

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

October 25, 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 **City of Flint Municipal Center, Flint, Genesee 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.

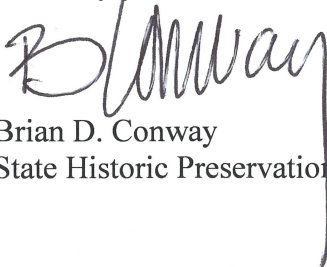
- 1 Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Disc 1)
- 2 Locational maps (Disc 1, incl. with nomination)
- 1 Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s) (Disc 1, incl. with nomination)
- 1 Pieces of correspondence (Disc 1)
- 32 Digital photographs (Disc 2)
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed.
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67.
- The enclosed owner objections 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,



Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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 PropertyHistoric name: City of Flint Municipal CenterOther names/site number: Flint Civic Center

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 1101 Saginaw Street, 210 East Fifth Street, 310 East Fifth StreetCity or town: Flint State: MI County: GeneseeNot 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 DBrian D. Murray

Signature of certifying official/Title:

10/28/19

Date

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

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 :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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City or town: Flint State: MI County: Genesee

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 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

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 :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee 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 ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: brick, glass, marble

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

The City of Flint Municipal Center (hereafter Municipal Center) is located in downtown Flint, Michigan, at the south end of the city's main commercial district. The Municipal Center's primary building, City Hall, fronts on the downtown's main thoroughfare, Saginaw Street. Across Saginaw Street, west of the complex, are the Genesee County Administrative Building and jail. The Municipal Center includes six International-style buildings that were erected between 1957 and circa 1959. The contributing buildings were designed by two architectural firms but share commonalities form, massing, scale, and materials. Contributing buildings within the Municipal Center complex are the City Hall; the former Public Health Building, currently known as City Hall South Building; the Police Department Headquarters; the Municipal Courts Building, now occupied by the Police Department and identified as the Municipal Center North Building; the Public Health Auditorium, currently known as the Auditorium; and the Fire Department Headquarters. There are four contributing structures within the Municipal Center: the below-grade Powerhouse and trilon smokestack, the parking lots, circulation paths, and covered walkway. The buildings are positioned around the outer edges of the lot in a park-like setting. The majority of the buildings have a rectilinear footprint, rise to no more than three stories above grade, and have flat roofs. Five of the principal buildings' exterior walls are

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

constructed primarily of brick and aluminum-framed panels in curtain walls. The curtain walls are composed of a mix of glazed and colored panels, with each building easily identified by the color of its panels. In some locations white marble, painted concrete, or metal posts provide accents. Contributing landscape features include a sunken courtyard, a mall area that extends to the east between the City Hall and Stevens Street, and an open grassy area that wraps around the buildings along East Fifth Street, Saginaw Street, and East Seventh Street. The Municipal Center continues to serve the City of Flint as the primary location of its municipal offices. The buildings and landscape retain historic integrity for the period of significance, which extends from the start of construction in 1955 to the fifty-year threshold of 1969.

Narrative Description

Setting



Figure 1: City of Flint Municipal Center, 1958, from *Flint Journal*, April 18, 1958.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

The City of Flint Municipal Center is in downtown Flint at the south end of the city's main commercial district. The Municipal Center's primary building, City Hall, fronts on the city's main thoroughfare, Saginaw Street. Across Saginaw Street, west of the Municipal Center, are the Genesee County administrative building and jail. A metal arch displaying the city and county name extends over Saginaw Street, with one of the support posts on the Municipal Center's property. East and south of the Municipal Center is the I-69/I-475 interchange, and to the north are several blocks of commercial buildings and parking areas. The Municipal Center historic district occupies a 16.84-acre superblock (Map 1). The superblock was historically six city blocks that were combined for the newly developed Municipal Center. The Municipal Center is bounded by Saginaw Street on the west, Stevens Street on the east, East Fifth Street on the north, and East Seventh Street on the south (Map 2).

The six buildings and one structure of the Municipal Center are primarily along Saginaw Street and East Fifth Street. Although not part of the setting, several key materials are used repeatedly within the Municipal Center. These materials, including white marble and colored panels, visually tie the large complex together and aid in the organization of space. For example, the marble is used as trim on the buildings and aids in the definition of spaces. The varying panel colors suggest to the visitor that although all are part of a greater complex, each building fulfills a different role in the management of the city and its residents.

The buildings and structure are in a park-like setting with manicured lawns, ornamental plantings, and mature trees. Each of the buildings in the Municipal Center is set back from the street with an expansive lawn positioned between the buildings and adjacent sidewalks. This visually distinguishes the complex from the otherwise dense urban environment of downtown that is characterized by closely spaced buildings that front directly on the sidewalk and are interspersed with paved surface parking lots. Numerous concrete walkways extend between the buildings and from the buildings to the sidewalks that flank the streets. A group of three flagpoles is positioned south of the sidewalk that extends perpendicular to Saginaw Street to the west of City Hall. The flagpoles are placed behind a low row of shrubs that surround a low, rectangular sign for the Municipal Center. Paved surface parking lots are located to the rear and east sides of the Fire Department Headquarters and Police Department Headquarters, and to the east of the Public Health Building.¹

Between several of the buildings in the Municipal Center are covered, and sometimes enclosed, walkways. The longest of the covered walkways extends from the north elevation of the Public Health Building to the north, along the east elevation of City Hall. The walkway turns east at the northeast corner of City Hall and continues along the south side of the Powerhouse before terminating near the southwest corner of the Municipal Court/Police Department Headquarters. This covered walkway consists of a flat roof supported by regularly spaced square piers along its length. In areas where the terrain drops away, there is a low metal balustrade consisting of woven panels framed and supported by metal pipes. The west side of the walkway between City Hall

¹ Several buildings within the Municipal Center have changed uses since they first opened. Both original and current names are used in the header for each resource. However, for the ease of the reader only the historic name will be used in the remaining text.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

and the nearby buildings is directly accessible from the manicured lawn. Raised, uncovered bridges provide access from the perimeter sidewalk across the southern basin to the Public Health Building, and across the northern basin to the Police Department Headquarters. These walkways consist of paired columns supporting a concrete platform lined with wrought iron balustrades.

To the east of City Hall is a contributing landscape feature, a sunken courtyard, which is built of brick retaining walls topped by concrete coping. East of City Hall and the Auditorium buildings is a large, rectilinear, manicured lawn. This lawn is flanked by small trees along sidewalks and includes distinctive metal light poles, which are found across the Municipal Center.

In addition to the contributing resources within the Municipal Center are two non-contributing bronze statues of autoworkers that are placed near the street in front of City Hall. A State of Michigan historical marker, also non-contributing, is located near the northwest corner of the City Hall. A non-contributing metal sculpture, entitled "River," is east of the auditorium.

Inventory

Information on each resource included in the Municipal Center is presented below. Each entry begins with the a header with the historic name of the building, the current name of the building in parentheses, if applicable, the date of construction, street address, the architect, and the resource's contributing or non-contributing status within the district. The inventory begins with the City Hall, moves clockwise, and ends with

Below the header is the exterior building description followed by the interior descriptions when available. Smaller resources, such as sculptures, that do not have their own street address are discussed following the closest building so the setting can be better understood.

Contributing and non-contributing status for the resources within the Municipal Center were carefully considered. The buildings, structures, sites, and objects that were part of the early vision of the Municipal Center and continue to retain historic integrity are considered to contribute to the historic district. The status for each resource, which includes the associated landscape and parking lots, is largely based on 1958 aerial images of the complex (Photographs 1 and 2). Whereas the Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1 Building was not yet erected when the photo was taken, and the construction of I-475 had not begun, the original buildings, pathways, and structures are present. Each of these buildings, structures, sites, and objects present in 1958, along with the 1959 Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1, is considered to contribute to the overall district.

Additions to the Municipal Center after the period of significance are non-contributing. These include sculptures, a historic marker, and flagpoles. These resources are considered non-contributing because they do not meet the fifty-year threshold for National Register eligibility and are not eligible under any National Register Criteria Considerations.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

**City Hall; 1955–1958; 1101 Saginaw Street; Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates;
Contributing**

The City Hall is a three-story building with a rectilinear footprint, with the long axis oriented parallel to Saginaw Street. It has a flat roof and a small section projects above the roof near the center of the building and is clad in yellow and brown brick. A covered walkway spans the east (rear) elevation and extends to the north, connecting to the Municipal Courts Building, and to the south, connecting to the Public Health Building.

Pilasters and three-story posts clad in white marble divide all of the elevations into multiple fenestration bays. The marble also covers the cornice and areas in the upper two stories that lack fenestration. The first story is clad in brick where it lacks fenestration. The majority of each elevation is filled with walls of large, plate glass windows with blue metal spandrels. Many of these ribbon windows are slightly recessed. Within each fenestration bay, each window alternates between having a lower hopper and an upper hopper. White metal pergolas stretch along the tops of the first and second stories of the façade, between the windows and the marble-clad posts.

The main entryway is centered on the façade. It projects slightly from the façade and includes three metal and glass doors with transoms and large, plate glass windows on the sides. A flat-roofed canopy extends slightly over the doors and is supported by silver metal posts. Six large, plate glass panels are placed above the entryway, and a panel of nine glass panels is placed to the north of the entryway.

The south elevation has a single metal and glass door in the westernmost of the three bays. This bay is also filled with plate glass windows on each story: nine in the second and third stories and seven on the first, with the door filling the space of two windows. A ribbon window, like those on the façade, fills the remaining two bays of the first story. The upper two stories lack fenestration in these two bays and are clad in white marble. This arrangement is repeated on the north elevation. However, the central and eastern bay are clad in brick on the first story.

As a result of the slope in topography the lower level of the east elevation is exposed, resulting in four stories. The lower level also extends farther to the east and forms the floor of the colonnade. The entirety of the first, second, and third stories are filled with ribbons of plate glass windows with blue, metal spandrels, except for an entrance aligned with the main entryway on the façade. The lower level also contains long ribbons of the plate glass windows. Near the center of the elevation are paired metal doors and paired metal and glass doors, which lead to a flight of steps descending into the sunken courtyard.

The lower level extends to the south of City Hall and connects to the north elevation of the Public Health Building.

Interior

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

The interior of City Hall has a total of five floors: a basement and sub-basement below grade; a first floor at street level that includes a lobby and offices; a second floor with offices; and a third floor that includes the Council Chamber room. Each level has a central corridor that extends the length of the building and is flanked by individual offices or office suites. When constructed, the sub-basement contained an underground parking garage for fifty-five vehicles. The basement housed the Water Department, Civil Service, the receiving room, employee cafeteria, and storage rooms, and provided a passage to the adjacent Public Health Building. The street level (first floor) housed the offices of the City Clerk, Assessor, and Treasurer. The second floor included Departments of Finance and Public Works, as well as the Retirement Board, conference rooms, printing facilities, and Purchasing and Inspection Divisions. The third floor included the 504-seat City Commission Chamber room, a large increase from the fifty seats in the old City Hall. The third floor also included conference rooms, City Manager's office, Law Department, Land Board, Recreation and Park Board, and the City Planner offices.

When constructed, City Hall and the other buildings in the Municipal Center used similar finish materials. The interior walls included wood paneling, movable steel partitions, ceramic tiles, brick, and painted cement block. Ceilings were acoustic tiles with recessed lighting. The Michigan Architect and Engineer declared that the "range of the interior colors would make a housewife envious." The palette included oranges, yellows, greens, grays, and tans. A combination of venetian blinds and curtains were used for interior window coverings. Among specific interior highlights was a pneumatic tube system in City Hall that enabled the easy exchange of money between departments.

The primary entrance to City Hall is on the first floor at street level, through a glazed vestibule that is centered on the façade. The vestibule opens into a two-story lobby. The rectilinear room has a public service counter in the southwest corner, a corridor centered on the south wall that leads to elevators and offices, and access to the Finance Department through doors on the north wall. The Finance Department is accessed through two entrances. The west entrance includes a pair of glazed doors flanked on either side by a sidelight and surmounted by a glazed transom. The east entrance is slightly smaller and includes a pair of glazed doors with a single sidelight and glazed transom. The southeast quadrant of the lobby includes a staircase partially hidden behind a snack bar.

The lobby flooring is twelve-inch-square vinyl tile. The room is flooded with natural light by curtain walls on the north and south walls. The east and west walls are constructed of exposed brick that matches the building's exterior. The brick walls are bisected by a broad belt course molding between the first and second floors. The second-floor walls are plastered above the belt course on the east half of the room. The ceiling is clad with twelve-inch-square acoustic tiles with similarly sized recessed square light fixtures placed in regular intervals. Additionally, four ceiling fans are centered in each of the quadrants of the room.

The lobby staircase provides access to the second-floor bridge that passes over the lobby. The dog-legged staircase has terrazzo stair treads and is lined by a balustrade consisting of narrow metal uprights with wood rails. Wrapping the north and east walls of the staircase is a one-story snack bar. The snack bar has partition walls with a painted drywall surface on the east and west

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

elevations. The north wall of the snack bar faces the interior of the lobby and comprises three full-height wood-framed windows flanking two glazed panels below the height of an interior counter. The windows are surmounted by a boxed cornice and the ceiling is clad in translucent rectangular panels.

Barrier-free access to City Hall's upper floors is facilitated by two elevators. The elevator doors are on the east wall of the corridor south of the lobby, immediately south of the lobby staircase. The elevator lobby walls are identified by decorative tiles, a design feature that is repeated on the public floors of City Hall and Public Health Building. The wall has a checkered pattern formed by one-inch-square ceramic tiles arranged in a three-wide by five-tall design. The dominant color scheme is alternating light and dark gray tiles; however, panels of other colors are placed randomly in the design, including yellow, white, black, pink, green, peach, and red/brown.

A dominant feature of the lobby is a bridge that carries the second-floor corridor over the lobby to connect the north and south ends of the building. The center of the bridge is supported with a square post on either side with a crossbeam below the bridge deck. The bridge deck is lined by a metal and wood balustrade that matches the lobby staircase. At the north end of the bridge is a glazed double-door entry to the Department of Finance offices. The doors are flanked by full-height sidelights and are surmounted by a fully glazed transom window. The corridor south of the bridge is open to an elevator lobby and additional office suites.

The southern half of the third floor of City Hall is filled by the City Commission Chamber. The large rectilinear room stretches the full width of the building. At the south end of the room are two doorways that flank a central dais. The western door accesses a small meeting room and the eastern door leads to a short hallway with restrooms and a secondary exit. The Commission Chamber has twelve-by-twelve-inch vinyl tile flooring. Four pairs of engineered trusses extend slightly from the walls and then curve across the chamber to form a roughly barrel-vaulted ceiling. The ceiling between the trusses has a rough shotcrete-like surface for sound dampening. At the center ridge of the room is a lower panel, also clad with the same shotcrete finish. The panel is pierced by two large circular openings, through which a cone extends and connects to a flat disk clad with shotcrete. Inside the opening around the disks is a smooth finish. Mounted in the upper side of the disk are lights, which when on, bounce off the opening above to provide ambient lighting. Between the vertical portion of the trusses, the east and west walls of the chamber feature banks of windows, below which are heating units clad in vertical wood paneling. The same paneling is used on the south wall, whereas the north wall is wallpapered.

The focal point of the Chambers is a raised dais with three flanking desks near the south wall. These desks are designated for the council president, city attorney, city clerk, and support staff during meetings. The fronts of the wooden desks have panels created with raised molding. Two sets of desks are positioned at an angle from the east and west sides of the dais. The lower desks have panels of alternating colored materials across the front surface. These lower desks provide seating for the city council members. Separating the council portion of the chambers from the public seating is a low screen composed of wood-framed panels of translucent glass, which are anchored to the floor by low metal posts.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

Audience seating in the chamber is arranged in two sections, providing a central aisle and two side aisles. Each section of seating contains rows of stationary metal-framed connected chairs. The folding chairs each have a wood seat and back.

Powerhouse; 1955–1958; 1101 Saginaw Street; Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates; Contributing

The powerhouse is a below-grade structure with a rectilinear footprint located between City Hall and the Municipal Courts Building. The structure's roof forms a tarred deck that was once the Veterans Memorial Plaza. In lieu of a traditional memorial, the powerhouse has a sculptural trilon chimney stack, a prism-shaped obelisk with three faces. The chimney is four stories, constructed of light brown brick, and has a triangular footprint.

Interior

The interior of the powerhouse was not accessible.

Municipal Courts Building; 1955–1958; 120 East Fifth Street; Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates; Contributing

A two-story, narrow hyphen connects the western end of the Police Department Headquarters Building to the two-story Municipal Courts Building, which is oriented perpendicular to East Fifth Street. The Municipal Courts Building also has a flat roof and a rectilinear footprint. The building is mostly at grade, except for the southern portion of the east elevation, which is exposed due to the downward slope of the ground. This section also extends to the Police Department Headquarters Building, to the east of and below the hyphen, and has a door surrounded by large plate glass windows. The east elevation of the lower level is clad in brick; the remaining elevations are clad mainly in white marble.

The north elevation, which faces East Fifth Street, is clad in square panels of white marble. Paired, plate glass windows extend from the ground to the roofline in the center of this elevation and have narrow metal frames. The façade, which faces west, has a recessed entryway in the northern end of the building. This section is also clad in brick and features a small vestibule with paired metal and glass doors and large plate glass window topped by a flat roof. A very large plate glass window resting on a dark blue metal panel is placed above the vestibule. To the south of the entryway, the façade is filled with ribbons of plate glass windows and dark blue metal spandrels that stretch from the ground to the roofline. The windows alternate between windows with lower hoppers and windows with transoms. This fenestration pattern is repeated on the east elevation.

Interior

The interior of the Municipal Courts Building, now fully occupied by the Flint Police Department, was not accessible.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

**Flint Police Department Headquarters Building; 1955–1958; 210 East Fifth Street;
Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates; Contributing**

The Flint Police Department Headquarters² is oriented parallel East Fifth Street. The building is connected by a narrow hyphen to the Municipal Courts Building, discussed below. The building is two stories in height, and the lower level is nearly completely exposed due to the downward slope of the land. The building has a large setback and a pedestrian bridge stretches from the sidewalk along East Fifth Street to the first story. The building has a rectilinear footprint and a flat roof. The walls are clad in yellow and light brown brick. Bands of white marble are used on the outer corners, in the cornice, and as a water table below the first story.

The façade of the main building is divided into twelve fenestration bays. Paired glass and metal doors are placed in the bay that is fourth from the eastern end and are accessed by the pedestrian bridge. The remaining portion of this bay is filled with plate glass windows with light yellow, metal panels in the spandrels on both stories. The other first- and second-story façade bays are filled with plate glass windows and light yellow, metal panels as well. Each bay has four plate glass windows on each story; the central two windows have small transoms while the outer two windows have lower sliding windows. However, the western second-story windows are awning windows. On the lower level, ribbons of small windows are placed in the eastern three bays, while the central four bays have large plate glass windows with lower sliding windows. The lower level bays are separated by narrow, white, concrete pilasters.

The south (rear) elevation largely mirrors the façade fenestration. However, the lower level has several two-bay, metal, overhead doors and several metal pedestrian doors. A canopy with slats of metal spans the south elevation above the first story.

The east elevation has a centrally placed group of four plate glass windows topped with a band of yellow metal on the second floor. A metal door is placed in the lower level. The west elevation lacks fenestration except for paired metal and glass doors. These doors are sheltered by a colonnade that extends to the City Hall building at 1101 Saginaw Street.

Interior

The interior of the Police Department Headquarters Building was not accessible.

**City of Flint Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1; 1959; 310 East Fifth Street;
Architect – A. Charles Jones and Associates; Contributing**

² There is a minor inconsistency in the way the Fire Department and Police Department buildings are identified by signage. The Fire Department is identified by building signage and on the city's website as the City of Flint Fire Department, although it is occasionally referred to as the Flint Fire Department. The Police Department, however, is identified by building signage and the city's website as the Flint Police Department. The department is identified as the Department of Fire in the city's code of ordinances. Likewise, the Police Department is identified as the Department of Police. The names of the buildings in this nomination follow the naming conventions as reflected in the building signage.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

The City of Flint Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1³ is an International style building at the northwest corner of the complex, near the intersection of Fifth and Stevens Streets. The building is situated on a northwest-southeast axis and faces northwest toward Fifth Street, with the east elevation facing a parking lot and the large, park-like greenspace that occupies the center of the Municipal Center. The building appears as two stories from the façade, but the ground slopes downward, from north to south and west to east, towards the rear of the building, resulting in a lower walkout level along the south elevation.

The Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1 building is composed of two rectilinear multi-story wings that are connected by a narrow hyphen between the Headquarters to the east and Station No. 1 to the west. This results in an irregular footprint. A narrow three-story tower is set into the northwest corner of the larger south wing. The southwest wing (hereafter Station No. 1) holds the apparatus and maintenance bays and the residential areas, whereas the smaller northeast wing contains administrative offices (hereafter Fire Department Headquarters). The Fire Department Headquarters is slightly lower in height than Station No. 1. The various volumes and planes of the building are defined by the use of white marble, resulting in highly defined spaces. Bands of marble used at the exterior corners, along the cornice, and as a water table to provide contrast to the individual planes of the façade and elevations, which are clad in yellow and light brown brick or glass and red metal panel curtain walls. All of the sections have flat roofs.

The main entrance to the building is in the façade of the hyphen. A pair of glass and metal doors is sheltered by a canopy that is supported by two red metal poles. The doors are divided by a panel of red metal, which is also used in a transom that spans both doors. The entrance is surrounded by large, plate glass windows that are divided by narrow metal frames.

The façade of the Fire Department Headquarters is clad in brick and is trimmed in white marble at the cornice line and along the northeast and northwest corners. The façade of this section lacks fenestration. The façade of the apparatus section is arranged as a number of rectangular planes differentiated by materials and set apart by white marble trim. The three-story tower lacks fenestration on its façade; however, a band of narrow windows extends from the ground to the roofline on the east and west elevations, abutting the marble-clad façade. At the south end of the apparatus section is a brick veneer wall. Set between the three-story tower and this brick veneer wall is the main block of the apparatus section. The first story has six fenestration bays. Five of the bays have single-bay, red metal, overhead doors, each with six small rectangular windows in the middle in a three-over-three configuration. The easternmost bay has a glass and metal pedestrian door set in a plate glass and metal panel curtain wall. Unlike the rest of the building, the metal panels are gray. The second story of the façade has a curtain wall of plate glass windows set within narrow metal frames. Windows alternate between paired windows with

³ See note on page nine above regarding the names of the City of Flint Fire Department Headquarters and the Flint Police Department Headquarters.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

lower hoppers and paired windows with transoms. Red metal panels are placed above and below the windows.

The west elevation of Station No. 1 features a ribbon window on the first story that stretches across the entire elevation. The central portion of the ribbon window features floor to ceiling plate glass windows, while the outer sections have plate glass windows resting on red metal panels.

The east elevation fenestration is placed on the Fire Department Headquarters. The first and second stories are slightly recessed and filled with ribbons of plate glass windows with red metal panels in the spandrels. Several of the windows have lower hopper sections, and these windows alternate with paired windows that have transoms. The northern one-sixth of the elevation is filled entirely with red metal panels and has a pedestrian door on the first story, which is accessed by a metal stairway. The lower level is exposed by the slope of the ground and also features a ribbon of window with red metal panels. This window pattern is also repeated on the west elevation of the Fire Department Headquarters.

The south (rear) elevation largely mirrors the façade. The entryway, which is located on the lower walkout level, also features a pair of doors sheltered by a canopy and surrounded by large plate glass windows; however, some of these windows have white metal panels in place of glass. The lower walkout level of the rear elevation of Station No. 1 has five bays with overhead doors and two bays with metal pedestrian doors. The western one-quarter of the second story has a ribbon of five windows, two of which have lower hoppers and all of which have red metal panels above and below the plate glass. The majority of the rear elevation is filled with a curtain wall of windows that spans both stories and features ribbons of large plate glass windows with red metal spandrels. The first-story plate glass windows are taller than those on the second story.

The building is ornamented mostly by the use of the white marble panels, glass, and metal. However, the three-story tower has a metal spire rising from the top of its façade. The Fire Department Headquarters has individual letters reading "FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS" placed on its façade and rear elevation, and the façade canopy has individual letters reading "310 E FIFTH." Large, contemporary communication towers rise from the top of the three-story tower.

Interior

The Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1 has three floors: a ground level with exterior access on the south elevation; the first floor, which is at street level; and the second floor. The east section of the building houses administrative offices and the west section includes the apparatus and maintenance bays and the residential areas. The firehouse is distinguished by its large open bays for fire vehicles, which are accessible from the southeast elevation on the ground floor and from the northwest elevation on the first floor. In addition to the garage bays, the station includes classrooms and living quarters for the fire personnel on the second floor. Public access to the building is from the façade (northwest) elevation of the hyphen between the

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

two building sections, with the primary entrance at street level on the first floor, facing East Seventh Street.

Durability was the main objective of the building's interior. The interior "service areas" include terrazzo floors, glazed tile walls, and acoustic tile ceilings with recessed lighting.⁴ The interior spaces are divided by a stairway tower and glazed lobby between the administrative offices and living quarters/garage. The tower features an "aluminum mast," or spire, which formerly supported an antenna for the department's radio system. Like City Hall, each level of the Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1 Building was designed for a different function. When it opened, the headquarters section of the building included the Fire Prevention Bureau on the lower level.⁵ This included offices for the fire marshal, assistants, housing inspectors, and photographic department, and reception and conference rooms. The first story included the Fire Department administration offices, including the office of the chief, the chief's assistants, office space, a conference room, and the records vault. The second story housed dispatching facilities and fire alarm equipment for the whole department. This included a variety of communication facilities, including a radio, telephone switchboard, and a "modernized telegraph fire alarm system."⁶ The second story also included training facilities, including a classroom, office, and storage for uniforms and training materials.

Station No. 1 was designed to have a maintenance shop on the lower level to provide services to all eight of the department's fire stations.⁷ The space, accessed by garage bays on the south elevation, housed facilities for washing and drying hoses, an electrical shop, a storage area, emergency power equipment, and apparatuses for cleaning fire trucks. The first story included garage bays that faced East Fifth Street for vehicle storage. At the time of construction, the space was planned for four pump trucks, two tractor-drawn aerial ladders, a combination of squad and rescue trucks, and a command car. The level also included storage for miscellaneous equipment, as well as twenty thousand feet of reserve hose, the ready-to-use hose, and cleaning facilities for rubber coats, boots, and elements. The first story also accommodated some shared living quarters for the thirty fire personnel who were stationed there in twelve-hour shifts, including a kitchen, living room, and dining room. The second story housed dormitories, lockers, showers, restrooms, a library, and a study area. Five brass poles allowed the firefighters to quickly access the main floor from the upper floors when the alarm bell rang.

The interior of the hyphen is a two-story open lobby that is flooded with natural light from floor-to-ceiling windows on the facade and southwest elevation, and the east and west walls are clad with brick that matches that on the exterior. The lobby has access from the facade to the first floor and from the southeast elevation to the ground level. The first and second lobby floors

⁴ Pallotta, "Fire-Headquarters," 51.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

serve as bridges, terminating several inches away from the southeast wall of the hyphen tower. A sleek metal balustrade extends along the outer edges' sides of the bridges.

The floor of the lobby's first level is terrazzo laid in a checkered diamond pattern of alternating black and white panels. The underside of the second-floor bridge is visible from the first floor. Like the first floor, the second-floor bridge extends nearly the full width of the lobby. The underside of the bridge is clad in twelve-inch-square acoustic tiles with a polka-dot pattern printed on the surface. Cylindrical light fixtures are attached to the ceiling in three rows: the center row of two canister lights is attached directly to the ceiling, and the outer two rows, each with three lights extending below the ceiling, are attached by stiff rods that connect to a small ceiling medallion.

The first level of the lobby provides access to both the Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1. The Fire Department Headquarters is accessed through a pair of glazed doors surmounted by a transom light. The doors are positioned in an off-centered shallow recess on the east wall. A glass display case is mounted high on the lobby wall adjacent to the doors. Station No. 1 is accessed from the west side of the lobby, which passes through a recessed area that includes a lowered ceiling in front of an elevator on the south wall and a pair of heavy metal doors on the west wall. On the second floor, the lobby bridge has a vinyl tile floor and the ceiling is sheathed with drop acoustic tiles. Modest metal railings extend across the sides of the bridge flanking the window walls.

The first floor of Station No. 1 has a concrete floor with lines painted to demarcate the parking space of each vehicle. The walls and free-standing piers are sheathed with glazed yellow brick, and the ceiling is twelve-inch acoustic tiles. The classrooms on the second level have vinyl tile floors, a combination of painted brick and partition walls, and acoustic tile ceilings. The private living quarters of the fire personnel and the administrative offices were not accessible.

Public Health Building (City Hall South Building); 1955–1957; 121 East Seventh Street; Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates; Contributing

The Public Health Building, is one story in height. However, its lower level is completely exposed along the façade, north, and east elevations due to the downward slope of the land. The building has a large setback and a pedestrian bridge stretches from the sidewalk along Stevens Street to the first story. The building has a rectilinear footprint with the long axis oriented parallel to Stevens Street and a flat roof. The walls are clad in yellow and light brown brick. Bands of white marble are used on the outer corners and in the cornice.

Pilasters clad in white marble divide the façade and north elevation into multiple fenestration bays, which fill these elevations. The main entryway is centered on the façade and has paired metal and glass doors, which are accessed from the pedestrian bridge. Each bay, including in the lower level, has a recessed ribbon of plate glass windows with blue metal spandrels. Within each fenestration bay, each window alternates between having a lower hopper or sliding window and an upper hopper. White metal pergolas stretch along the tops of the bottom of the first story,

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

between the windows and the marble-clad posts. One bay on the first story is clad in blue standing-seam metal oriented vertically.

The east and west elevations lack fenestration and are clad in brick. However, the north elevation is also filled with ribbons of plate glass windows and metal spandrels. A wing extends from the lower level. It has a flat roof and is composed of large plate glass windows with narrow, silver, metal posts. Paired metal and glass doors are placed on the east and west elevations. This wing leads to the Public Health Auditorium.

Interior

The interior of the Public Health/South Building is similar to City Hall. The rectilinear building is two floors, a ground floor and a first floor, which is at street level. The spatial arrangement includes a two-story lobby at the center of the building. On both floors, west of the lobby, are central corridors flanked by offices and east of the lobby are office suites. Like other buildings in the Municipal Center, the lobby has fully glazed exterior walls and brick interior walls.

Among the most distinctive interior details in the building's two-story lobby is the open stairway that provides access between the ground and first floors. Also within the lobby is the ground-floor entrance to the semi-detached Auditorium. The open, dog-legged staircase is constructed of concrete with terrazzo stair treads that extend to create the appearance of floating steps. Balustrades of bent aluminum railings and thin metal balusters flank the staircase and landing. The west wall of the lobby repeats the checkerboard tile pattern seen in City Hall. The pattern consists of rectangular groupings of three-by-five, square, one-inch ceramic tiles. The dominant color scheme is alternating groupings of dark and light gray; however, color groupings are applied at random and include yellow, white, black, pink, green, peach, and red/brown. On both the ground and first floors, the tile wraps around the corners to extend partially down the west corridor around the elevator area.

Finish materials of the ground level lobby and west corridor include a floor clad with square vinyl tiles. The walls are constructed of two types of concrete block: yellow, porcelain enamel finished blocks on the lower two-thirds of the wall, and regular flat surface block above. The ceilings are twelve-inch-square acoustic tiles with thirty-six-by-twelve-inch recessed lighting panels. The doors and door trim are all metal. The doors have a variety of configurations, including solid metal with lower ventilation panels, glazed upper panels with lower ventilation panels, and solid metal.

East of the first-floor lobby is the Building Permits office. The exterior wall of the Permits office is clad with broad wood panels and is pierced by two individual doors near the south corner of the lobby. There is also a three-part window on the west wall of the permit office that provides additional natural light from the lobby. Extending west of the lobby is a corridor that accesses restrooms and offices. The west corridor floor tile has been replaced with carpet and the walls are clad with wallpaper.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

Public Health Auditorium (Auditorium); 1955–1957; 121 East Seventh Street; Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates; Contributing

The Public Health Auditorium is to the east of City Hall and north of the South Building, to which it connects via a one-story wing. The dome has a circular footprint and a dome-shaped roof with deep overhangs that is sheathed in shotcrete. Ten tapering concrete posts, integral to the dome roof, extend from the bottom of the roof to the ground. The sides of the posts project outward and continue along the bottom of the roofline, connecting to the neighboring posts. The exterior walls are clad in yellow and brown brick. Ribbons of curving plate glass windows extend from low concrete bulkheads to the roof. The main entryway is placed within the wing. A metal door, partially below grade, leads into the north elevation and is accessed by several concrete stairs.

After the completion of the Municipal Center, a reflecting pool around the Public Health Auditorium was filled. The pool wrapped the west side of the dome and extended around the north portion to create an L-plan pool between the Public Health Building and City Hall (Photograph 3). The north end of the pool was bound by a sidewalk, north of which was a green space adjacent to the sunken courtyard. It appears that the pool, which was planned to aid the cooling mechanism for the Municipal Center's air conditioning system, was replaced with sodded areas by the 1990s.

Interior

The Public Health Auditorium was designed for visual relief from the numerous straight lines and rectangular shapes of the complex. It was intentionally semidetached from the Public Health Building so that it could be used for multiple purposes. The dome also had the advantage of offering "every seat perfect visual and audio communication with every other seat in the auditorium."

Interior access to the Public Health Auditorium is through a glazed hyphen that forms a passageway connecting the south side of the auditorium to the north elevation of the Public Health Building's lower level. The one-story hyphen has a rectilinear footprint, which on the interior includes a flight of stairs that accesses the lower level. Interior finishes include slate floors and terrazzo stairs encircled by an aluminum balustrade. The east and west walls have fully glazed curtain walls while the north and south walls are exposed brick. The passageway's ceiling is clad by twelve-inch-square acoustic tiles. Boxed light fixtures are mounted to the ceiling, extending the length of the passage in two rows. The small space has a number of fenestration features: off-center on the south wall is a pair of glazed doors with a transom above, and fully glazed exterior doors are centered on the east and west walls, providing direct entry to the space from the exterior of the hyphen.

The north end of the passage terminates in an open antechamber within the south side of the Public Health Auditorium dome. This portion of the space has exposed tan brick walls, matching the auditorium's exterior brick. Wood doors provide access to the auditorium on the east and west sides of the antechamber. Off-centered on the north side of the antechamber is a narrow,

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

metal door for a custodial closet that also includes a ladder to a projection booth above. The projection booth is a small room with two square wall openings for film projection into the auditorium room.

The Public Health Auditorium itself is a large, open, circular space with a floor that slopes downward toward a small, raised stage that is centered on the north side of the room. The auditorium floor is concrete with tiled aisles flanking each of the three sections of seats. Walls of the room are exposed tan brick, and a cornice molding encircles the room at the junction of the wall and ceiling. The tall window walls are covered with heavy curtains. A wood exterior exit door is located on either side of the stage. The ceiling is sheathed by shotcrete and is punctured by recessed circular lights and ventilation units.

The semicircular stage area has a finished wood platform that is accessed by a short run of stairs inset on its east and west sides. The wall at the rear of the stage is clad in a blonde wood veneer. There are doors of matching wood located on each side of the stage back. Blue floor-length curtains are placed between the doors. Matching curtains form a valance over the stage in a curved proscenium wall that echoes the footprint of the stage apron.

Stationary, permanent furniture is used for the auditorium seating. Each of the three groupings of seating includes rows of attached metal chairs with fold-up seats. The chair backs and upholstery are chartreuse, the arms are a light wood, and the remainder of the chair structures are a dark gray metal.

Open Spaces, Circulation Systems, and Parking Lots; Contributing

The Municipal Center includes six sites, including three large parking areas and driveways, the sunken courtyard (discussed below), the mall area which extends to the east between the City Hall and Stevens Street, and the open grassy area that wraps around the buildings along East Fifth Street, Saginaw Street, and East Seventh Street.

The large grassy areas adjacent to Saginaw, East Fifth, and East Seventh Streets extend from the front of the associated buildings to the curb. Other than the addition of trees, plants, the flagpoles in their current locations, the building sign, and the recent placement of several sculptures and a historical marker, the open spaces and sidewalks/pathways remain unaltered from the original design. This includes the placement of the sidewalks that access each of the buildings and the curvilinear pathways that lead to the front of City Hall. An additional large open grassy area is located between the two large parking areas and east of City Hall. This area was not a formal park, although it does have sidewalks defining its boundaries. Historically there was a children's playground southeast of the open area, which was removed with the construction of I-475, and the remaining portion of the parcel was incorporated into the Public Health parking lot.

The grassy areas are relatively flat, although there are steep changes in terrain in front of the Public Health Building and the Police Department Headquarters and their respective adjacent streets. This terrain change continues to the rear of each building, resulting in a lower level partially hidden from view of the street. Because of the importance this feature plays in the

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

setting of the Municipal Center, the lawns and open areas are considered to contribute to the building complex. There are essentially just two large open areas, with one extending along the south side of East Fifth Street, wrapping down Saginaw Street, and turning to parallel East Seventh Street. The second open area extends from the rear of City Hall east to Stevens Street.

A series of sidewalks define each of the grassy areas. Rectilinear concrete walkways span the distance between buildings and from the buildings to the sidewalks flanking the streets. The exception to this gridded walkway system is a U-shaped path that begins at the outer perimeter sidewalks and curves to the front door of City Hall before returning back the opposite direction to terminate at the perimeter sidewalk. Two additional curved sidewalks are located near the north and south corners of City Hall, each beginning at the front doors. The north walk sweeps out to join the sidewalk grid to the north. The south sidewalk curves past the walkway at the south side of City Hall and extends to the perimeter sidewalk along the south side of the Municipal Center.

The parking areas were part of the original plan for the Municipal Center and were carefully placed in the original design to keep vehicles from blocking most views across the lawns to the buildings. There have been some changes to the parking lots, including reducing the area for the northeast lot where the Fire Department Headquarters and Station No. 1 Building was constructed on a portion of the lot. The small triangular portion of the south lot is part of the former playground area that was removed with the construction of I-475 to the south. Despite these changes, the parking areas have not expanded into the planned open space of the complex and therefore are considered to contribute to the City of Flint Municipal Center.

Sunken Courtyard; 1955–1957; Architect – H. E. Beyster & Associates; Contributing

Located to the east of City Hall is a sunken courtyard, a contributing landscape feature. It is built of brick retaining walls with concrete coping. The courtyard has a rectangular footprint and is accessed by shallow concrete stairways positioned in the north and south corners of the east and west sides. Within the courtyard is a paved sidewalk grid system that creates areas of manicured lawns, paved areas, and sections devoted to tree and shrubbery plantings.

Bronze Sculptures; 2017; Artist – Suzanne Johnson; Non-Contributing

Two bronze statues erected to memorialize autoworkers are located near the sidewalk in front of City Hall. The northern statue is on a stone slab. It includes a bronze figure of a 1930s man holding a plaque, placed adjacent to a wheel. The southern statue is also on a stone slab and includes a bronze figure of a 1930s man and an automobile door. The plaque for the south statue is positioned adjacent to the figure on the base. The statues were erected in 2017 and are non-contributing.⁸

⁸ Cheryl Dennison, "Auto workers memorialized with bronze statues at Flint City Hall," *My City Magazine* last updated September 27, 2017, accessed October 25, 2018, <http://www.mycitymag.com/auto-workers-memorialized-with-bronze-statues-at-flint-city-hall/>.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

Municipal Center Sign and Flag Poles; ca. 1975; Non-Contributing

A group of three flagpoles is south of the sidewalk that extends perpendicular to Saginaw Street to the front of City Hall. The flagpoles are roughly one-third of the way between the curb along Saginaw Street and City Hall. The poles are widely spaced and to the east of several shrubs. The shrubs surround a low rectangular sign, approximately four feet high and six feet wide. The sign consists of a lower concrete/stone panel surmounted by a metal sign that reads "CITY OF FLINT MUNICIPAL CENTER."

Municipal Center Historical Marker; 1961; Non-Contributing

A State of Michigan historical marker is located near the northwest corner of the City Hall. The informational marker provides a statement on the history of Flint as the "Vehicle City." Although it is over fifty years old, the marker does not meet Criteria Consideration F and therefore is non-contributing.

***River* Sculpture; 1977; Artist – Syd Atkinson; Non-Contributing**

A metal sculpture, entitled *River*, is located to the east of the Public Health Auditorium. This statue is approximately six feet high and has a shallow V-plan footprint. Adjacent to this portion are angular forms and pipes that result in an abstract interpretation of a river. The *River* sculpture is the work of artist Syd Atkinson. The piece was installed the piece in 1977. Therefore, it is outside the period of significance and is considered non-contributing.

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Government
Community Planning and Development

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

Period of Significance

1957–1959

Significant Dates

1957

1959

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

H. E. Beyster and Associates, Inc.

A. Charles Jones and Associates

Sorenson-Gross Construction Company

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

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.)

The City of Flint Municipal Center (hereafter Municipal Center) is significant at the local level under National Register Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the Municipal Center is eligible for its significant associations with government and community planning. The complex is the culmination of planning efforts to centralize Flint's municipal services that began in the 1920s. The process received input from major planning figures, including renowned New York City planner Robert Moses. The Municipal Center has remained the center of Flint's government since its construction in the 1950s. Although departments and functions have changed in some buildings, the buildings retain their association with civic services.

Under Criterion C, the Municipal Center is a distinctive grouping of five International style buildings, a domed building, one structure located below grade with a towering sculptural chimney stack, known as a trilon, and landscaping. The majority of the Municipal Center, excluding only the Fire Department Headquarters Building, was designed by H. E. Beyster and Associates. The International style buildings include curtain walls, porcelain panels, and a marble veneer. The rectilinear forms and consistent use of glass curtain walls illustrate the material aesthetics of the International style. Additionally, the shotcrete-covered, domed Public Health Auditorium is a unique component of the Municipal Center. Its circular form provides a sensitive contrast to the horizontality of the International style aesthetic of the rest of the complex.

The last building to be constructed was the Fire Department Headquarters. This building was designed by the Flint architectural firm A. Charles Jones & Associates. Designed in a architectural vocabulary that compliments the earlier buildings of the Municipal Center, the Fire Department Headquarters building also employs rectilinear forms and the use of brick, glass and enamel curtain walls, and marble. The function of the building, like those of the earlier buildings, is indicated by the use of color, in this case red.

Historic landscape features extant within the Municipal Center include the curvilinear paths, pedestrian bridges over small basins, parking lots, and the sunken courtyard. Overall, the Municipal Center retains a high level of historic integrity.

The period of significance dates from 1957, when the first buildings opened, to 1969. This period follows the National Park Service's fifty-year guideline and encompasses construction of the Municipal Center and its early years serving as the center of Flint municipal government.

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

History of the City of Flint and Development of City Government

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

The modern-day city of Flint began as a small trading post at the intersection of the Flint River and the Old Saginaw Trail, at a location that was known to Native Americans as “Mus-ca-da-wain,”⁹ (also given as Muscadawin,¹⁰ or Muscatawanigh¹¹) and to the white traders first as the “Grand Traverse,” later as Todd’s Crossing.¹² The village of Flint River was platted in 1833, and a post office was established there in 1834. The village of Flint was platted in 1836 and the post office shortened its name accordingly. Incidentally, none of these villages were ever incorporated, and it was not formally established until 1855 when these “villages” were incorporated as the city of Flint.¹³

In 1835 Genesee County was created from land taken from surrounding counties and the village of Flint was fixed as the county seat on August 25, 1835.¹⁴ In 1836 the United States government established a land office there which, in addition to Flint’s status as the county seat, fixed the village as a center of government in Genesee County, which it maintains to present day.

Located in the Saginaw Valley, which, in the early nineteenth century, was “an almost impenetrable forest, which extends uninterruptedly towards the northwest,”¹⁵ the village of Flint developed a considerable milling operation. In 1865, for example, thirty million feet of pine logs were sent by river to the village.¹⁶ The ravenous felling of these vast forests continued northward, and by 1867 a mere six million feet of logs were milled in Flint.¹⁷ By about 1880 the lumbering era had ended.

This economic turn caused the “the sons of civilization and industry”¹⁸ to direct their effort to manufacturing. Soon, “one of the most wonderful industrial revolutions in the annals of the United States”¹⁹ took place within the city of Flint, and by the last decades of the nineteenth century a robust road cart and carriage manufacturing industry had developed in the city. During this time factories in Flint produced as many as 300,000 sets of wagon wheels a year and 150,000 two- and four-wheel carriages.²⁰ So prodigious was the production of these vehicles and their various components, and so far afield were they sold, that the city became known as the

⁹ W. L. Webber. *Indian Cession of 1819 Made by the Treaty of Saginaw*. Saginaw, Mich.: Sermann & Peters, Printers, 1895, p. 17.

¹⁰ W. C. Smith. *Summary of the Early History of Flint, Michigan*. Flint, Mich: Flint Printing Co., 1919, p. 4.

¹¹ Flint Chamber of Commerce. *Progressive Flint*. Flint, Mich.: Flint Chamber of Commerce, 1930, p. 3.

¹² Walter Romig. *Michigan Place Names: The History of the Founding and the Naming of More Than Five Thousand Past and Present Michigan Communities*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986, pp. 199-200.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ladislav Segoe & Associates. *Comprehensive Master Plan of Flint, Michigan*, 1960, p.19.

¹⁵ W. L. Webber. *Indian Cession of 1819 Made by the Treaty of Saginaw*. Saginaw, Mich.: Sermann & Peters, Printers, 1895, p. 26.

¹⁶ Truman B. Fox. *History of the Saginaw Valley*. East Saginaw, MI: Daily Courier Steam Job Print, 1868, p. 17.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted in W. L. Webber. *Indian Cession of 1819 Made by the Treaty of Saginaw*. Saginaw, Mich.: Sermann & Peters, Printers, 1895, p. 14.

¹⁹ “Flint, The Vehicle City.” *Detroit Free Press*, January 29, 1903.

²⁰ Buick Motor Division, General Motors Corp. *Buick’s First Half-Century*. 1952, p. 10.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

“Vehicle City.” These numerous factories drew new inhabitants to the city, and by the early 1900s the city had a population of roughly fourteen thousand people.

As the city’s population increased, the need for additional municipal government functions and services became apparent. The city charter was revised twice, first in 1897 and then just a few years later in 1901.²¹ A new city hall was erected in 1909,²² and included a single police station in a department staffed by ten, while the fire department consisted of four stations and twenty-two employees.²³ City government included elected officials such as supervisors, alderman, justices, and constables. In lieu of multiple municipal departments, city aldermen served on specific committees: finance, lighting, streets, bridges, buildings/repairs, sewers, water, railroads, sanitary, cemeteries, ordinances, licenses, parks, conventions and industries.²⁴ Despite the success of Flint industry the seemingly endless supply of lumber and the days of the horse-drawn travel were coming to a close.

Yet, Flint had particular advantages in its numerous factory buildings and thousands of working men. The purchase of the Buick Motor Company by William C. Durant, and its ultimate location in Flint, resulted in a significant expansion of the geographical size of the city, the number of people, and the number of homes and businesses. The organization of the General Motors Company in 1908, and the subsequent purchase of numerous manufacturing companies and suppliers by the holding company created an economic structure in which the city of Flint was inextricably linked to the company.²⁵

As the industrialized community grew, its population diversified. By 1910 the number of people in the city reached 38,500. By 1915 the population had grown to about 53,000.²⁶ The city’s population increased to 91,600 in 1920, and then to 156,500 by 1930.²⁷ Between 1910 and 1920 large numbers of European immigrants relocated to the city. Among the new immigrants were members of several major ethnic groups, including German, Hungarian, Greek, Polish, Ukrainian, Lebanese, as well as European Jews.²⁸ The number of foreign-born residents in Genesee County peaked in 1930, when the total number reached 25,500.²⁹ In addition to European immigrants, African Americans who migrated from southern states increased the city’s black population by six hundred percent.³⁰ Most sought employment in the automobile factories.

²¹ Gustin, *Picture History*, 43.

²² Ibid.

²³ R. L. Polk, *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1907–1908* (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., 1907), 956; R.L. Polk, *1909 Flint City and Genesee County Directory* (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., 1909), 10.

²⁴ Polk, *1909 Flint City Directory*, 26.

²⁵ Flint Chamber of Commerce. *Progressive Flint*. Flint, MI.: Flint Chamber of Commerce, 1930, p. 5.

²⁶ *Polk's Flint City Directory*. Detroit, MI: R. L. Polk & Co., 1915, p. 10.

²⁷ Gustin, *Picture History*, 159.

²⁸ Ibid., 172.

²⁹ Ibid., 269.

³⁰ Ibid., 171.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

The location of Buick and General Motors subsidiary plants in Flint created a special relationship between the city and the automobile industry in general, and General Motors in particular. In 1929 the Flint Chamber of Commerce reported that:

- (a) The total number of industrial wage earners is approximately equal to 30 percent of the total population [of the city]. The average for all cities in the United States with populations of 100,000 or over is approximately 12 percent.
- (b) Of all industrial wage earners, 95 percent are employed in motor vehicle plants or industries supplemental thereto.
- (c) Over 90 percent of all industrial wage earners are employed in plants which are subsidiaries of General Motors.³¹

This relationship continued through the 1930s and the Great Depression, through World War Two, and into the postwar era. Despite the lack of employment opportunities in the city during the depression, thousands still came, in the hope of obtaining work at one of the city's factories. By 1933 one in three city residents had moved to Flint after 1930,³² and by the early 1940s Flint had reached a population of 151,543 (a drop of almost 5,000 residents from the high in 1930) and occupied 29.86 square miles within Genesee County.³³

The first half of the 1950s were prosperous years for the companies and people of Flint. Robust growth in both automobile and construction provided a significant increase in employment opportunities. The city-wide workforce increased from an estimated 87,200 job-holders in 1945 to 127,300 workers in 1953.³⁴

By 1956, however, signs of stagnation and recession appeared. Through the first months of that year, "a general slowdown in consumer installment buying" occurred.³⁵ Automobile sales dropped considerably, and the depressed demand eventually reached Michigan and Flint.

The *Detroit Free Press* reported on April 28, 1956, that "General Motors Corp. accounted for more than half of the 10,000 auto industry layoffs in the last week."³⁶ In the preceding week alone, "1,300 were idled at GM's Buick plant in Flint."³⁷

In May 1956 the *Lansing State Journal* reported that "some 390,000 [General Motors] employees in 119 Cadillac, Buick, Oldsmobile, Pontiac and Chevrolet plants in 64 cities" would be closed for one day.³⁸

³¹ Flint Chamber of Commerce. *Progressive Flint*. Flint, MI.: Flint Chamber of Commerce, 1930, p. 7.

³² Frank J. Manley, Bernard W. Reed, and Robert K. Burns, *The Community School in Action*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961), 21.

³³ Polk, *Flint City Directory 1941*, 12; R. L. Polk & Co. *Flint City Directory 1941* (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., 1941), 12; Highsmith *Demolition Means Progress*, 38.

³⁴ Clever, "Population Spurt," 7.

³⁵ Walter Breede, Jr. "Auto Industry Layoffs Put Damper on Business Boom." *Lansing State Journal*. May 13, 1956.

³⁶ "Car Layoffs Hit 10,000 for Week." *Detroit Free Press*. April 28, 1956.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Walter Breede, Jr. "Auto Industry Layoffs Put Damper on Business Boom." *Lansing State Journal*. May 13, 1956.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

Through 1957 and into 1958 “news of industrial layoffs continued.”³⁹ In January 1958 4,200 autoworkers were laid off,⁴⁰ and by February 1958 350,000 people across the state were unemployed.⁴¹ By the end of 1958, however, “automobile production... more than doubled during November” and projections indicated further increases in December.⁴² One year later, through October 1959, General Motors had produced 750,000 more cars than the year before, and Buick, specifically, had produced nearly 31,000 more cars than the first ten months on 1958.⁴³

Despite the economic downturn, both in Flint and across the United States, the people of Flint had reason for celebration. In 1956 General Motors celebrated the production of its fifty-millionth car, and in 1958 the company celebrated its fiftieth year in business. Both events were the cause of considerable celebration in Flint. The city and the company had been “together in sickness and in health,” and appeared to be “closer than ever.”⁴⁴

At the same time, the city and people of Flint had reason of their own to celebrate. A new college and cultural center was under construction, and their new, modern municipal center was nearing completion. The latter of which served as evidence of the city’s progress over the previous one hundred years, reflected “the more intangible community riches [of] industry, progress, vision, civic pride,”⁴⁵ and served as a symbol of future possibilities for the city.

Origins of the Municipal Center Plan

From 1904 through the Great Depression, from the prelude to World War II to the 1950s, the city of Flint benefited from what was an incredible expansion of automobile production in the United States. By the early 1950s, Flint had grown from a small trading post near the Grand Traverse to a modern, thriving metropolis of 163,000 people spread over thirty square miles. Within the city were found: 112 factories, 1,700 retail stores, 15 theaters, 12 hotels totaling more than 1,100 rooms, 94 churches (the number of synagogues and other religious facilities were omitted), and 4 banks with 18 branches.⁴⁶

This considerable growth was not limited to private enterprise. Public facilities and services expanded to include: 8 fire stations maintained by 152 firefighters, a municipally owned hospital with 350 beds, 6 public library buildings, a 127-member police force, 39 public parks, 2 municipal golf courses, 5 municipal swimming pools, 30 public schools, and 500 miles of streets (165 paved miles) lighted by 1,700 lights.⁴⁷

³⁹ “Stocks Down in Quiet Trade.” *Port Huron Times Herald*. January 13, 1958.

⁴⁰ “4,200 Laid Off at Buick Factory.” *Lansing State Journal*. January 30, 1958.

⁴¹ “350,000 Now Idle in State.” *Detroit Free Press*. February 27, 1958.

⁴² “Production is Boosted.” *Lansing State Journal*. December 14, 1958.

⁴³ Fred Olmsted. “Auto Pace 507,000 Before Steel Pinch.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 3, 1959.

⁴⁴ Louis Cook. “Flint, GM Ready for Anniversary.” *Detroit Free Press*, August 15, 1958.

⁴⁵ “New Center Dedicated to Serve City.” *Flint Journal*. August 16, 1958.

⁴⁶ Flint Chamber of Commerce. *Progressive Flint*. Flint, MI.: Flint Chamber of Commerce, 1930, pp. 23-31.

⁴⁷ Flint Chamber of Commerce. *Progressive Flint*. Flint, MI.: Flint Chamber of Commerce, 1930, pp. 23-31.

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

Despite this general prosperity, the City Hall was approaching forty years old and maintenance had been continuously deferred. In 1946, Mayor E. E. McLogan wrote that the “boilers in the basement of the Flint city hall are leaky and dangerous.”⁴⁸ There also was a shortage of space needed for the new employees required to serve the growing population. This issue, which was first broached by an unfulfilled 1920 plan, would continue to be a problem for the city in the coming decade, leading to extended studies on how to best approach the city hall issue.⁴⁹

The city’s first population boom in the 1910s led city leaders to seek a master plan to accommodate the expanding population. The city hired noted city planner and landscape architect John Nolen of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to aid them in developing a plan that would accommodate the expected growth of the city. By the time he was hired by Flint, Nolen was arguably most well-known for his 1910-1911 study of Madison, Wisconsin, and had written and lectured extensively on city planning, and “advised in the formation of many organizations for the betterment and beautifying of our cities.”⁵⁰ By 1917, Nolen’s list of clients included communities of all sizes and from across the country.⁵¹

Nolen’s study of Flint and final report were provided to the city along with a transportation study undertaken by Bion J. Arnold. Both reports were incorporated into the 1920 city plan. Nolen’s recommendations were the first step toward a modern municipal center for the city of Flint.⁵²

Specifically, Nolen’s plan called for institutional buildings surrounding a two-block central park, bounded by West Second Street to the north, West Third Street to the south, Grand Traverse Street to the west, and Beach Street to the east.⁵³ Church Street would penetrate the park and encircle a World War I memorial sculpture at its center. On the Beach Street side of the park was to be a large addition to City Hall (extended from the original location that fronted on Saginaw Street), a new hotel, and the existing Elks Club. On the opposite side of the park, on Grand Traverse Street, was to be a community building. Second Street was to include an art gallery and federal building. Third Street was mapped to include an existing church and a site for an unspecified building, although the text suggests it was a library. The plan compared the park and municipal center design to such places as Independence Square in Philadelphia and City Hall Park in New York City, as well as squares in Berlin, Vienna, and Lisieux, France.

The plan rationalized the need for what it called a civic center, stating that:

In order that a city may coordinate its official activities and have some point of attraction in which to focus its communal life, it is necessary to have some form

⁴⁸ “Self-Help,” *Lansing State Journal*, January 25, 1946, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Dayne Walling, “Urban Planning for Change: Data and Projections in City of Flint Master Plans (1920, 1960 & 2013),” *Stochastics and Quality Control, De Gruyter*, vol 29 (December 2014), 97.

⁵⁰ John Nolen and Bion J. Arnold. *City Plan of Flint Michigan*, (Flint: City of Flint Planning Board, 1920), 6.

⁵¹ John Nolen. “The City Planning Movement.” *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), June 25, 1917

⁵² Walling, “Urban Planning for Change,” 97.

⁵³ John Nolen and Bion J. Arnold. *City Plan of Flint Michigan*, (Flint: City of Flint Planning Board, 1920), 54–55.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

of civic center, some place of meeting that will fulfill the function of the market place or common of the past.⁵⁴

Despite the great effort of Nolen, Arnold, and the City Planning Board, formal steps to build such a municipal center were not taken until over thirty years later.⁵⁵ In the interim, however, the city did not sit idly by, but continued to engage in planning activities, albeit unrelated to the development of a municipal center.

In August 1936 the Community Fund and the local Chamber of Commerce established the Flint Community Association (FCA).⁵⁶ Led by Harlow H. Curtice, president of the Buick Motor Company, the FCA, in turn, established the Flint Institute of Planning and Research (FIPR). The FIPR studied social and physical issues with the aid of the University of Michigan and the Cranbrook Academy of Art.⁵⁷ In the late 1930s, Eliel Saarinen, president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, was invited by city leaders to assist the city with urban planning issues. Rather than carry out this work himself, Saarinen first sent Edmund N. Bacon, then a student at Cranbrook, and later Eero Saarinen to assist the city.⁵⁸ The first project carried out by Bacon and Saarinen was a traffic study, funded in part by the Works Progress Administration (project number 25-3-1089). Bacon's work began in 1937 and ended in 1939.⁵⁹ The plan did not address the location of or need for a municipal center explicitly, but focused instead on traffic flow, parking, and planning for future traffic needs. His report, however, noted that Saginaw Street, from the Flint River to Third Street was the location of "intensive" commercial development.⁶⁰ Bacon's report indicates that through 1937 the neighborhood south of downtown along Fifth and Seventh Streets, the site of the future municipal center was, more or less, intact.

Development of the City of Flint Municipal Center

After Bacon's departure in 1939 the city does not appear to have undertaken any significant comprehensive planning until the early 1950s.

About 1953, Flint residents voted on a ballot measure to fund construction of a municipal center. Despite perceived public support for the project, the measure failed. The *Flint Journal* attributed the loss to a lack of specificity on the municipal center site.⁶¹ As a result, the Flint City Commission directed the Planning Commission to seek consultation on an appropriate location for the complex.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁵⁵ "Site as Civic Center is Dismissed," *Flint Journal*, August 25, 1953, 17.

⁵⁶ "Flint Organizes Community Group." Hackensack, NJ: *Bergen Evening Record*. March 30, 1937.

⁵⁷ Michael A. Gorman. "\$500,000 is Latest Rackham Fund Gift." *Michigan Alumnus*. July 9, 1938.

⁵⁸ Gregory L. Heller. *Ed Bacon: Planning, Politics, and the Building of Modern Philadelphia*.

⁵⁹ "E. N. Bacon Named to Planning Job." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. January 1, 1949.

⁶⁰ *A Comprehensive City Plan for Flint, Michigan: Part 1*. City Planning Board. 1937, p. 49.

⁶¹ "Highway Contest Let to Flint's Good Fortune in Getting Help of Moses," *Flint Journal*, August 25, 1953, 12.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

To address this issue, the city was assisted by New York engineers Robert Moses, William S. Chapin and Gilmore D. Clarke.⁶² Moses, like Nolen in forty years before, was one of the most prominent public planners in the United States. Moses was in Michigan to accept an award from General Motors for his highway development plan when he was approached by city officials with a request to assist them in planning the municipal center. Ultimately Moses accepted the role, but on the condition that he return to the area to study the issues before making recommendations. Moses was not the only notable member of the planning team. William S. Chapin was a consulting engineer for the New York City Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, and Gilmore D. Clarke was a member of the Institute of Consulting Engineers.⁶³ Because the fees for Moses' effort were waived, the cost for the city was just four thousand dollars to cover travel expenses and other incidentals.⁶⁴

The Flint City Planning Commission plan suggested building the new municipal center at the site of the old City Hall, Police Station, and adjacent square. Moses's team rejected this idea as "not sound planning" because the surrounding streets could not be closed to accommodate a large municipal campus.⁶⁵ Instead, the planners suggested a Saginaw Street location bounded by Stevens, Fifth, and Seventh Streets. They explained that the location was close to mass transit lines, had room for landscaping including a park, could accommodate two hundred parked cars, and had room to expand.

Of the three sites reviewed by the Moses team, a six-block area bound by South Saginaw, East Fifth, East Seventh, and Stevens Streets was ultimately recommended, due in part to its size, location, and landscape. Moses stated that the area was "by far the best location," as it was south of the main business corridor and adjacent to the county government facilities. In his opinion, the project would "reclaim a blighted area," and "encourage healthy development" of the surrounding neighborhood.⁶⁶ Moses' team directed that the Municipal Center should include appealing landscaping, parking, and a public park, all of which could be accommodated at the selected site. They also recommended that Flint seek financing for the project by issuing public bonds.⁶⁷

⁶² "New Center Dedicated to Serve City," *Flint Journal*, August 16, 1958, 8.

⁶³ "Moses for Saginaw St. City Hall," *Flint Journal*, 1.

⁶⁴ "Highway His Services Here Gratis," *Flint Journal*, August 25, 1953, 12.

⁶⁵ "Moses for Saginaw St. City Hall," *Flint Journal*, 1.

⁶⁶ "Highway Contest," *Flint Journal*, 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

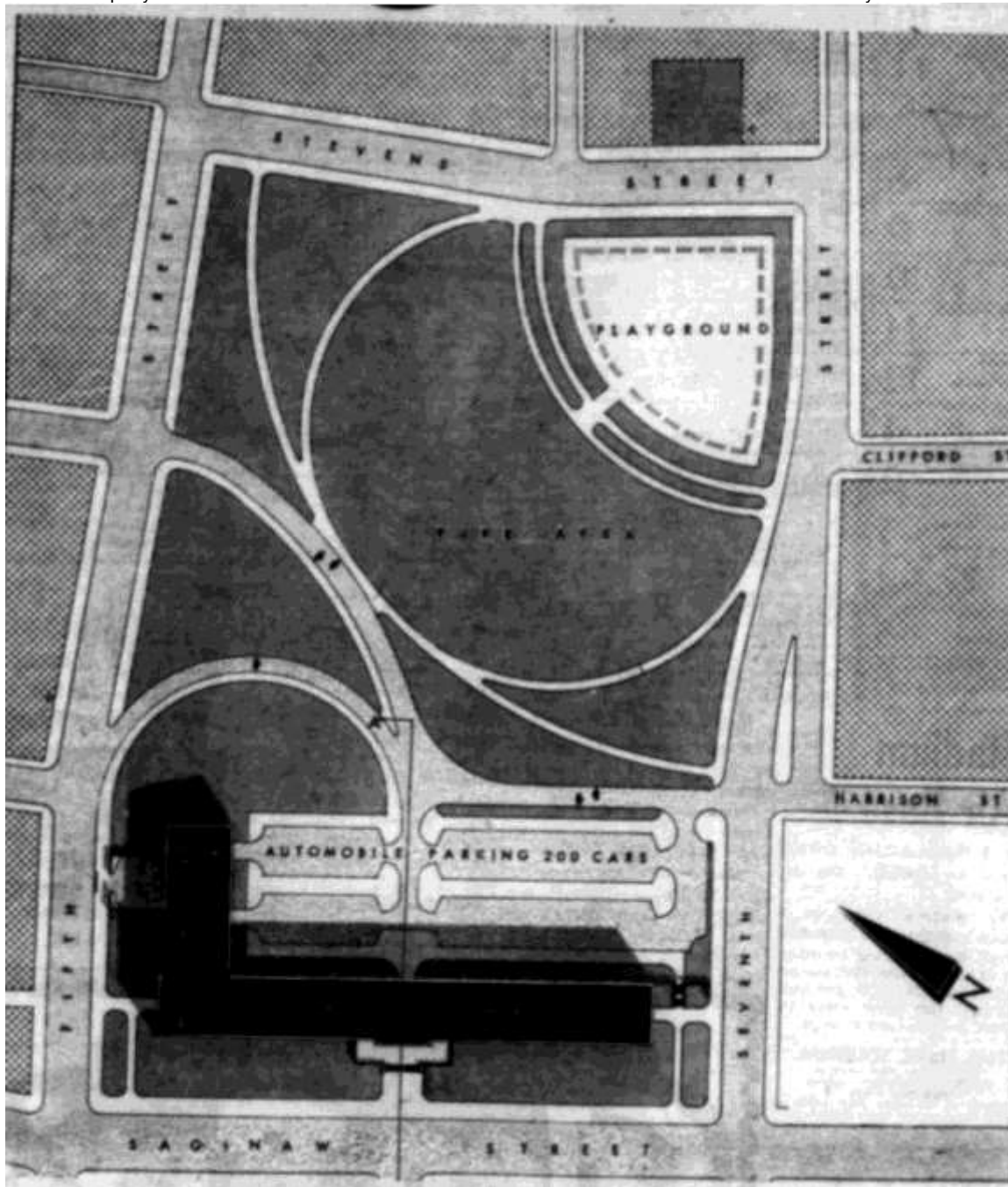


Figure 2: Moses' Plan for the Municipal Center, from *Flint Journal*, August 25, 1953.

The City followed Moses' advice and proposed a bond of nearly five million dollars. Proceeds would be used to undertake the project, which was approved by voters in November 1953.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Bud Johns, "City Government to have New Headquarters in 1957," *Flint Journal*, September 4, 1955, D1.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

Additional funds to reach the projected six million dollars were to come from the sale of the old municipal building sites and a federal grant to fund the new Public Health Building.⁶⁹

Approximately 1.1 million dollars was spent to acquire, condemn, and remove the houses that were present on the site. The city began condemnation in January 1955, prior to acquisition of any property.⁷⁰ Flint's mayor, George M. Algoe, later dismissed the condemned neighborhood as, "a second-rate commercial section, a neglected housing area, several acres of converted swamp known as Haskell's Marsh, and an undeveloped playground."⁷¹

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1928 indicate that businesses were located along Saginaw Street and included used auto sales, a hay and feed store, and a wallpaper and paint store. The Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church was located along Seventh Street. Single-family homes, duplexes, and small apartment buildings lined Harrison Street's west side, Fifth Street, Stevens Street, and Seventh Street. There were no buildings along Clifford Street, and the area bounded by Seventh Street, Harrison Street, Sixth Street, and Clifford Street was labeled as a public dump.⁷²

Aerial imagery from 1954 shows that the two blocks bounded by Saginaw Street to the west, Seventh Street to the south, Fifth Street to the north, and Harrison Street to the east were densely filled with houses, larger commercial buildings, and parking lots. Houses also lined Fifth Street for two blocks to the east and portions of Seventh and Stevens Street; however, the central area was largely empty, in contrast to most of the other areas proximate to Flint's downtown.⁷³

The 1940 Federal Census records indicate that this area was a white, working-class neighborhood. Most of the residents were born in Michigan, with smaller numbers of people from Ohio, Illinois, and various other states, along with Russia, Canada, and Palestine. Most are listed as families in single-family homes, although there were small numbers of lodgers as well. Occupations included clerical worker, stenographer, bookkeeper, draftsman, janitor, salesman, manager, machine worker, assembly line, bench worker, and builder. Not surprisingly, many of these occupations were in the auto industry.⁷⁴

On September 7, 1955, the site of the municipal center was dedicated by Vice-President Richard M. Nixon during Flint's Centennial Week celebration.⁷⁵ Nixon was on the road promoting President Eisenhower's plan for the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act. Prophetically, Nixon remarked, "as you think of the industrial future of Flint, it is very significant that the President... submitted the greatest highway program ever heard of in this

⁶⁹ Bud Johns, "City Government to have New Headquarters in 1957," *Flint Journal*, September 4, 1955, D1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷¹ "New Center Dedicated to Serve City," *Flint Journal*, August 16, 1958, 8.

⁷² Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Flint Michigan, Volume 4* (Chicago: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1928), 30-31.

⁷³ NETROnline, 1954 aerial imagery of Flint, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>, accessed April 17, 2019.

⁷⁴ National Archives, "1940 Census," <https://1940census.archives.gov/>, accessed April 17, 2019.

⁷⁵ "Robert Moses to Give Dedicatory Address," *Flint Journal*, August 14, 1958, 2G.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

country—100 billion dollars in ten years.⁷⁶ Nixon went on to note that “more cars mean a bigger and better Flint and Michigan.”

A citizen committee unanimously selected the Detroit firm of H. E. Beyster & Associates to design the project, with C. Henry Harberkorn acting as general manager.⁷⁷ This decision was confirmed by the Flint City Commission, who awarded the contract in a unanimous vote.⁷⁸ In May 1956 the city accepted a bid from the Flint-based Sorenson-Gross Construction Company to erect the new Municipal Center, including city hall, the police and municipal courts buildings, and the public health center.⁷⁹ The end design called for six “ultra-modern” buildings.⁸⁰ Initially, the Municipal Center did not include the Fire Department Headquarters and Station 1, which was eventually completed in 1960.

Although projected as a six-million-dollar project, the six-building complex cost \$7.4 million to construct.⁸¹ However, the total for the project, including the planning process that began in 1951, ultimately surpassed \$21 million. H. E. Beyster and Associates was responsible for six of the Municipal Center’s buildings, constructed between 1955 and 1958, while A. Charles Jones and Associates of Flint designed the Fire Department Headquarters in 1959.

The first components of the Municipal Center to open included the Public Health Building and associated Public Health Auditorium, which opened in 1957.⁸² In January 1958 the Police Department Headquarters and Municipal Court were opened. City Hall opened in April 1958 when the City Commission held their first meeting in the new Commission Chamber.⁸³ Roger Lane, then an Associated Press correspondent wrote that “many cities have built handsome additions... none is as striking as the five million dollar new Flint Municipal Center.”⁸⁴

The mostly complete municipal center, the third seat of municipal government in the city’s 105-year history, was dedicated on Friday, August 15, 1958. The dedication took place during the Golden Milestone fiftieth anniversary celebration of General Motors. While events took place around the country, the center of the celebration was held in the “castle of the GM empire.”⁸⁵ Festivities included open houses, a number of events, appearances by celebrities, including singer Pat Boone, entertainer Phil Silvers, actor Guy Williams, and others, and a parade that rivaled that of General Motor’s Golden CARnival celebration that took place four years earlier.

⁷⁶ “Nixon Pledges Michigan Action on Better Roads,” Benton Harbor: *News-Palladium*, September 8, 1955.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “Flint Maps Huge Project,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1955, 22.

⁷⁹ “Flint Awards Contract for Huge Civic Center,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, May 30, 1956, 2.

⁸⁰ “Flint Maps Huge Project,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1955, 22.

⁸¹ “New Center Dedicated” *Flint Journal*, 8.

⁸² Rudolph H. Pallotta, “New Municipal Center City’s Third Seat of Government,” *Flint Journal*, August 14, 1958, D7.

⁸³ “Robert Moses to Give Dedicatory Address,” *Flint Journal*, August 14, 1958, 2G.

⁸⁴ Roger Lane. “Sewers Arent’ Very Fancy—But.” *Lansing State Journal*, February 13, 1958.

⁸⁵ Leo Donovan. “Eyes of Nation Focused on Flint for Spectacular ‘GM CARnival.’” *Detroit Free Press*, November 23, 1954.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

Robert Moses was invited back to Flint to see the completed project and was the main speaker of the event. He had many fond words for Flint's new municipal center and other public projects, such as the developing College and nearby Cultural Center. His colorful speech drew in metaphors of the automobile for the city's vibrancy. In more direct terms, he said:

"here, an enlightened citizenship under distinguished leadership has boldly launched urban redevelopment, has established a new Municipal Center, and has fostered higher education, the arts and sciences, health and recreation as the companions of industry."⁸⁶

Moses went on to say that the people of Flint "have proven that your City need not be a great metropolis to afford cultural distinction as well as material prosperity."⁸⁷

Moses's appreciation of Flint's planning efforts extended beyond the event. In a 1959 television interview with NBC's *Wisdom* series, he stated on national television that the city embodied "ideal planning and follow-through."⁸⁸

Mayor Algae noted that the "dedication of this magnificent Municipal Center is a time of triumph for every citizen of the City of Flint."⁸⁹ The *Flint Journal* offered that the term "triumph" should be considered in the "sense that the center certified the City's success in winning the more intangible community riches—industry, progress, vision, civic pride—and in our ability to turn vision into practicality."⁹⁰ The mayor continued that he considered the components of the modern, functional headquarters of the City of Flint as "structures that will remain as a testament to those who follow us that we built well the foundations for the future."⁹¹ He also credited the completed center as a "... success in winning the more intangible community riches – industry, progress, vision, civic pride – and in our ability to turn vision into practicality."⁹²

In April 1958 Flint voters approved a 3.8-million-dollar capital improvement program, of which 850,000 dollars was allocated for a new Fire Department Headquarters to complete the Municipal Center.⁹³ The building was planned to replace a 150-vehicle parking lot at East Fifth and Stevens Street, the northeast corner of the Municipal Center. The Flint based firm of A. Charles Jones and Associates was the selected architectural firm, who received planning assistance from Fire Chief Calvin P. F. Johnson, Assistant Fire Chief Elmer L. Pratt, director of the Department of Public Works Theodore D. Moss, and consulting engineer Henry M. Foley.⁹⁴ Fire department staff noted that the old fire headquarters was only fourteen-thousand square feet

⁸⁶ Rudolph H. Pallotta, "Flint Achievement Cited as Example to Whole U.S.," *Flint Journal*, August 16, 1958, 9.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ "Interview to Dwell on 'Face' of NY," Victoria, Texas: *Victoria Advocate*, March 15, 1959, 48.

⁸⁹ "New Center Dedicated to Serve City," *Flint Journal*, August 15, 1958, 8.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² "New Center Dedicated to Serve City," *Flint Journal*, August 16, 1958, 8.

⁹³ Rudolph H. Pallotta, "Fire-Headquarters Plans Nearly Ready," *Flint Journal*, February 1, 1959, 51.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

and exceptionally inadequate. The new three-level building offered forty-three-thousand square feet of floor space.

The completed building opened in 1960 and included both the administrative offices of the city fire department, and Fire Station No. 1.⁹⁵ According to then Fire Chief Elmer L. Pratt, the building was “designed and constructed for the maximum of efficiency.”⁹⁶ The headquarters arm of the building served as the nucleus for the Fire Department’s 254 personnel.⁹⁷ The Fire Station component of the building (Station No. 1) included forty-five firefighters.⁹⁸ The station served central and east Flint in an area bound by Longway Boulevard and Lewis Street to the north, Thread Creek and the Grand Trunk Railroad line to the south, the city limits to the east, and Thread Creek again to the west.⁹⁹ The new building came with an upgrade in equipment for city-wide fire services. One of the two new 1,000-gallon-per-minute fire pumps was installed at the headquarters facility.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, a new light truck with a generator, lamps, and emergency equipment was put into service at the building and a second trailer-mounted lighting facility was purchased for emergency services.

Major Events at the City of Flint Municipal Center

Since its construction the Municipal Center has served as the locus of city government.

The center has also been the site of several notable local events. Two of the more significant events were a campaign stop by President John F. Kennedy on October 6, 1962, and a ten-day sleep-in protest in 1967 over the refusal of the city commission to adopt an open housing ordinance.

President Kennedy’s speech at the municipal center was just one of three he made while in Michigan for a “19 1/2 hour politicking sweep” through the state prior to that year’s mid-term election in November.¹⁰¹ While Kennedy’s campaign speech was one of nearly thirty he made throughout the Midwest in the early days of October 1962, and many he made during the campaign, it was a significant and notable event in the city. According to local newspaper accounts, his visit in 1962 marked the first time a sitting president visited the city.¹⁰²

In August 1967 the lawn in front of the City Hall was the site of a ten-day sleep-in attended by some four thousand people. The protesters advocated for an open (fair) housing ordinance. The protest in Flint was one of many such protests across the nation in the late 1960s. In August 1967 the Flint city commission voted 5-3 against an open housing ordinance. Then-mayor Floyd

⁹⁵ Flint Fire Department, *Fire Department Annual Report 1960* (Flint: Fire Department, 1961), 1; “Fire Hall Drawing Given to Commission,” *Flint Journal*, February 7, 1967, 23.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁷ Flint Fire Department, *Annual Report 1960*, 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁹ Flint Fire Department, *Annual Report 1960*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰¹ “Kennedy Comes to State Friday.” Ironwood, MI: *Ironwood Daily Globe*, October 4, 1962.

¹⁰² Kennedy had appeared in Flint two years before, that time as a senator and candidate for president.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

McCree and two members of the Flint Human Relations Commission, all African Americans, resigned in protest.¹⁰³ In total, sixteen city officials resigned in protest. Notably the entire city commission was white. The commission, in part, based their decision on the opinion of the Flint city attorney, who had determined that a 1963 state attorney general opinion left “all civil rights matters to the state [Michigan Civil Rights] commission,” therefore making any local ordinance unconstitutional. However, in 1966 the state civil rights commission, in consultation with the state attorney general sent a memorandum to several Michigan cities indicating local ordinances were, in fact, constitutional. The attorney general sent a similar letter to Mayor McCree in March 1967.¹⁰⁴

The city commission’s decision came just a few weeks after a number of uprisings occurred throughout the state. The most well-known of these was the multi-day rebellion in Detroit, but similar events, though smaller in scope, occurred in other Michigan cities. Flint was no exception.

The initial defeat of the open housing ordinance resulted in a “sleep-in” protest on the lawn of city hall. The protest lasted more than a week, and drew attention from across the state.

On August 20, 1967, then-Governor George Romney “left his paradise retreat on Mackinac Island” to deliver a speech outside of city hall. A series of firebombings the day before drew Romney’s attention. He spoke before a crowd of seven thousand, and urged them to support Mayor McCree and told them he supported open housing.¹⁰⁵ By the next day, however, Governor Romney had reportedly reconsidered his position, and stated that he “didn’t mean to say that about open housing,” since such provisions were included in the state constitution.¹⁰⁶

A second vote was held on August 21, this time failing 4-4. The commission meeting was attended by six hundred people. Both votes by the city commission followed several weeks of “minor racial disturbances” across the city, including several firebombings.¹⁰⁷

Ultimately, the Flint city commission reversed their earlier decision and adopted an open housing ordinance at a meeting on October 30, 1967.¹⁰⁸ Flint joined Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Ypsilanti as those cities that had adopted ordinances aimed at ending discrimination.¹⁰⁹ Many more Michigan cities followed.

Related Developments

¹⁰³ McCree’s resignation had not been accepted by the city commission because it had not been submitted in writing. McCree later reversed his decision and continued to fight for open housing, and encouraged his colleagues to do the same.

¹⁰⁴ “First Step in Flint.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 18, 1967.

¹⁰⁵ Edward S. Lechtzin. “Flint Situation Draws Romney Visit Sunday.” *Lansing State Journal*. August 21, 1967.

¹⁰⁶ “He Didn’t Mean It.” *Battle Creek Enquirer*. August 22, 1967.

¹⁰⁷ “Open Housing Rejection Sparks New Flint Protest.” *Battle Creek Enquirer*. August 22, 1967.

¹⁰⁸ “Flint Affirms Housing Law.” *Battle Creek Enquirer*. October 31, 1967.

¹⁰⁹ “Revised Housing Statute Gives Shelter from Bias.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 2, 1967.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

The City of Flint Municipal Center was not the only significant development to take place in the city in the 1950s.

The College and Cultural Center was developed at roughly the same time as the municipal center. As originally envisioned, the cultural center was to include a “Museum of Transportation, Historical Museum, Art Center, Auditorium, Little Theatre, College Swimming Pool and Athletic Field, Carillon Tower, Planetarium, Amphitheatre and additional land.”¹¹⁰ This collection of buildings are to be constructed on approximately 250 acres of land, eight blocks east of Saginaw Street.¹¹¹ The Flint Cultural Center, as it is now known, was developed over a roughly ten-year period, between 1957 and 1967, mirroring that of the municipal center. The cultural center is situated just south of Applewood, the former estate of Charles S. and Ruth (Rawlings) Mott, and northwest of the Mott Community College campus.

Along with the college and cultural center, a development led by William Zeckendorf of the New York development firm Webb & Knapp, called for twenty million dollars in investment for a new post office, a motel and office and apartment buildings on thirty-five acres adjacent to the cultural center. Smith, Hinchman and Grylls of Detroit were the lead architects for both the cultural center and the Webb & Knapp development. Available news sources do not confirm whether the development was completed, but several of the types of buildings noted are located just to the west of the cultural center.

The college campus, cultural center, and commercial developments are located several blocks to the north of the municipal center. Together these mid-century developments serve as bookends to the historic downtown commercial area of Flint and collectively represent an era of intense redevelopment in the city.

Architectural Significance

The buildings and landscape features of the Municipal Center were designed in the International Style, one of several styles that is associated with the Modern Movement that was popular in the United States during the twentieth century (ca. 1920–1970).¹¹² The Modern Movement has its early design roots in Michigan, when Albert Kahn, a Detroit-based architect, was commissioned to design a large industrial complex in Detroit for the Packard Motor Car Company.¹¹³ By using new concrete construction techniques that were developed by his brother, Julius Kahn, Kahn was able to create a structure with vast, open interior spaces and large ribbons of windows.¹¹⁴ Kahn

¹¹⁰ *Flint's College and Cultural Development*.

¹¹¹ Bill Taylor. “Farmers, Sometimes Farmers and One Industry—Genesee.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 6, 1957.

¹¹² Stephen C. Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory*, (Columbus: Ohio Historic Preservation Office, 1992), 115.

¹¹³ Amy L. Arnold and Brian D. Conway, editors, *Michigan Modern, Design that Shaped America* (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2016), 22.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

was also hired to design similar complexes for Henry Ford at the Highland Park and River Rouge plants in 1908 and 1918, respectively.¹¹⁵

During the time that Kahn was designing large factory buildings and industrial architecture in Detroit, European modernist architects were experimenting with new designs in the years between World War I and II.¹¹⁶ After World War I, in 1919, architect Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus School in Germany. Gropius, along with other leading architects Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, were inspired by the work of Kahn. The architectural style developed by Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier incorporated the straightforward, unornamented, functional lines of Kahn's designs with the availability of new construction materials.¹¹⁷ The coalescence of these philosophies and aesthetics resulted in the International style, which is defined by simple, geometric forms; frames of steel and concrete; glass curtain walls and metal ribbon windows; and little to no decoration.¹¹⁸

Architects were also inspired by Ford's assembly line system, which was facilitated by Kahn's open designs. The development of new construction materials allowed for prefabricated, mass-produced, modular construction that could be incorporated into the designs.¹¹⁹ This method of production also resulted in designs that incorporated replicated, standardized units. An early example of this is Buckminster Fuller's "Dymaxion House," designed in 1927, which was constructed of prefabricated modules.¹²⁰

One of America's first exposures to Modernism came in 1932 when the Museum of Modern Art in New York unveiled its "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition."¹²¹ In the accompanying book, *The International Style*, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson identified three principals that link International buildings: architecture as volume, regularity, and avoiding the application of ornament.¹²² In the 1930s many prominent European architects, including Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and other associated with the Bauhaus and European Modernism, were forced to flee from Nazi Germany. After immigrating to the United States, many took up teaching positions at architectural schools.¹²³

Closer to Flint, two influential architecture programs were established in Michigan: the architecture program at the University of Michigan (UM) in Ann Arbor and the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills. The program at UM was established by Emil Lorch in 1906 and was based on the theory of Pure Design and the ideals of Chicago's Prairie School and architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The program rejected the traditional teachings of the Beaux Arts method of architectural education and became one of the first Modern architecture programs in

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹¹⁶ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2013), 620.

¹¹⁷ Arnold and Conway, *Michigan Modern*, 22–24.

¹¹⁸ McAlester, *Field Guide*, 616.

¹¹⁹ Arnold and Conway, *Michigan Modern*, 24.

¹²⁰ Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 361.

¹²¹ McAlester, *Field Guide*, 617.

¹²² Ibid. 617.

¹²³ Roth, *American Architecture*, 411.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

Name of Property

the country.¹²⁴ Lorch invited Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen to serve as a visiting professor, which eventually led to Saarinen meeting George Booth and the creation of Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1923. An architectural program that was based on the practices of the Bauhaus was established at Cranbrook, and through its expansive list of architectural professors and students—including Saarinen's son, Eero—who were encouraged to submit many designs in competitions, Cranbrook became a center of Modern design.¹²⁵

By the 1930s, Modern architecture in America had evolved into two schools: the steel and glass structures of the International style, chiefly associated with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.¹²⁶ International style was characterized by a stark lack of ornamentation, flat surfaces, linear expanses of window groupings juxtaposed with windowless surfaces, and unified exterior materials.¹²⁷ Contrasting with this approach was the “form follows function” mindset of organic architecture that promoted that the building design should be based on its site and constructed using natural materials.¹²⁸ The Organic movement was particularly popular in Michigan and the style of choice of innovators such as Midland-based architect Alden B. Dow.

These innovations in design, industry, and education ensured that Michigan was at the forefront of Modernism in the early twentieth century. With the onset of World War II, Michigan's industrial powerhouse automobile plants were thrown into defense manufacturing. New factories meant that new residences for defense workers were required. Modernist features were applied to these designs including utilizing mass production of prefabricated buildings.¹²⁹ Wartime restrictions and limitations of construction materials prompted innovation, with the military researching and testing new materials including plastics, acrylics, polyester, aluminum, and plywood.¹³⁰

In the years following World War II, 1946–1970, Michigan continued to be at the forefront of Modern design.¹³¹ Two of the great Modern architects of the late twentieth century, Eero Saarinen and Minoru Yamasaki, were based in Michigan. Saarinen's acclaimed campus design for the General Motors Technical Center in Warren likely served as the inspiration for Flint's Civic and Cultural Center campuses. Modern architecture came to symbolize the “hope and excitement people felt for the future”¹³² following the years of financial depression and war they had had to endure.

The buildings and landscape of Flint's Municipal Center comprise one of the best examples of International style architecture in the region and retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

¹²⁴ Arnold and Conway, *Michigan Modern*, 24.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24–26.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹²⁷ McAlester, *American Houses*, 617.

¹²⁸ Arnold and Conway, *Michigan Modern*, 28.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 28.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

The Municipal Center campus features many of the characteristics that define the International style, including a frankly expressed steel or concrete frame in a modular pattern, flat roofs, glass curtain walls, ground story walls and entrances set behind outer piers, glass-enclosed lobbies, exposed brick and concrete surfaces, and stairs that are often broad, without solid risers, to create a floating effect.¹³³ Six of the Municipal Center's buildings were designed by H. E. Beyster and Associates, including the City Hall, the Public Health Building, the Public Health Auditorium, the Municipal Courts, the Police Department Headquarters, and the Powerhouse which is surmounted by the Veteran's Memorial Plaza.¹³⁴ The buildings all share commonalities and are linked through their orientation and landscape design. The City Hall, Municipal Courts, Police Department Headquarters, and Health Department Headquarters are all of poured concrete construction with hanging curtain walls. The buildings were described by the *Flint Journal* as "designed along modern, functional lines," with the curtain walls having colored-porcelain-enameled panels, brick, Georgia white marble for "decorative purposes," and "large expanses of glass."¹³⁵ The architects sought to avoid the outright appearance of "monumental" buildings; however, the application of marble was intended to "recall that appearance."¹³⁶ "Greater use of brick" was applied to the Police Department Headquarters to "give an appearance of stability."¹³⁷

Werner Guenther served as chief architect of Beyster and Associates and John Hilberg served as chief designer.¹³⁸ Guenther said that flexibility of space was his "primary consideration" in the design of the buildings, recognizing that city departments may want to shift locations within the buildings, and future levels may need to be added. The four main buildings were designed to accommodate additional levels, should future expansion be needed. Guenther believed that most public buildings "never have enough floor space," so he made sure that the buildings were accessible from the exterior on multiple levels and included outdoor corridors and bridges to connect the first floors of the Public Health and Police buildings to the street level. The offices most used by the public would be located on the first floor, and the buildings were designed to have a view to the landscaped area behind them "whenever possible."¹³⁹

The International style buildings of the Municipal Center are not the only examples of the style in Flint. Based on a 2018 survey of the Modern architecture in Flint, the majority of International style buildings are modest commercial buildings that utilize rectilinear forms with ribbon windows and in some cases curtain walls. There are other examples of the International style in Flint, including in the Cultural Center, which includes the Flint Public Library, 1026 East Kearsley Street, and the Bower Theatre and Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 East Kearsley Street. In addition to the Municipal Center and Cultural Center, International style buildings in Flint include the YMCA building, 310 Third Street; the Salvation Army building, 2200 North Dort

¹³³ Gordon, *How to Complete*, 115.

¹³⁴ "Flint's New Civic Center," 14; Rudolph H. Pallotta, "New Municipal Center," *FJ*, D7.

¹³⁵ Johns, "City Government," D-1.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Johns, "City Government," D-1; "Flint's New Civic Center" *Michigan Architects and Engineers*, October 1958, 11.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

Highway; Estes Express Lines, 3318 Robert T. Longway Boulevard; and the Children's Museum, 1602 University Avenue. While these buildings all illustrate the design vocabulary of the International style, the Municipal Center is the largest collection of high-style examples in the city.

Landscape

From the early stages of planning for the Municipal Center, the terrain and its potential to create a park setting was key to the final site selection. In 1953, when the Moses team presented their suggestion for the Municipal Center site, they noted that the Saginaw Street location would allow City Hall to be "surrounding by landscaping and parking facilities and will have back of it a public park."¹⁴⁰ One of the points in favor of the site was that the "contour of the land lends itself to a park like treatment."¹⁴¹ Even in the earliest sketches of the proposed facility on the site included a large park area and an estimate for development of 100,000 dollars (Photograph 4).¹⁴²

Two years after the Municipal Center was completed the Michigan Mayor's Exchange Day was held in Flint. The event gave the city an opportunity to show off their new facility. At the time, the *Detroit Free Press* described the facility and its grounds, noting "this eight-million-dollar facility has a court area complete with artificial pool, and its landscaped grounds stretch far back, providing City employes [sic] with one of the most pleasant views in town."¹⁴³

Perhaps part of the appeal of the landscaping at the Municipal Center was the removal of what was described by Mayor Algoe as "...several acres of converted swamp known as Haskell's Marsh, and an undeveloped playground."¹⁴⁴ In his dedication speech, the mayor noted the "broad beautiful mall upon which we are gathered, the 'elbow room' we enjoy in a congested downtown area."

Even from the first plans drawn for the new Municipal Center, a large open mall was included. The mall has survived intact, even though flanking areas have undergone some changes due to the construction of the Fire Department Headquarters/Station 1 and the loss of the playground resulting from the construction of I-475.

H. E. Beyster and Associates, Inc.

The architecture and engineering firm H. E. Beyster and Associates, Inc. was established by engineer Henry E. Beyster. Beyster was born in Detroit in 1881, where he attended public school before attending the University of Michigan.¹⁴⁵ As a young adult, he found work in the

¹⁴⁰ "Moses for Saginaw St. City Hall," *Flint Journal*, 1.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "Highway Contest," *Flint Journal*, 12.

¹⁴³ Frank Beckman, "City-County Report, Flint Buildings, Too," *Detroit Free Press*, May 22, 1960, B-5.

¹⁴⁴ "New Center Dedicated to Serve City," *Flint Journal*, August 15, 1958, 8.

¹⁴⁵ "Henry E. Beyster, Auto Man, Dies," *Detroit Free Press*, September 9, 1963, 30.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

burgeoning auto industry. In 1906 he became co-owner of a Detroit garage, which propelled him to founding his own engineering firm, the Beyster Detroit Motor Car Company.¹⁴⁶

At the beginning of World War I, Beyster gained employment with the Packard Motor Car Company and headed the development of the Rolls-Royce engine for military application.¹⁴⁷ In 1920 he joined the Fisher Body Corporation as the head of both plant engineering and architecture departments. Later, he headed the same departments for General Motors and was critical in developing some of the company's major facilities.¹⁴⁸

According to his obituary, General Motors "loaned him to the city of Detroit" in 1938 when he was appointed the head of the Department of Public Works.¹⁴⁹ In that capacity, Beyster worked to streamline the department's processes and led the construction of three city trash incinerators. In 1940 he resigned to establish his own architectural firm, H. E. Beyster and Associates, after having purchased the C. A. Handeyside Construction Company.¹⁵⁰ Among the firm's first contracts was the Packard Motor Co.'s Rolls-Royce engine plant in Detroit.

In the midst of World War II, Beyster was appointed by President Roosevelt to lead a United States technical mission in India.¹⁵¹ Roosevelt's successor, Harry S. Truman, later appointed him to head the United States Damages Commission in the Philippine Islands. Beyster's public service also included serving as a federal technical advisor to several Latin American countries.

Following the war the Beyster firm expanded and undertook numerous projects across Michigan. By 1952 the firm had grown to two hundred architects and engineers.¹⁵² In 1956 the company opened a branch office in Grand Rapids to handle the West Michigan projects.¹⁵³ Newspaper articles indicate that the bulk of the firm's contracts were carried out during the 1950s. These projects primarily concerned schools, public buildings, commercial buildings, and industrial facilities. A list of some of the other known works the firm completed in Michigan is provided in the table below. It appears that the firm had closed or disbanded by March 1962, when an advertisement appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* for a public auction to be held on March 9, 1962. Held "By Order Of The Trustee Under Trust Chattel Mortgage," the auction included office equipment and machinery, furniture, and drafting and engineering equipment.¹⁵⁴

Beyster died in September 1963 at the age of 82.¹⁵⁵ He was remembered in his obituary by the *Detroit Free Press* as an "auto industry engineering genius, [and] a construction wizard."¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁵⁰ "Beyster Heads Own Company," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1940, 12.

¹⁵¹ "Henry E. Beyster," 30.

¹⁵² Mark Beltaire, "Boyhood Dream Takes Shape in Yard," *Detroit Free Press*, July 5, 1952, 22.

¹⁵³ "Architects will Open Office in Grand Rapids," *Benton Harbor: News-Palladium*, December 22, 1956, 10.

¹⁵⁴ "Public Auction" advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1962, 48.

¹⁵⁵ "Henry E. Beyster," 30.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 30.

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

A selection of the firms' work is provided in Appendix A, including with this nomination. The project list was taken from listings in the 1956 and 1962 issues of the *American Architects Directory*.¹⁵⁷

Sorenson-Gross Construction Company

The Sorenson-Gross Construction Company was established in 1925 by John Sorenson and Robert Gross.¹⁵⁸ The company was initially located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but moved to Flint in 1927 and "quickly established itself as the city's premier builder."¹⁵⁹ Gross, a former resident of Lansing, Michigan, got his start with the Gratton Brothers Construction Company before forming the partnership.¹⁶⁰ At the time of his death in 1932, Gross was president of Michigan Allied Construction Industries, based in Flint. The company is still in operation as of 2018, known as Sorenson Gross Construction Services.

A list of some of the firm's known works in Michigan prior to 1970 is provided in Appendix B, included with this nomination.

A. Charles Jones and Associates

A. (Arthur) Charles Jones was born in London, England, on August 22, 1913.¹⁶¹ He was married in 1936 and had three children. He attended Lawrence Institute of Technology (now Lawrence Technological University) in Southfield, Michigan, from 1942 to 1943, during which time and after, he worked as an architect for Giffels & Vallet in Detroit (1941–1944). From 1944 to 1946 he worked as an architectural designer for Albert Kahn and Associates in Detroit before forming his own firm in 1946.¹⁶² Although a variety of architectural styles are illustrated in Jones' work, a number of Modern Movement buildings are found in his portfolio. In Michigan, these included the International style City of Flint Fire Department Headquarters, the Jackson Fire Department Headquarters, a grocery store in Alpena that the family collections indicate included a "folded shell roof using prestressed masonry," and the family home at 3005 Mallory Street in Flint.

Jones completed a number of buildings across Michigan. His firm was particularly known for their designs for educational buildings. A list of projects from the Jones family collections reveals that he completed designs for twenty-one new schools, forty additions and renovations of existing schools, and eleven new school studies.¹⁶³ Jones was recognized with a Merit Award

¹⁵⁷ Koyl, George S., editor, *American Architects Directory* (New York: American Institute of Architects and the R. R. Bowker Company, 1956), 281

¹⁵⁸ Sorensen Gross, "A History Built on a Foundation of Integrity," Sorenson Gross Construction Services," accessed October 1, 2018, www.sorensengross.com.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ "Contractor, Formerly Resident Here, Dies," *Lansing State Journal*, April 11, 1932, 14.

¹⁶¹ Koyl, *Directory*, 1956, 281.

¹⁶² Koyl, *Directory*, 1956, 281.

¹⁶³ A. Charles Jones & Associates Portfolio. Personal collection of Douglas Jones, Flint, Michigan.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

from the Flint Area chapter of the American Institute of Architects for his design of the Flint Fire Department Headquarters. Tragically, Jones died in an auto accident in 1966.¹⁶⁴

Appendix C, included with this nomination, provides a selection of Jones' buildings taken from listings in the 1956 and 1962 issues of the *American Architects Directory* and the Jones family collections.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ "A. C. Jones - Architect Broker - Dies in Crash," *Flint Journal*, October 14, 1966, 33.

¹⁶⁵ A. Charles Jones & Associates Portfolio. Personal collection of Douglas Jones, Flint, Michigan.

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

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Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ 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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16.84 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: 43.011599 | Longitude: -83.686927 |
| 2. Latitude: 43.013375 | Longitude: -83.683271 |
| 3. Latitude: 43.012175 | Longitude: -83.682328 |
| 4. Latitude: 43.010777 | Longitude: -83.683336 |
| 5. Latitude: 43.009908 | Longitude: -83.685106 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ 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.)

The boundary of the City of Flint Municipal Center begins at the curb at the southeast corner of Saginaw and East Fifth Streets. From the point of beginning (pob), the boundary extends east along the curb on the south side of East Fifth Street until it reaches the curb along the west side of Stevens Street. From this point, the boundary turns south along the curb on Stevens Street and continues around the corner at the junction with East Seventh Street where it turns west to follow the curb on the north side of the street until it reaches the northeast corner of East Seventh and Saginaw Streets. From this point, the boundary turns north, following the curb on the east side of Saginaw Street to the pob.

City of Flint Municipal Center
Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the entire Municipal Center property as it was established, with the exception of a portion of the property that was lost with the construction of the I-475 and I-69 junction.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Katie Remensnyder, Architectural Historian; Scott Slagor, Architectural Historian; and Elaine Robinson, Senior Architectural Historian
organization: Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.
street & number: 3215 Central Street
city or town: Dexter state: MI zip code: 48130
e-mail: ehrobinson@chg-inc.com
telephone: 734-253-2789
date: April 23, 2019

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.

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

Photo Log

Name of Property: City of Flint Municipal Center

City or Vicinity: Flint

County: Genesee

State: Michigan

Photographer: Scott E. Slagor (SES)

Date Photographed: June 15, 2018; July 18, 2018; November 2, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall, view to the east-northeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0001
- 2 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall, view to the east
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0002
- 3 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall, view to the northeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0003
- 4 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall, view to the north
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0004
- 5 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, open walkway east side of City Hall, view to the north
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0005
- 6 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall lobby, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0006
- 7 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall lobby, view to the northwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0007
- 8 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall first floor elevator lobby, view to the southeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0008
- 9 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall council chambers, view to the south
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0009

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

- 10 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall open walkway to the Public Health/City Hall South, view to the east-southeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0010
- 11 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health/City Hall South, view to the northeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0011
- 12 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health/City Hall South, view to the northwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0012
- 13 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health/City Hall South first floor lobby, view to the east
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0013
- 14 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health/City Hall South lower level lobby, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0014
- 15 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health Auditorium, view to the northwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0015
- 16 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health Auditorium, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0016
- 17 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health Auditorium, interior of passage from City Hall South, view to the south
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0017
- 18 of 32. 121 East Seventh Street_Public Health Auditorium interior, view to the northeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0018
- 19 of 32. 1101 Saginaw_Powerhouse Trilon_view to the south
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0019
- 20 of 32. 1101 Saginaw_Covered walkway between City Hall and the Municipal Courts building, view to the north
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0020
- 21 of 32. 210 East Fifth Street, Municipal Courts/Police Department, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0021

City of Flint Municipal Center

Genesee County, Michigan

Name of Property

County and State

- 22 of 32. 210 East Fifth Street, Municipal Courts/Police Department, view to the northeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0022
- 23 of 32. 210 East Fifth Street, Municipal Courts/Police Department, view to the southeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0023
- 24 of 32. 120 East Fifth Street, Police Department, view to the southeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0024
- 25 of 32. 120 East Fifth Street, Police Department, view to the east
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0025
- 26 of 32. 120 East Fifth Street, Police Department, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0026
- 27 of 32. 310 East Fifth Street, Fire Department Station 1, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0027
- 28 of 32. 310 East Fifth Street, Fire Department Headquarters/Station 1, view to the
northwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0028
- 29 of 32. 310 East Fifth Street, Fire Department Headquarters/Station 1 lobby, view to the
southeast
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0029
- 30 of 32. 310 East Fifth Street, Fire Department Station ground floor truck bays, view to
the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0030
- 31 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, City Hall sunken courtyard, view to the southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0031
- 32 of 32. 1101 Saginaw Street, Municipal Center Mall, view to the west-southwest
MI_Genesee_City of Flint Municipal Center_0032

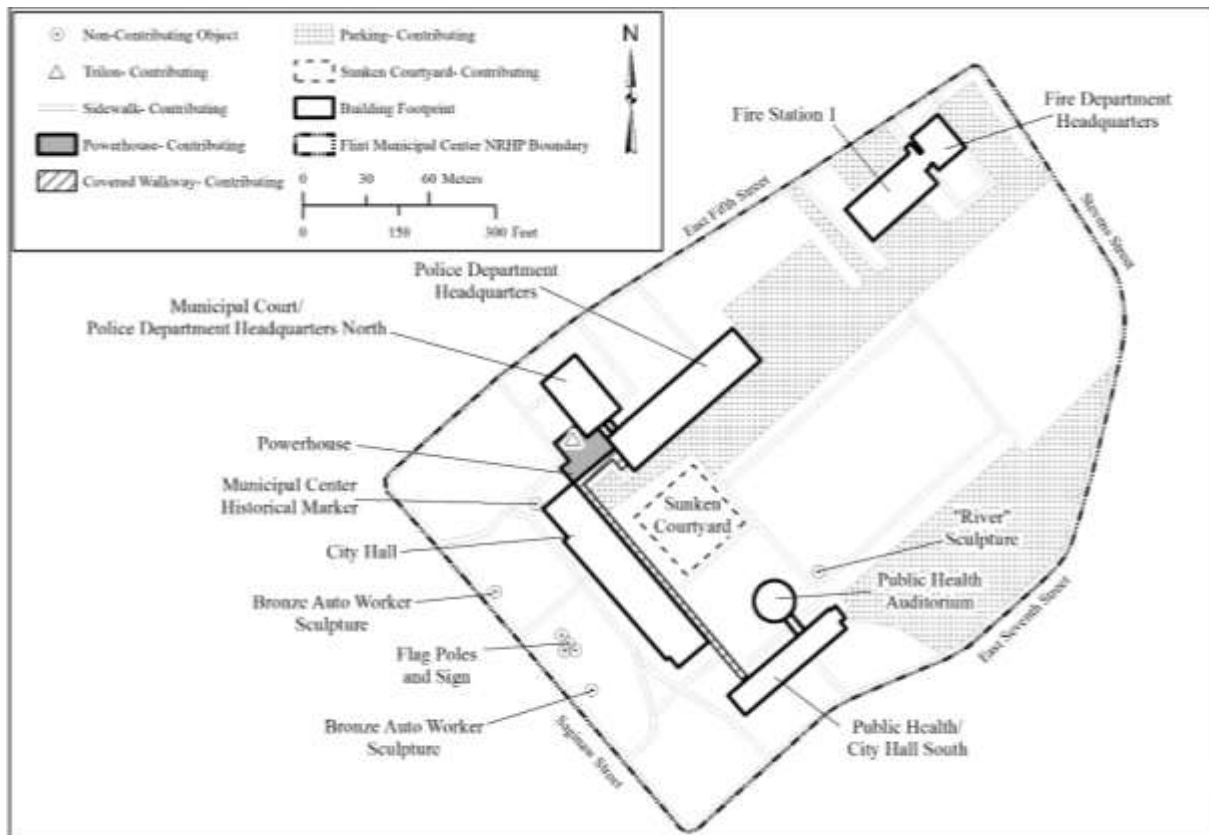
City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, Michigan

County and State

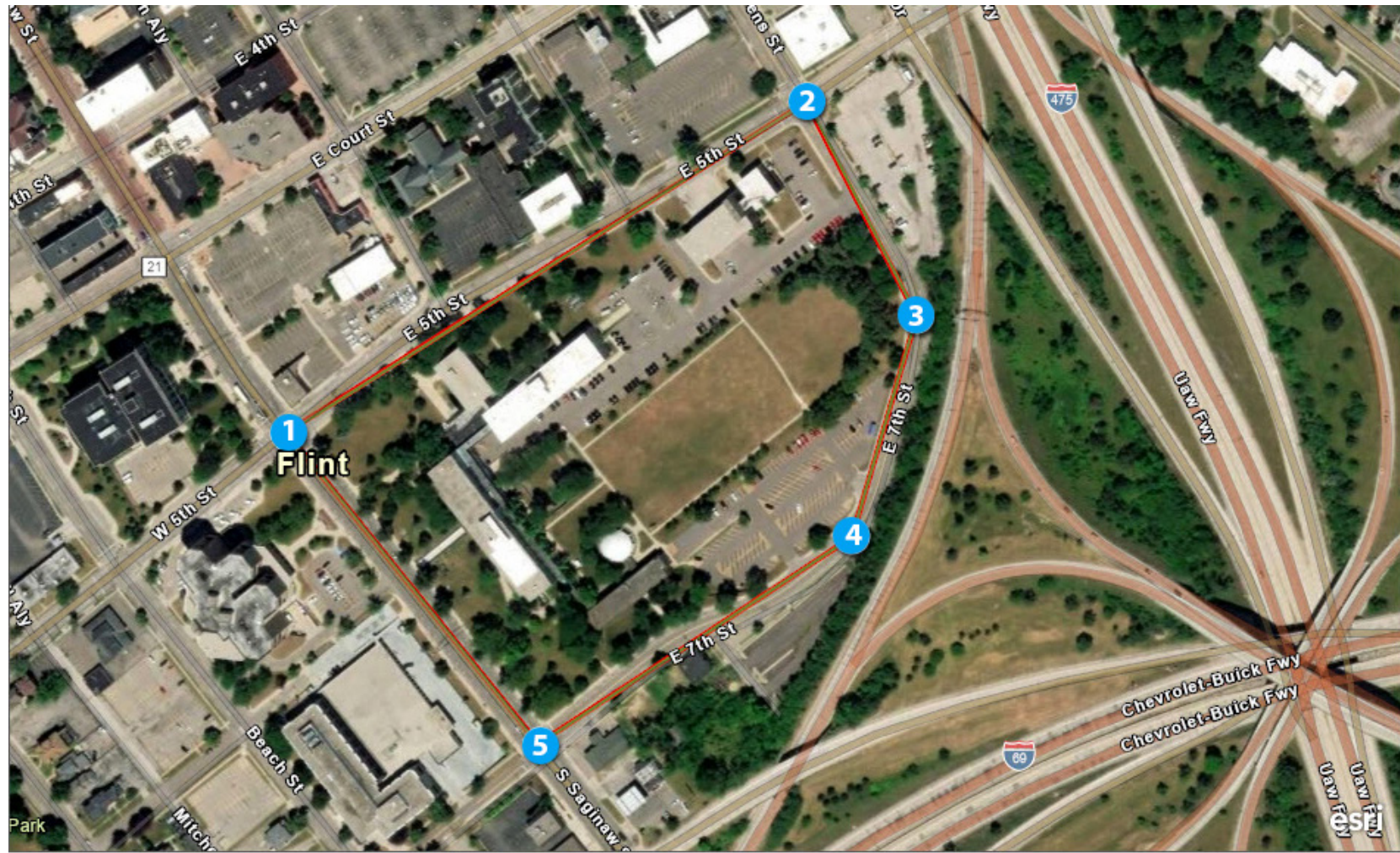
Maps



Map 1. Sketch Map of Flint Municipal Center

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.



300ft

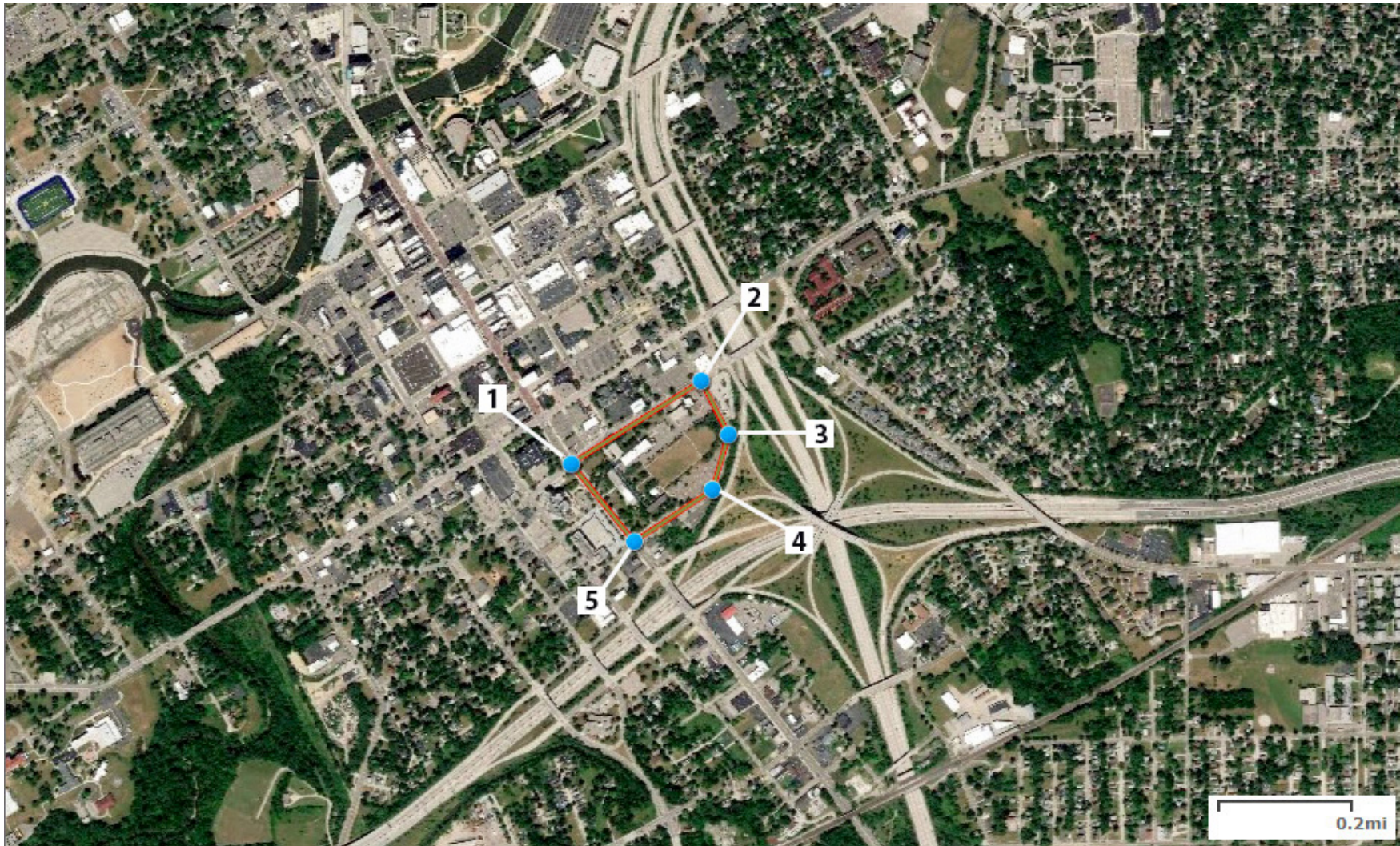
City of Flint Municipal Center

1101 Saginaw Street & 210-310 East Fifth Street, Flint, Genesee County, Michigan

Lat./Long.:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Latitude: 43.011599 | Longitude: -83.686927 |
| 2. | Latitude: 43.013375 | Longitude: -83.683271 |
| 3. | Latitude: 43.012175 | Longitude: -83.682328 |
| 4. | Latitude: 43.010777 | Longitude: -83.683336 |
| 5. | Latitude: 43.009908 | Longitude: -83.685106 |





City of Flint Municipal Center

1101 Saginaw Street & 210-310 East Fifth Street, Flint, Genesee County, Michigan

Lat./Long.:

1.	Latitude: 43.011599	Longitude: -83.686927
2.	Latitude: 43.013375	Longitude: -83.683271
3.	Latitude: 43.012175	Longitude: -83.682328
4.	Latitude: 43.010777	Longitude: -83.683336
5.	Latitude: 43.009908	Longitude: -83.685106



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, MI

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

Appendix A

Selected Buildings in Michigan attributed to H. E. Beyster and Associates, Inc.

Building Name or Type	Location	Date of Construction
Bath Intermediate School	Bath, Clinton County	1952 ¹
Chevrolet Plant	Flint, Genesee County	1952 ²
Lynn Hospital	Lincoln Park, Wayne County	1953 ³
Three School Buildings	Garden City, Wayne County	1953 ⁴
Three School Buildings	St. Clair Shores, Macomb County	1953 ⁵
Two School Buildings	Hudson, Lenawee County	1953 ⁶
Herman Kiefer Hospital Addition	Detroit, Wayne County	1953 ⁷
Morley Brothers Hardware Warehouse	Royal Oak, Oakland County	1954 ⁸
Elementary School Addition	Grose Pointe Farms, Wayne County	1954 ⁹
Memphis Elementary School	Memphis, St. Clair County	1955 ¹⁰
Rochester High School	Rochester, Oakland County	1956 ¹¹
Addition to Holland Hospital	Holland, Ottawa County	Ca. 1956 ¹²
Jolman High School and Carr School	Muskegon, Muskegon County	Ca. 1956 ¹³
Douglas School	Saugatuck, Allegan County	Ca. 1956 ¹⁴
Ionia Manufacturing Company	Ionia, Ionia County	Ca. 1956 ¹⁵
Elementary School	Brighton, Livingston County	1957 ¹⁶
B. F. Goodrich Co. Merchandising Center	Allen Park, Wayne County	1958 ¹⁷
Wayne County Youth Home	Detroit, Wayne County	1958 ¹⁸

¹ "Contract is Awarded for \$113,000 School," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, August 11, 1952, 2.

² "Nine staff architects and engineers..." *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1952, 21.

³ "Ground is Broken for Lynn Hospital," *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1953, 35.

⁴ "Garden City Plans School Expansion," *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1953, 26.

⁵ "School Expansion," 26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷ "Herman Kiefer Hospital addition during construction." Detroit Public Library Burton Historical Collection. MS/Detroit Archives. Housing Commission. Health centers and hospitals. 60:11.

⁸ "Hardware Warehouse Planned by Morley," *Detroit Free Press*, November 14, 1954, 41.

⁹ "addition: elementary classrooms for a parochial school." *Progressive Architecture*, May 1954, pp. 121-125.

¹⁰ "Advertisement for Bids," Port Huron: *The Times Herald*, March 2, 1955, 23.

¹¹ Photograph: "Rochester High School, now..." *Detroit Free Press*, March 11, 1956, 42.

¹² "Office in Grand Rapids," 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁶ "Will Start New Brighton School," *Lansing State Journal*, February 28, 1957, 12.

¹⁷ "Start Store for Goodrich" *Detroit Free Press*, March 28, 1958, 19.

¹⁸ "Youth Home Plans OK'd," *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1958, 30.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, MI

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2

Library and Cultural Center	Huntington Woods, Oakland County	1959 ¹⁹
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Appendix B

Selected Buildings in Michigan attributed to Sorenson-Gross Construction Company

Building Name or Type	Location	Date of Construction
Hospital	Three Rivers	1926 ²⁰
Mueller Brass Company Office Building	Port Huron	1929 ²¹
Post Office	East Lansing, Ingham County	1935 ²²
Port Huron Hospital	Port Huron, St. Clair County	1937 ²³
Post Office	Munising, Alger County	1937 ²⁴
Edward W. Sparrow Hospital Additions	Lansing, Ingham County	1943 ²⁵
Cold Storage Building, Lapeer Home and Training School	Lapeer, Lapeer County	1946 ²⁶
Stevens T. Mason Building	Lansing, Ingham County	1953 ²⁷
Library	Lansing, Ingham County	1962 ²⁸

¹⁹ "Let Contract for Design," *Detroit Free Press*, March 13, 1959, 25.

²⁰ "New Hospital Begun." *Lansing State Journal*, August 12, 1926.

²¹ "New Mueller Office Rushed." *Port Huron Times-Herald*, October 15, 1929.

²² "Construction Work Started on East Lansing Post Office," *Lansing State Journal*, January 1, 1935, 36.

²³ "Seven-Year Job, Finished." Port Huron: *The Times Herald*, February 23, 1937, 14.

²⁴ "Munising News," *Escanaba Daily Press*, July 11, 1937, 10.

²⁵ "To Finish Units of Hospital Soon." *Lansing State Journal*, May 28, 1943.

²⁶ "State to Let Contract on Building at Lapeer," Benton Harbor: *News-Palladium*, August 1, 1946, 13.

²⁷ Howard J. Rugg, "Stevens T. Mason Dedication Tuesday," *Lansing State Journal*, November 6, 1953.

²⁸ "Flint Firm Receives Contract in Lansing," *Holland Evening Sentinel*, October 5, 1962, 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

City of Flint Municipal Center

Name of Property

Genesee County, MI

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3

Appendix C

Selected Buildings in Michigan attributed to A. Charles Jones and Associates

Building Name or Type	Location	Date of Construction
Atherton School	Burton, Genesee County	1950 ²⁹
Beecher School District, New Elementary School	Mount Morris Township, Genesee County	Unknown
Brown Funeral Home	Flint, Genesee County	Unknown
Buchingham's Store	Flint, Genesee County	1950 ³⁰
Clio Elementary School	Clio, Genesee County	1951 ³¹
Comis Township Hall	Fairview, Oscoda County	1955
Consumers Power Office Building	Flint, Genesee County	1954 ³²
Durand Memorial Library	Durand, Shiawassee County	1950
Flint Osteopathic Hospital	Flint, Genesee County	Unknown
Reid Elementary School	Goodrich, Genesee County	Unknown
Jackson Fire Department Headquarters	Jackson, Jackson County	Unknown
Kearsley School District, New Elementary School	Flint, Genesee County	Unknown
Kroger Supermarket	Alpena, Alpena County	Unknown
Mundy Township Hall	Rankin, Genesee County	1952
Municipal Buildings	Caro, Tuscola County	1954 ³³
Saint Leo's Parish Elementary School	Flint, Genesee County	1958
Saint Robert Church and School	Flushing, Genesee County	Unknown
Salvation Army Social Service Center	Flint, Genesee County	1959-1960
Stubbs & Christenson Office Building	Flint, Genesee County	ca.1959
Westminster Presbyterian Church	Flint, Genesee County	1969

²⁹ Koyl, *Directory* 1956, 281.

³⁰ Ibid., 281.

³¹ Ibid., 281.

³² Ibid., 281.

³³ Koyl, *Directory*, 1962, 356.