlier eras, was on the private backyard. The family living room, and sometimes the master bedroom, usually had a sliding glass door onto a large patio or terrace designed for private family time or entertaining, and other rooms on this elevation had large windows. The second characteristic feature was the picture window, a focal point on the front elevation with a large fixed pane, sometimes flanked with operable sections.⁴² The ubiquity of the picture window seems an anomaly in a house form that oriented itself toward a private backyard, but architect and author Witold Rybczynski has argued that the picture window, rather than offering a view for residents, was a window into the house, for displaying the house's interior decoration and seasonal displays.⁴³

Far from being cookie-cutter or mass-produced tract buildings, the houses of Northland Gardens, while mostly adhering to the basic elements of the Ranch style, vary widely. They range from relatively modest houses to highly styled examples with unique designs. Most are executed in varying colors of brick masonry, with insets of wood siding, whether horizontal, vertical, or flat, or stone veneer panels, coursed and uncoursed. A number have stacked bond brick panels or entire elevations. Roofs are side gabled, cross-gabled, hipped, and cross-hipped, and a few combine multiple forms; most have wide eaves, some with canted points at the gable ends, or exposed rafter tails. Porches vary from small recessed entries to partial or almost-full width, usually recessed under the roof or a roof extension. Very rarely does a house have a regular form, with irregular rectangle, L, and asymmetrical U-shapes being most common, and all have attached garages. The windows are uniformly asymmetrical, with a number of houses featuring windows tucked under the roof line, typically separated from the rest of the wall by a sill course and surrounded by a contrasting material. Commonly seen decorative details include wrought

⁴⁰ Alan Hess, *The Ranch House* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 2008), 14-17.

⁴¹ McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 603.

⁴² McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 597-602.

⁴³ Witold Rybczynski, "The Ranch House Anomaly," *Slate.com*, April 17, 2007, http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/architecture/2007/04/the_ranch_house_anomaly.html.

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iron porch supports and railings, geometric patterns on entry doors, garage doors, and shutters, screen walls and wing walls, and textured glass sidelights.

There are a few common variants of the Ranch style seen in Northland Gardens. While they cannot always be classified as “Styled Ranches,” they do have stylistic elements borrowed from other contemporary styles and forms. A few split-level ranches are present. Although these typically take the form of a front gabled two-story section with a side-gabled one-story section beside it, a few houses are one story at the front and rise to a split-level two story at the rear. A number of houses, both one-story and split-level, have Colonial elements, including dormers, gable returns, gabled pedimented porches, and other Colonial Revival detailing. Conversely, some Ranches shade toward the Contemporary style, with angle-topped windows in the gable ends, broad expanses of uninterrupted wall, and clerestory windows. There are several clearly Contemporary houses in the neighborhood, as well. Finally, there are several outstanding and unique houses, like the Prairie Ranch at 16367 Westland, and the sprawling Ranch at 17077 Westland.

Following the establishment of Northland Gardens, Hudson-Webber also platted the remaining land south and east of the residential neighborhood into eighteen commercial parcels (two phases, 1956-1958). Among the twenty buildings constructed here were the Reynolds Metals Building (Minoru Yamasaki, completed 1959), Standard Oil Building (architect unknown, 1957), the General American Life Insurance Building (Victor Gruen, 1958), and One Northland Drive (Seymour Levine, 1969). Continuing into the 1960s and 1970s, Hudson-Webber developed other parcels it owned around Northland Center, branching out into the luxury apartment field with North Park Towers (1967) and North Park Place (1971), both designed by Detroit architect Nathan Levine.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Southfield Public Library, Oakland County, MI

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 47.8 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.448573 | Longitude: -83.219362 |
| 2. Latitude: 42.448773 | Longitude: -83.207578 |
| 3. Latitude: 42.448773 | Longitude: -83.207578 |
| 4. Latitude: 42.448773 | Longitude: -83.207578 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):



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NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 1-104, Northland Gardens Subdivision, Part of the southeast quarter of Section 27, Township 1 North, Range 10 East, City of Southfield, Oakland County Michigan, as recorded in Liber 102 (Plats), page 28, November 22, 1960.

Lots 67-126, Magnolia Subdivision, Part of the southeast quarter of Section 27, Township 1 North, Range 10 East, City of Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan, as recorded in

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary identified for Northland Gardens is the original development boundary as outlined in the plat, plus the parcels on the north side of Westland Avenue, which were originally part of the Magnolia neighborhood but developed as Northland Gardens. See attached maps for boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

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date: November 30, 2018

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Northland Gardens
City or Vicinity: Southfield
County: Oakland **State:** Michigan

Photographer: Google Earth
Date Photographed: 2018
Aerial photograph, north at the top of the image.
0001 of 0064

Photographer: Google Earth
Date Photographed: 2018
Aerial photograph, north at the bottom of the image.
0002 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westland Drive, looking east
0003 of 0064

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan

County and State

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westland Drive, looking west
0004 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westover Drive, looking east
0005 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Rutland/Westover Drive, looking west
0006 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westhampton Drive, looking northeast
0007 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17610 Westland Drive, looking north
0008 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17530 Westland Drive, looking north
0009 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17521 Westland Drive, looking southeast
0010 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17501 Westland Drive, looking southwest
0011 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17396 Westland Drive, looking north

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

0012 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17391 Westland Drive, looking south
013 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17336 Westland Drive, looking north
014 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17319 Westland Drive, looking southwest
015 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17310 Westland Drive, looking north
016 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17276 Westland Drive, looking north
017 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17231 Westland Drive, looking southeast
018 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17181 Westland Drive, looking southwest
019 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17160 Westland Drive, looking northeast
020 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

17077 Westland Drive, looking southeast
021 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17070 Westland Drive, looking north
022 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17025 Westland Drive, looking south
023 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17016 Westland Drive, looking northeast
024 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17005 Westland Drive, looking south
025 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16395 Westland Drive, looking southwest
026 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16370 Westland Drive, looking north
027 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16367 Westland Drive, looking southwest
028 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16349 Westland Drive, looking south
029 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan

County and State

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

16318 Westland Drive, looking north
030 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17465 Westover Drive, looking southeast
031 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17448 Westover Drive, looking northwest
032 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17433 Westover Drive, looking south
033 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17432 Westover Drive, looking northeast
034 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17385 Westover Drive, looking south
035 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17384 Westover Drive, looking north
036 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17350 Westover Drive, looking northwest
037 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17337 Westover Drive, looking south
038 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan

County and State

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

21106 Rutland Drive, looking southwest
039 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
21128 Rutland Drive, looking southeast
040 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
21140 Rutland Drive, looking east
041 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
21152 Rutland Drive, looking south
042 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17589 Westhampton Drive, looking southwest
043 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17561 Westhampton Drive, looking west
044 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17533 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
045 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17519 Westhampton Drive, looking west
046 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17457 Westhampton Drive, looking south
047 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

17448 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
048 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17441 Westhampton Drive, looking south
049 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17416 Westhampton Drive, looking north
050 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17386 Westhampton Drive, looking north
051 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17366 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
052 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17365 Westhampton Drive, looking southeast
053 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17358 Westhampton Drive, looking north
054 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17357 Westhampton Drive, looking south
055 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17338 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
056 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan

County and State

17320 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
057 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17263 Westhampton Drive, looking southeast
058 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17228 Westhampton Drive, looking northeast
059 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17209 Westhampton Drive, looking south
060 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17172 Westhampton Drive, looking north
061 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17153 Westhampton Drive, looking south
062 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17141 Westhampton Drive, looking south
063 of 0064

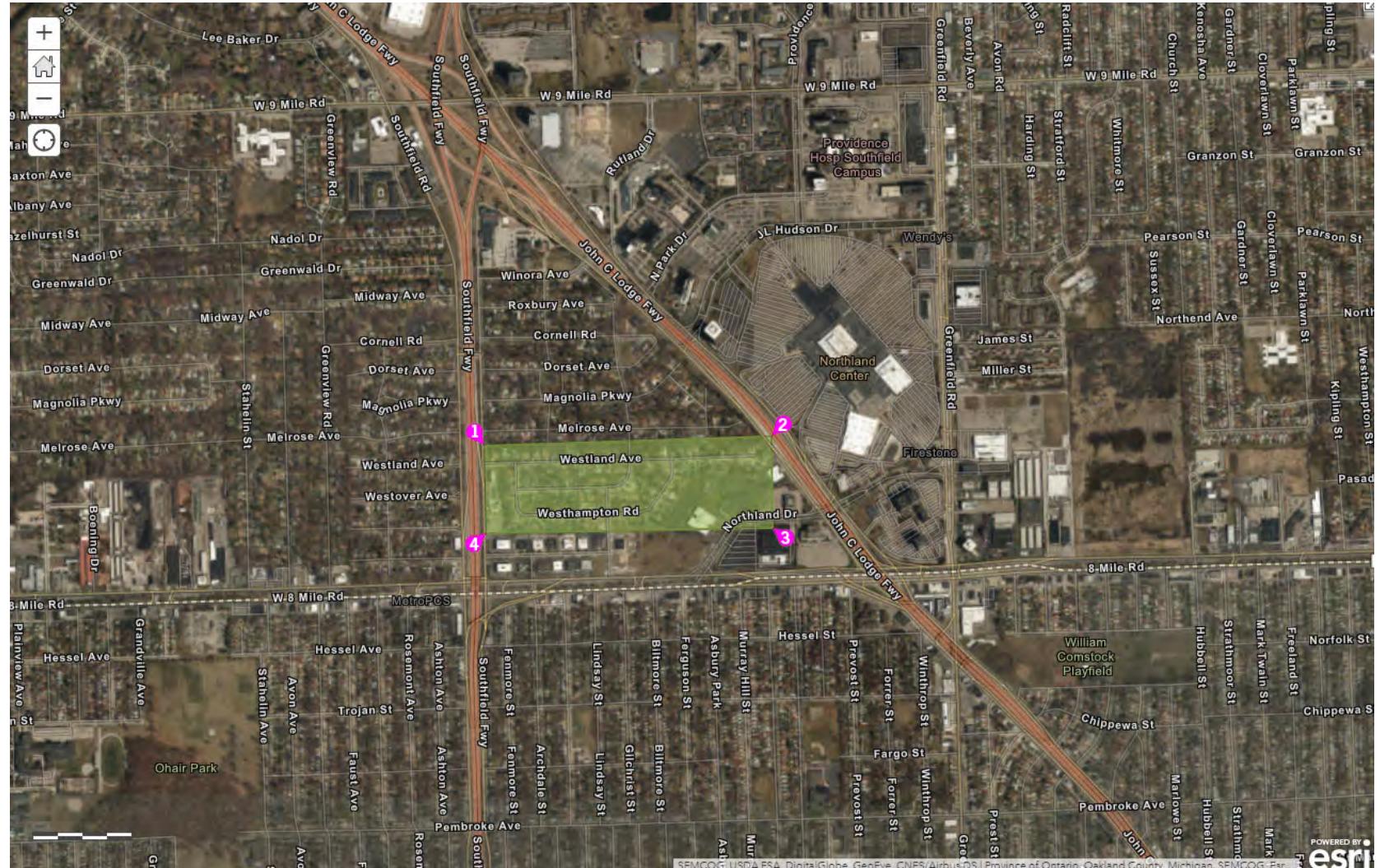
Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17140 Westhampton Drive, looking north
0064 of 0064

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Northland Gardens

Westland Avenue, Westhampton Road, Rutland Drive, and Westover Road, Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 1. Latitude: 42.448573
 2. Latitude: 42.448773
 3. Latitude: 42.448773
 4. Latitude: 42.448773

Longitude: -83.219362
 Longitude: -83.207578
 Longitude: -83.207578
 Longitude: -83.207578





Northland Gardens

Westland Avenue, Westhampton Road, Rutland Drive, and Westover Road, Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 1. Latitude: 42.448573
 2. Latitude: 42.448773
 3. Latitude: 42.448773
 4. Latitude: 42.448773

Longitude: -83.219362
 Longitude: -83.207578
 Longitude: -83.207578
 Longitude: -83.207578



Northland Gardens

Historic Resource Survey and National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

November 2018



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

Northland Gardens

Historic Resource Survey and National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

November 2018



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

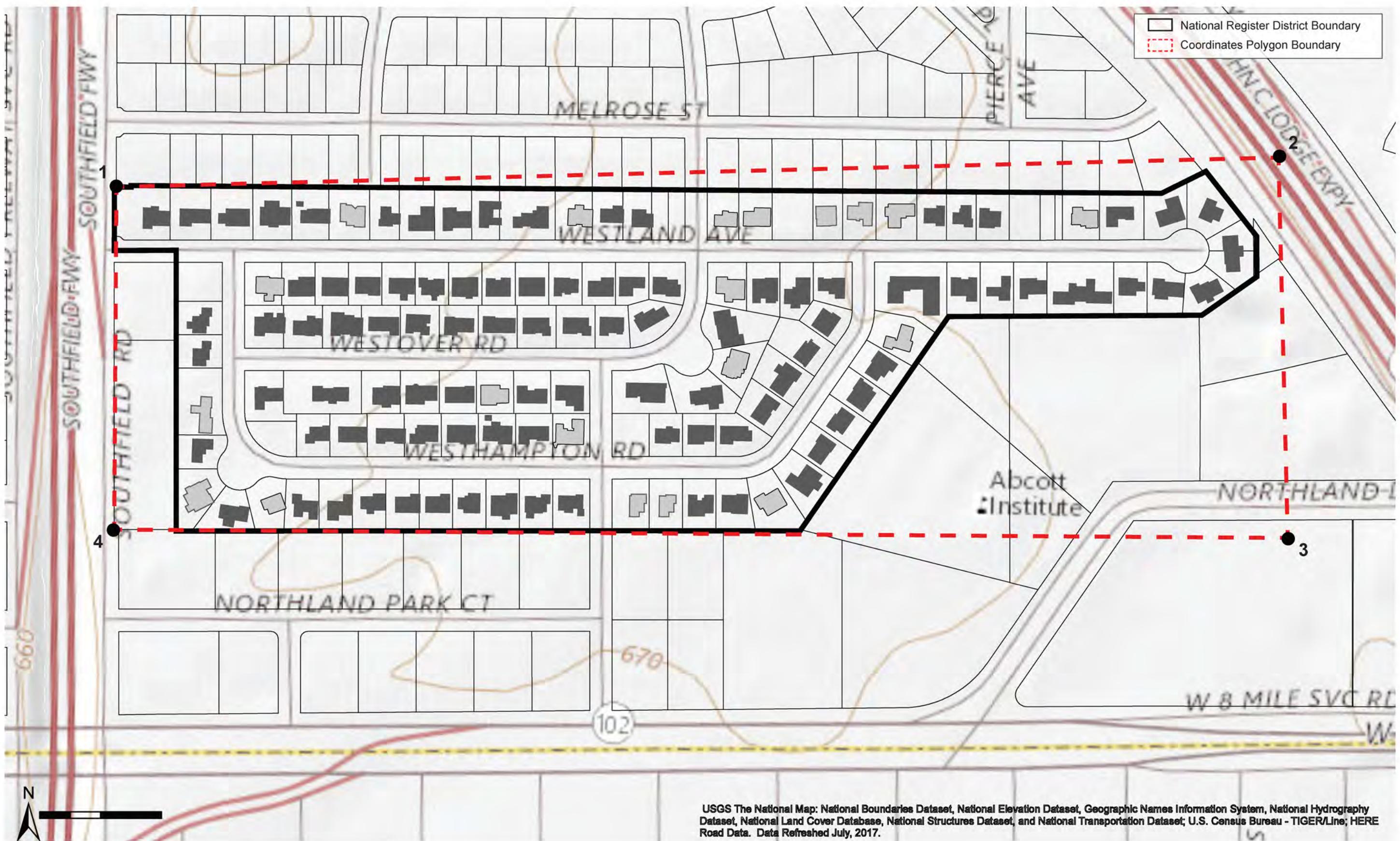
Northland Gardens

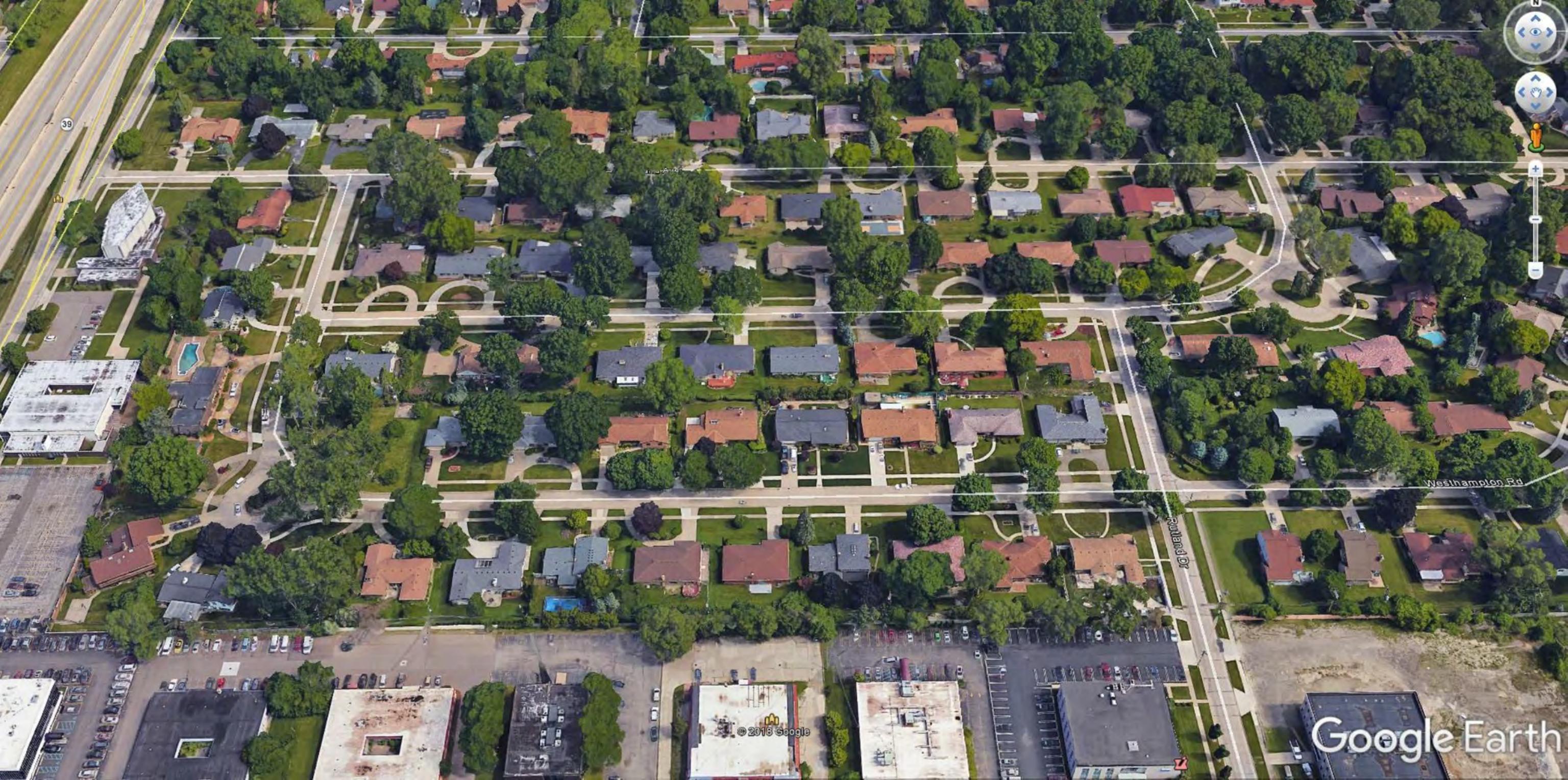
National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Northland Gardens USGS Map

Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

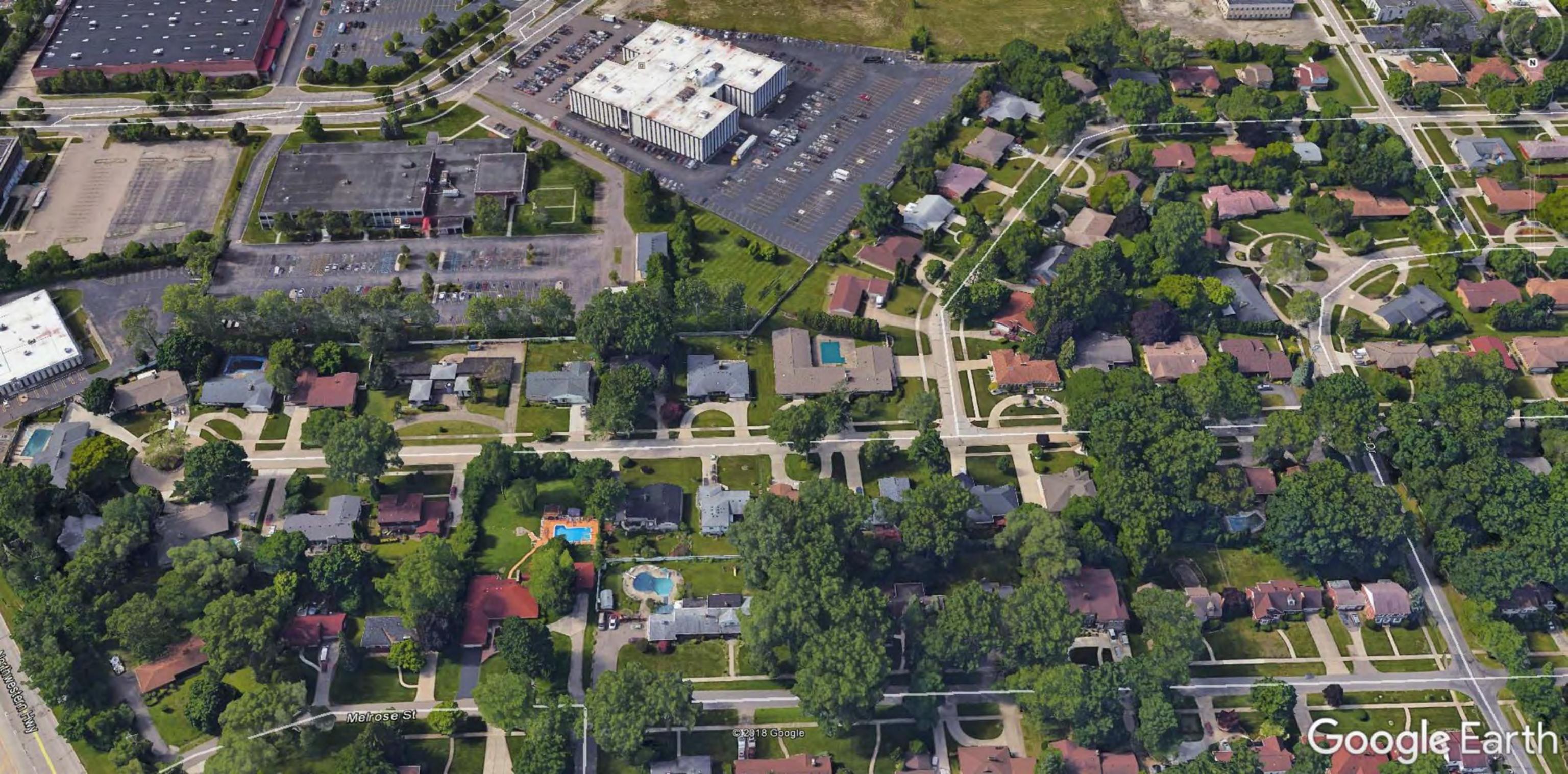
November 2018





Google Earth

© 2018 Google



Google Earth

©2018 Google













17610













17336





17310

17276

















17016











16349

16349







17448



17433

17432





17384

17384























17457



































National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Resubmission
Property Name:	Northland Gardens
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	MICHIGAN, Oakland

Date Received: 1/10/2020 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List: 2/24/2020

Reference number: RS100004660

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 1/24/2020 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Resubmission addressed return comments

This subdivision is a significant development in the suburbanization of Detroit, taking advantage of new trunk routes that led outward from the city core and being located near amenities such as the Northland Mall. A strong middle class African American neighborhood, it is also characterized by its layout with curved streets, and the collection of Mid Century housing, primarily substantial ranch types.

Recommendation/
Criteria

Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275

Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE L. BROOKS PATTERSON

Michael McCready, Director

Office: (248) 858-9099 mccreadym@oakgov.com

January 9, 2019

Mr. Todd A. Walsh
National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
735 East Michigan Avenue
PO Box 30044
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Walsh:

We have received Mr. Conway's letter dated December 13, 2018 regarding consideration of listing two districts to the National Register of Historic Places in Southfield.

As you know, the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. We are proud of Oakland County's historic neighborhoods and downtowns, they embody Oakland County's historical, architectural, and cultural significance. The history of Oakland County is rich and diverse, and we support the following districts being listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Northland Gardens, Southfield
Plumbrooke Estates, Southfield

The historic buildings, neighborhoods and places in Oakland County's villages, townships and cities distinguish each community and provide a unique sense of place and quality of life. The preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, places and neighborhoods contribute to the beauty, character, and economic vitality of Oakland County communities.

We understand Mr. Kenson J. Siver, Mayor of the City of Southfield, supports this endeavor. His work with Southfield's Mid-Century Modern Architecture Tours, and advocacy for the preservation of Southfield's Mid-Century architecture prompted the pursuit of these designations.

We understand that listing in the National Register provides recognition that a property is significant to the nation, the state, or the community. The above districts are significant to the history of Oakland County, and the historical growth thereof, and we support their listing in the National Register.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McCready".

Michael McCready
Director of Economic Development & Community Affairs

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Thursday, October 3, 2019

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Northland Gardens, Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a X New Submission _____ Resubmission _____ Additional Documentation _____ Removal.

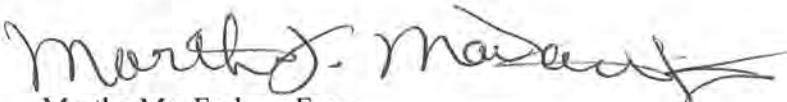
- 1 Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Disc 1)
2 Locational maps (Disc 1, incl. with nomination)
3 Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s) (Disc 1, incl. with nomination)
7 Pieces of correspondence (Disc 1)
64 Digital photographs (Disc 2)
Other _____

COMMENTS:

- ____ Please insure that this nomination is reviewed.
____ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67.
____ The enclosed owner objections do ____ do not ____ constitute a majority of property owners.
Other _____

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 373-1979 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,



Martha MacFarlane-Faes
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Northland Gardens

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Westland Avenue, Westhampton Road, Rutland Drive, and Westover Road between Southfield Road and the John C. Lodge Freeway

City or town: Southfield State Michigan County: Oakland

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Meredith

10/3/19

Signature of certifying official>Title:

Date

MT SHPS

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title : or Tribal Government	State or Federal agency/bureau
--	---------------------------------------

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Returned

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>110</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>111</u>	<u>7</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Returned

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Contemporary

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK

WOOD: Weatherboard

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Northland Gardens is a 47.8-acre residential neighborhood located north of Eight Mile Road between the John C. Lodge Freeway and Southfield Road in the City of Southfield, Michigan. Platted in 1956 by the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the neighborhood was built out between 1956 and 1976, with a few later additions. The subdivision contains 117 houses, the majority rendered in Mid-Century Modern Ranch style with Colonial Revival and Contemporary variations. The subdivision has a very high degree of integrity, with only a few more recent intrusions and virtually no significant alterations to the original houses.

Northland Gardens
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Oakland County, Michigan
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Narrative Description

SETTING

Northland Gardens is a neighborhood of the City of Southfield, and is located just north of Eight Mile Road, the boundary between Southfield and the City of Detroit. To the east, the John C. Lodge Freeway (M-10) cuts southeast to northwest, while to the west, the neighborhood is bordered by the Southfield Freeway (M-39) and Southfield Road (service drive). Built on formerly agricultural land, the neighborhood was designed as a residential suburb in the period just before Southfield incorporated as a city and at the beginning of the city's era of rapid expansion in the 1960s. To the east lies the former Northland Mall; to the west, opposite Southfield Freeway, lies an earlier residential neighborhood, Westhampton subdivision. To the north is another earlier subdivision, Magnolia, while to the south is a commercial development along Eight Mile Road. The commercial development wraps around to the west side of Northland Gardens but terminates at Westland Avenue.

Northland Gardens lies on an irregularly shaped parcel within a square approximately 900 feet north to south and 3,142 feet east to west. There are three entrances to the subdivision. Rutland Drive enters from the south through the commercial development at Eight Mile Road and from the north through the Magnolia neighborhood, while from Southfield Road, Westland Avenue enters from the west directly into the neighborhood. There are four named streets within the subdivision. Westland Avenue is the northernmost street, and it runs in a straight east-west line across the entire neighborhood. Westhampton Road departs Westland at a right angle heading south on the western side of the development and curves east at the southern edge of the neighborhood, crosses over Rutland Drive, and then gradually curves north again to end at Westland Avenue. Westover Road runs east-west paralleling Westland from Westhampton until it reaches Rutland Drive. Rutland Drive enters the neighborhood from the south and runs north-south until it reaches Westover Road, where it turns sharply east, then curves back to the north to meet Westland and cross into Magnolia neighborhood at the north end of the development. Cul-de-sacs are located at the southwest curve of Westhampton Road, the southeast curve of Rutland Drive, and at the eastern terminus of Westland Avenue. The cul-de-sacs are circular or oval with concrete curbs and centers planted with manicured lawn and trees.

The roads and cul-de-sacs are asphalt, and concrete sidewalks line the streets, with the exception of some areas on the north side of Westland Avenue. The houses in Northland Gardens have garages and private driveways. Many have semi-circular driveways. Frequently on corner lots, the garage and driveway face the side street and there is a semi-circular drive on the main entrance side. Sidewalks on individual lots vary from traditional walks leading from the public sidewalk to the front doors, to sidewalks leading from the driveway to the front door. The houses along Westhampton that back onto the church and commercial buildings along Southfield and Eight Mile Roads have six to eight-foot privacy fences.

Northland Gardens

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Oakland County, Michigan

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The vegetative character of Northland Gardens is mature and domestic in nature. Houses have primarily manicured lawns with varying levels of decorative plantings ranging from simple bushes to more elaborate tended flower beds and gardens. Most yards have one or more trees, deciduous and/or coniferous, both in the front and back yards, that provide both visual interest and shade. Signs with small planted beds mark the entrance to the subdivision at Westhampton and the south end of Rutland.

The individual lots are chiefly rectangular with wedge or irregularly shaped lots on curves and around the cul-de-sacs. Several houses sit on double lots. The houses are generally placed on the center of the lot, although as a rule the front yards are larger than the back. The footprints of the houses in Northland Gardens are typically irregular. While most have a basic rectangular or square shape, they often have intersecting blocks, offset garages, porches, and other protrusions. A good example of this is 17384 Westover Road, which has a series of asymmetrical projecting and receding sections, particularly on the front elevation, as well as different eave heights. There are also a number of L, U, or T-shaped houses.

The majority of the houses in Northland Gardens are in the Ranch style, a popular Mid-Century Modern style that was widely used for residential buildings from modest, mass-produced tract houses to sprawling high-style designer homes. The Northland Gardens houses fall somewhere in the middle range. Although the houses share many of the classic characteristics of the style, no two houses are alike, and they are relatively large and of very high quality in both their design and materials. All have attached garages.

Ranch houses are typically long, low one-story irregularly-shaped buildings with asymmetrical masonry facades and low-pitched roofs with wide eaves. Northland Gardens houses exhibit a variety of roof forms, although all are clad with asphalt shingles. They are typically side-gabled or hipped roofs, although cross-gables and cross hips are also common. Some mix both gables and hips; the house at 17172 Westhampton, for example, has a side gabled main roof with both front gabled and hipped sections at the front elevation. Many houses have graduated roofs: slightly raised roof sections, sometimes denoting a change in function (e.g. house to garage). This is clearly seen on houses such as 16349 and 17556 Westland. Gable returns are also evident on a number of houses, including 17153 Westhampton, 21128 Rutland, 16395 Westland, and even wrap-around returns on 17448 Westover. Another characteristic roof feature is a canted gable end, that can take the form of an angled gable or a graduated gable end, both projecting beyond the plane of the main gable. Examples are seen at 17366 Westhampton, 17050, 17501, and 17556 Westland, and 17319 Westover. Some houses, particularly those with Contemporary stylistic influences, have exposed rafter ends, for instance 17141 Westhampton and 17319 Westland. Wide chimneys are very common.

The main cladding material is brick masonry in a variety of colors ranging from black to deep red, multi-colored red, brown, yellow, beige, pink, white, etc. Occasionally a dark mortar is used on the lighter colored bricks for contrast. Decorative brick is often seen, frequently panels or entire walls of stacked bond or repetitive ornamental patterns, such as within the end wall of 21106 Rutland Drive, or under the windows of 17501 Westland. Contrasting sections of wall

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan

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cladding are also very common, particularly in entry or porch areas, at the bases of windows, and in the gable ends. Materials used here are typically wood siding in horizontal, vertical, or flat iterations; uncoursed ashlar stone; and fieldstone veneer panels. There is a cluster of the latter at 17432, 17448, and 17465 Westover. Stone or cast stone is used for window sills and sill and belt-courses.

Sheltered entries are a distinctive feature of the Ranch style, and many variations are seen in Northland Gardens, ranging from a narrow, recessed entry to partial and full-width porches. Common configurations include a recessed entry on the flat façade (17319 Westover, 17366 Westland, 17320 Westhampton), an entry set into the ell of the house and garage (21131 Rutland, 17141 Westhampton, 17005 Westland), an entry porch on the corner of the cross gable or hip roof (17319 Westland, 17350 Westover), and a partial width entry porch under the main roof form (17441 Westhampton, 17448 Westover). A particularly noteworthy example of the latter is at 21106 Rutland Drive, where the nearly full-length porch is nestled under the short side of an asymmetrical side gable and partially screened by a concrete screen wall. Other unusual variations include 17385 Westover, where the entry door is flush with the house, but sheltered under a half-round porch with a fan-shaped roof, and 17276 Westland, which has an entry under one corner of the gable end roof. A number of houses also have back porches recessed under the main eaves, such as 17319 Westland. Porches are usually low, with one or two steps, and supports are typically boxed or wrought-iron posts. Entry doors can be single or, less-commonly, double, and many have their original front doors.

Windows in Northland Gardens also exhibit great variety. While there have inevitably been replacements, a number of original windows remain, including aluminum and wood, double-hung, casement, and sliding units, and sliding glass doors. Windows are generally asymmetrical, often with two matching windows on the bedroom wings, a larger window at the dining or living room, and smaller windows at the kitchen and bathrooms. Ribbon windows are seen occasionally, such as at 21152 Rutland. It is common to see windows with their lintels just below the eave line; these are often set within sections of contrasting siding, such as wood, stone, or stacked brick. For example, the windows at 17280 and 17357 Westhampton are both surrounded by stacked bond brick, while 17263 and 17338 Westhampton have horizontal and vertical wood siding surrounds. Many entries have textured or bottle glass sidelights, such as 17345 and 17391 Westland and 17465 Westover.

Although mid-century styles are usually known for their lack of decoration, the houses in Northland Gardens do have some common decorative elements. Wrought iron is seen extensively throughout the neighborhood. The most typical use is on porch supports, for example at 21131 Rutland and 17448 Westhampton. Houses notable for their use of wrought-iron include 17209 Westhampton, where it is used for porch supports, the porch railing, and under the bedroom windows; 17366 Westhampton, which has wrought-iron screens atop partial-height walls flanking the front porch; and 16318 Westland, where its use includes screening over the windows, a porch support and railings, an elaborate window box, and a railing beside the front walk. Concrete screen walls, most notably at 21106 Rutland, are present, as are wing walls extending from the plane of the front elevation, for example 17171, 17366, and 17457.

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Westhampton, or at 16332 Westland, where the wing wall extends at an angle to screen the back yard. Finally, geometric patterns on front entry doors are also seen, for example at 17448 Westhampton and 17135 Westland, and, unusually, on garage doors (17337 Westover) and shutters (17299 Westland).

While most of the houses in Northland Gardens are clearly classified as Ranches, some have influences from other mid-century styles, chiefly Contemporary. Another largely California-influenced style, Contemporary houses share some of the common features of the Ranch style – long, low form, low-pitched roof, asymmetrical facades, and recessed entries. The major departure is the roof line; while Ranches more often use hipped or side gabled roofs, Contemporary houses have dramatic front-gabled roofs, often in swooping asymmetrical forms or butterfly and exaggerated slant roofs. The roof lines are further emphasized with exposed rafter ends, triangular or trapezoidal gable-end windows, and wide overhangs. While many Contemporary houses were rendered in brick or stone exteriors, builders could reduce costs by setting the windows within wood-framed cutouts, obviating the need for masonry headers and bases. The Contemporary was also more easily adapted to two-story or split-level forms than the Ranch, allowing for more square footage in the same footprint. Contemporary-influenced Ranches in Northland Gardens most often have a higher-pitched front or side-gabled roof section, often with a porch recessed under one side. Examples include 17228 and 17358 Westhampton, 17016 and 17231 Westland, and 17350 Westover. The house at 17457 Westhampton has a front-gabled garage with trapezoidal frieze windows, a common Contemporary characteristic. A few houses are more Contemporary than Ranch, as they have split levels or two stories with asymmetrical gabled roofs, dormers, and other Contemporary traits; these include 17140, 17227, 17519, 17561, and 17575 Westhampton, and 21140 Rutland.

Another stylistic influence in Northland Gardens is Colonial Revival. Mid-century Colonial Revival was typically much more restrained than earlier iterations of the style, with minimal architectural detailing, such as a second-story overhang, Georgian or Federal-inspired doorway, or shutters. Colonial-Revival-influenced houses in Northland Gardens range from one-story (17005 Westland, 17433 Westover, and 21128 Rutland) to split-levels (17365 and 17425 Westhampton, both with lower-level garages), to two-story (17160 Westland, 17475 Westhampton). 17530 Westland is notable for its oversized pedimented front entry portico.

Finally, a few houses stand out even among the varied building stock of Northland Gardens. All of the windows on 17320 Westhampton are wood-framed corner windows, a unique occurrence in the neighborhood. The house at 16370 Westland Avenue is not only two stories, but has a full-height truncated A-frame portico, more Alpine in character than Mid-Century Modern. In a neighborhood of generous-sized houses, a few are notable for their size. One of these is 17077 Westland, which sprawls over two lots, including a corner lot, wrapping around a large in-ground pool in back yard. This is perhaps what attracted the house's most famous owners, Motown stars Claudette and William "Smokey" Robinson. The other large house is truly the most outstanding in the neighborhood, 16367 Westland, designed in what can be described as "Prairie Ranch" style. Also low and sprawling, the one-story house has large expanses of windows, including fixed and corner windows with transoms above shed-roofed extensions, tall,

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narrow stained glass windows with geometric shapes, a raised monitor roof section with clerestory windows, and large engaged cylindrical towers, the front one covered in multiple-shaded blue tiles.

Seven houses within the neighborhood, built in 1987 or later, are non-contributing to the district. They are in a mixture of late twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century styles, and have either been altered or are not complementary to the character of the district. Their addresses are 17281, 17299, 17505 and 17533 Westhampton, and 17084, 17110, and 17510 Westland Avenue.

INVENTORY

The resources within Northland Gardens contribute to the significance of the historic district if they were present during the period of significance (1956 to 1980) and are associated with one or more of the specified areas of significance for which the district is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places: Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Planning and Development, and Social History. Non-contributing resources are those that were not constructed within the period of significance, are not associated with the identified areas of significance, or have been so altered from its original appearance that it no longer retain integrity and cannot convey its significance.

<u>Address</u>	<u>Date Constructed</u>	<u>Contributing Status</u>
21101 Rutland Drive	1958	Contributing
21106 Rutland Drive	1959	Contributing
21128 Rutland Drive	1958	Contributing
21131 Rutland Drive	1957	Contributing
21140 Rutland Drive	1972	Contributing
21152 Rutland Drive	1957	Contributing
17111 Westhampton Road	1976	Contributing
17118 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17121 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17140 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17141 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17153 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17154 Westhampton Road	1959	Contributing
17172 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17173 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17209 Westhampton Road	1963	Contributing
17227 Westhampton Road	1973	Contributing
17228 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17245 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17262 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17263 Westhampton Road	1964	Contributing
17280 Westhampton Road	1966	Contributing

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Name of Property	Year Built	Status
17281 Westhampton Road	1995	Non-contributing
17299 Westhampton Road	1995	Non-contributing
17320 Westhampton Road	1976	Contributing
17321 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17338 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17339 Westhampton Road	1957	Contributing
17357 Westhampton Road	1959	Contributing
17358 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17365 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17366 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17383 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17386 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17409 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17416 Westhampton Road	1964	Contributing
17425 Westhampton Road	1961	Contributing
17432 Westhampton Road	1962	Contributing
17441 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
17448 Westhampton Road	1963	Contributing
17457 Westhampton Road	1959	Contributing
17475 Westhampton Road	1975	Contributing
17489 Westhampton Road	1958	Contributing
17505 Westhampton Road	1957	Non-contributing
17519 Westhampton Road	1966	Contributing
17533 Westhampton Road	1959	Non-contributing
17561 Westhampton Road	1962	Contributing
17575 Westhampton Road	1960	Contributing
16302 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
16317 Westland Avenue	1963	Contributing
16318 Westland Avenue	1967	Contributing
16331 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
16332 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
16349 Westland Avenue	1960	Contributing
16352 Westland Avenue	1968	Contributing
16367 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
16370 Westland Avenue	1974	Contributing
16395 Westland Avenue	1965	Contributing
17005 Westland Avenue	1969	Contributing
17016 Westland Avenue	1969	Contributing
17020 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17025 Westland Avenue	1961	Contributing
17050 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17070 Westland Avenue	1980	Contributing
17077 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17084 Westland Avenue	2005	Non-contributing

Returned

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Name of Property

Address	Year Built	Status
17110 Westland Avenue	2004	Non-contributing
17115 Westland Avenue	1966	Contributing
17135 Westland Avenue	1960	Contributing
17157 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17160 Westland Avenue	1971	Contributing
17180 Westland Avenue	1976	Contributing
17181 Westland Avenue	1972	Contributing
17209 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17230 Westland Avenue	1966	Contributing
17231 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17252 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17255 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17275 Westland Avenue	1967	Contributing
17276 Westland Avenue	1973	Contributing
17299 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17310 Westland Avenue	1960	Contributing
17319 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17336 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17345 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17346 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17367 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17376 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17391 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17396 Westland Avenue	1966	Contributing
17501 Westland Avenue	1963	Contributing
17510 Westland Avenue	1993	Non-contributing
17521 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17530 Westland Avenue	1964	Contributing
17539 Westland Avenue	1958	Contributing
17556 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17561 Westland Avenue	1976	Contributing
17580 Westland Avenue	1959	Contributing
17610 Westland Avenue	1962	Contributing
17640 Westland Avenue	1957	Contributing
17318 Westover Road	1957	Contributing
17319 Westover Road	1959	Contributing
17336 Westover Road	1957	Contributing
17337 Westover Road	1957	Contributing
17350 Westover Road	1962	Contributing
17357 Westover Road	1975	Contributing
17364 Westover Road	1959	Contributing
17365 Westover Road	1962	Contributing
17384 Westover Road	1968	Contributing
17385 Westover Road	1961	Contributing

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17416 Westover Road	Contributing
17417 Westover Road	Contributing
17432 Westover Road	Contributing
17433 Westover Road	Contributing
17448 Westover Road	Contributing
17464 Westover Road	Contributing
17465 Westover Road	Contributing

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Northland Gardens has a very high degree of integrity. The majority of the houses in the subdivision were built in the late 1950s and 1960s and, aside from the installation of replacement doors and windows, there are virtually no significant alterations to the original houses, except for 17533 Westhampton Road. The few later additions to the subdivision are compatible with the architectural character and setting of the Mid-Century Modern neighborhood, with the exception of several Millennium Mansions built in the 2000s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Social History

Period of Significance

1956-1980

Significant Dates

1956

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Levine, Seymour, Architect

Horner, Fred J., Architect

Nemers and Lipshaw, Builders

Spoon Builders

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Northland Gardens is significant under National Register Criterion A as an important example of a residential neighborhood built during the City of Southfield's rapid expansion following its establishment as an incorporated municipality. It is also significant under National Register Criterion C as a highly intact and cohesive example of a Mid-Century Modern residential neighborhood within a city notable for its concentration and quality of mid-century design. Platted in 1956 by the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the real estate arm of the J. L. Hudson Company, Northland Gardens was the residential component of a larger development that included Northland Center, one of the nation's earliest shopping malls, as well as commercial buildings along Eight Mile Road south of the neighborhood. The subdivision was substantially built out by the late 1960s, although construction continued slowly in the 1970s. The houses, designed mostly in the Mid-Century Modern Ranch style with some other stylistic influences, were of high quality both in terms of design and materials, and have remained remarkably intact since the period of construction. Northland Gardens was one of Southfield's early Mid-Century Modern subdivisions. The period of significance extends from 1956, when the subdivision was platted and construction began, to 1980, when the last house conforming to the mid-Century aesthetic of the neighborhood was completed. Because of the outstanding design quality of the houses in the neighborhood, the cohesiveness of the design character, and the relative lack of intrusive non-contributing elements and alterations, Northland Gardens meets the criteria for exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G as the period of significance extends to less than 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL HISTORY

Northland Gardens meets the National Register Criteria for listing under National Register Criterion A, at the local level, as an important example of a residential neighborhood built during the City of Southfield's rapid expansion following its establishment as an incorporated municipality. The neighborhood was within the boundaries of a planned residential district, Southfield Park, in the 1920s, which was never executed. In the late 1940s, the site of Northland Gardens was part of a large site acquired by the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the real-estate arm of the J. L. Hudson Company, for Northland Center, one of metropolitan Detroit's (and the nation's) first regional shopping centers. Following the opening of Northland Center in 1954, Hudson-Webber platted Northland Gardens in 1956 to encourage residential development and bolster the economic viability of its investment in Southfield. In the early 1970s, Northland

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Gardens became a popular neighborhood for middle- and upper-middle-class African Americans, who began to supplant the many original Jewish owners in the subdivision. Among the new homeowners in Northland Gardens during this period were Motown stars including Claudette and William “Smokey” Robinson and Ronald White of the Miracles, Bobby Smith of the Spinners, Otis Williams of the Temptations, and Eddie Holland, Jr, of the renowned songwriting team of Holland–Dozier–Holland.¹ The neighborhood illustrates the history of ethnic and racial integration in the city of Southfield.

Early Development of Southfield and Northland Gardens Location

Northland Gardens is located on a portion of the land originally designated as the southwest quarter of Section 36 of Southfield Township, in Oakland County. An 1817 survey of the section noted that the character of the land was level and bushy, with a mixture of oak, ash, beech, maple, and sassafras trees. On an 1822 survey map, Section 36 was within a large area on the eastern side of the township labeled timberland. The township is within the watershed of the Rouge River, and a number of tributaries are shown on some of these early maps, although no creeks are shown in the area of Section 36.²

When the first EuroAmerican settlers arrived in the county in the early 1800s, the land was already home to several American Indian villages of Neshnabek (Potawatomi). While much of the Neshnabek land in southeast Michigan had been taken by the United States government in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit, the Neshnabek retained several areas of land in Oakland County. These included two villages in Southfield Township, the Seganchewan village in sections 8 and 9 and Tonquish’s village in sections 30 and 31, both in the western part of the township. A portion of the Shiawassee Trail, an American Indian road running from just west of Detroit north and west to the Saginaw River, ran through the southwest corner of the township roughly along what is now Shiawassee Street. The 1822 Hubbard map also shows a trail running from southeast to northwest just west of Section 36, but this does not appear on other maps. Both of these land reservations were taken by the United States government in the 1827 Treaty of St. Joseph, in which this land and other tracts were exchanged for consolidated land in Kalamazoo and Saint Joseph counties.

Oakland County was established as a political entity in 1819. The county was originally divided into two large townships, with the future Southfield Township lying in the southern half, then called Bloomfield Township. In 1830, Bloomfield Township was subdivided and Southfield Township was established. On January 31, 1834, John Thomas of Oakland County purchased the south half of the southwest quarter of Section 36, eighty acres, from the United States

¹ Lamont Dozier, Brian Holland, and Eddie Holland Jr were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1988 for their significant accomplishments as songwriters, first associated with the Motown label (1958 to 1968), and later independently. The trio, according to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, “wrote and produced many of the songs that are most closely identified with Motown,” including six consecutive Number One singles.

² Joseph Wampler, “Description of the Soil on the Interior Sectional Lines: Township 1 North, Range 10 East,” 1817; Map by B. Hubbard, 1822. Both copies found in “Southfield – Maps” compilation at Southfield Public Library.

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government.³ While most early EuroAmericans settled on the north and west sides of the township, where the soil was better than the flat and marshy land of the eastern and southern sections, it is possible that Thomas farmed this land, as the 1840 census lists John Thomas as head of household in Southfield Township, engaged in agriculture, with one male 60-70 and one female 60-70 living in the household.⁴

At some point between 1840 and 1864, Thomas' eighty acres were acquired by Sylvester Smith. Born around 1800 in Ireland, Smith was in Oakland County by 1835, where he married Ann Keggney. He was listed as a cooper in the 1850 census, but in subsequent censuses was a farmer. By 1880, the year Smith died, the farm, which had grown to 250 acres (the remainder of the farm was in Redford Township, across the county line in Wayne County), was worth \$10,000. Smith grew wheat, corn, and oats and kept horses, cows, oxen, sheep, and pigs.⁵ Following Smith's death, the farm was inherited by his youngest son, Thomas Louis Smith, who converted the farm to a dairy operation in the early 1900s. While an 1872 plat map showed the farmstead buildings at the southwest corner of the property, at the intersection of Eight Mile Road and Southfield, subsequent plat maps depict the farmstead farther east along Eight Mile Road, perhaps to provide closer access to Smith's farm land across the road. The farmstead was still visible on aerial photographs in 1949 and 1952, including a house near the road, a large barn, and several small outbuildings and perhaps a chicken coop. There may also have been a small fruit orchard west of the house. Thomas Smith and his wife Mary had eight children, five of whom survived him, but it does not appear that any of the children lived or worked on the farm after Thomas Smith's death in 1923. The land continued to appear on plat maps into the late 1940s as the "Thomas Smith Est(ate)," so the surviving children may have leased the 80 acres in Southfield Township as a farm, or perhaps kept it as an investment as it was becoming clear even in the early 1920s that Southfield Township was ripe for suburban development.

Beginnings of Suburban Development in Southfield

The first half of the twentieth century saw the rise of the first automobile-oriented suburbs. Across the United States, the greater affordability of privately-owned automobiles in this period permitted increasing numbers of middle-class workers to move to residential areas in formerly rural areas bordering large urban centers, where they could have larger yards and more privacy than typically available in the cities. The metropolitan Detroit area, home to the country's major automobile manufacturers, would seem a natural place to see this trend. However, while the population of the city of Detroit was indeed expanding quickly in the 1910s and 1920s, in general Detroit felt less development pressure than other urban areas like those on the east coast. Although density was increasing since the city stopped annexing land after 1926, Detroit still covered a relatively large area, with plenty of vacant land left to build the single-family homes that Detroiters preferred. Still, Detroit saw the beginnings of suburbanization in the early twentieth century, particularly in the southern areas of Oakland County, which bordered

³ List of original purchasers of land from the government held at Southfield Public Library.

⁴ United States Census, Population Schedule, 1840, Southfield Township, Oakland County, MI. Kenson Siver, *Southfield: The History of Our City in its 50th Year* (Southfield, MI: Johnson Lithograph, Inc, 2008), 22.

⁵ United States Census, Agricultural Schedules for 1860, 1870, and 1880.

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Detroit's northern boundary. This was bolstered by the anticipated development of eight "superhighways" in the Detroit metropolitan area, with 204-foot rights-of-way. Four of these superhighways, Northwestern Highway (now M-10, the Lodge Freeway), Southfield Road (now M-39, the Southfield Freeway, until it reverts to Southfield Road north of its intersection with M-10), Telegraph Road (US-24) and Eight Mile Road (M-102) were planned to run very close to the future site of Northland Gardens.

With these projected major access roads, areas like Southfield became attractive for suburban development in the mid to late 1920s. In 1925 eighteen local developers joined to form the Southfield Park Improvement Association (SPIA). The SPIA envisioned a model residential district running from approximately 7 ½ Mile (modern-day Pembroke) to 14 Mile Road and 1 ½ miles to either side of Southfield Road, which had already been paved from Michigan Avenue to Birmingham (although not yet at its full highway width). The SPIA claimed that the twenty-one-square-mile Southfield Park development area was the largest of its kind in the country and represented the most advanced ideas in city planning. In addition to taking advantage of the new superhighways being developed in the area, the SPIA's plans included infrastructure improvements such as water, lighting, gas, and electricity, an investment that would be offset by the expected development value of the land, which was estimated at \$100 million. Other amenities planned included business, social and recreational areas to support the development of "high class homes" within reach of those with a moderate income who wanted a country-like setting that was still easily accessible from Detroit.⁶ In the late 1920s the SPIA laid water mains along the Southfield Road corridor, extended telephone service to the southern part of the district, and was planning to lay sewers when the Depression halted improvements. Residential construction was severely curtailed in the 1930s and early 1940s, first because of the Depression, and then due to labor and material shortages during World War II. There was virtually no mention of Southfield Park or the Improvement Association after 1930, although the name was revived briefly in the 1950s for a proposed incorporated city.

In 1929, Northwestern Highway was officially dedicated at its intersection with Greenfield Road, just south of Eight Mile Road. The ceremony marked the completion of paving on the east side of the highway from Wyoming and Fenkel to Ten Mile Road, and the press accompanying the event noted its importance to the future development of Southfield Park.⁷ A 1930 map showed most of the area around the Smith Estate had already been platted into subdivisions, including the Magnolia Subdivision, just to the north. Platted in 1926, Magnolia was the first planned subdivision in Southfield Township, and the developers built an elementary school, Magnolia School, to attract families to the development. Portions of the original Magnolia plat were later incorporated into the present-day Northland Gardens.⁸

Post-World War II Suburbanization and City Planning in Southfield

⁶ Southfield is Land of Ideal Homesites," *Detroit Free Press*, April 18, 1926, 34.

⁷ "Nor'western Highway Unit Open to Traffic," *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1929, 6-3. Northwestern Highway was later renamed the James Couzens Highway before it was converted to the Lodge Freeway.

⁸ Subdivision Plat for Magnolia, 1926, and Northland Gardens, 1956.

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Following the end of World War II, the Detroit area experienced another period of economic and population growth. Suburbanization, which had begun in the 1920s, accelerated in the late 1940s and continued into the 1950s and 1960s, as the end of the war unleashed over a decade of pent-up demand for housing. A number of factors were involved in the greater interest in the suburbs. Some were simply demographic – this was the time of the baby boom, when the population was rising across the country. Detroit was no exception; its population continued to grow until it reached its peak in 1950, but the city was still contained within its 1926 borders. While vacant land remained available in the city, it was mostly concentrated at the outer edges, not far from the suburbs. As well, many of the incentives for suburbanization present in the 1920s remained relevant in the post-World War II era, such as the affordability and range of the automobile, supported by the expansion and improvement of surface roads and highways, and the availability of cheap, formerly agricultural land where developers could build larger houses on more widely spaced lots. With bigger salaries, more and faster automobiles, and better roads, white middle-class Americans could afford to move out of the cities, with their older housing stock, and into the newly-constructed subdivisions beyond the city.

Suburbanization in the metropolitan Detroit area in the post-war period was largely a white phenomenon, and in many cases whites were not just moving to the suburbs, but away from the minority populations of the city. The United States Supreme Court's 1948 decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer* outlawed racially-based restrictive covenants in property deeds (one of the companion cases in the decision, *McGhee v. Sipes*, was a Detroit case). This triggered a decades-long migration pattern of "white flight" where the entrance of African American families into or even near a white city neighborhood prompted a wave of departures by white homeowners. While racial covenants were also unenforceable in suburban neighborhoods, defacto methods of segregation made it much more difficult for African Americans to move into the suburbs. Strong societal pressure discouraged white developers and property owners from selling to African Americans, and the practice of redlining virtually prevented African Americans from obtaining the low-cost mortgages available to whites.

Southfield Township, a first ring suburb located just north of the Detroit border, began seeing the effects of the suburban housing boom almost immediately after the end of World War II. The township issued only 147 building permits, worth just over \$300,000, in 1944. The following year, those figures nearly tripled with 405 permits, worth over \$1 million, issued. It was not a short term trend; permits continued to increase nearly every year, rising to 1,276, with a value of over \$13.5 million, in 1950.⁹

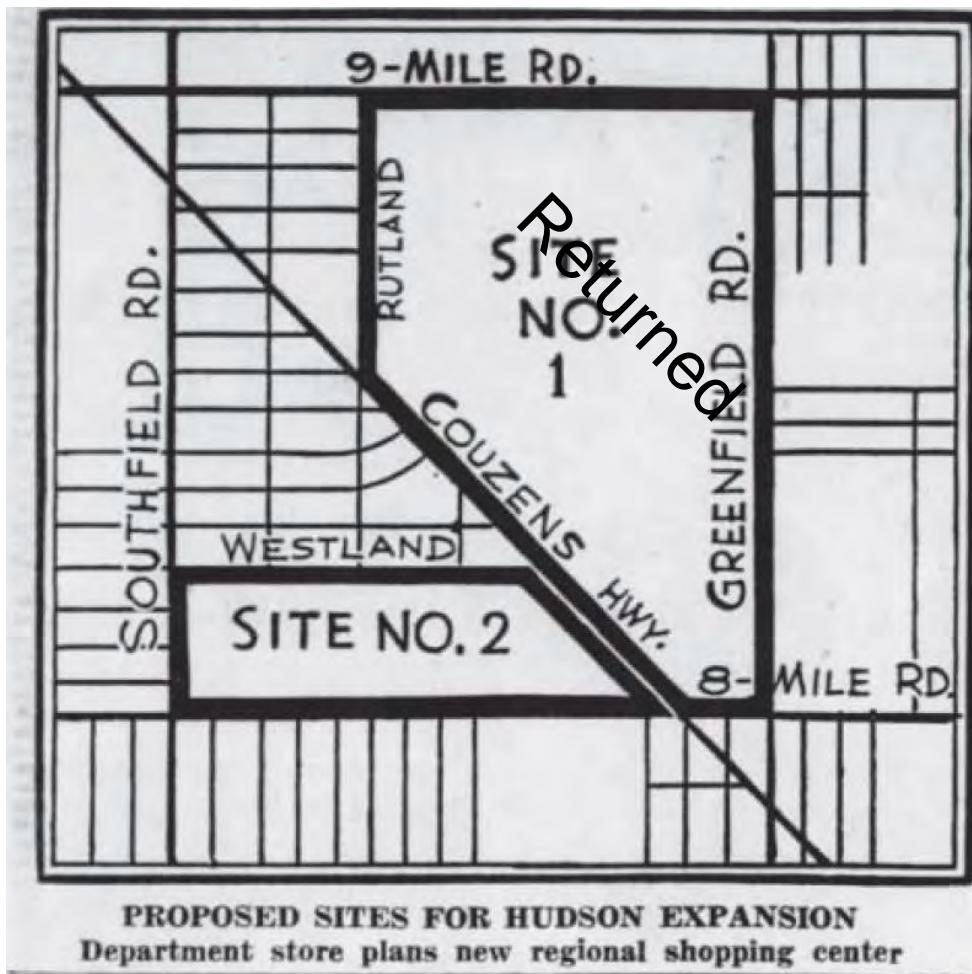
That same year, the J. L. Hudson Company announced plans to build a regional shopping center in Section 36, the southeastern corner of Southfield Township. It was one of two regional shopping centers planned by the company in 1950. Hudson cited surveys carried out by the company that showed around three-quarters of a million people lived within a twenty-minute drive of the planned regional sites. Many residents of the newly developing suburbs preferred to shop locally for staples such as children's clothing and shoes, so Hudson's recognized an

⁹ Siver, *Southfield*, 60.

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opportunity not being filled by its flagship downtown store.¹⁰ The first shopping center, located at Eight Mile and Kelly Roads in what was then Gratiot Township (Macomb County) on the northeast border of Detroit, was announced in the spring of 1950, to be named Eastland Center. The following October, Hudson's publicized plans for a second shopping center in Section 36 of Southfield Township, to be called Northland Center.¹¹ At the time of the announcement, the company had purchased two parcels in Section 36. The first was a wedge-shaped lot between Eight and Nine Mile Roads, Couzens (Northwestern) Highway, and Greenfield Road, about 309 acres. A second area was one hundred acres fronting on Eight Mile Road between Couzens and Southfield Road. The majority of the latter site was the former Thomas Smith farm, plus an additional twenty-acre parcel between the Smith farm and Couzens. Hudson's president Oscar Webber reported at the time that the company planned to use the entire area for the shopping center, including the development of a "beautiful, well planned residential section."¹²



Map of proposed shopping center parcels, from *Detroit Free Press*, October 8, 1950, 14A.

¹⁰ "J. L. Hudson Plans Shopping Center," *Lansing State Journal*, June 4, 1950, 6.

¹¹ Although it was announced first, Eastland was not completed until after Northland Center.

¹² "Hudson's Announces Plans for Southfield Shopping Center," *Four Corners Press*, October 12, 1950.

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While the layout of the planned center was not released at that time, it seems likely that the larger parcel would be reserved for the shopping center, which would include generous parking facilities, while the smaller parcel was ideal for a residential neighborhood adjoining the Magnolia subdivision as well as commercial development along Eight Mile Road. Planning for the shopping center continued in 1951 and early 1952, with groundbreaking taking place in May 1952. A local Southfield newspaper article on the groundbreaking included an aerial photograph, taken from the west, with the model of the store superimposed to show the scale. The article noted that “the area on the right, where water has collected, will be used to ‘pond’ storm water running off the huge, paved parking area, until sewers are free enough to take it.”¹³ This area was the future site of Northland Gardens. Another aerial photograph, dated April 1952, shows this area much as it had been in 1949. The Smith farmstead was still in evidence, as were other landscape features related to the farm (circular tracks and farm trails). The western third of the property was largely wooded, with a stream or drainage channel extending into the area.

Northland Center opened to the public on March 22, 1954. The new development brought enormous visibility to Southfield, which was still an unincorporated township. Southfield Township officials recognized that the township was facing a period of potentially high growth and that careful planning was needed to manage it. In the same month that J. L. Hudson’s broke ground for Northland, May 1952, the township completed a population study. At the time, the township was still overwhelmingly rural, with most of its land either vacant or still in agricultural use, and the population was still quite low, at only 18,500 people. The study acknowledged that the 1920s had seen some building, but that due to large tracts of land still available in the city, development pressures on Southfield Township had remained low. The gradual decline of available land in Detroit, combined with low taxes and a more relaxed building code in the township, resulted in higher rates of growth in the 1930s, despite the Depression, but building in the township was greatly restricted during the 1940s by World War II and the accompanying material and labor shortages.¹⁴

The population study concurred that Southfield Township was facing a period of rapid and unprecedented growth over the next ten years due to the township’s proximity to Detroit and the rates of growth associated with suburbanization. It estimated the 1960 population at 45,000, with the ideal fully-built up population pegged at 96,000 (the actual population in 1960 was 31,531; Southfield’s peak population was 78,322 in 2000, dipping slightly to 73,100 (estimated) in 2016), while unplanned, unchecked growth could result in as many as 300,000 people, much of it from in-migration, especially higher income households, rather than “natural” growth.¹⁵

Density was a significant concern. The study noted that “one of the great attractions of Southfield Township is the amenity of low density living, ‘a home in the country,’ ” but that low density residential development would have to be balanced against the ability to provide water,

¹³ “Ground Broken for Hudson’s Northland Shopping Center,” *Four Corners Press*, May 8, 1952.

¹⁴ Geer Associates, “Population Growth: A Master Plan Study,” Prepared for Southfield Township Planning Commission, May 1952. Copy held in folder “Master Plans” at the Southfield Public Library.

¹⁵ Geer Associates, “Population Growth: A Master Plan Study.”

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sewer, and other services. The study recommended concentrating denser residential neighborhoods in the southern part of the township where water and sewer were more available and some areas were already being developed with fifty-foot lots. Northern areas of the township were expected to stay on private wells and sewer longer, with concurrent lower density development. Planning for community facilities such as schools should also be considered while land values were relatively low; house values in the township were by now above the metro Detroit average, and land values were likely to increase as site choices decreased.¹⁶

Given the predicted development, the township also began to look seriously at incorporation, partly for self-preservation. In the early 1950s, several areas within the township attempted to incorporate, with varying degrees of success, and adjacent communities were eyeing parts of the township for annexation into their own cities. The new shopping center at Northland was looking like a particularly ripe economic plum, with the winning municipality due to collect an anticipated \$250,000 in annual taxes. In late 1951 there was an unsuccessful referendum to incorporate the southeastern corner of the township as “Southfield Park,” a callback to the unrealized development plan of the 1920s. This city would have included the J. L. Hudson Company’s planned residential community, Northland Gardens, but not the existing Magnolia neighborhood, whose residents opposed the plan.¹⁷

In May 1953 the Lathrup Townsite in the ~~northern~~ part of the township incorporated as Lathrup Village. The following September, the township’s municipal neighbor to the east, Oak Park, attempted unsuccessfully to annex the area around Northland, with area residents voting overwhelmingly against the proposal. The next day, two hundred fifty Southfield Township electors voted in favor of incorporating as a city the six square miles at the southern end of the township bounded by Greenfield, Inkster, Eight, and Nine Mile Roads, although formal incorporation did not take place.¹⁸ In November 1953 Franklin, in the northwestern part of the township, successfully incorporated under Michigan’s Home Rule Village law.

Not surprisingly, Southfield Township officials feared the township would be split into too many small pieces. In addition to piecemeal incorporation and annexation threats, the township was known as a “community without a main street” because it lacked a traditional downtown, although many considered that Northland Center could serve as the business hub of an incorporated city.¹⁹ However, it took another five years before the township officially became a city. In June 1955 the unincorporated township areas (minus Lathrup Village, Franklin, and Bingham Farms, which incorporated as a village in October of that year), voted for city status, but formal incorporation was delayed due to disagreements over the proposed city charter. A second successful vote in September 1957 approved the creation of Southfield as a city, but again minus a large chunk of land for the Village of Westwood north of Lathrup Village.

¹⁶ Geer Associates, “Population Growth: A Master Plan Study,” Prepared for Southfield Township Planning Commission, May 1952. Copy held in folder “Master Plans” at the Southfield Public Library.

¹⁷ Siver, *Southfield*, 67; “Oak Park Fails to Win Northland,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 1953, 11.

¹⁸ “Oak Park Fails to Win Northland,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 1953, 11; “City Favored in Southfield Center Area,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 17, 1953, 2.

¹⁹ “Southfield Eyes Status of City,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 1953, 9B.

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(renamed Beverly Hills in 1959).²⁰ Finally, Southfield formally incorporated in April 1958, with an approved city charter and elected city officials.

While the various incorporation and annexation battles were taking place in the 1950s, development continued within the township. As Northland Center opened in 1954, business and residential development picked up in the southern end of the township. The Wayne County Road Commission initiated plans to turn Southfield Road into an expressway to handle the increased traffic heading to Northland and to a new Ford Motor Company office and business development at the southern end of the township.²¹ Homes in the township were featured in shelter magazines, including one decorated and furnished by the J. L. Hudson Company appearing on the cover of *Better Homes and Gardens*' September 1953 issue, and another on Eleven Mile between Southfield and Greenfield that was a "Builders Show Ideal Home" in 1953. The city of Southfield also opened a new high school in 1953, which was attributed to home builders "discovering" Southfield.²²

With construction of Northland Center completed, and runoff storm water now directed into sewers rather than the old Thomas Smith farm, the implementation of the associated residential and commercial area along Eight Mile Road could begin. In May 1956 the Hudson-Webber Realty Company, the real estate arm of the J. L. Hudson company, submitted the plat for "Northland Gardens." It was signed by Oscar Webber, president, and Walter A. Crow, secretary. Webber was the nephew of Hudson founder Joseph L. Hudson. Hudson, who never married, died in 1912 and left the company to the four sons of his sister, Mary Webber. Oscar, the youngest of the Webber brothers, became the general manager of the firm. In 1948 he was named president, and became chairman of the board from 1961 until his death in 1967.²³ The Hudson-Webber Realty Company, originally known as Hudson-Webber Land, was a subsidiary of the J. L. Hudson Company, formed in 1915 to acquire and manage the company's real estate holdings. This went beyond properties related to the company's department store; as early as the 1920s, Hudson-Webber was purchasing and developing land in Detroit and surrounding areas for various commercial and residential purposes, such as a subdivision in Hamtramck and a sales and service building along Woodward Avenue. Hudson-Webber also held property for members of the Webber family; in 1919, Joseph Webber transferred his house at 405 East Ferry Avenue to the Hudson-Webber Land Company, who held it until it was sold in 1922.²⁴

The Northland Gardens subdivision was set within an irregularly shaped plot approximately 760 feet from north to south, by 3,142 feet from east to west. Toward the eastern end of the

²⁰ Siver, *Southfield*, 71-73.

²¹ Warren Stromberg, "Southfield to Become Expressway," *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1953, 1. Both Northwestern Highway (M-10) and Southfield Highway (M-39) completed their conversions to freeways in the early 1960s.

²² "Southfield Eyes Status of City," *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 1953, 9B.

²³ "Hudson's Oscar Webber Dies at 78," *Detroit Free Press*, May 24, 1967, 1-2.

²⁴ "New Corporations," *Detroit Free Press*, September 5, 1915, 8; "Building Year is \$170,000,000," *Detroit Free Press*, October 4, 1925, 72; *Annual Report of the Auditor General of the State of Michigan for the Year Ending June 30, 1917* (Lansing, MI: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford, Co., 1917), 378; Francis S. delRosario, "East Ferry Avenue Historic District," (Historic American Building Survey), Detroit, Michigan, 1984, 5.

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development, the south line of the plat turned diagonally to the northeast for about seven hundred feet before straightening back out to an east-west line. The east end of the plat had five irregularly-shaped lots around a cul-de-sac. Two of those lots, on the north side of Westland Avenue, originally encompassed six lots of the previously platted Magnolia subdivision that were replatted for Northland Gardens. The remainder of the lots north of Westland Avenue remained part of the Magnolia subdivision plat.

Following the opening of a model home at Northland Gardens in September 1956, construction began on a number of homes in the development. By the following spring the roads were laid out and about a dozen homes were completed or under construction, as seen on an aerial photograph dated May 1957, although the developers had left the existing trees on the remainder of the site; some may have been saved during the construction of individual houses.

Aerial photographs show that by 1967 the neighborhood was largely complete. South of Westland Avenue, there were only about fifteen lots open, while the north side of Westland, especially east of Rutland Drive, was largely vacant. The rapid development of the neighborhood was a testament not only to the high quality of the homes in Northland Gardens, but also to the increasing popularity of Southfield as a city. The opening of Northland Center had been a seminal event for the city and indeed the entire Detroit metropolitan region, but its placement in Southfield was no accident. It was located just across the boundary of northwest Detroit, one of the last areas of the city to fill in, and where many middle-income families were settling, a ready-made client base. The convergence of multiple highways in this corner of the township facilitated access from all directions. Following the opening of Northland Center and Northland Gardens, the city's incorporation and early planning paid off as more businesses began relocating to the city and housing density increased.

The neighborhood's first residents were overwhelmingly white, but that began to change not long after the subdivision was completed. Southfield was along the route of a characteristic Detroit migration pattern stretching back to the early twentieth century and related to the complex levels of racial and ethnic discrimination present in the region's history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jewish people arriving in Detroit initially settled in the north-south corridor along Hastings Street, which would eventually become Paradise Valley and Black Bottom. Subject to some of the same racial covenants as African Americans, Jewish people were likewise restricted in their ability to move anywhere in the city. However, as African Americans began arriving in greater numbers in the 1910s and 1920s and were segregated into Black Bottom, their Jewish neighbors began moving north and west, primarily into the area around 12th, Linwood, and Dexter Streets from Grand Boulevard up to Davison, as well as the apartment district of Palmer Park. By the beginning of World War II, the Jewish population had continued to move north and west, populating far northwest Detroit. Behind them came a population of middle-class African Americans, who followed the same migration pattern, developing some of the first integrated neighborhoods in the city in the Russell Woods/Nardin Park area. This was possible because there were usually no restrictive covenants and the Jewish owners of properties were comfortable selling to African Americans. This pattern repeated itself in the post-World War II period, when the Jewish community continued to move north and west.

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into the suburbs of Southfield, Oak Park, Farmington, and West Bloomfield. Indeed, many of the original owners of properties in the new subdivisions in southern Southfield like Plumbrooke and Northland Gardens could be identified as Jewish or had typically Jewish surnames. By the early 1970s, black middle-class professionals were likewise moving in larger numbers into the suburbs just over the city line.

In the case of Southfield, the integration of neighborhoods like Northland Gardens, Plumbrooke, and Magnolia, just north of Eight Mile Road, appeared relatively quietly at first; in fact, many residents, both black and white, were attracted to the racially diverse neighborhoods. A 1975 *Detroit Free Press* article about Detroit-based African American drug dealers buying homes in Southfield noted that the city was “one of the few upper class suburbs which is integrated” and quoted a Southfield policeman as saying that “...we’ve had black professionals living here since the mid-60s without any trouble.”²⁵ Among the early African American residents of Northland Gardens, geographically the first suburb north of the Detroit boundary, were several famous Motown stars, particularly in the early 1970s, including Smokey and Claudette Robinson of the Miracles, who owned 17077 Westland from 1970 to 1973, Ronald and Earlyn White, also of the Miracles, who owned 17358 Westhampton from 1971 to 1977, Bobby Smith of the Spinners, who owned 17561 Westhampton from 1979 to 1985, Otis Williams of the Temptations, who owned 17556 Westland from 1969 to 1974, and Eddie Holland, Jr. a singer and lyricist who penned songs for many well-known Motown stars, who owned 17432 Westover from 1971 to 1975.

However, by the mid-1970s, some residents feared that their integrated neighborhoods were under threat by “white flight.” An experiment in 1975 conducted by the North Suburbs Interfaith Center for Racial Justice and the League of Women Voters found that a large percentage of real estate agents in the region were steering black homeowners to subdivisions south of Ten Mile Road, while whites were advised to buy north of Ten Mile. Coded language suggested to whites that subdivisions like Northland Gardens and Magnolia were “too close to the city” while blacks were told they “would not like” living in Farmington or Birmingham.²⁶ First Baptist Church of Detroit, which had built its new sanctuary next to Northland Gardens, sponsored annual “Brotherhood Teas” so neighbors, white, black, Jewish, and Christian, could meet each other and talk about potential problems. At one such gathering, in 1972, an unidentified board member of the Northland Gardens Homeowners Association noted that “(I)t’s the old blockbusting tactic done backwards...It’s illegal for an agent to solicit sales if you have said you don’t want to sell your house. Pressure, scare – all the old stuff - is still around.”²⁷

In 1977 a group of Southfield homeowners formed the Southfield Federation of Homeowners to counter what they perceived as the increasing segregation of Southfield. They noted four subdivisions south of Ten Mile that were threatened with rapid racial turnover, namely Northland Gardens, Plumbrooke, Magnolia, and the Ravines. Members of the association from those neighborhoods specifically cited the diversity of the neighborhoods as part of their attraction.

²⁵ Kathy Warbelow, “Wealthy Drug Dealers Move to Suburbs,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 23, 1976, 3A, 12A.

²⁶ Julie Morris, “Southfield Group Says Racial Line Exists at 10 Mile,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 14, 1975, 3-4

²⁷ Helen May, “Searching for Brotherhood in These Changing Times,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 2, 1972, 25

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Barbara Davis, a leading member who lived in the Magnolia subdivision just north of Northland Gardens, said that the association was “fighting to keep our integrated neighborhoods from becoming segregated again.” The new association blamed not the African American homeowners buying into the subdivisions, but “fearful” white homeowners who quickly sold their houses if a black family moved in, and real estate agents who continued to steer home buyers into specific neighborhoods based on their race.²⁸

Although 1970s residential groups like the Northland Gardens Homeowners Association and the Southfield Federal of Homeowners, as well as current homeowners met during the course of this research, cited the diversity of Northland Gardens and neighboring subdivisions as a source of strength, the neighborhood has seen its share of difficult times. Southfield’s population, which had more than doubled between 1960 and 1970, leveled off in the 1970s and 1980s, and the declining birth rates resulted in the closure of the neighborhood elementary school, Magnolia School, although nearby subdivisions like Magnolia and Northland Gardens worked together to reopen it as a community center. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, residents became concerned about rising levels of crime. Northland Gardens seemed like a particular target, as residents noted that thieves from Detroit would enter the neighborhood, rob homes, and cross back into Detroit before Southfield police could arrive. And for a time, one of Detroit “most notorious and flamboyant dope dealers,” Eddie Jackson, lived in a “palatial compound” at 17533 Westhampton in Northland Gardens (another convicted drug dealer, Courtney Brown, lived next door at 17519 Westhampton). In response, much as they had banded together to fight segregation and save the Magnolia school, residents of Northland Gardens and Magnolia worked together to set up a neighborhood watch and urged police to increase patrols.²⁹

In more recent years, Southfield, like many communities in Michigan, has struggled with fluctuating population levels, and some Northland Gardens residents lost their homes in the 2007-2009 financial crisis and recession. However, the neighborhood in general remains strong due to its close-knit and diverse group of homeowners, the high quality of the neighborhood’s housing stock and landscape, and efforts by the city to support and maintain high levels of home ownership.

ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Northland Gardens meets National Register Criterion C, at the local level, as a highly intact and cohesive example of a Mid-Century Modern residential neighborhood within a city notable for its concentration and quality of mid-century design. The development exemplifies many of the characteristics of mid-century residential subdivisions, which had their roots in the Picturesque suburbs of the late nineteenth century, and were further refined through the Federal Housing Administration’s development of standards and guiding principles for subdivision layout in the 1930s and 1940s. Generous but not wasteful lot sizes, thoughtfully planned curved streets, and

²⁸ Ken Fireman, “Southfield Group Fights to Maintain Racial Balance,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 9, 1977, 4.

²⁹ Gregory Huskisson, “Southfield Gears Up to Fight Crime,” *Detroit Free Press* (Oakland Supplement), January 19, 1984, 1A, 6A; Judy Diebolt, “Colorful Drug Bust Turns Gray in Tax Court,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1981, 3A.

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attractive green spaces were all hallmarks of the FHA's guidance that were realized in Northland Gardens. Overwhelmingly designed in the popular Mid-Century Modern Ranch style, the houses of Northland Gardens use similar design motifs including brick masonry, wide overhanging eaves, and large windows, which keeps them cohesive and complementary, but also differentiated by unique detailing such that no two houses are the same. The quality of the houses, both in design and material, mean that Northland Garden's building stock has retained its integrity and economic viability to a very high degree.

Planning Northland Gardens

The 1956 plat for Northland Gardens laid out one hundred and four generous-sized building lots, as well as an outlot, along four roads that incorporated gentle curves and cul-de-sacs. This form of layout can trace its roots back to the Picturesque suburbs of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. During that period, city dwellers with the means to do so sought an escape from the increasingly industrial urban centers to the more naturalistic landscapes of areas close enough to the city to make commuting feasible yet far enough away for large lots and plenty of vegetation. Drawing on the principles of the mid-nineteenth century Romantic landscape movement, Picturesque suburbs employed curvilinear streets, irregular lot divisions, and the extensive use of vegetation to create a naturalistic, park-like setting that separated the privacy of residential streets from the busy thoroughfares of commercial districts. Prototypical examples of the Picturesque suburbs, such as Llewellyn Haskell's Llewellyn Park in New Jersey (platted 1857) and Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Riverside subdivision outside Chicago, Illinois (platted 1869), influenced the character of American residential subdivisions into the twentieth century.³⁰

The concepts of Picturesque suburbs were applied at a larger scale in the Garden City planning movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Garden City was introduced by English social reformer Ebenezer Howard in 1898 as an ideal city plan laid out in a series of concentric circles with public and commercial uses in the center and residential zones of mixed income levels, surrounded by an outer ring of industrial, educational, and social institutions connecting the inner rings to outlying agricultural land. Howard's Garden City ideals were adopted by the nascent planning profession in the United States in the early twentieth century as they designed residential suburbs at the outer edges of cities and in the newly developing suburbs where the increasing affordability of the automobile made longer commutes feasible for middle-class workers. The availability of large tracts of formerly agricultural land and favorable zoning practices permitted planners and developers to design an entire subdivision without being tied to an existing dense street grid. Developments were spatially organized into clusters of buildings along hierarchical circulation patterns that emphasized privacy, access to open space, and naturalistic landscaping. Some of the most influential of the early Garden City models in the United States were Sunnyside Gardens in Queens, New York and Radburn, New Jersey, both

³⁰ David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs, Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 2002), 38-39.

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developed in the late 1920s.³¹ In Southfield, residential developments of the 1920s like Lathrup Townsite and Washington Heights followed a number of these principles, including curvilinear streets, restricted access, and a parklike setting.

Many of the principles of Picturesque and Garden City planning were reinforced in the late 1930s and early 1940s by the United States Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA developed and issued a series of booklets outlining standards for new residential developments that wished to use FHA-backed low-cost mortgages. FHA planners went beyond minimum requirements such as compliance with local ordinances and the financial viability of developers, establishing guidelines and recommendations for ideal layouts, street patterns, integration of parks and playgrounds, and relationship to shopping, schools, and other amenities. Specific features promoted by the FHA included adaptation of the site to respond to topography and natural features, elimination of dead-end streets and sharp corners (less than ninety degrees) at intersections, long blocks to eliminate unnecessary cross streets and through-traffic, generous, well-shaped house sites without sharp angles, access to common green spaces, and other features to add to the privacy and attractiveness of the neighborhood. Deep lots like those employed in Nine Mile Gardens were “wasteful,” but lots should have a minimum width of fifty feet or longer to provide adequate side yards for light, air, driveways, and to avoid overcrowding. Corner lots should be wider because they had to comply with setback requirements on two sides.³²

Although not all prospective homeowners obtained FHA-backed mortgages, the FHA’s guidelines proved enormously influential in the planning and development of post-war suburbs. Like the garden suburbs of the early twentieth century, the FHA-influenced subdivisions of the post-World War II period were well suited to the large, formerly agricultural tracts of the suburbs. The larger lot sizes complemented the increasingly popular modern house styles, such as ranches and split levels, that were placed with their long sides facing the street. While early twentieth century garden suburbs had attempted to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic, the new suburbs were far more oriented toward the car. In many cases, the traditional “front walk” from the sidewalk to the front door was eliminated, with foot traffic shifting to the wide driveway and attached garage; residents and their guests either entered the house from the garage or the front walk was shifted to lead from the driveway to the front door.³³

In addition to new models for designing suburbs, the post-World War II era also saw new models for building them. While most early developers had limited their activities to subdividing the land, providing basic utilities, and perhaps building a few models before selling the lots off piecemeal, the early twentieth century saw the rise of the “community builder” and the “operative builder.” Less land speculators and more community planners, the community and operative builders controlled more aspects of the subdivisions, from layouts to home building to deed restrictions. By “exert(ing) control over the character of their subdivisions, (they) attracted certain types of home buyers, and protected real estate values.” In the 1930s, the FHA

³¹ Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 41-47.

³² See for example “Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses,” 1936; “Planning Profitable Neighborhoods” (Technical Bulletin No. 7), 1938; and “Successful Subdivisions,” 1940.

³³ Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 70.

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encouraged the operative builder model to ensure the consistency, attractiveness, and financial stability of neighborhoods backed by its mortgage insurance.³⁴

It is unknown how many residents of Northland Gardens used FHA-backed mortgages, but the planners of the Hudson-Webber Realty Company were clearly influenced by the FHA's subdivision design principles. While the new neighborhoods just across the Detroit boundary line to the south were still being built to the rectilinear grid with narrow lots and closely placed houses, Northland Gardens featured substantial lot sizes, curving streets, and plenty of green space. It also contrasted with the layout of the 1920s Magnolia subdivisions to the north and west. While those plans included some curving streets and common park space, the lots were still relatively narrow and deep (about 40 feet wide by 130 deep) and the plan conformed to the open street grid. In Northland Gardens, entry to the subdivision was limited to three right-angle points and cross-streets were likewise limited, but the layout had only one dead end, the cul-de-sac at the east end of Westland. Of the rectangular lots, widths ranged from 90 to 105 feet and depths from 116 to 144 feet. The wedge-shaped lots on curves or cul-de-sacs had a minimum of 54 feet frontage on the inside curves, widening to 184 feet on an outside corner lot, while depths were similar to the rectangular lots. In addition to the generous lot sizes and mostly private rear yards, the developers also installed amenities like sidewalks and a landscaped center ring in the middle of each cul-de-sac. While a few houses had traditional front walks, particularly on the corner lots, many homeowners opted for no front sidewalk, relying on the wide driveways for pedestrian access to their homes.

While the Federal Housing Administration had favored the operative builder model, Hudson-Webber was a more traditional developer. After building and furnishing a model home, the company generally sold lots on an individual basis either to their final owners, or to a construction company who then built and sold the house to a new owner. As a result, while a little less than half of the development's houses were built between 1956 and 1959, it took another fifteen to sixteen years for the neighborhood to be substantially complete, with at least a few houses built each year until 1976 (seven houses were added between 1980 and 2005 and there are still a few empty lots). Of the one hundred and four lots originally platted, some were combined into double lots. The remaining Magnolia subdivision lots on the north side of Westland Drive were informally incorporated into Northland Gardens. While they were not replatted into the Northland Gardens subdivision as a few lots at the eastern end of the subdivision had been, many of the narrow forty-foot lots were combined into double or triple lots to accommodate larger footprint houses, and built in house designs that related architecturally to the character of Northland Gardens. Finally, lots one, two, and three were originally platted on the far western side of the development north of Outlot A, two fronting on Southfield Road and the third tucked behind them on Westland Avenue. These three lots were never developed as house sites; instead, First Baptist Church of Detroit moved to a newly built sanctuary on this site in the late 1950s.

³⁴ Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 27, 49.

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The Architecture of Northland Gardens

Michigan was a leading center of Modern architecture and design in the middle decades of the twentieth century, and the city of Southfield has a density of high-quality Mid-Century Modern resources rivaled by few other places in the state. Southfield's strategic geographic location in the first ring of suburbs outside of Detroit, the convergence of several highways in the city, and the availability of large tracts of relatively inexpensive agricultural land drew many businesses to Southfield, and numerous world, national, and regional corporate office headquarters were built in Southfield in the 1950s and 1960s, including Bendix Research Laboratories, Federal Mogul, Reynolds Metals Company, Maccabees Mutual Life Insurance, and E. F. MacDonald Travel. The city aggressively pursued commercial development through proactive installation of utilities and policies that encouraged corporate investment.

These corporations hired many of the state and nation's most well-known architects to design their offices. The Reynolds Metals Company, the nation's second-largest aluminum products manufacturer, selected Minoru Yamasaki, whose firm had just won the AIA Honor Award for the Lambert-St. Louis Municipal Airport Terminal, to design a showpiece regional sales office in Southfield (completed 1959). Giffels and Rossetti designed the award-winning Federal Mogul Staff Office Building (1966), and the Gunnar Birkerts-designed IBM Regional Office Building was constructed in 1975.

To design its flagship regional shopping mall, J.E. Hudson Company hired Viennese architect Victor Gruen. Gruen's plan for Northland Center established the shopping mall archetype and influenced mall design for decades, including the nearby Tel-Twelve Mall, designed by the firm of Charles Agree, Inc. and completed in 1968. Mid-Century Modern architecture in Southfield extended beyond the commercial sector, for example at Shaarey Zadek Synagogue, designed by New York architect Percival Goodman (1961-62), and the luxury high-rise apartments at North Park Towers (1967), designed by Nate Levine.

While Southfield's major commercial, retail, and religious entities hired state or nationally famous architects, high-quality Mid-Century Modern design filtered down to even modest office buildings, schools, churches, and residential neighborhoods in the city, like Northland Gardens.

To sell the lots in the Northland Gardens subdivision, Hudson-Webber built a model home at 17589 Westhampton, at the southwest corner of Westland and Westhampton. Designed by Seymour Levine and built by Nemers and Lipshaw Building Company with interiors by J. L. Hudson's, the house was completed in the summer of 1956. Emphasizing the suburban character of the neighborhood, Hudson-Webber called it the "City-Country House...a house that's just right for those suburban areas that are neither city nor country, but a blending of the two." The one-story, three-bedroom, two-bathroom house was "zoned" to separate the more public living areas from the private bedrooms, and the living room featured a brick fireplace and outdoor terrace. The entry hall had slate floors and stained-glass sidelights. Hudson's finished the kitchen with "(c)abinets of pickled birch (with) translucent plastic panels in which a black linen gauze has been embedded for an unusual decorative effect." The design provided flexibility in opening

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or closing off areas of the house for either more room or greater privacy through the use of louvered doors. While the house avoided large expanses of glass in order to provide greater privacy, the developers noted that it had “an air of tweedy informality, with plenty of room for family activity, that makes it very well suited to modern suburban living.”³⁵

The attention paid to the model house’s layout was intentional. Mid-Century Modern house designers were during this period re-envisioning the form and function of the middle-class house. The spatial organization of suburban neighborhoods like Northland Gardens resulted in larger lot sizes and more private space in the back yards. Designers often reoriented house layouts to place family living spaces at the rear of the house with large glass windows or sliding glass doors to reduce the barrier between indoor and outdoor space. They supported the emphasis on the nuclear family unit during the period by prioritizing family living spaces, particularly the living room, over private bedrooms. Kitchens became the showpiece of the home, a space the family was expected to spend time in (hence the rise of the “eat-in kitchen”) and where guests might be invited. This was “better living through design.”

The article promoting the model home had noted that “(s)even builders are cooperating in the development, (and) will build homes in the \$35,000 to \$45,000 range.” It was not known who those builders were, aside from Nemers and Lipshaw, but a few model houses were featured in the newspaper real estate sections, such as 15173 Westhampton, built by Spoon Builders, in 1958, who also built 17339 Westhampton (1958). Similarly, little is known of the architects of Northland Gardens homes. Seymour Levine was recorded as the architect of 17589 Westhampton, and the homeowner of 17310 Westland has the original drawings for the house, designed by Fred J. Horner. However, the homes received little press when they were constructed, and the city does not retain building permits for residential construction from that era.

The model house at 17589 Westhampton was built in the Ranch style, as were most of the houses subsequently built in Northland Gardens. Ranch houses, from modest tract houses to large high styled versions, were the dominant Mid-Century Modern house style for residential architecture. Modern house styles, like Modern architecture in general, were “based primarily on the lack of applied historically influenced ornamentation and a resulting external simplicity or ‘honesty,’ as well as on spatial variation and manipulation made possible by new materials and construction techniques.” The first stage of modernistic house design, in the early decades of the twentieth century, resulted in house styles like Prairie and Craftsman, “elegantly simplified” buildings that still employed decorative touches but in a more organic manner, such as elaborated structural elements. In the middle decades of the century, designers often eschewed non-functional ornament altogether, preferring to create “machines for living” that took advantage of mass-production methods to create rigorously “honest” buildings, exemplified by the International style of architecture.³⁶

³⁵ “City-Country House,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1956, B-7.

³⁶ McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 5, 10-11.

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There were, of course, many gradations within Modernism, from the simple rectilinear glass boxes of the International style to the more elaborate examples of New Formalism. Many Modern house styles employed asymmetrical forms, exaggerated roof pitches, varying wall planes, and non-traditional windows to express their style rather than applied ornament. However, non-functional ornamental details were not uncommon, such as decorative brick walls, textured glass, applied paneling, and exposed rafter ends.

The Ranch originated in California (it was often called the California Ranch in its early years) and, like the Mission style of the earlier twentieth century, it was based on (often romanticized) Colonial southwest precedents. Adapted to the warm climate of the region, the Spanish ranch house was usually one story, long and low to the ground, with adobe walls and flat roofs. The L- and U-shaped plans provided access to a private courtyard that functioned as auxiliary living space, and the wide eaves sheltered the interior from the full sun.³⁷ In the 1930s, California architects like Cliff May (who is often credited with popularizing the style) began building modern adaptations that were suited for the large lots and mild climate of the West, and in the 1940s and 1950s, the architectural press began promoting them.

The Ranch was ideally suited for the growing suburbs of the post-war period. The larger lot and development sizes of the suburbs could accommodate the one-story rambling form of the Ranch, which increasingly included an attached garage, further lengthening the building. In contrast to pre-World War II styles, which focused outdoor living space on the front and side porches, the mid-century suburb emphasized private back yards and patios, which could be larger on the suburban lot. As well, technological developments supported the proliferation of a building form more suited for a warm climate. Multiple-thermostat central heating and residential air conditioning systems were introduced widely after World War II, making year-round residence in a rambling house with large expanses of windows feasible even in the cold climates of the north.³⁸ Designers could adjust the simple and flexible floor plan to different sizes and forms from the most basic tract house to a unique high-end residence. The Ranch style was easily adapted to the requirements of the FHA program, as well. The developers of Levittown, the prototypical American suburb in Pennsylvania, introduced a modified Cape Cod with a Ranch-like exterior in 1949,³⁹ and the mass-produced tracts of Ranches that followed eventually contributed to a late twentieth century backlash against the “cookie-cutter” suburbs full of American Ranches.

Ranch styles were far more likely to be the product of builders than of architects. As architect and historian Alan Hess has noted, it was the home buyers of America who embraced the large family rooms, modern amenities, and low prices of the Ranch, when most architects of the 1950s and 1960s preferred to design in the concurrent Contemporary style (with some exceptions, such as Cliff May and others in California and Texas).⁴⁰ Another advantage of the Ranch was that was

³⁷ Barbara Allen, “The Ranch-Style House in America: A Cultural and Environmental Discourse,” *Journal of Architectural Education* (49:3, February 1996), 156-157.

³⁸ Allen, “The Ranch-Style House in America,” 158.

³⁹ Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 66.

⁴⁰ Alan Hess, *The Ranch House* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 2008), 14-17.

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relatively easy to individualize similar house plans in large neighborhoods. The irregular footprint and asymmetrical plan could be easily and inexpensively varied by bumping out or recessing a section, changing the window size, shape, and placement, varying the proportion of masonry and wood, and changing the porch size or shape.⁴¹

Despite its variability, the Ranch had a number of standard characteristics. In form, it was long, low, and rambling, oriented with its long elevation to the street and covered by a low-pitched roof with wide eaves. The façade was almost always asymmetrical, with projecting or receding sections, an offset front door, and non-matching fenestration patterns. Front entries were usually deeply recessed, often within the ell of the house or under a porch, and smaller than the patio or terrace on the rear of the house. The dominant roof form was cross-hipped or cross-gabled, with a simple boxed eave or plain rafter-tail detail. An attached garage was common, as well as a large private patio or terrace at the rear. Windows varied widely both as to form and material, but there were two prevailing characteristics of mid-century fenestration. The first was large expanses of glass on the rear elevation. As noted above, the focus of outdoor living in the mid-century period, unlike earlier eras, was on the private backyard. The family living room, and sometimes the master bedroom, usually had a sliding glass door onto a large patio or terrace designed for private family time or entertaining, and other rooms on this elevation had large windows. The second characteristic feature was the picture window, a focal point on the front elevation with a large fixed pane, sometimes flanked with operable sections.⁴² The ubiquity of the picture window seems an anomaly in a house form that oriented itself toward a private backyard, but architect and author Witold Rybczynski has argued that the picture window, rather than offering a view for residents, was a window into the house, for displaying the house's interior decoration and seasonal displays.⁴³

Far from being cookie-cutter or mass-produced tract buildings, the houses of Northland Gardens, while mostly adhering to the basic elements of the Ranch style, vary widely. They range from relatively modest houses to highly styled examples with unique designs. Most are executed in varying colors of brick masonry, with insets of wood siding, whether horizontal, vertical, or flat, or stone veneer panels, coursed and uncoursed. A number have stacked bond brick panels or entire elevations. Roofs are side gabled, cross-gabled, hipped, and cross-hipped, and a few combine multiple forms; most have wide eaves, some with canted points at the gable ends, or exposed rafter tails. Porches vary from small recessed entries to partial or almost-full width, usually recessed under the roof or a roof extension. Very rarely does a house have a regular form, with irregular rectangle, L, and asymmetrical U-shapes being most common, and all have attached garages. The windows are uniformly asymmetrical, with a number of houses featuring windows tucked under the roof line, typically separated from the rest of the wall by a sill course and surrounded by a contrasting material. Commonly seen decorative details include wrought iron porch supports and railings, geometric patterns on entry doors, garage doors, and shutters, screen walls and wing walls, and textured glass sidelights.

⁴¹ McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 603.

⁴² McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 597-602.

⁴³ Witold Rybczynski, "The Ranch House Anomaly," *Slate.com*, April 17, 2007, http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/architecture/2007/04/the_ranch_house_anomaly.html.

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There are a few common variants of the Ranch style seen in Northland Gardens. While they cannot always be classified as “Styled Ranches,” they do have stylistic elements borrowed from other contemporary styles and forms. A few split-level ranches are present. Although these typically take the form of a front gabled two-story section with a side-gabled one-story section beside it, a few houses are one story at the front and rise to a split-level two story at the rear. A number of houses, both one-story and split-level, have Colonial elements, including dormers, gable returns, gabled pedimented porches, and other Colonial Revival detailing. Conversely, some Ranches shade toward the Contemporary style, with angle-topped windows in the gable ends, broad expanses of uninterrupted wall, and clerestory windows. There are several clearly Contemporary houses in the neighborhood, as well. Finally, there are several outstanding and unique houses, like the Prairie Ranch at 16367 Westland, and the sprawling Ranch at 17077 Westland.

Following the establishment of Northland Gardens, Hudson-Webber also platted the remaining land south and east of the residential neighborhood into eighteen commercial parcels (two phases, 1956-1958). Among the twenty buildings constructed here were the Reynolds Metals Building (Minoru Yamasaki, completed 1959), Standard Oil Building (architect unknown, 1957), the General American Life Insurance Building (Victor Gruen, 1958), and One Northland Drive (Seymour Levine, 1969). Continuing into the 1960s and 1970s, Hudson-Webber developed other parcels it owned around Northland Center, branching out into the luxury apartment field with North Park Towers (1967) and North Park Place (1971), both designed by Detroit architect Nathan Levine.

Rebutted

Northland Gardens
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Subdivision Plat for Northland Gardens, 1956.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
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- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Southfield Public Library, Oakland County, MI

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 47.8 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.448573 Longitude: -83.219362
2. Latitude: 42.448773 Longitude: -83.207578
3. Latitude: 42.448773 Longitude: -83.207578
4. Latitude: 42.448773 Longitude: -83.207578

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):



Northland Gardens
Name of Property

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NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 1-104, Northland Gardens Subdivision, Part of the southeast quarter of Section 27, Township 1 North, Range 10 East, City of Southfield, Oakland County Michigan, as recorded in Liber 102 (Plats), page 28, November 22, 1960.

Lots 67-126, Magnolia Subdivision, Part of the southeast quarter of Section 27, Township 1 North, Range 10 East, City of Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan, as recorded in

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary identified for Northland Gardens is the original development boundary as outlined in the plat, plus the parcels on the north side of Westland Avenue, which were originally part of the Magnolia neighborhood but developed as Northland Gardens. See attached maps for boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ruth E. Mills, with assistance from Lauren Strauss

organization: Quinn Evans Architects

street & number: 219 ½ North Main Street

city or town: Ann Arbor state: Michigan zip code: 48104

e-mail rmills@quinnevans.com

telephone: 734-663-5888

date: November 30, 2018

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Northland Gardens
City or Vicinity: Southfield
County: Oakland **State:** Michigan

Photographer: Google Earth
Date Photographed: 2018
Aerial photograph, north at the top of the image.
0001 of 0064

Photographer: Google Earth
Date Photographed: 2018
Aerial photograph, north at the bottom of the image.
0002 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westland Drive, looking east
0003 of 0064

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
County and State

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westland Drive, looking west
0004 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westover Drive, looking east
0005 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Rutland/Westover Drive, looking west
0006 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
Westhampton Drive, looking northeast
0007 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17610 Westland Drive, looking north
0008 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17530 Westland Drive, looking north
0009 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17521 Westland Drive, looking southeast
0010 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17501 Westland Drive, looking southwest
0011 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17396 Westland Drive, looking north

Northland Gardens
Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan
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0012 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17391 Westland Drive, looking south
013 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17336 Westland Drive, looking north
014 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17319 Westland Drive, looking southwest
015 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17310 Westland Drive, looking north
016 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17276 Westland Drive, looking north
017 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17231 Westland Drive, looking southeast
018 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17181 Westland Drive, looking southwest
019 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17160 Westland Drive, looking northeast
020 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

17077 Westland Drive, looking southeast
021 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17070 Westland Drive, looking north
022 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17025 Westland Drive, looking south
023 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17016 Westland Drive, looking northeast
024 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17005 Westland Drive, looking south
025 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16395 Westland Drive, looking southwest
026 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16370 Westland Drive, looking north
027 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16367 Westland Drive, looking southwest
028 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

16349 Westland Drive, looking south
029 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan

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Returned

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

16318 Westland Drive, looking north
030 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17465 Westover Drive, looking southeast
031 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17448 Westover Drive, looking northwest
032 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17433 Westover Drive, looking south
033 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17432 Westover Drive, looking northeast
034 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17385 Westover Drive, looking south
035 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17384 Westover Drive, looking north
036 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17350 Westover Drive, looking northwest
037 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17337 Westover Drive, looking south
038 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

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Northland Gardens

Name of Property

21106 Rutland Drive, looking southwest
039 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

21128 Rutland Drive, looking southeast
040 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

21140 Rutland Drive, looking east
041 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

21152 Rutland Drive, looking south
042 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17589 Westhampton Drive, looking southwest
043 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17561 Westhampton Drive, looking west
044 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17533 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
045 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17519 Westhampton Drive, looking west
046 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17457 Westhampton Drive, looking south
047 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

Oakland County, Michigan

County and State

Returned

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

Oakland County, Michigan

County and State

17448 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
048 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17441 Westhampton Drive, looking south
049 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17416 Westhampton Drive, looking north
050 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17386 Westhampton Drive, looking north
051 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17366 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
052 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17365 Westhampton Drive, looking southeast
053 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17358 Westhampton Drive, looking north
054 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17357 Westhampton Drive, looking south
055 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018
17338 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
056 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: May 2018

Northland Gardens

Name of Property

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17320 Westhampton Drive, looking northwest
057 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17263 Westhampton Drive, looking southeast
058 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17228 Westhampton Drive, looking northeast
059 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17209 Westhampton Drive, looking south
060 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17172 Westhampton Drive, looking north
061 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17153 Westhampton Drive, looking south
062 of 0064

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17141 Westhampton Drive, looking south
063 of 0064

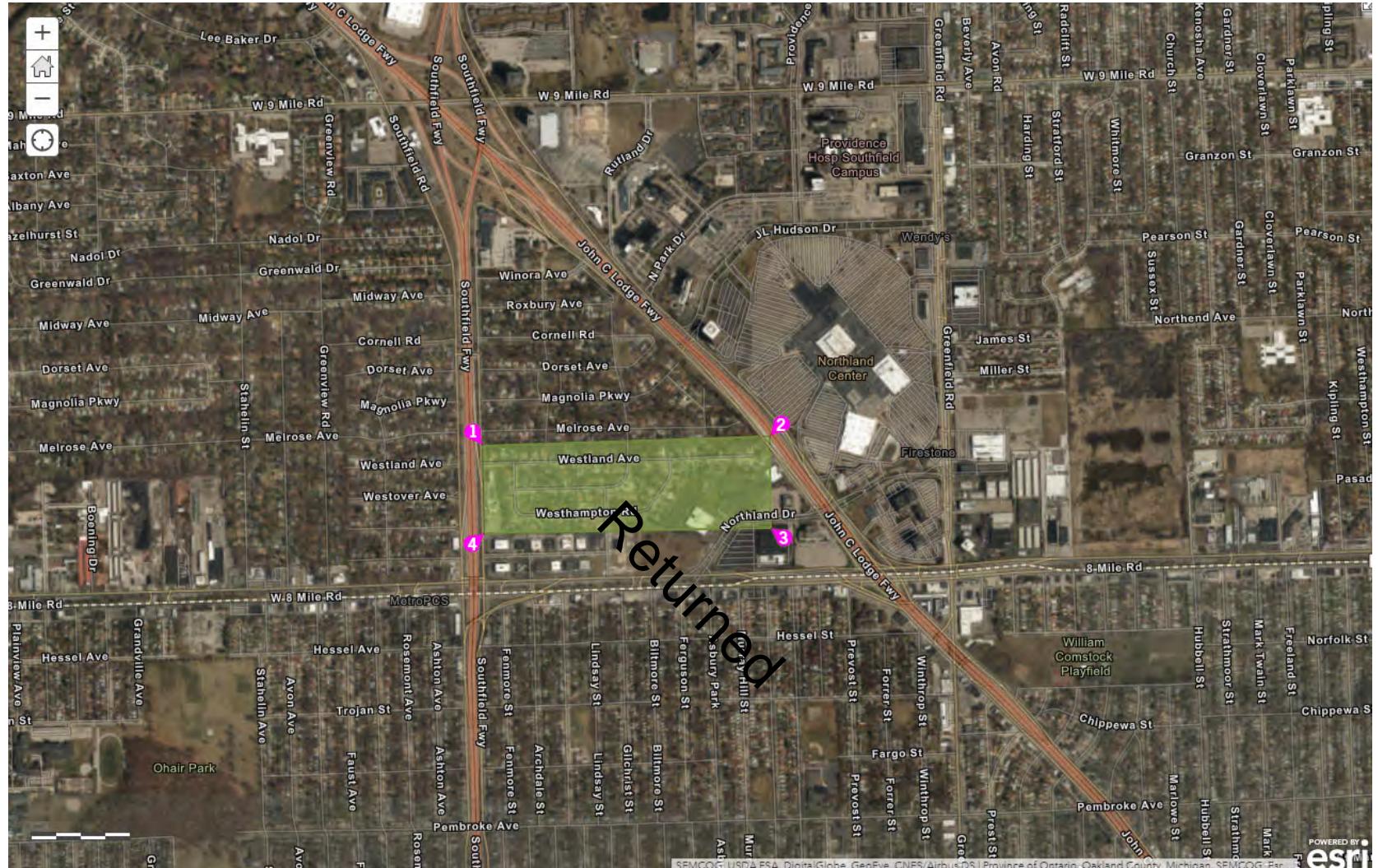
Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects

Date Photographed: May 2018

17140 Westhampton Drive, looking north
0064 of 0064

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Northland Gardens

Westland Avenue, Westhampton Road, Rutland Drive, and Westover Road, Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 1. Latitude: 42.448573
 2. Latitude: 42.448773
 3. Latitude: 42.448773
 4. Latitude: 42.448773

Longitude: -83.219362
 Longitude: -83.207578
 Longitude: -83.207578
 Longitude: -83.207578





Northland Gardens

Westland Avenue, Westhampton Road, Rutland Drive, and Westover Road, Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

Lat./Long.: 1. Latitude: 42.448573
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Longitude: -83.207578
Longitude: -83.207578
Longitude: -83.207578



Northland Gardens

Historic Resource Survey and National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

November 2018



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

Northland Gardens

Historic Resource Survey and National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

November 2018

- Contributing Property
- Non-contributing Property
- Northland Gardens Historic District Boundary



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

Northland Gardens

National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Northland Gardens USGS Map

Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan

November 2018



USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, National Elevation Dataset, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; U.S. Census Bureau - TIGER/Line; HERE Road Data. Data Refreshed July, 2017.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Northland Gardens

Multiple Name:

State & County: MICHIGAN, Oakland

Date Received: 10/9/2019 Date of Pending List: 11/1/2019 Date of 16th Day: 11/18/2019 Date of 45th Day: 11/25/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100004660

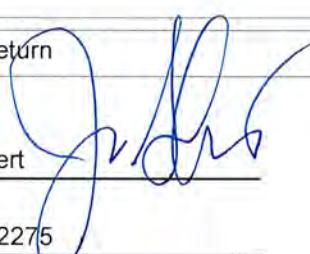
Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 11/18/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Issues with POS and areas of significance. See attached comments

Recommendation/ Criteria Return 

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date 11/18/2019

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : Yes see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Northland Gardens
Oakland County, MI

Reference Number: 100004660

Reason for Return

Northland gardens is one of two district nominations from Southfield that were submitted together; both are eligible properties, and both suffer some minor detail issues. However, the Northland gardens nomination has issues that cannot easily be remedied with an SLR, so it is being returned for substantive and technical revision.

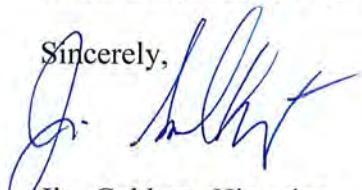
Exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G is claimed, but there is no reasoned explanation of why extending the period of significance beyond the 50 year mark is warranted, let alone why that period is considered exceptional. The narrative goes on to explain some racial tensions in the 1970s, and notes the presence of many Motown-affiliated residents who lived there in the early 1970s. Could these issues, which fall under the “Social History” aspect of Criterion A, be the basis of the exceptional importance claim? If so, an expanded explanation of the exceptional importance of these events as they relate to this particular subdivision is required. There are 12 houses constructed after 1969; are these the basis for exceptional importance under Criterion C? If so, an analysis of these properties should be provided that explains why they represent exceptionally significant design.

I do wish to point out guidance found in the “Historic Residential Suburbs” Bulletin regarding counting contributing and noncontributing resources. On page 96, there is an explanation of when Criteria Consideration G must be used and when it is not necessary. In particular, the portion that discusses construction of buildings that occur within the past 50 years but are consistent in character with the older resources. This is also noted on page 99. Later, on page 106, there is discussion of classifying contributing and noncontributing resources and how properties (especially those “less than 50”) relate to the original plans and character of the district. Using these guidelines, please re-evaluate the period of significance and the 12 “less than 50” properties as they relate to both the character of the neighborhood and the guidance found in the bulletin. In particular, there

are four houses on Westland Avenue that should be more closely looked at: 16370, 17070, 17160, and 17180.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <James_Gabbert@nps.gov>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Gabbert".

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
11/18/2019



OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE L. BROOKS PATTERSON

Michael McCready, Director

Office: (248) 858-9099 mccreadym@oakgov.com

January 9, 2019

Mr. Todd A. Walsh
National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
735 East Michigan Avenue
PO Box 30044
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Walsh:

We have received Mr. Conway's letter dated December 13, 2018 regarding consideration of listing two districts to the National Register of Historic Places in Southfield.

As you know, the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. We are proud of Oakland County's historic neighborhoods and downtowns, they embody Oakland County's historical, architectural, and cultural significance. The history of Oakland County is rich and diverse, and we support the following districts being listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

**Northland Gardens, Southfield
Plumbrooke Estates, Southfield**

The historic buildings, neighborhoods and places in Oakland County's villages, townships and cities distinguish each community and provide a unique sense of place and quality of life. The preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, places and neighborhoods contribute to the beauty, character, and economic vitality of Oakland County communities.

We understand Mr. Kenson J. Siver, Mayor of the City of Southfield, supports this endeavor. His work with Southfield's Mid-Century Modern Architecture Tours, and advocacy for the preservation of Southfield's Mid-Century architecture prompted the pursuit of these designations.

We understand that listing in the National Register provides recognition that a property is significant to the nation, the state, or the community. The above districts are significant to the history of Oakland County, and the historical growth thereof, and we support their listing in the National Register.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McCready".

Michael McCready
Director of Economic Development & Community Affairs

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



Tuesday, January 7, 2020

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Northland Gardens, Southfield, Oakland County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a New Submission Resubmission Additional Documentation Removal.

- 1 Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Disc 1)
 2 Locational maps (Disc 1, incl. with nomination)
 3 Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s) (Disc 1, incl. with nomination)
 Pieces of correspondence (Disc 1)
 64 Digital photographs (Disc 2)
 Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed.
 This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67.
 The enclosed owner objections do do not constitute a majority of property owners.
 X Other: This nomination was returned for technical revision. Please see enclosed return sheet. Criteria Consideration G was removed and resources re-evaluated and reclassified to address return comments.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 335-9854 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

300 North Washington Square | Lansing, MI 48913 | 888.522.0103