



**BUCHANAN
PRESERVATION &
NATIONAL
REGISTER
PLANNING REPORT**

City of Buchanan
in partnership with
Buchanan Preservation
Society

2022

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REPORT BACKGROUND

The City of Buchanan contracted with the consultant, KW Garner Consulting & Design, for assistance in preservation planning and prioritizing historic districts/properties for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. This was identified as part of the Buchanan City Action Plan (Buchanan Master Plan, 2021) for implementation in 2021. A nomination for **Clark Equipment** was started in 2021. As part of the Agreement for Services for this report, the City of Buchanan also contracted for preparation of a National Register nomination for **Oak Ridge Cemetery** as a pilot project for 2022-2023.

The goal of the report is to identify and evaluate resources, districts, etc. important to Buchanan’s heritage and develop a planning strategy to celebrate, interpret, and restore/preserve these resources. The plan builds off the 2012 Michigan SHPO and reconnaissance documents which conducted surveys and identified National Register-eligible properties/districts. The plan evaluates the City’s current planning documents, including the Andrews Study, to determine how findings from the 2012 documents can work in harmony with City goals and how historic resources can best be positioned to support economic development and take advantage of funding opportunities. At the direction of the City, the Consultant worked closely with the City’s Community Development staff and Buchanan Preservation Society (BPS).

BUCHANAN HISTORIC DISTRICTS & PROPERTIES LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Buchanan Downtown Historic District (2009)



& Union Block, 114 E. Front St. (2007)

Buchanan North and West Neighborhoods Historic District (2011)



Zinc Collar Pad Building, 304 S. Oak (2009)



CURRENT NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTIES UNDER REVIEW/CONTRACT FOR LISTING

*Clark Equipment Complex (2022)**



*Oak Ridge Cemetery (determined eligible, scheduled 2023)**



Mill Race (determined eligible, scheduled 2023)

Preservation plan recommended, particularly as to how the Andrews Study relates to the park site.



NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS/PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED IN 2012 REPORT

*(not under review/contract)**

Bainton/Gimlin House

Buchanan Hydroelectric Dam & Power Plant

Claremont Street Survey Area

Electro-Voice Factory

Liberty Heights Survey Area

Redbud-Days-Oak Survey Area

BENEFITS OF DISTRICT LISTING & COMMUNITY GOALS



Generally speaking, districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places see an increase in sense of place and pride of ownership among property owners. The notoriety and recognition of living in a listed district also educates property owners to the history of their neighborhood or house, which leads to greater appreciation for its place in the community. Districts usually see increased or stable market values due to neighborhood pride and investment.

Investment and stability of neighborhoods is a general, overarching goal of the city's 2021 Master Plan. A National Register designation of a neighborhood may aid in this effort through providing neighborhoods a greater sense of their own identity. A preservation plan should identify goals of preserving neighborhood character and use of form-based regulations to aid in the most-desirable development and improvements in neighborhoods.

While the National Register of Historic Places designation *does not* carry rules or regulations for property owners in the district, it can provide general guidance in what is appropriate, which is further reinforced when accessing tax credits for investment in properties.

PROCESS FOR IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION

The process by which districts and properties were identified in this report, and then prioritized, relies on multiple facets relating to architecture, community planning & development, character, cohesiveness, period of significance, and context. All of these facets play a role in determining if a district is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Buchanan Preservation Society played the most critical role in evaluating districts and properties with regard to prioritization. This was done through a tour with board members, conversations at regularly-scheduled meetings, and surveys.

Housing development in Buchanan from its early period through the 20th century was examined in order to see growth patterns and development of styles/house types. Having an understanding of “first of” neighborhoods or if the neighborhood best exhibits a particular period of growth or styles/types in Buchanan was important for how to view potential districts. Boundary justification is more easily-made for whole plats versus partial plats in determination of eligibility. Determining the “build-out” of the plat, how it may have been marketed to the public, or if there were certain restrictions involved also aid in creating boundaries and making eligibility determinations.

Driving tours and photographic documentation of neighborhoods was undertaken to understand their fixed or blurred boundaries, types or styles of housing, period of development, and general cohesiveness. While a potential district is not required to have only a certain style or type, or tightly-determined period of significance (development), a potential district generally will not vary greatly on these facets. Generally speaking, an eligible district will have homes of a certain scale, period of construction, and must exhibit a sufficient concentration of buildings that retain their historic features such as porches, historic materials, and shape. These requirements for having an eligible district may restrict a district’s geographic boundaries from what may be generally thought of as a specific neighborhood or broader plat.

Prioritization of listing districts to the National Register of Historic Places depends largely on availability of funding. Because some districts are very small and others quite large, the cost of nomination preparation will vary considerably. Prioritization may also depend on the desire for investment in specific neighborhoods or other community goals. The number of property owners in a given district should also be considered since districts with fewer than 50 owners (dual spouse ownership counts as two owners) must be notified individually versus newspaper notification. This is important because if adequate community outreach is not made, and 51% of owners object, then the district will not be listed. Community outreach, regardless of the number of owners, is always recommended. Generally, prioritization should follow: 1) potential eligibility and 2) chronological development.

POTENTIAL DISTRICTS

In Buchanan's 2021 Master Plan, historic district designation was to be considered to encourage the preservation and restoration of existing historic architecture that celebrates Buchanan's history. The following identified historic districts are based on a concentration of resources evaluated and grouped together in the 2012 Preservation Plan. These are generally listed chronologically.

The **Redbud-Days-Oak Survey Area** appears to be the oldest area of Buchanan not yet designated with National Register status. The core of the area is Days Plat, which extends from Redbud Trail on the east to Oak Street on the west, south of the downtown district. While the survey area incorporated a larger area, from Berrien Street on the east to Clark Street on the west, some refinement of the boundaries is probably warranted for submission of the initial questionnaire to the SHPO.

The two districts following Redbud-Days-Oak are examples of plats created in the post-war housing boom of both WWI and WWII. **Liberty Heights** and **Colonial Gardens** are similar to each other. Both districts have examples of American Small House design and appear to be developed using a limited palette of designs, constructed within a limited period of time, and provided housing relief for a burgeoning labor market, particularly at Clark Equipment. Given this, when submitting the initial questionnaire to the state, it may be beneficial to propose these together and seek guidance for how the state may like to see these prioritized.

The last district listed in this group is **Claremont Avenue**, or the Park Ridge Addition, which seems to identify as the first modern suburban housing developments for middle-class families. The compact plan includes Stark Elementary School. Nearby is the **Electro-Voice Industrial Complex**; this is the only single-property, private district proposed for listing. Because of various challenges, it should fall at the end with regard to prioritization.

Districts are listed in order of prioritization based off of review and input from BPS.

1 Redbud-Days-Oak Survey Area (2012)

The west side of Berrien Street on the east to the east side of Clark Street on the west, extending from the south edge of the downtown historic district to the historic south end of town at the railroad.

Platted 1858 (Days Addn.)

Traditional, mid-19th century town plat character

The district includes approximately 160 resources dating between c. 1850-1920 including certain key historic resources like the Old Livery and Buchanan Mill at the railroad

Styles and types from the second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century

Proposed boundary may incorporate only the Days Addition Plat to Buchanan.



2 Liberty Heights Survey Area (2012)

The east side of Liberty Street to the west side of Sylvan St., Ryneerson St. on the north

Platted 1918

Early suburban-traditional, worker housing

The district contains about 70 resources

American Small Houses/Minimal-traditional housing/Compact Ranch

Boundaries are fairly easily arrived at due to the nature of the plat



3 Claremont Avenue (Park Ridge Addn.) Survey Area (2012) or in conjunction with Liberty Heights

Lining each side of Claremont Avenue south of Rynearson Street.

Platted 1953, the proposed district was built-out during 1950s-1960s

Suburban-Traditional, worker housing

The district contains approximately 32 resources dating between c. 1950-1965, and includes Stark Elementary School

Ranch Houses

Proposed boundaries would follow Park Ridge Plat and Addition No. 1, though they may be more constricted nearer the south end of the district.



4 Colonial Gardens Survey Area (2022)

The south side of Front Street to the south side of Polis Street, from Terre Coupe Street on the east to the cemetery on the west.

Platted 1928

Early suburban-transitional, worker housing

The district contains about 80 resources dating to c. 1940-1960

American Small Houses, Minimal-traditional, Compact Ranch

Boundaries are fairly easily arrive at due to the nature of the plat, but may incorporate a few additional homes that were outliers when the plat was created.



5 Electro-Voice Industrial Complex

Industrial development between Jordan and Carroll Streets, west of Liberty Street

Construction dates run with additions to the building, but generally c. 1920-1960

Area of significance is restricted to Industry with one primary resource



OTHER DISTRICTS/PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED IN BUCHANAN PRESERVATION SOCIETY 2022 SURVEY

***represent properties of conditions/planning concerns*

Clark Equipment Headquarters, Circle Drive (1972-1975)

*& Dr. Gamble House, Redbud Trail (c. 1930, Section 106 Review)** Preservation plan recommended.*



English & Holmes Addition (Fulton/Arctic Neighborhood, c. 1910-1950)

Jacobs House, 208 Berrien St. (brick/stone house in proposed Days District, c. 1925)

Colonial Gardens Addition (Roe/Polis Neighborhood, c. 1930-1960)

*Hall Farm Apple House, 1640 S. Redbud Trail (outside city limits, c. 1940)***

Preservation plan recommended.



*Buchanan Brethren Church, 303 N. Oak St. (located in North-West District, c. 1865/1950)***



*Moccasin School, 416 Moccasin St. (located in North-West District, c. 1950)***



*Buchanan Mill/Grain Elevator Complex, Days Street (in proposed Days District, c. 1915-1950)***
Preservation plan recommended.



INTERPRETATION-HISTORIC MARKER DEVELOPMENT

Buchanan has a rich, early heritage in southwest Michigan that is recognized by its residents, city, and organizations. Buchanan Preservation Society has been engaged in preserving and celebrating this history for decades.

When the Buchanan Downtown Historic District was listed to the National Register of Historic Places, a large cast metal plaque was installed downtown to commemorate the district's history and listing. While not listed yet to the National Register, a similar effort to interpret Clark Equipment's history and relationship to Buchanan is memorialized on plaques and signage in the complex.



As additional districts and sites are added to the National Register of Historic Places, and as both the city and BPS work toward celebrating the community's history, further demarking of districts and properties, not necessarily listed on the NR, should be undertaken. These markers should have some common theme and appearance and be marketed together either as a biking or pedestrian route. This kind of promotion realizes several benefits. The markers act together to provide a sense of community pride, education for its residents, and tourism attraction.

It is recommended that all new markers follow the attractive design, in color, font, etc., of the existing downtown marker. Using a logo, such as the Red Bud tree commonly seen in community materials, will aid in creating unity and be easily-recognizable for individuals seeking out these markers. Buchanan should consider installation of several of these markers in 2023, then follow with new installations as National Register listings, or other sites, warrant. Markers may include historic photographs to provide additional context/understanding of the sites being memorialized. This could be particularly helpful in areas where significant changes have occurred due to demolition. The interpretive opportunities in locations such as these may require supporting signage/markers.

Recommended installations for markers in 2023 include:

Already Listed:

North & West Neighborhoods District
Zinc Collar Pad Building

Listings scheduled for 2023:

Clark Equipment Complex
Oak Ridge Cemetery
Mill Race/Pears Mill

Development of a tri-fold brochure, easily available at the city offices and library, with the sites/markers with a clear driving/biking path outlined should be released at the time the markers are unveiled. This should also be linked to the city and library's websites.

HISTORIC CHARACTER PROTECTION

Buchanan's 2021 Master Plan is replete with recommendations and steps required for the preservation of the community's historic resources and character. One of the plan's community goals is *to promote and fully develop the historic character and artistic quality of the community*. This is followed with the desire *to promote preservation of historic community character in districts and throughout the community beyond historic districts*. It was recognized that the community could also capitalize on its historic assets for tourism development. Protection of a community's historic character, in districts or at-large, rarely is a naturally-occurring movement. It requires a variety of approaches to encourage protection until such time that it might naturally occur, however, eternal vigilance is always necessary to safeguard the community's heritage.

Education

One simple, logical approach that requires no regulatory process is education. Often when property owners understand the benefit to preservation of historic character, embrace of that approach gains a significant foothold in districts and/or neighborhoods. This should take two approaches. The first is through educating property owners of the history embedded in their buildings, homes, neighborhoods, and how it relates contextually to the whole of their community. This often engenders community pride, at a very local level, and realizes results that regulation may fail to do. Mentioned previously is the program to place markers at historic sites and districts, which aids this approach.

The other approach is to educate property owners on types and styles of architecture, periods of architectural styles, materials, and best practices for preservation/restoration. The front part of this approach may simply require booklets or publications and presentations. The second part may require bringing professionals in for workshops, such as window restoration or masonry tuck-pointing repair. Many property owners take a hands-on approach to work on their own buildings; this could provide a valuable service to residents and property owners in Buchanan.

Education can be a function of either government or local organizations. It is recommended that BPS partner with the city to develop educational programs that will support any oversight action.



Oversight

A regulatory approach may also be required, particularly as it can protect important historical assets and protect property values in historic districts. The 2021 Master Plan suggests *the use of overlay districts* for some level of oversight/regulation. Overlay districts are a simplified approach over more typical Certified Local Government designation and establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission. An overlay district may put additional limits on demolition, remodeling, and new construction through the more commonly-adopted municipal plan commission's oversight, similar to zoning applications.

Overlay districts tend to be less threatening and better embraced in the community. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the treatment of historic properties may still be employed in aiding decision making by the commission, and would allow consistent treatment/review of properties. The overlay district likely would extend to National Register listed districts only, but often can be focused to provide specific, desired outcomes. The overlay concept may also guide new construction to provide parameters for scale and materials.

Oversight is a function of government, not non-profit or other organizations. This is due to the nature of planning, zoning, and ordinance creation and enforcement.



BUCHANAN PRESERVATION SOCIETY SURVEY & MEETING SUMMARY

August 16, 2022; submitted August 18, 2022

The survey/tour visited the districts/sites identified in the 2012 Report with the exception of the Bainton/Gimlin House and Dam & Power Plant since participants were already familiar with those sites. Further discussion continued at a working dinner and following at the regularly-scheduled monthly meeting of the Buchanan Preservation Society. An update was provided on the status of Clark Equipment, Oak Ridge Cemetery, and the Mill Race National Register nominations and/or review for eligibility with Michigan SHPO. Initial impressions from the survey include the following:

While the English & Holmes Addition reflects worker housing, it seems that many of the resources have had substantial alterations which may render buildings and the district ineligible for the NR. In contrast, the Colonial Gardens Addition has better architectural integrity and represents similar worker housing and is likely NR eligible. This was not identified in the 2012 Plan. Liberty Heights Survey Area also represents worker housing, largely spurred by Clark Equipment.

The area identified as the Claremont Survey Area is the Park Ridge Addition and contains Stark Elementary School. While a NR listing was not thought to be beneficial to the neighborhood, it could be beneficial for future uses of the school.

In time, the AEP/Clark Headquarters Building may be eligible for the NR. With purchase of the property by the county, there are concerns for the future of the vacant Dr. Gamble House. The unusual c. 1930 stone house is likely individually-eligible for the NR and a preservation plan should be considered. A similarly-interesting stone and brick masonry house, the Jacobs House, was surveyed and may be individually-eligible for NR listing, but is also part of the Redbud-Days-Oak Survey Area.

While there may need to be better definition to the boundaries suggested for the Redbud-Days-Oak Survey Area identified in the 2012 Plan, this seems to be highest in priority for NR listing, particularly as it relates to investment. It would include the Old Livery and Buchanan Mill sites.

The Electro-Voice site was visited and while it relates to Buchanan's industrial heritage, it is weak architecturally and provides challenges in terms of reuse/clean-up. Previous discussions about the Dam & Power Plant revolved around it being corporately-owned and reception to NR-listing is questionable.

Similarly, concerns for appropriate preservation on the Bainton/Gimlin House were mentioned, as well as its important landmark/gateway position into town. Receptiveness to NR listing was in doubt. While outside city limits, concerns for preservation of the Hall Farm Apple House were mentioned; it represents a strong connection to the area's agri-history and is also a landmark/gateway.

Long-term preservation concerns were also mentioned regarding two properties located in the North-West District. Moccasin School, proposed for demolition, and the former Brethren Church may have need for preservation plans developed.

Other items discussed include development of a Historic Preservation Commission and CLG status, and from where that task should originate. Design Review may be a less threatening approach to achieve preservation goals if Secretary of the Interior's Standards are better understood and followed. Demolition was also a concern, particularly as to how it may fray the fabric of historic districts to the extent of potential loss of NR-status.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. Richard Murphy, Director
City of Buchanan Economic & Community Development

Mr. Peter Lysy, Archivist & Historian
Buchanan Public Library

Ms. Beth Murphy, President
Buchanan Preservation Society

Mr. Randy Hendrixson, Owner
Clark Equipment Complex

City of Buchanan and the Buchanan Preservation Society

