The Early Settlers

The area of Milwaukee which most residents of the City know today as the "Lower East Side" is an area roughly bounded by Kilbourn Ave. to the south, the Milwaukee River to the west, North Ave. to the north, and the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan to the east. This has not always been the case. What was called the Lower East Side of Milwaukee was an area which extended north to Ogden Ave. and south beyond Spring St. (now Wisconsin Ave.) The area north of Ogden Ave., which today comprises most of the Lower East Side was predominantly cow pastures. The name "Pleasant St." was given that name because it was literally in the country. Prospect Ave. was the location of many summer homes, and those living there had a beautiful "prospect" of Lake Michigan.

The Lower East Side's institutions reflect its pattern of ethnic development. In the early days, its northernmost section, which at that time ended at Ogden Ave., was called "Yankee Hill" because of the significant concentration of families from New York, New England, and Britain. These early residents established a number of the area's churches, including All Saint's Cathedral and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. St. Mary's Catholic Church was built in 1846 by a predominantly German congregation that settled around it. In 1847 the Irish community constructed St. John's Catholic Church. By the 1850's, the Lower East Side was the heart of the City, and was the home of both the laborer and the factory owner. The children of these diverse ethnic groups attended Milwaukee's first high school, Central Milwaukee High, which opened in 1868 at the corner of Knapp and Cass Sts., presently the site of Lincoln Center for the Arts.
Industrial Growth

The construction of a dam on the Milwaukee River east of Humboldt Ave. in 1842 provided a critical source of water power for a number of industries. Cigar and barrel factories, knitting and flour mills, and tanneries located along the Milwaukee River in response to this much needed source of power. The river also provided a means for transporting the hides and hemlock, which was used in the tanning process. The tanning industry became a strong magnet for immigrants. Albert Trostel and August Gallun formed a tanning business in 1858. With the demand for leather used in the Civil War, and a growing population, business boomed. Milwaukee soon became the leading tanning center. In 1870, Pfister and Vogel acquired the Zohrlaut Tannery on Pleasant St. and later made it their corporate headquarters.

As the industries grew, so did the city. Cow pastures were transformed into yards as the city limits were pushed north to Brady St. The Lake bluffs, once used for cattle grazing and summer homes, became one of the finest and most exclusive areas of the city. Flop houses and taverns located near the industries along the river's edge. The beginnings of a centralized downtown district along Grand Ave. forced residents farther north. Among the first businesses to contribute to downtown growth were T.A. Chapman and Northwestern Mutual Life. A large group of Kaszubian Polish fishermen moved from the Jones Island area to the land north of Brady St., attracted by jobs in the tanneries and ice houses. In 1871 they built St. Hedwig's Church on the corner of Brady St. and Humboldt Ave. The Polish community contributed Milwaukee's well-known "Polish flats" to the
varied inventory of Lower East Side housing types. The Polish flat consisted of one home constructed under an existing home. Italians began to replace the Irish community in the area south of Wisconsin Ave., and later moved north into the areas around Brady St. Business activity on the Lower East Side remained stable until the Great Depression, when many industries closed and those that survived declined. Larger houses were converted into rooming houses and many apartments were broken into smaller units.

Decline and Demolition

After World War II, America began its migration away from the city; Milwaukee was no exception. Lower East Side homeowners were replaced by a new population of renters and investors. In the 1950's, a large Spanish speaking population lived in the former mansions in the area bounded by Van Buren, Knapp, State and Milwaukee Streets. This area was later cleared for the construction of a number of Urban Renewal projects, including Juneau Village. The Lower East Side was also hurt by the decision to clear away nine blocks of land between Lyon and Ogden Sts. from N. Milwaukee St. to the Lake bluff for the proposed Park East Freeway link. During the late 1960's, with the construction of a number of high-rise apartments, Prospect Ave. began to develop into a new "Gold Coast". Many of the remaining houses were acquired for future apartment development. Inexpensive flats and rooming houses attracted large numbers of young people to the area. Soon the Lower East Side was the center for Milwaukee's "Couter Culture". The earlier ethnic markets and other establishments were replaced by stores catering to the needs of these young people. Today, this counter culture has largely dispersed, but its influence on residents' and outsiders' perceptions of the area remains.
A Constant State of Change

The Lower East Side has been in a constant state of change. Over the years, census data has shown a decline in the area's population, size of households, persons under 18, and property values. Contrarily, the number of one-person households and female heads of household have increased. These trends are not exclusive to the Lower East Side, but are an indication of city and nationwide changes.

The population of the Lower East Side declined greatly between 1960 and 1970, when buildings were demolished for a number of urban renewal projects and the Park East Freeway segment. Since 1970, the population has continued to decline, but at a much slower rate, close to the city average. The number of housing units increased over 31% during the decade of 1960-70. This was nearly 30% more than the city average and could most likely be attributed to new apartment construction, especially along Prospect Ave. and the Juneau Village complex. Since 1970 there has been a small decrease in the number of available units, due to demolition of older structures and a lack of any new construction.

The non-white population has continually increased, but at a rate below the city average. The Lower East Side's over 65 population was stable for a number of years, but with the construction of the elderly housing projects, and a number of subsidized housing schemes, its growth has been greater than the city's. In contrast, the under 18 population in the area has been decreasing rapidly. The city of Milwaukee's under 18 population increased 1%, while the Lower East Side's dropped 14%. The nationwide trend toward an increase in one person households is particularly evident in the Lower East Side, which had a 53% increase, more than double the city's figures.

Owner-occupancy has been steadily declining for years. Between 1960 and 1970, only 28% of the Lower East Side's units were owner-occupied, whereas the city average was 48%. From 1970-1975, owner-occupancy fell another 16% in this area, but the city lost only 1%. Average house values in the Lower East Side dropped 8%; the average for the rest of the city was an 18% increase. The average rent for units on the Lower East Side has been generally lower than rents for comparable units in other parts of the city. Much of this can be attributed to the age of housing stock on the Lower East Side. In addition, many of the existing units are
small and lack the amenities that new projects can offer. Because of the cheaper rents and smaller units, singles and low-income persons locate here. The median income of persons living in the area is half that of the city average, and the number of persons below the poverty level exceeds the city's average by 13%.

Though these statistics describe a certain set of conditions, one must remember that the Lower East Side has always been in a state of change. The 1980's may well bring about another change in the composition of the Lower East Side. Investors and absentee landlords may realize the area's potential for renovation, people may begin to take advantage of its proximity to the downtown's activities and amenities, and new homeowners and renters may be attracted to the convenience and character of this distinctive Milwaukee neighborhood.

| Population | 1960 | 16,839 | 4,233 | 741,324 |
| 1970 | 12,733 | 5,061 | 717,099 |
| 1975 | 11,615 | 5,095 | 699,022 |
| % Change | 1960-70 | -24.4% | 19.6% | -5.3% |
| 1970-75 | -8.9% | 0.7% | -6.7% |
| Non-White Population | 1975 | 401 | 250 | 65,752 |
| % Non-White | 1960 | 0.4% | 1.7% | 8.9% |
| 1970 | 1.0% | 1.2% | 15.0% |
| 1975 | 10.7% | 6.9% | 15.8% |
| Over 65 Population | 1975 | 2,143 | 1,412 | 75,458 |
| % Over 65 | 1960 | 11.5% | 23.6% | 9.6% |
| 1970 | 22.4% | 32.0% | 15.7% |
| 1975 | 18.9% | 27.7% | 11.3% |
| Under 18 Population | 1975 | 1,416 | 148 | 212,659 |
| % Under 18 | 1960 | 26.4% | 8.4% | 31.1% |
| 1970 | 18.4% | 5.0% | 31.2% |
| 1975 | 12.4% | 11.2% | 31.8% |
| Households | 1975 | 6,460 | 2,919 | 340,508 |
| % Change | 1960-70 | 8.0% | 54.6% | 2.6% |
| 1970-75 | 0.4% | -4.3% | 1.5% |
| Female Heads of Household | 1975 | 2,764 | 1,295 | 73,145 |
| % Female Heads | 1970 | 7.5% | 4.3% | 10.5% |
| 1975 | 43.2% | 44.4% | 30.4% |
| Average Household Size | 1960 | 2.51 | 1.73 | 3.13 |
| 1970 | 1.93 | 1.53 | 2.96 |
| 1975 | 1.87 | 1.48 | 2.78 |
| Number of Units | 1975 | 6,865 | 3,142 | 251,631 |
| % Change | 1960-70 | 31.8% | 47.9% | 1.9% |
| 1970-75 | -4.1% | -3.3% | 2.3% |
| % of Vacancies | 1975 | 5.4% | 7.1% | NA |
| % Owner-Occupied | 1960 | 28.1% | 6.7% | 48.4% |
| 1970 | 12.2% | 5.1% | 47.2% |
| Median Income | 1960 | $4,143 | $5,058 | $5,694 |
| 1970 | 5,583 | 11,845 | 5,760 |
| 1975 | 5,800 | 9,728 | 11,100 |
| % Below Poverty Level | 1970 | 25.0% | 11.3% | 13.0% |
| Average House Value | 1960 | $12,500 | $24,000 | $15,400 |
| 1970 | 11,400 | 56,500 | 18,200 |
| Average Monthly Rent | 1960 | $65 | $103 | $74 |
| 1970 | 87 | 157 | 95 |
1663 North Marshall - Victorian Gothic

This house is one of three near identical houses, which were probably constructed by the same builder. Builders often used the same set of plans for a number of houses, a common occurrence on the Lower East Side. The house, constructed in 1890, is close to Victorian Gothic in style, and its characteristics include: pointed windows, massive gable, porch and eave trim, and distinctive iron cresting above its bay window.

1515 North Marshall - Vernacular

"Vernacular Architecture" is a style label given to a building type common to an area, and constructed during a particular period of time. These two homes were probably constructed around the turn of the century, and are typical of the simple workers' homes built during this period of time in the Lower East Side. Generally these homes have a low pitched roof, a simple porch and minimal wood detailing. These particular two homes are also somewhat more unusual, since they were constructed on the same lot, common at the time because property was so expensive.

1697-99 North Marshall - Italianate Double House

This example of the Double House, which was a forerunner of the duplex, was built in 1895. Although not very common in Milwaukee, there are a number of fine examples of this type of house on the Lower East Side. This building is Italianate in style, with narrow clapboard siding and few details, with the exception of the small round window in its peak.
1506 North Cass - Queen Anne

This house, built in 1887, is a good example of Queen Anne, a style that is predominant on the Lower East Side. Queen Anne is typified by irregular massing, turrets or towers, the use of turned wood detailing, and shingling in the gable. This house has 'fish scale' shingling, which has a scallop-like appearance.

1309 North Cass - Italianate

Named after its first owner, the John Roberts' House was constructed in 1973-74. It is a simple Italianate compared with the more elaborate Insbusch residence (1874) at 1135 North Cass. The Robert's House has the typical Italianate arched windows and bracketed cornice pierced with eave windows. This style is not that premoninent on the Lower East Side, although there are a number of fine examples of its various forms.

1518 North Cass - Classical Revival

Milwaukee architect Walter A. Holbrook designed this Classical Revival house for his brother, W.J. Holbrook. Built in 1899 for $3000, the house is similar to the many other examples of this style in the Lower East Side. One of the characteristics of Classical Revival is the Palladian window, a window divided by columns or piers into three lights, the middle of which is higher and arched at the top. Two other noticeable features of this house are the dental bands (un-carved, tooth-like projections) at the top of the second floor and porch, and the Doric columns supporting the porch.
Using the Map of the Lower East Side

The map on the following page depicts the Lower East Side as a city planner or pilot might see it. Text and captions throughout the Neighborhood's Catalogue will frequently refer to its streets and intersections, its alleys, blocks, edges, vacant lots, freeway land, and other urban elements within the area. Although it represents only two dimensions, it is the basis for almost all municipal decisions that relate to the use of land, traffic engineering, the delineation of political districts, and physical improvements, to name a few. Unfortunately, the dimensions of space, time, change, and perception cannot be rendered in plan.

While maps like this one help to inform urban policy, they are relatively limited tools in the formulation of zoning classifications that encourage supportive neighborhood environments. People who live on the Lower East Side share a different "map" of their neighborhoods. Unlike the planner's two-dimensional version, the resident's map contains the sensation of the area at eye-level, moving through neighborhood spaces at different hours of the day and night, frequently over many years, sometimes alone and sometimes with others. Rather than roads, the resident's map consists of feelings. It defines places that are liked and disliked, remembered and forgotten. It describes special short-cuts, personal landmarks, the addresses of friends and frequented shops, places that are noisy and quiet, sunny, or shaded. These and other points of interest on the resident's neighborhood map accumulate slowly as the details of streets grow more familiar over time.

Both types of maps are important; both deserve to play a balanced role in the process required to determine the design and development of physical settings that support human activities and events. However, until policy-makers begin to regard the hidden map of memory with equal credibility, neighborhoods will continue to suffer from a subordination to the needs of those who live outside the feelings of everyday urban life.
Perception

Perception plays an important role in the identity of a neighborhood. Like a person's home, a person's neighborhood contains elements that evoke feelings, associations, and memory--what might be called "the spirit of place." This spirit or set of feelings tends to grow with increasing familiarity. Over time, a whole community that has grown familiar with its neighborhood begins to share attitudes which relate to the neighborhood's image and identity. One of the largest difficulties with the decision-making processes that influence the use and distribution of urban land is that they do not generally account for residents' shared feelings and experiences of the place they live.

Consciously or unconsciously, all people employ all of their senses in order to locate themselves in their environment. Preferences for one place or building over another indicate that perception (as well as taste and other individual likes and dislikes) plays a role in the choices people make about where they live and where they go for entertainment, recreation, shopping, and other activities outside the home. Whether within the limits of a person's neighborhood or beyond it, perception helps the individual to make decisions about his or her environment.

Perception, therefore, is a significant force of influence in and of itself. It not only affects the image and identity attached to a neighborhood by the people who reside within it, it affects the attitudes of many people who don't. Visitors' opinions about a place and the opinions of people who only pass by may not have a significant impact on city policy. However, if the visitor or passer-by happens to be a banker or developer, an investor, a public official, a highway engineer or anyone whose job involves the value or use of urban land, perception becomes critical. Each of these individuals invariably harbors an attitude about a place that derives primarily in his or her perception of its image (particularly its economic image). If a neighborhood falls within the sphere of interest of a policy-maker, how he or she views a place--how it is "read," how its signs of health or disrepair are perceived--could have considerable influence in decisions that determine the neighborhood's future or the value of its real estate. The Park East freeway is a good case in point.
Rate of Change

The rate of change in a neighborhood often affects its quality and perception. Some elements of the neighborhood change very slowly, others overnight. Dramatic changes have the potential of disrupting the natural evolution of neighborhoods. Repair, maintenance, compatible redevelopment, historic preservation, and incremental planning all tend to help slow the rate of change in a neighborhood and protect it from disruption and discontinuity. If the rate of change is evaluated as carefully as the substance of change (the physical form, location, and characteristics of new building, for instance), the normal equilibrium of neighborhood life will be less vulnerable to the adverse effects of growth and redevelopment.

Time, Movement, and Memory

The elements that make up a neighborhood environment—open spaces and houses, sidewalks, streets, alleys, storefronts, apartments, trees, cars, people—are perceived in relationship to one another. These relationships change over time (for instance, where there was once eight blocks of buildings there is now empty space). The relationships between the different physical characteristics of a neighborhood and their location are sometimes defined by the distance between various elements or areas. Lower East Side is a fairly specific description which locates the neighborhood in relation to the central district of the city. However, the phrase "lower east side" tells nothing at all about how the neighborhood is perceived or what it contains, only where the neighborhood is located in relation to the rest of the city.

Time, movement, and memory are important ingredients of perception and equally impossible to legislate. People perceive the elements of their environment while moving either in a vehicle or on foot. Walking and driving all the way the objects and elements along a street are perceived. Only people who reside in a neighborhood and who frequently walk its streets begin to know its elements intimately, although even they look at things selectively.

Memorable spaces and places can be both positive and negative. Elements that are noticeably different, like the freeway corridor or the Arlington Court elderly high rise, are more likely to be remembered than ele-
ments that do not stand out. Similarly, only those elements that are visible from the street tend to be seen. The life that occurs on the "insides" of city blocks--in the back yards and hidden areas behind buildings and houses--are rarely seen by people who do not live in the neighborhood. These spaces, although semi-private, are important parts of city life; they support many different kinds of activities, such as gardening, childplay, hanging the laundry, and outdoor barbeques. They serve as a good example of the types of special spaces overlooked by planners and developers who lack a street-anchored sensitivity to the intimate organization of neighborhood life.

People tend to move in sequences from one point to another--from one's kitchen to the dining room, from the house to store, from the neighborhood to the shopping mall, from Milwaukee to Chicago. If the physical elements of an area have strong, clearly defined, coherent relationships, people moving through or within the area will have less difficulty orienting themselves. When a neighborhood is coherent, it produces positive feelings of security and safety. If an area contains unrelated elements sporadically arranged that are unfamiliar or disconnected (the Menominee River industrial valley is a good example), it tends to produce feelings of disorientation and discomfort. Consequently, both residents and visitors may either remember less about the place, or remember it negatively, or both.

The issues of perception, time, movement, and memory work to influence individual and shared experience, the qualities of everyday living in a variety of related environments, from the privacy of the home to the crowds of the downtown shopping district. They are not often discussed nor considered when major decisions about land use and locality are made, although they are probably just as important to the health of neighborhoods as the economic and political issues which complicate city and state government. The most effective method of integrating these and other intangible but important aspects of neighborhood life into policy is through active participation in the exchange of ideas at the neighborhood level.

Shared perceptions of common elements contribute to the strong sense of neighborhood place. These elements--streets and buildings, boundaries, open space, traffic, trees, playgrounds, churches, schools, and sidewalks, among many others--often reflect the economic, cultural, and social forces that act to shape neighborhood life. The Lower East Side contains physical characteristics that have an important relationship to the perception
of its neighborhoods. Some of the more significant characteristics, like the river and the lake, are briefly explored in the following discussions.

Natural Boundaries

As they have in the past, two unambiguous natural boundaries continue to influence both the shape and perception of Milwaukee's Lower East Side. Like most 19th century industrial cities, Milwaukee tended to centralize around the intersection of rail, water, and labor supplies. Over time, this growth expanded in all directions, including northward along the shores of the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan, dramatically affecting the settlement and use of land in between.

Despite their close proximity—less than a mile separates them—the shoreline of Lake Michigan and the inland banks of the Milwaukee River grew to support very different activities and land development. The river nourished the steady northeastern expansion of Milwaukee's industry. Conversely, the lake bluff attracted the city's wealthy class, prompted the linear development of leisure residences, and later witnessed the construction of tall apartment buildings designed to capitalize on its cool summer breezes and lake view. The contrast and diversity of land use along these two natural boundaries helped to shape the character of the Lower East Side.

Although a significant depression in the topography between N. Van Buren and N. Water Streets obscures the river from the sight of anyone standing east of N. Astor, the smokestacks and granaries that rise above riverfront industry reveal its dominating presence in the neighborhood's western skyline. Tanneries on the east bank and breweries on the west are the origin of the distinctive smells that occasionally permeate the Lower East Side area.

Together, the lake bluff's high-rises and the river's historical, 19th century factory facades create two "walls" that enclose the neighborhoods in between. Both boundaries clearly delineate the extreme eastern and western limits of the area. The vitality and coherence these important "walls" lend to the perception of the Lower East Side area are a part of the strength its neighborhoods have exhibited in the face of growing urban disintegration to the south and commercial instability to the north.
Lower East Side Street Grid

Five north/south routes carry traffic to and from downtown Milwaukee through the Lower East Side. Farwell Avenue (one-way southbound) and Prospect Avenue (one-way northbound) combine to serve the Upper East Side and northeastern suburbs; North Humboldt Avenue, which terminates at Ogden, serves the communities located on the near-west side of the river; North Van Buren carries significant traffic to and from the middle west side; Water Street, which branches off of North Humboldt just south of the Humboldt bridge, circumvents the residential area and provides alternative access to the downtown business district, the PAC, City Hall, primary east/west connectors, and South Milwaukee. Both N. Humboldt and N. Van Buren must utilize Ogden Avenue as a connecting route to points west (the freeway on-ramp) and points south (Jackson, Milwaukee, and Water Streets). The critical five-point intersection at the east end of the freeway corridor, where Franklin, Farwell, and Ogden Streets converge, is a heavily utilized juncture offering alternative access to major east/west downtown streets (south, via Prospect) and I-43 (west, via Ogden).

Primary east/west connectors which intersect with major north/south arteries facilitate cross-town traffic. Ogden Avenue was at one time a commercially active street serving the community which used to occupy the Park East corridor. It remains the primary connection to the Milwaukee Street on-ramp for the completed portion of the expressway loop that feeds I-43, I-90, and I-94. Two blocks south, Juneau picks up significant westbound traffic carrying it across the river to the lower 3rd Street/Highland Avenue area, MATC, and points west. It is less active and slower than the State and Kilbourn options further south. State Street tends to attract through westbound traffic, serving the PAC, newspapers, MECCA, the police station, the court house, and points west. Kilbourn's median strip and width demarcate the border between the Lower East Side residential area and the downtown business district. Prospect turns fully into it, picking up traffic with east downtown destinations, Wisconsin Avenue and Jefferson Square shops, City Hall, banks, and the retail district.

The combined north/south-east/west network, although suffering moderate congestion at rush hours, provides a secondary but essential transportation system linking near-west and East Side communities with the central business district. Frequency of use,
noise, width, and the speed of traffic along these streets tend to impede the interaction between adjacent neighborhood areas.

Concentrations of Commercial Activity

Brady Street and N. Van Buren between Ogden and State Streets support significant concentrations of commercial activity and pedestrian traffic. On Brady, small storefront businesses, taverns, restaurants, and retail signage define the northern edge of the corridor study area and separate the upper neighborhoods of the Lower East Side from the neighborhood areas to the south. The history of Brady Street is colorful and well-known, reinforcing its perception as a special place with its own unique urban persona. Despite a troublesome economic pattern and high retail turnover, the lower portions of Brady Street continue to attract new enterprise. The markets, shops and restaurants west of the N. Humboldt intersection have evolved into the Italian retail center of Milwaukee and enjoys a loyal, growing patronage. The whole street, however, is a vital part of Lower East Side life.

The Juneau Village shopping center also attracts a good portion of commercial activity, but it is hidden from the street. Its three-level parking structure encourages the use of cars to transport shoppers, but the complex still draws pedestrian patronage from the Juneau Village high-rise apartments and the neighborhood due east. The post office located across Juneau from the parking structure serves the entire Lower East Side area. Between Juneau and Ogden, a mix of restaurants, an athletic club, Milwaukee Stratton College, and a private lounge attract selective night-time activity, but it is also removed from the street. Regardless, the commercial vitality of Van Buren and Brady influence and strengthen the perception of neighborhood boundaries. The life they bring to the neighborhood enriches the articulation of edges.

Proximity to Downtown

The slow but steady development of Milwaukee's central business district is dramatically evident in the tall office buildings that hover above the southern horizon of the Lower East Side neighborhoods.
They represent both the history and future of city life. New downtown construction -- the Grand Avenue Mall on Wisconsin, the NML building, the new MGIC offices, and two speculative high-rise condominium projects -- indicate the efforts of city government and the local private sector to fortify Milwaukee's commercial future in a difficult economic season. However, not all new growth supports the conservation of healthy neighborhood life. The Juneau Village complex is a reminder of the urban renewal strategies that favored vertical privacy over next-door neighbors. These schemes, while attractive to some, tend to destroy the scale and close-knit character of neighborhood communities without contributing other street-anchored activities to replace what was demolished on their behalf.

The Lower East Side is an important part of downtown redevelopment. A renewed business district depends on a reliable flow of local consumers which the Lower East Side can provide. The area around the corridor is within walking distance of every major cultural and retail amenity in the downtown district. In-town high rise condominium proposals suggest that important lessons still have not been learned. As the pressure of new investment and residential development approaches the southern edge of the Lower East Side, the careful consideration of land use in relation to new construction will determine the character of an invaluable balance between homelife and workplace. Without this critical balance, Milwaukee and its neighborhoods will remain vulnerable to decline and decay.

The Freeway Stub End

The concrete freeway that stops abruptly at the west end of the Park East corridor was created and built with public money by public officials ostensibly acting on behalf of the public's welfare. The government agencies that devised the freeway plan no doubt believed that it would promote the economic growth of the Central Business District. Consequently, the implementing agency charged with the construction of the freeway exercised the power of eminent domain, purchased all property in the path of the new right of way, and leveled eight blocks of city. All signs of residential life were removed from the corridor to accommodate automobiles and trucks.

The stub end symbolizes both the authority of govern-
ment and the authority of money. The portion of the freeway completed prior to SWRPC's revision of the regional transportation plan and the institution of the ten year moratorium represents millions of dollars, a great concentration of temporary jobs, and tons of material investment. Unfortunately, the stub end fail to symbolize the revitalization of downtown Milwaukee. Nevertheless, the forces that demolished the buildings on the Park East corridor still have a hand in policy. With the growing recognition that the destructive potential of freeway construction in the Lower East Side far exceeds the benefits it promised to bring to downtown businesses, it is hoped that the same hand will be extended to aid the redevelopment of abandoned neighborhood land.

Neighborhood Conservation All of the Time

Although they do their damage at different scales, a vacant lot and an empty corridor have the same destructive impact on the perception and health of the Lower East Side. Even if one problem is easier to see, both deserve the same ongoing attention. The Catalogue views the corridor not as an isolated issue, but as one major feature of a comprehensive conservation effort designed to ensure the continued vitality of the entire residential area. Conservation, by definition, is not a single issue cause; like the maintenance of a well-kept home, it goes on all the time.

In order to facilitate a brief survey of the condition and salient characteristics of areas surrounding the corridor, the Catalogue has identified several smaller neighborhood localities that together comprise the southern portion of the Lower East Side. These localities have been influenced by many of the forces discussed on the preceding pages.

The brief descriptions that follow seek to understand the whole first by understanding its "joints," or point of connection. By no means a thorough examination, these descriptions include short diagnoses intended to initiate greater discussion and, if need be, closer scrutiny.

These areas do not necessarily represent the impressions and attitudes of residents. They are presented here only to help organize a general portrait of the areas that will inform the redevelopment of corridor land, the first priority in the full conservation of Lower East Side neighborhoods.
The Industrial Edge

Narrative Description: The westernmost boundary of the Lower East Side is a small, linear industrial district. Running parallel to the river, factory buildings, parking lots, and other non-residential structures (some old, some new), line N. Water Street from the N. Humboldt Avenue bridge to the elevated freeway just south of E. Lyon Street. The continuity of facades is distinct on the western side of N. Water, although the eastern side of the street displays a frayed assortment of buildings that reflect the history of the area and the point of contact between residential settlement and working places. The western side of the street -- the wall of factory facades -- contains no residential land use.

Between the elevated freeway and E. State Street, the industrial edge of the Lower East Side deteriorates, offering a good example of urban blight. A forest of concrete pylons disrupts the continuity of facades to the north and robs the street of light. Asphalt parking lots run between E. Lyon (underneath the expressway) and E. Jumeau, leaving only vestigial evidence of earlier neighborhood life. On the west side of N. Water, old storefronts, small businesses, and taverns stand disconnected from the rest of the city.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: The west side of N. Water between E. Lyon and N. Humboldt is a valuable neighborhood asset; the east side of N. Water is in need of small acts of maintenance and repair, improved landscaping south of the E. Brady intersection, and friendly walls to buffer parking and storage lots from pedestrian activity, particularly at the intersection of E. Lyon and N. Water across from Pfister & Vogel's factory; the entire area from underneath the freeway to E. State Street, which indicates the collision of modernizing downtown development, and the older Lower East Side residential area, deserves major rehabilitative analysis and improvements, well beyond the scale of this inquiry.

N. Water/E. Brady/N. Van Buren/E. Lyon

Narrative Description: The outer edges of this part of the Lower East Side have been seriously damaged by the demolition of the corridor, the construction of the freeway, road "improvements," devalued land along the east side of N. Water Street, and intensified traffic volumes on N. Van Buren. Nonetheless, the
center of the area is not only healthy, it has become the focus of a few significant building restorations. This part of the neighborhood features a significant dip in topography, creating a bowl at the intersection of E. Pleasant and N. Jackson. Here, D'Amato's grocery store, Leonardo's Restaurant, and a small barber shop form the center of immediate neighborhood life. N. Jackson then climbs to a bluff perched well above the river and the industrial development below, to the west. It is a long street replete with trees, old houses (mostly in good condition), and a respectful commercial building at its northern end.

The E. Brady Street edge, which features a slow turn into N. Water Street, is weakened by an unsightly reused gas station, a billboard, and amorphous landscaping. The corner of E. Brady and N. Van Buren is held by a restaurant set back from the intersection. The restaurant has erected a respectful cast-iron fence to define its parking lot. N. Van Buren between E. Brady and E. Pleasant is a long block with a healthy and continuous line of older houses with porches and characteristic roof forms, finally disrupted by the corridor.

The intersection of N. Van Buren and E. Pleasant is a traffic hazard. Although a crossing guard is stationed there during school hours, his presence does not provide sufficient control. During the course of the Study, the intersection witnessed three major collisions and innumerable close calls.

The southern edge of this area, along E. Lyon Street between N. Van Buren and N. Water, has suffered from the impact of the proposed freeway, its subsequent clearing of the corridor, and the construction of the stub-end atop the adjacent block due south. Five full blocks were cleared on the northwest corner of N. Van Buren and E. Lyon. Roughly from the alley that divides the block between N. Jefferson and N. Water, houses face a prohibitively steep embankment, a virtual wall burned to support the freeway. The end of N. Jefferson was blockaded to relieve traffic at the E. Pleasant/N. Water intersection; this anomalous cul-de-sac is the only one of its kind on the Lower East Side. Just above it, on the east side of the street, four full lots were purchased and cleared by Beatrice Foods, who own the Pfister & Vogel Tanneries. This hole is a serious neighborhood liability and symbolizes, especially to outsiders, the declining value of housing stock and local real estate. Pfister & Vogel also operate the parking lot on the northeast corner of E. Lyon and N. Water, another small piece of blight.
Although the area contains a number of unoccupied buildings, some residential and some commercial, its center seems relatively well-insulated from the forces which affect its edges. Alleys service all but the block between E. Pleasant, N. Jackson, N. Van Buren, and E. Lyon and seem to contain healthy activities, both commercial and residential. The topographical depression and slope to the west make it a distinct area within the Lower East Side.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: North, west, and particularly south edges in need of small repair and generally upgraded frontal maintenance; deteriorating houses on the west end of E. Lyon; over a half-dozen vacant lots, including a major hole on N. Jefferson, visible from N. Water Street (this hole exposes alley activity normally hidden from view and therefore hurts the image of the area); the vacant northwest corner of N. Van Buren/E. Lyon needs temporary improvements to discourage dumping and the accumulation of refuse; the intersection at N. Van Buren and E. Pleasant needs improved traffic controls to prevent accidents and soften impact of traffic volume on the neighborhood.

N. Van Buren/E. Brady/N. Franklin/E. Lyon

Narrative Description: A large portion of the Lower East Side's residential population resides in this relatively flat, central area. Its southernmost edge runs along E. Lyon Street, facing the Park East corridor. Although many of the houses and apartment buildings on E. Lyon suffer from evident neglect and transient occupancy, many have been fully restored or are undergoing significant rehabilitation as of this writing. Selective renovations in the area indicate the growing popularity of the neighborhood.

Eddie Glorioso's corner grocery at E. Pleasant and N. Astor, located roughly in the center of the area, is a well-known and widely-patronized community asset. A number of other small commercial and retail enterprises in the vicinity include a plumber, a gift shop, numerous taverns, and a wholesale food supplier. The northern portions of the area benefit from close proximity to E. Brady Street's unusual potpourri of specialty shops and restaurants.

The area contains two elementary schools, one public and one parochial. Located directly next door to each other, Cass Elementary and St. Rita's dominate the western side of E. Cass between E. Pleasant and
E. Brady. The schools overlook a full block of paved recreational facility operated by the City. The Cass Street Playground is an important neighborhood amenity currently scheduled for upgrading in conjunction with temporary improvements on the Park East corridor.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: The central portion of the Lower East Side is healthy and stable with a diverse population mix, a variety of historically significant buildings, and increasing owner occupancy; moderate building repair and upgrading needed in some parts, especially along E. Lyon; exposed parking lots on N. Humboldt just north of E. Lyon and on E. Lyon between N. Van Buren and N. Cass require visual screens; vacant lots appear infrequently, although many deserve temporary improvements and should be kept free of litter; the area's boarding houses, with a few notable exceptions, require maintenance and physical repair.

N. Franklin/E. Brady/N. Farwell

Narrative Description: Two significant features distinguish this portion of the Lower East Side from other parts of the area: firstly, the land drops in elevation between N. Humboldt and N. Franklin resulting in a highly perceivable depression that rises again slightly and stabilizes toward the Lake Bluff; secondly, the entire city grid shifts a full thirty-five degrees to the northeast, creating a series of triangulated intersections and irregular lots, particularly along N. Warren Avenue. These lots maintain an east-west orientation; consequently, the houses on the west side of the street are staggered in a sawtooth fashion between N. Franklin and E. Brady Street.

In addition to these unusual features, three anomalies interrupt the neighborhood texture: the first and least noticeable is a parking lot that occupies nearly three-quarters of the east side of N. Warren between N. Franklin and E. Albion; the second and third—the Boys Club facility and the Arlington Court elderly high-rise—are adjacent and consume almost one-half of the block between E. Brady, N. Franklin, N. Warren, and N. Arlington. The twenty-two story tower, which has a distinctive decagonal shape, is visible from almost every part of the Lower East Side.

The immediate neighborhood benefits from a small corner grocery at the triangular intersection N. Warren and N. Franklin called Tina's. Other than a few small garages used for occassional automotive repair, the
proximity of the area to Brady Street may have pre-empted additional retail activity.

**Abbreviated Diagnosis:** For the most part, this area of the Lower East Side is enjoying the steady rehabilitation of houses, although two vacant lots on N. Franklin and evidence of neglectful maintenance across from the Arlington Court tower indicate it is going through transition; a relatively new system of one-way streets designed to accommodate parking and snow removal has complicated the traffic pattern on N. Franklin, N. Warren, and N. Arlington; the area of the neighborhood located near the 5 point intersection of N. Farwell, N. Prospect, N. Franklin, and E. Ogden suffers from the vacancy of the easternmost block of the corridor, which has been used as a parking lot for the last few years; improved upkeep on this block (across from the gas station) will strengthen southern portion of the area; the shifted grid, as in other cities including San Francisco, Dallas, and Denver, tends to create a strongly perceived edge.

**N. Prospect and the Lake Bluff**

**Narrative Description:** N. Prospect Avenue between E. Ogden and E. Windsor (five blocks north of E. Brady) consists primarily of larger residential buildings. The street also supports a variety of other uses, including the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, the Allen Bradley Museum, elderly housing, a veterans organization, the Jewish Community Center, and a Montessori school. Many of these new uses have adapted larger, older houses to accommodate newer apartment developments, many high-rises, and recent condominium conversions indicate the continuing attractiveness of the lake bluff, which shows little sign of deterioration. N. Prospect carries much of the city's northbound afternoon rush-hour traffic.

N. Farwell is a street with greater diversity but significantly less stability than N. Prospect. Like N. Prospect, its buildings are larger, with a healthy selection of mid-rise apartments. Farwell supports a variety of small and large retail enterprises, restaurants, wholesale businesses, storage, medical, and other uses. The residential life seems more transient than other parts of the Lower East Side. As a principal thoroughfare, it suffers high volumes of morning southbound rush-hour traffic which may
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affect the perception of the street, at least between E. Brady and E. Ogden. In the morning, the taller buildings along N. Prospect Ave. cast most of Farwell in a shadow, which may also influence the perceived stability of the area. The two cross-streets, E. Albion and E. Curtis, contain densely packed houses and appear hidden if not protected from the life of either N/S artery.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: The N. Farwell/N. Prospect/lake bluff area features a linear concentration of mid- and high-rise residential buildings generally taller and larger than the majority of building types immediately to the west of the parallel arteries; the transition from small to large scale buildings occurs roughly on the north/south centerline of the blocks between N. Warren and N. Farwell, although the edge is amorphous from the pedestrian point of view; N. Prospect enjoys stability because of its lake frontage; N. Farwell between E. Ogden and E. Brady suffers from poor morning sunlight (shadows cast by taller buildings) and periodically stultifying traffic volumes; the lack of traffic control between the two major intersections results

The Five Point Intersection

A critically strategic factor in the redevelopment of Park East corridor land will be the five-point intersection at the corner of E. Ogden, N. Franklin, and N. Farwell. This intersection is an important juncture both with respect to the perception of Lower East Side decisions that will determine the re-use of vacant land. It has been established that motorists attach unusual significance to major street junctures and their surrounding buildings, urban elements, or open space. These junctures represent a point of decision for drivers who therefore pay greater attention to the immediate physical setting.

Narrative Description: At least five discrete areas within the Lower East Side are joined at the intersection of E. Ogden and N. Farwell (which includes by association the intersection of E. Ogden and N. Prospect). These areas include the old "Yankee Hill" area, the full eight-block corridor, the triangular portion of the neighborhood delineated by N. Franklin and N. Farwell, the N. Prospect/lake bluff area, and the lakefront itself, including the Burns triangle and Juneau Parks to the southeast.
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A gasoline station commands the corner west of the stoplight on N. Farwell. Beyond it, a cleared corridor block is used for parking and the storage of old cars. To the east of the stoplight is an old building with evidence of high turnover and Teddy's, a popular dance bar. The block to the east is truncated by the short extension of E. Ogden over to N. Prospect; an easterly view reveals a parking lot along the southern edge of this block, the parking lot of the Jewish Community Center across N. Prospect, and the area east of N. Prospect cleared for freeway construction. A southeasterly view reveals the Burns Triangle Park and a 1938 art deco apartment building (1260 N. Prospect), an historically significant Milwaukee landmark designed by the locally prominent architect, Herbert A. Tullgren. Due south, the famous mansions on the west side of N. Prospect are just visible. A grand view of Juneau Park, the First Wisconsin and Cudahy Towers, the Milwaukee War Memorial Art Center, the Summerfest grounds, the Hoan Bridge, the Lake Michigan harbor, and South Milwaukee's Bay View Skyline await just beyond. To the immediate southwest of the intersection, a vacant corner sits neglected and underutilized.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: The five point intersection is one of the most important in the city. It marks the gate to downtown, the gate to the Lower East Side's central neighborhoods, and a potential gate to the Lakefront recreational area; currently, the intersection is in need of major rehabilitative planning, screens for parking lots, infill for the vacant southeast corner of E. Ogden and N. Farwell, and new development for the corridor. (These and other issues will be expanded in Section 4 of the Catalogue).

N. Van Buren/E. Ogden/N. Prospect/E. Kilbourn

Narrative Description: This is the area historically known as Yankee Hill. It features two schools on E. Ogden and four hotels, two of which (the Astor and Knickerbocker) dominate the blocks along the north side of E. Juneau between N. Prospect and N. Marshall. East of the Knickerbocker, four of Milwaukee's most valuable architectural treasures, the Jason Downer, Francis Hintor Stephen Harrison, and Collins/Elwell mansions--grace the northwestern and northeastern corners of N. Prospect and E. Juneau. Additionally, the area contains six historic churches, each contributing a unique spire or tower to the rich skyline of the area and each located within two blocks of each other. Many other buildings of considerable architectural and historical significance may be found.
within this early Milwaukee neighborhood, although its continuity has been damaged by the more recent development of mid- and high-rise apartments. The disintegration of the area is most noticeable along its western and eastern edges, N. Van Buren and E. Kilbourn respectively. The atmosphere of the area, despite its occasional incongruities, surface parking lots, and "holes in the fabric," remain a large asset to the Lower East Side. It is not surprising that the area is enjoying substantial rehabilitation and development. Its compact assortment of schools, churches, hotels, apartments, historic landmarks, high-rises, restaurants, and mansions deserve great consideration in new development strategies; its jump in scale from the area across the Park East corridor presents the community with a challenging set of problems and opportunities.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: Nearly one-third of the land in the Yankee Hill area has been flattened with asphalt for surface parking; those lots that have not already provided screening of plantings or trees should be buffered from the street; the edges of the area, particularly along N. Van Buren between E. Kilbourn and E. Ogden could become the focus of significant residential redevelopment and nonetheless deserves better maintenance and conscientious repair that acknowledges the historical importance of the neighborhood.

N. Milwaukee/E. Ogden/N. Van Buren/E. State

Narrative Description: This portion of the Lower East Side, known historically as Convent Hill, is almost entirely transitional. Late 60's urban renewal projects, brand new downtown office development, older factories, older schools and residential townhouses, a small retail shopping mall, garden apartments, and new, low-rise flat roof commercial development all collide in a discontinuou collision of two urban eras. Large, vacant blocks symbolize the influence of the new. The tall Juneau Villag Towers represent alternative sky-borne urban neighborhood. The campus of The Milwaukee School of Engineering reside in this area, having adapted old buildings (including the original German-American school on N. Broadway) and constructed new ones to satisfy classroom and dormitory needs. Many of the older, original residences of the area are located between N. Milwaukee and N. Broadway. These smaller, historical buildings, including the Grace Lutheran Church, sit on the shadow of adjacent manufacturing and distributing activity, demolition, and a somewhat disharmonious streetscape. They are nonetheless valuable buildings
that retain a badly-needed link to the past, particularly in an area ravaged by renewal, vacant lots, and new large-scale urban construction.

Abbreviated Diagnosis: The development of the downtown retail and office district has had a traumatic effect on what used to be an important Milwaukee residential neighborhood; older manufacturing structures and houses provide an important opportunity to reinforce the history of the city and should be conserved or adapted for new use; parking lots and vacant land create burdensome and unsightly voids in the street-scape and would profit from temporary screening, trees, and sensitive construction; the treatment of parking and the small park in front of the Convent Hill elderly care facility demonstrates how good buffering elements can improve and support pedestrian activity; the scale of the area marks the contact between the downtown and its closest east side residential neighborhoods.