

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

573

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Dearborn City Hall Complex  
Other names/site number: Springwells Municipal Building  
Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 13615 Michigan Avenue  
City or town: Dearborn State: Michigan County: Wayne, 48126  
Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide x local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
x A \_\_\_ B x C \_\_\_ D

<u>Brian D. Conway</u>	<u>7/2/14</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>MI SHPO</u>	
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

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Jon E. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

8.25.14  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

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



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Colonial Revival  
Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, limestone, painted wood trim  
Clay tile roof

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Dearborn City Hall Complex occupies a nearly trapezoidal block on the southwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Schaefer Road on the eastern edge of downtown Dearborn, Michigan. Maple Road borders the property to the west and Ellar Street to the south. The complex contains three buildings: the 1921 Georgian Revival Dearborn City Hall (originally Springwells Municipal Building) is located in the northeast portion of the site with its long main facade facing north on Michigan Avenue; the 1929 Colonial Revival Police and Municipal Courts Building is located on the southwest portion of the property with its long main facade facing west on Maple Street; while the third building is a partial sub-terrain office/auditorium concourse addition from 1981 that is located at the southeast corner of the property and extends west and north to connect the two older structures. The concourse addition also contains an above-ground parking garage. Landscaped walks and sitting areas are present in a public park on the northwest portion of the site, a small paved war memorial plaza is situated on the northeast corner, and a small surface parking area is located along the eastern edge of the property. Paved walkways flow through most portions of the site and connect to the perimeter public sidewalks.

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## Narrative Description

### Site Background

The City Hall Complex is located on Michigan Avenue, a main east-west artery leading west out of Detroit that was expanded from an old Indian trail and called the Chicago Road in the 1800s.<sup>1</sup> This roadway also was the location of an interurban line, which at the time of the Springwells Municipal Building construction stretched as far west as Jackson, Michigan. This property at one time also contained several additional structures that were integral to the operation of the local government but have since been removed: the Fire Hall and Garage (1925) was located on the southeast corner of the property and demolished in 1979 to make room for the concourse addition; a Signal Bureau Building was built in 1929, converted into the Health Department and also demolished in 1979; and a centrally located Fire Alarm Building (unknown date) was located where the current concourse now resides.

### City Hall:

Constructed in 1921 at a cost of \$209,882.00,<sup>2</sup> and designed by noted Detroit architect Marcus Burrowes, the red brick-wall Georgian Revival building is a long, rectangular two-and-one-half-story building on a raised basement with a north facing central entrance. The building is oriented with its long axis in the east-to-west direction (parallel to Michigan Avenue) and is approximately 300' long by 125' deep. The basement level is partially raised above grade, is visible on all four sides of the building and is faced in dressed limestone with a sloping cap.

The building's walls are built of brick in varying tones of brown and red and laid in a Flemish bond pattern from the limestone base up to the roof cornice. Flat-arch brick soldier course lintels with limestone keystones are present atop the first-floor square-head windows while arched soldier course lintels with limestone keystones top the second-floor round arch windows. Simple 4" rectangular limestone window sills are present at the basement, first, and second-floor window openings. In the center of the symmetrical north (main) façade, facing Michigan Avenue, is a projecting two-story entrance area clad in limestone. It includes a first-floor arched entry with modern aluminum frame doors and sidelights beneath a shallow portico displaying a limestone Tuscan column at each end supporting a small second-floor balcony with limestone balustrade. Behind the balcony in the second story is a triple window, with divided lights, outlined by limestone trim. A small secondary entrance is located on the south (rear) portion of the building and consists of aluminum-framed doors and windows set in a recessed masonry opening with a projecting limestone cornice above.

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<sup>1</sup> Fader. Springwells-150 Years later. 2

<sup>2</sup> City Clerk's Office memo. 1

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Both the north and south long elevations are symmetrical and consist of a central five-bay wide façade flanked by projecting three-bay wide wings at each end of the building. The east and west side elevations are both five bays wide with a slightly projecting three-bay wide central portion flanked by single-bay sections at either end. The main entrance at the north elevation is reached by a broad symmetrical limestone staircase, with steps rising in front and on each side, with limestone wingwalls that hide depressed glass-framed entrances to the basement level on each side.

The existing windows consist of irregularly spaced, double-hung, four-over-four units at the basement level, square-head combination fixed and awning divided-light units in each bay of the first floor level, and round-arch combination fixed with awning divided light units in each bay at the second-floor level. The rear (south) central bay contains a one-and-one-half-story high multi-light round-arch window divided by mullions into a round-arch central section and an outer section flanking and arching over it. Arch-top dormers are symmetrically-placed on all four sides on the building, their fronts set back from the cornice at the back of recesses in the sloping roof edges: on the north elevation there are five in the central bay with one each in each flanking wing; on the south elevation there are four in the center bay with one each in each flanking bay; and there are three on both the east and west elevations. All dormers have windows consisting of two casement four-over-four units with divided arch top heads.

The hipped roof has a long central ridge in the east-west direction with cross hip roofs on each of the four projecting wings. All roof surfaces and ridges are covered in clay tile. A dominant feature of the roof is a centrally located Colonial cupola, which is a fiberglass reproduction of the original. The base on which the cupola rests is octagon-shaped, contains a clock face on the north elevation and is capped with a deck with metal raining system. A middle step below the cupola is square and faced in painted wood horizontal siding. The cupola is octagonal in form, with a slender round-arch vertical fixed divided light window in each face below a domed copper roof. A flagpole rises from the peak of the cupola roof. A single square brick chimney, with a limestone cap, projects above the roofline on the southeast portion of the building.

A pre-cast concrete flat-roofed addition connects to the western side of the south elevation at the basement and first-floor levels of this building. Two existing window openings, one at the basement level and one at the first, were converted to entrance doors to connect the building to the addition.

The building interior is arranged around a double-loaded central corridor on all four floors. This corridor has terrazzo and marble floors with a marble wainscot and is reached on the first level through a central lobby and vestibule on the north elevation and from the south through a small vestibule and curving marble grand staircase. There is a smaller enclosed steel-framed utilitarian stairway on the west end of the building. The majority of the interior consists of perimeter offices, utility spaces, and storage rooms all designed for government functions and reached by the central double-loaded corridor. These offices contain plastered walls and ceilings with varying amounts of original plaster ceiling coves and trim remaining. Most of the interior office spaces were remodeled in 1981 when the concourse addition was built.

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### **Police and Municipal Courts Building:**

This Colonial Revival building was designed by architect John Kasurin of Fry and Kasurin Architects of Ann Arbor and built in 1929 for a cost of \$162,000.00<sup>3</sup>. Complementing the design, massing, scale, and materials of the adjacent City Hall Building, but with simpler detailing, this red brick-wall building is a long, broadly U-shaped (almost rectangular two-and-one-half-story structure on a raised basement with a west-facing main entrance along Maple Road. The building is oriented with its long axis in the north-south direction (parallel to Maple Road) and is approximately 250' long by 125' deep. The basement level is partially raised above grade, is visible on all four sides of the building and is faced in dressed limestone. Its cap is a multi-coursed limestone beltcourse at the first-floor window-sill level.

The building's walls are built of brick in varying tones of brown and red laid in a Flemish bond pattern from the beltcourse up to the roof cornice. The square-head first-floor windows are capped by round-arch-head carved limestone panels beneath arches of soldier course brickwork, while the second story's square-head windows are capped by flat soldier course brick lintels. Simple four-inch rectangular limestone window sills are present at the basement, first, and second floor window openings. In the center of the symmetrical west (main) façade, facing Maple Street, is a projecting three-bay two-story entrance area clad in limestone. It contains a tall central double-door entry, with large glass light above, beneath a limestone pediment lintel and flanked by double-hung windows with segmental pediment limestone window hoods. The entrance area displays four fluted Tuscan limestone pilasters supporting a projecting Classical style limestone entablature that features a dentil band beneath the cornice. Three double-hung divided lite windows are present in the second floor of this entrance area. A basement level entrance at the south elevation is the former Police garage door and is now a glass framed public entrance.

The west elevation is symmetrical and consists of the central three-bay limestone entrance section flanked by five-bay wide portions at each end of the building. The north side elevation is eight bays wide with only the center six bays containing windows; the end two bays do not have any fenestration. The south elevation is seven bays wide and consists of seven window openings on the first and second-floor levels and three openings at the basement level consisting of a central double-door entrance, with transom and sidelights, framed in limestone in the center bay flanked by former openings in-filled with brick/hollow metal doors one bay in from each end of the building. The east (rear) elevation consists of a symmetrical seven-bay wide central façade flanked by a projecting wing on each end. Although the wings are the same width, the north wing is four bays wide while the south wing is only three bays in width. A portion of the east elevation is obscured by the connecting concourse addition. The main west entrance is reached by broad west-facing limestone steps with limestone wingwalls and metal pipe railings.

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<sup>3</sup> Fordson Independent article. 1

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The existing windows consist of irregularly spaced, double-hung three-over-three units at the basement level, double-hung eight-over-eight units at the first level, and double-hung eight-over-eight units at the second-floor level. Three window openings in the basement level, west elevation, were in-filled at an unknown time with limestone. The rear (east) central bay contains a two-story high round-arch fixed triple divided window. This monumental window is flanked by two small one-over-one fixed windows at the second floor level.

The combination roof has a flat portion over the central part of the building and hip roofs at the north and south ends and capping the two projecting wings. The central flat roof has an exposed copper roof edge and contains minimal amounts of roof-top mechanical equipment. All hipped roof surfaces are covered in clay tile units. A single square brick chimney with a limestone cap projects above the roofline on the northeast portion of the building. A pre-cast concrete flat-roofed concourse addition connects to the east elevation at the basement and first-floor levels of this building. It is unknown what existing features were modified to allow for this connection.

The building interior is arranged around a double-loaded central corridor on all three floors. This corridor has terrazzo and marble floors with a marble wainscot on the upper two floors and a coated concrete floor at the basement level. The corridor is reached on the first level by a central lobby and vestibule on the west elevation which connects to a marble-clad curving grand staircase on the east side of the building. There is a smaller steel-framed utilitarian stairway on the south portion of each floor. The majority of the interior space consists of perimeter offices, utility spaces, and storage rooms all designed for government functions and reached by the central double-loaded corridor. A portion of the main corridor was blocked-off with drywall partitions on the north end of the first floor. The interior offices contain plastered walls and ceilings with varying amounts of original plaster ceiling coves and trim remaining. Most of the interior office spaces were remodeled in 1981 when the concourse addition was built.

### **Non-Contributing Features of the Property:**

#### Concourse Addition

This partially sunken, exposed cast-in-place concrete addition was designed by Rosetti Associates of Southfield, Michigan, in 1981<sup>4</sup> to provide a basement-level connection between the City Hall and Police and Court Buildings. It was also designed to provide public gathering space with a small, concrete-walled outdoor amphitheater and landscaped planting beds and paved walkways to connect both buildings to the south and north public sidewalks. This addition was designed to be partially hidden in the ground, allowing views of both existing buildings from Michigan Avenue to be mostly retained. As "new" construction less than fifty years old, it does not contribute to the complex's historic significance.

#### Northwest Park

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<sup>4</sup> Arneson. 6

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This rectangular park, located to the north of the Police and Courts Building and to the west of City Hall Building, is bounded on the north by Michigan Avenue and on the west by Maple Road. It is a tree-filled open public park that has no known significance as either a former civic area or location of any archaeological resources. The park contains several structures which are art pieces, all placed by local agencies within the last five years. Although considered a non-contributing resource of this district, this park with its natural setting of trees and landscaped areas provides an attractive green space along the Michigan Avenue commercial corridor.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Politics/Government

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1921 - 1963

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1921- Construction of Springwells Municipal Building

1929- Construction of Police and Courts Building

1929- Consolidation of Dearborn, Fordson, and Dearborn Township

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Marcus Burrowes

Fry and Kasurin

\_\_\_\_\_

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

### Significance Summary Paragraph

The Dearborn City Hall Complex is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based upon the integrity of its historic fabric and its continued use in its original function as a civic center. The complex meets National Register criterion A for serving as the seat of local government since 1921 for three separate governmental bodies: the Village of Springwells, the City of Fordson, and the consolidated City of Dearborn. It meets criterion B for its association with both Mayor Orville Hubbard and Mayor Clyde Ford and their connection to Dearborn's governmental activities and the early automobile industry that shaped America's culture. The complex also meets criterion C as an excellent example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century American civic architecture designed in the Colonial Revival style that was a defining characteristic of architect Marcus Burrowes' public work. The period of significance encompasses the time frame from the construction of the city hall building in 1921 to 1963, reflecting the on-going significance of the complex as the home of Dearborn city government.

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

### Dearborn

A major task for Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass was the creation of local governments throughout Michigan. On January 5, 1818, he formally established Springwells Township, which included a substantial section of southern Wayne County. Because of the fine quality of well water, this area had been designated "Belle Fontaine" by the French, the area's early settlers. Cass translated that name into English. After completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, settlement of southern Michigan increased rapidly, and settlers soon occupied land in Springwells Township. As early as the 1850s parts of the township were cleaved away to form villages, cities or other townships. Detroit, for example, annexed a substantial eastern proportion of the township before 1910.<sup>5</sup>

A settlement grew along the Michigan Central Railroad line in present-day Dearborn in 1837. It took the name Springwells. This part of Springwells Township had a post office, but was not incorporated as a separate political jurisdiction until 1921. In that year the area became the Village of Springwells. A few years later the village became the City of Springwells and then, in

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<sup>5</sup> [www.detroit1701.org](http://www.detroit1701.org)

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1925, adopted a new name, Fordson. By the mid-1920s this area of the former Springwells Township included Fordson, the nearby village of Dearborn, and an area known as Dearborn Township between and around them.<sup>6</sup>

From 1900 through the 1920s, as the urbanized area of Detroit expanded rapidly, the city annexed outlying areas. Numerous localities that once had their own identities and governments disappeared into the rapidly growing city. Residents of Hamtramck and Highland Park opposed such annexation and remain independent entities surrounded by the city of Detroit. Apparently, the residents of Fordson also feared being annexed by Detroit, so Fordson, Dearborn Township, and Dearborn in 1929 merged to form the city of Dearborn. Springwells became a defunct township. To the extent that the term Springwells is used today, it refers to a section of southwest Detroit and is the name of a local roadway.<sup>7</sup>

Dearborn is named after General Henry Dearborn, a Revolutionary War hero who went on to serve as Secretary of War in the Jefferson administration. The remote United States fort located at the mouth of the Chicago River at the time of the War of 1812, a fort that was abandoned prior to General Hull's surrender of Detroit to the British forces, was also named after General Dearborn.<sup>8</sup>

Dearborn became famous as one of the most prosperous and well-financed suburbs in the United States because its tax base included the large Ford River Rouge plant, the home office buildings of Ford, their test track and many engineering facilities. Dearborn was also widely known for the man who served as mayor from 1942 through 1978, Orville Hubbard. Mayor Hubbard was never reluctant to express his extremely strongly-held views and paid great attention to every detail of the operation of his city's government. He had the funds to provide civic services that were among the best in the nation and faced the unusual challenge of having to find ways to spend excess tax revenues. Dearborn had a reputation for having an especially punctual trash pickup and commentators speculated that no flake of snow fell on the streets of Dearborn since Mayor Hubbard had exceptionally active snow removal crews. Under his leadership, Dearborn bought rural land in southern Michigan to provide a place where city residents might camp and visit. The city also built at least one retirement complex in Florida for Dearborn residents when they visited the Sunshine State.<sup>9</sup>

The *Dearborn Historian* newsletter tells of another side of Mayor Hubbard:

However, he was also universally recognized for his refusal to allow any African Americans—other than household servants—in Dearborn. He took great pride in being the mayor of a city of more than 100,000 with virtually no African American residents, although thousands of African Americans labored at the River Rouge plant. Mayor

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

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Hubbard insisted that the slogan “Keep Dearborn Clean” be prominently posted on all city property and vehicles including police cars. Cynics translated that to “Keep Dearborn White.” Many of his efforts during and after World War II were devoted to opposing any developments whose promoters might take a liberal stance and allow African American residents. For instance, he successfully fought to keep the federal government from building housing for defense workers in Dearborn during World War II. After World War II, Metropolitan Life proposed investing in a large residential-commercial complex in his city. Mayor Hubbard successfully opposed this large civic development endeavor, fearing that the housing might be open to African Americans.<sup>10</sup>

The first federal census of Dearborn (1930) enumerated 50,000. The population grew rapidly after World War II, reaching a peak of 112,000 in 1960. Since then, the demographic trend in Dearborn is similar to that of the city of Detroit and most other older suburbs – that is, a slowing of growth followed by substantial population declines. The Census Bureau estimated a population of 86,000 for Dearborn in 2008 or about what it was in the mid-1950s.<sup>11</sup>

Dearborn’s population today includes descendants of ethnic European immigrants from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Irish, German, Italian, and Polish, whose ancestors generally first settled in Detroit. Persons of Middle Eastern ancestries now make up the city’s largest ethnic community, with Lebanese, Yemeni, Iraqi, Syrian and Palestinian groups being present. Dearborn was a center of Maltese American settlement, from the Mediterranean island of Malta, primarily due to the auto industry and the large exodus of Maltese who had originally settled in Detroit’s Corktown. The city also has a small African American population, many of whose ancestors came to the area in the early twentieth century.

Arriving in the early 1870s, the first Middle Eastern immigrants were chiefly Lebanese Christians (Maronites). There were three main reasons why they chose Detroit: proximity to Ontario, because there was already a Chaldean community in Windsor, Ontario, directly across the Detroit River; there was a Lebanese Maronite Catholic community to which the Chaldeans could relate; and the availability of jobs in the growing auto industry. Immigration from Iraq and Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula started at the beginning of the twentieth century. Other immigrants from the Middle East that began to arrive in the same time period included a large Armenian American community, who are Christian. Other early immigrant groups included Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syrians. A February 6, 1900, article in the *Detroit Free Press* stated that “Detroit’s Colony of Syrians” included 75-100 people, mostly Lebanese Maronites. The Lebanese typically worked as peddlers and shopkeepers. Henry Ford’s factories had 555 Syrian employees, including many recently arrived Muslims, by 1916.

The city’s most recent census lists approximately 40,000 people of Arab American ancestry, many of whom own businesses offering services in both English and Arabic. In the 2010 census, they comprised forty per cent of Dearborn’s population. The city has the largest proportion of Arab Americans in the United States, and as of 2006 Dearborn also has the largest Lebanese

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

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American population in the country. Dearborn's Arab Muslim community has built the Islamic Center of America, the largest mosque in North America. In January of 2006 the Arab American National Museum was opened to celebrate the Arab American community's history and contributions to Dearborn and the United States.

### **The Dearborn City Hall Complex**

The Dearborn City Hall Complex was initiated as the center of Dearborn's government with the construction of the Springwells Municipal Building in 1921. This important civic center then grew when the Police and Municipal Courts Building was built in 1929, the same year in which Dearborn, Fordson, and Dearborn Township consolidated to form one of Metropolitan Detroit's most influential and notable suburbs.

The City Hall Complex was begun during the time period when the exceptional rate of growth of Detroit and its surrounding suburbs due to the burgeoning auto industry caused the expansion of the labor force in Dearborn and the surrounding area. These buildings envisioned to be the seat of local government continue to impact life in the area as a remaining center of civic activity and as remnants of the people and ideals that helped to form and shape this important community.

The vision of this property as the location for multiple civic buildings and the seat of local government began before the construction of the then Springwells Municipal Building in late 1921. In his May 21, 1921, proposal letter for architectural services for this building, sent to Mr. Chas. Horger, President of the Village of Springwells, architect Marcus Burrowes explained his design for a "master plan" involving multiple buildings and a future underground connector building to allow for access between buildings, when he wrote: "We have placed the Police Department in the basement but understand that this is a temporary accommodation as it is the intention of the Council to build the fire station and police station at the rear of the property in the future. When this is done we would suggest that a tunnel connecting the two buildings be provided so that communication can be carried on between the two without exposure of the weather. The heating plan in the Municipal Building would be large enough to take care of the future fire and police departments in the rear."<sup>12</sup> Burrowes included a perspective rendering of

the proposed Municipal Building with his proposal letter that also included the future Police and Courts Building and two additional stately buildings, also designed in the Colonial Revival style, and sited on Michigan Avenue (where the current Public Park is located) and relating to the massing and scale of the other two buildings. These two additional buildings were never realized at this proposed location.

This "master plan" concept continued in 1929 soon after the three communities that form the present city of Dearborn were consolidated. An article in the Sunday, April 21, 1929, *Detroit Free Press* included photos of the Springwells Municipal Building and the Police and Municipal Courts Building with the following caption: "Concentrated in these two handsome buildings, units of a greatly increased municipal group of the near future, are the extensive civic facilities of

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<sup>12</sup> Burrowes. Letter to C. Horger

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the newly consolidated city of Greater Dearborn, which now includes the cities of Fordson and Dearborn and a portion of Dearborn Township. Here the various departments are being coordinated and assembled under the direction of Mayor Clyde M. Ford for the most efficient administration of public utilities and affairs of the greater city which now has a population of nearly 40,000 and an assessed valuation of more than \$265,000,000. Other units include the attractive new central fire station. More are to be added as the city grows.”

It was clear from the beginning that the growing city would soon require additional space for its civic activities. When the Springwells Municipal Building was opened for business in 1922, it housed the Public Works Offices including Sanitation, Assessor’s Office, Mayor, Clerk, Treasurer, Council Chambers and Council Office, Legal, Purchasing, Recreation, Health, Controller’s, Water Department, Engineering, Library, Building and Safety, and City Plan offices.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Fords of Dearborn**

In 1909, with the success of the Model “T,” Henry Ford began building his Highland Park Complex. The automobile industry was quickly becoming America’s largest and this growth was led by the Ford Motor Company. To bring the price of the Model “T” within the grasp of the average man, Ford introduced the assembly line to the automobile industry in 1913. Production jumped to 1,000 cars per day in 1914 and then to 2,000 cars per day in 1916. With this rise in productivity, Henry Ford found it possible to make his workers customers as well, announcing a \$5.00 day in January 1914. This unprecedented step, more than doubling wages overnight, also proved to be a great public relations move, driving sales still higher and turning Mr. Ford into a worldwide celebrity.<sup>14</sup>

Such success brought a stream of uninvited callers to the doors of Clara and Henry Ford’s home on Edison Avenue in Detroit. Reporters, salesmen, and job seekers deprived the family of the privacy they desired. They soon wished to build a new home, one removed from the rapidly expanding city, where they could satisfy their love of nature, gardening and bird watching, in particular. Never comfortable with the boisterous lifestyle of Detroit society, the Fords abandoned plans to follow the migration of the city’s wealthy to the eastern suburbs, and instead chose to build on a 1,300-acre tract of land in neighboring Dearborn Township, approximately two miles from Mr. Ford’s birthplace. The new fifty-six-room residence and estate were named “Fair Lane” after an area in County Cork, Ireland, the birthplace of Mr. Ford’s foster grandfather, Patrick Ahern. Work began on the house in February of 1914, and by January 1916, the Fords were completely settled into their new home. Henry Ford enjoyed Fair Lane for over thirty years until his death in 1947.<sup>15</sup>

During his active career as head of Ford Motor Company and one of this country’s most celebrated business leaders, Mr. Ford also took notice of local Dearborn politics and other

<sup>13</sup> City Clerk’s Office memo. 1

<sup>14</sup> The Henry Ford Museum webpage

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

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happenings in his home town and surrounding communities. The Ford Estate was located in Dearborn Township, which in 1921 was a C-shaped area of land wrapped around the south, west, and north sides of the City of Dearborn and abutted the western edge of the Village of Springwells. In honor of Henry Ford and his son Edsel, the Village of Springwells changed its name to Fordson in 1925.<sup>16</sup>

The *Fordson Independent* first carried the rumor of a possible merger of the Cities of Fordson and Dearborn and the Dearborn Township territory between the two cities in its February 11, 1927, edition.<sup>17</sup> The news story also hinted at the development of a new central civic center somewhere between the two cities which would contain large public buildings, a railroad station, freight offices and post office. The very same day that this story was published, Ernest G. Liebold, Henry Ford's general secretary, called a meeting at the Dearborn Country Club to discuss the issues with officials from both cities. They decided to form a seven-member Greater Cities Consolidation Committee under the chairmanship of Clarence L. Parker. The committee held regular meetings during the next several months to formulate arguments for and against the merger. By mid-January 1928 petitions were circulated which then went to the Wayne County Board of Supervisors for approval. With these initial steps completed, a new committee of interested citizens, called the Consolidated Cities Association, convened to muster up community support. Dearborn's Mayor Clyde M. Ford served as general chairman. Fordson's ex-Mayor Joseph M. Karman was also instrumental in promoting the consolidation.<sup>18</sup>

Karman was actually the first civic official to advocate the consolidation publically, when he predicted, "Someday you will see more people going to and fro in the vicinity of Michigan and Schaefer then at Michigan and Woodward in downtown Detroit." Twenty-five years after the consolidation, ex-Mayor Karman was asked about his thoughts about consolidation. "They laughed at our predictions then," reminisces Karman, "thought we were just talking politics – but never in our wildest dreams did we think that one foot of business footage would be worth almost as much as a 40-acre farm in twenty-five years."<sup>19</sup>

The late Henry Ford was the real author of the idea of consolidation, Karman recalls. Then mayor of Fordson, Karman had called on the auto pioneer to discuss city business. "Mr. Ford said, 'Joe, why don't you people annex the city of Dearborn and the part of the township in-between, where my estate is, then I wouldn't have to deal with three governments.'<sup>20</sup>

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1928, Henry Ford sent a letter to the Greater City Consolidation Committee to publically express his views on consolidation. The letter reads as follows:

Gentlemen:

<sup>16</sup> Detroit Free Press draft article

<sup>17</sup> Fader. Consolidation. 1

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 2

<sup>19</sup> Detroit Free Press draft article. 2

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 2,3

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I am taking this opportunity to express my views on the subject of the amalgamation of the territory comprising the cities of Fordson, Dearborn, and the intervening section of Dearborn Township, into one city.

For several years past, it has been very evident that one central government properly organized would be better able to direct the future development of this area, instead of each local community endeavoring to build a city within its own boundaries.

Sentiment and tradition must give way to progressive and economical development. We must look farther ahead today than we have been in the habit of doing in years past. Public funds should be spent in a manner that will serve the public need for a greater and longer purpose, which can only be done through centralized administration.

The tendency of business today is to lower costs through more efficient methods to eliminate expenditures that are unnecessary – all for the purpose of reducing prices to the public.

Your efforts to bring about a unified city are highly commendable and a step in the right direction, and I hope this will receive the favorable support of the people of the various communities at the polls next Tuesday. With best wishes for your success, I am very truly yours,

Henry Ford.<sup>21</sup>

Another member of the Ford family that had been instrumental in the early development of Dearborn and its civic center was Henry's cousin Clyde M. Ford. Clyde was born on November 19, 1887, on a Fordson farm located in what is today the Greenfield and Ford Road area. Like his cousin, Clyde as a young man worked on the farm and learned about the gasoline engine used at the mill and became quite familiar with dealing with farmers. At the age of twenty-one, Clyde and his father Addison Ford established one of the first automobile agencies in the area in a little red barn on one of the Ford farms. The Addison Ford and Son Company competed heavily with the horse and buggy. During the first year Clyde sold three Model "T" Fords. He served as manager, salesman, mechanic, and driving instructor in those early days. Clyde eventually became the sole owner of the Ford agency, and in 1922 he and his family moved to Dearborn where they bought the Kalmbach house at 318 West Garrison Street.<sup>22</sup>

In 1923 Clyde was selling Fords, Lincolns, and tractors. Dearborn was booming, and his business had thirty-five employees working at the dealership. In 1927, with the blessing of Henry Ford, Clyde's agency expanded, establishing the "Westwood Ford" dealership on Michigan Avenue just east of Inkster Road. Clyde Ford continued operations until 1941 when his agency was sold to Stuart Wilson.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Henry Ford letter

<sup>22</sup> Bryan. 238

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

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Soon after Clyde moved to the Village of Dearborn, he became involved in politics, and found public service to be more challenging than his auto business. He was also extremely interested in local history, writing a fairly lengthy account of early Dearborn in 1928, with an emphasis on the role of Henry Ford. Clyde began his role in public life when he joined the library board in 1918. He served as president of the newly formed Rotary Club in 1923, as chairman as the Greater Dearborn Consolidation Committee in 1928, and eventually as mayor of the City of Dearborn in 1929. He was easily reelected mayor both in the 1931 and 1933 city elections.<sup>24</sup>

Clyde Ford was mayor when conditions in Dearborn were the roughest, according to former city clerk, Joseph Cardinal. An inquiry into city politics at the time would have revealed that Dearborn was one of the tightest company towns in the United States. Carl Brooks, the Dearborn Chief of Police, and Verne Doonan, who was the chairman of the Dearborn Public Safety Division, were both former Ford detectives who worked for Harry Bennett, one of the company's top executives and chief of Ford's private police. Bennett allegedly shifted his private guards back and forth from the books of the Ford Motor Company to the payroll of the Dearborn Police Department. Clyde Ford subsequently held the office of city controller and was city assessor when he died in 1948 at the age of sixty-one.<sup>25</sup>

### **Marcus R. Burrowes<sup>26</sup>**

Marcus R. Burrowes (1874-1953) was a notable Detroit architect whose career in Detroit lasted nearly fifty years and produced "more than 1,000 structures" according to an estimate in his obituary. He was widely known in southeast Michigan, especially during the second and third decades of the twentieth century, for his public buildings, including schools and libraries as well as the Springwells Municipal Building/Dearborn City Hall and other municipal buildings, his academic and residential buildings at private schools and for the Starr Commonwealth for Boys campus near Albion, golf club and other clubhouses, and especially for his large suburban Tudor and English Cottage, Colonial and Georgian Revival, and Arts-and-Crafts houses.

Burrowes was born in Tonawanda, N.Y., near Buffalo. He attended the Denver Art Academy, where he attended lectures and received instruction in construction by architects of note, as well as serving an apprenticeship to a leading architectural firm in Denver. Burrowes began his architectural career in Ontario in the 1890s working in the Office of the Chief Architect of the dominion government at Ottawa, specializing in post office buildings. For Sarnia, Ontario, he designed a YMCA building, built in 1899, the 1902-03 Sarnia Public Library, a classical building with rotunda (demolished), and a brick hotel for Peter Heuser.

Soon after this he moved to Detroit, initially working for architect Albert Kahn. In 1907 he joined the firm of Stratton & Baldwin, which put him into contact with leading figures in the Arts and Crafts movement in Detroit, including William B. Stratton, Frank C. Baldwin, and

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 239-241

<sup>25</sup> Fader. The Chief Executive. 10

<sup>26</sup> Fox. 1-31

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George Booth of Cranbrook (along with Kahn). Stratton was the husband of Mary Chase Stratton who created Pewabic Pottery.

Two years later Burrowes formed his own firm of Burrowes & Wells with Dalton R. Wells. By 1914 Burrowes was operating under his own name. In 1920 he formed a new partnership with Frank Eurich, Jr., who had recently arrived in Detroit after receiving training in the architecture program at Cornell University. Under the Burrowes & Eurich name and later again on his own, Burrowes remained in practice almost until his death in 1953, although the work for which he is primarily recognized dates from the 1910s to 1930s.

### Public and Other Non-Residential Architecture

Along with his numerous large city and suburban Tudor and English Cottage, Georgian and Colonial Revival, and Arts and Crafts houses, Burrowes designed a great many other buildings – libraries, public and private school and institutional buildings, as well as municipal buildings.

The libraries include three for the Detroit Public Library system – the Francis Parkman, Gabriel Richard, and Duffield branches – built in the 1916-31 period, Duffield in a simplified Neoclassical style, the others elaborately Tudor, though of relatively small size.

Burrowes' firm designed several school buildings: the Grosse Pointe High School and Grosse Pointe Cottage School, the Barber School in Highland Park, and Highland Park Athletic Fieldhouse.

Institutional work included the Wayne County Training School near Northville (demolished), a complex of stuccoed cottage-type buildings of Arts-and-Crafts inspiration, and the main building at the Methodist Children's Village on West Six Mile (McNichols) Road west of Telegraph, a Colonial style complex, with slate roof and stone architecture. Both the YMCA and YWCA buildings in Highland Park were of Burrowes' origin. For the Starr Commonwealth for Boys, a home and training school for troubled youth, Burrowes designed eleven buildings mostly in brick and of simple Arts-and-Crafts design over the period from 1915 to 1952, with three more buildings being planned by him at the time of his death.

The Dearborn City Hall complex was one of several municipal complexes designed by Burrowes, mostly reflecting the Colonial and Georgian Revival styles at which he was so expert. These include the Grosse Pointe Municipal Building and a civic complex for Birmingham including city hall, police station, and library buildings as well as the Dearborn City Hall complex (another municipal building, his early 1920s Tudor Redford Village Hall, became the Redford Library when the village was absorbed into the city of Detroit in 1925). The Dearborn City Hall is the largest and most intact of these municipal buildings.

During his lifetime, Burrowes was recognized by his fellow architects. He served as president of the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1916-17; vice-president of the Detroit Chapter in 1923, and secretary in 1911-15. He served as president of the Michigan

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Society of Architects in 1923-24. In 1940 he was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and became Emeritus in 1952.

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27. Photograph of the Springwells Municipal Building opening ceremony, Dearborn Historical Museum Archives, number 2243, June 26, 1921.
28. Photograph of the Springwells Municipal Building, with Fire Hall and Garage Building in background, Dearborn Historical Museum Archives, 1925.

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29. "Police and Municipal Courts Building and Police and Fire Alarm Signal System Bldg."  
Article from the Fordson Independent, Dearborn Historical Museum Archives, undated.

30. The Henry Ford museum webpage, www.hfmvgv.org

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

N/A 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: Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI  
Dearborn Historical Museum Archives, Dearborn, MI  
Henry Ford Centennial Library- Ford Research Room  
Benson Ford Research Center, Henry Ford Museum and  
Greenfield Village, Dearborn, MI

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** N/A

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approx. 7.1 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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1. Latitude: Longitude:  
2. Latitude: Longitude:  
3. Latitude: Longitude:  
4. Latitude: Longitude:

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: 17 Easting: 320600 Northing: 4687730

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

Beginning at the intersection of the centerlines of Michigan Avenue and Schaefer Road, and proceeding southwesterly along the centerline of Schaefer Road to its intersection with the intersection of Ellar Street; thence west along the centerline of Ellar Street to its intersection with the centerline of Maple Road; thence north along the centerline of Maple Road to its intersection with the centerline of Michigan Avenue, thence along the centerline of Michigan Avenue to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries as described include entire the entire square containing City Hall, the Police and Municipal Courts Building, the concourse addition between the two contributing buildings, and the grounds associated with them, including the park at the Maple Road/Michigan Avenue intersection.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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organization: Neumann /Smith Architecture  
street & number: 400 Galleria Officentre, Suite 555  
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e-mail mkirk@neumannsmith.com  
telephone: 248-352-8310  
date: June 2014

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### **Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

### **Photographs**

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

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Dearborn City Hall Complex

City or Vicinity: Dearborn

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Photographer: Daniel Schneider

Date Photographed: April 02, 2013

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

City Hall Building:

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0001

Main (north) elevation along Michigan Avenue looking south

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0002

Main (north) entrance

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MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0003

Side (east) elevation along Schaefer Road looking north

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0004

Rear (south) elevation at parking lot looking north

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0005

Rear (south) entrance with concourse addition at left

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0006

Rear (south) elevation looking north with concourse addition in foreground

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0007

Rear (south) elevation looking north-east with concourse addition in foreground

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0008

Side (west) elevation looking east with concourse addition in foreground

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0009

Concourse addition looking south, with City Hall Building at left of photo

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0010

Main entrance of concourse addition looking south

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0011

Concourse addition, looking east

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0012

Concourse addition, interior view of main corridor looking west

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0013

Concourse addition, interior view of main corridor looking east

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0014

Basement level, looking west at connection to concourse addition

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0015

First floor lobby off Michigan Avenue looking north

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0016

First floor lobby looking south towards grand staircase on south side of building

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0017

First floor main corridor looking west

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0018

Second floor main corridor looking east

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0019

Dearborn City Hall Complex

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Third floor main corridor looking west

Police and Courts Building:

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0020

West (main) elevation along Maple Road looking east

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0021

West (main) entrance

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0022

Side (south) elevation along Ellar Road looking north

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0023

Side (south) elevation looking north east towards parking deck and City Hall Building

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0024

East (rear) elevation looking north with concourse addition on right of photo

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0025

South and east elevations looking northwest with parking deck in foreground

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0026

East (rear) elevation looking west with concourse in foreground

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0027

North (side) elevation from park looking south

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0028

North and east elevations looking south with concourse addition in foreground

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0029

View of park and City Hall Building in distance looking east from Maple Road

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0030

Basement level, looking east at main stairs

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0031

Concourse addition looking west towards connection to basement

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0032

Main (west) first floor lobby looking west

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0033

First floor grand staircase looking east

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0034

First floor main corridor looking north

MI\_WayneCounty\_DbrnCityHallComplex\_0035

Dearborn City Hall Complex

Name of Property

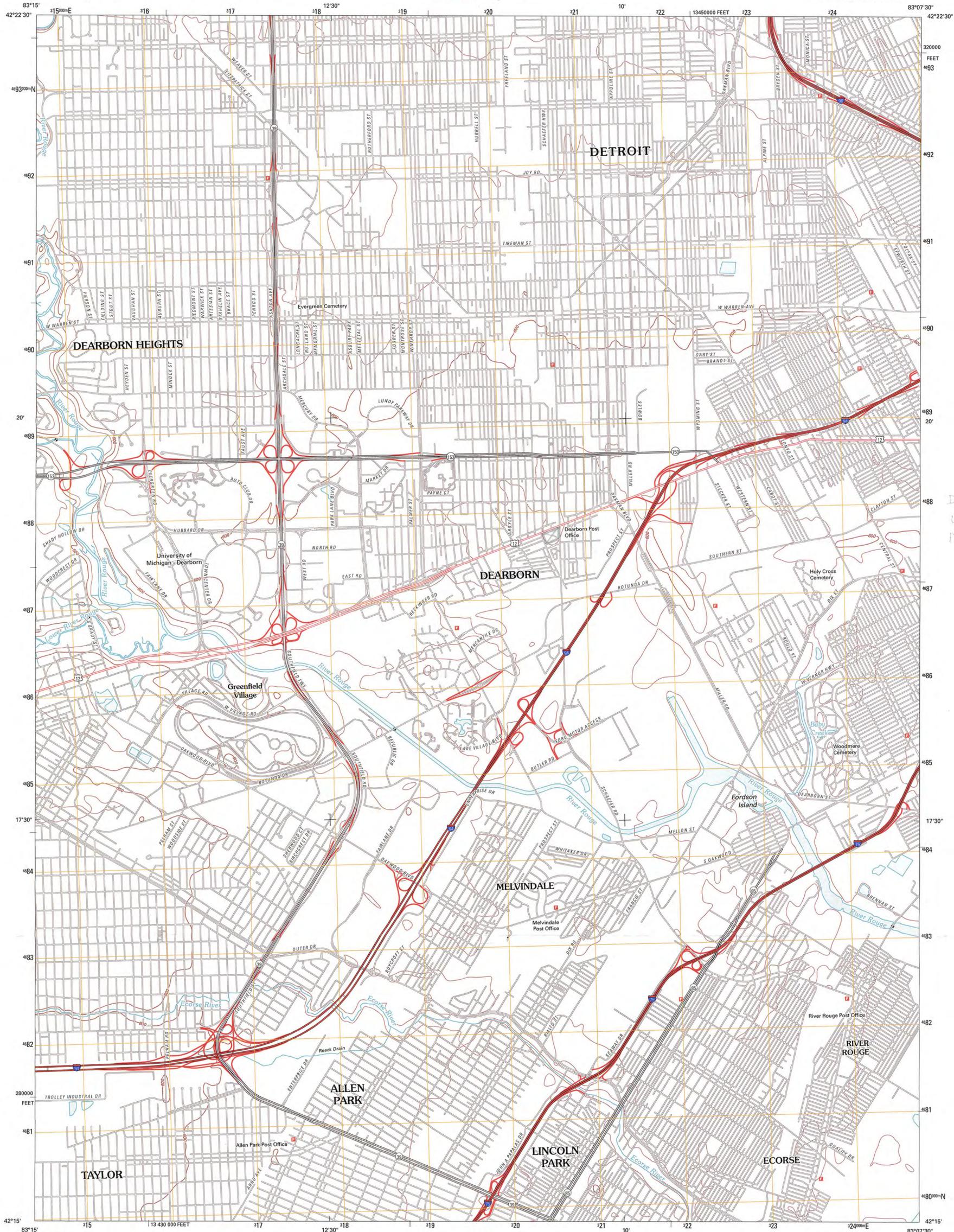
Second floor main corridor looking south

Dearborn, MI

County and State

**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.



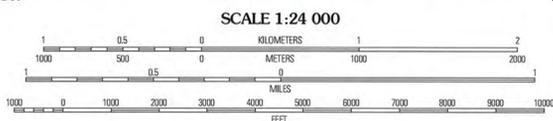
Dearborn City  
Hall Complex  
Wayne Co., MI  
17 320600  
4687730

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and  
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 17T  
10 000-foot ticks: Michigan Coordinate System of 1983  
(south zone)

Imagery: NAIP, August 2009 - September 2009  
Roads: ©2006-2010 Tele Atlas  
Names: GNIS, 2010  
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2009  
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 1999  
Boundaries: Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2010

UTM GRID AND 2011 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

U.S. National Grid	17T
100,000-m Square ID	LG
Grid Zone Designation	17T



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10  
of the USGS US Topo Product Standard.  
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.5.16



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Redford	Royal Oak	Highland Park
Inkster	Dearborn	Detroit
Flat Rock NE	Wyandotte	Wyandotte OE E

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

- Interstate Route
- US Route
- Ramp
- State Route
- Local Road
- 4WD

DEARBORN, MI  
2011

ADJOINING 7.5 QUADRANGLES



























CAUTION  
STEPS







LIBRARY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
1852



MEN









TOWN OF HUNTERDON  
HIGH SCHOOL  
EDKO MAPLE

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE



























