HISTORIC AREA PRESERVATION PLAN

CHATHAM-ARCH AND MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE HISTORIC AREA

HA-34 (CAMA)

A PART OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

Adopted by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission
June 7, 2006
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The Murat Temple, 510 N. New Jersey Street, was designed by Oscar D. Bohlen and built by William P. Jungclaus Company in 1909. Rubush and Hunter designed the addition in 1922. The building serves as the local headquarters for the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (“The Shriners”) and is perhaps best known for its theatre, which is the oldest surviving downtown stage house. Photo taken 1929. Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society
FOREWORD

The Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area Preservation Plan addresses a larger, more comprehensive geographic area. In doing so, it recognizes the changes that have occurred since the original Chatham-Arch Historic Area Preservation Plan was done in 1982 and the resulting need for a comprehensive vision for preserving the full area. The plan creates an exceptional district with the wide range of building types, land uses, and interest in new in-fill construction that will complement and enhance the historic fabric.

As a long time resident of nearby Lockerbie Square and a member of the Founding Board of Directors of a Massachusetts Avenue revitalization group that evolved into the Riley Area Development Corporation, it has been exciting to watch the changes in the area. Since 1982, Massachusetts Avenue and the Chatham-Arch neighborhood have gone from a blighted area to a highly sought after location. Much of the residential stock in this area has been restored as well as the creation of new in-fill housing in various forms and density. Many of the large industrial buildings have been converted to residential condos. Mixed use and other new construction are filling previously vacant lots and the commercial structures along Massachusetts Avenue have been renovated to popular cultural and retail destinations. It is a vibrant, attractive and inviting area.

These changes, along with strong overall downtown development, have made areas outside the current Chatham-Arch Preservation Plan, particularly along I-65 and both ends of Massachusetts Avenue, highly desirable for growth with no protection for their historic fabric. The area east of College Avenue not only possesses unique buildings like the historic art deco Coca-Cola plant, but already has seen new development that seeks to demolish rather than incorporate old buildings. The importance of this Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area Preservation Plan can not be under-estimated for its role it preserving the history of the built environment and assuring integration of appropriate new construction in this area.

Writing the Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area Plan required unifying a diverse group of people, perspectives, and wide ranging input. The Chatham-Arch neighborhood has worked together with the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) to achieve the goals set forth in the original 1982 preservation plan. It has not always been easy, but clearly they have endeavored to achieve that “high degree of sensitivity, consideration, and cooperation among all parties” as encouraged in the Foreword. This new, more comprehensive plan will require that same level of interaction among the additional and diverse constituents; and between the representatives of the newly defined historic area and the IHPC. In return, the IHPC will continue to strive “to interpret the guidelines and standards of the preservation plan with as much respect, fairness, objectivity, common sense, and consistency as the combined good judgment of the Commission membership can provide.”

James T. Kienle, FAIA
President,
Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission
Located at 704 N. Park Avenue, the First United Brethren Church was built in 1921 and was designed by the prominent Indianapolis architectural firm of Rubush and Hunter. The United Brethren Church was one of the oldest congregations in the city and continuously occupied this site until 1965. The church later housed a smaller congregation, but was vacated sometime after 1982. Due to severe structural deterioration, the church was razed in 1997. Photo taken 1923. Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society
INTRODUCTION

The Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area is located in the northeast quadrant of Indianapolis’ Regional Center and is less than one mile from Monument Circle, the city’s epicenter. The area’s north and east boundary is formed by interstates I-65 and I-70, while the south and west boundaries are irregular and often zig-zag due to the diagonal street pattern of Massachusetts Avenue. In relation to Indianapolis’ original 1821 Mile Square, the majority of the historic area is immediately adjacent to it and includes two of the original boundaries of the Mile Square: North and East Streets. Massachusetts Avenue, one of the City’s original four diagonal streets, traverses the district at a 45° angle.

Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue are two distinct areas, and their physical, economic, and social environments are quite different. Chatham-Arch is primarily a residential neighborhood that is comprised of single, two-family and multifamily housing. In contrast, Massachusetts Avenue contains a variety of land uses, including commercial, retail, residential, office, governmental, and industrial, and offers numerous shopping, dining, cultural and entertainment venues. Although each area’s built environment and land uses are different, Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue both represent thriving urban historic areas that are unique to the city of Indianapolis – which is a stark contrast from twenty-four years ago when the areas were suffering from years of decline.

Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue experienced their greatest periods of development in the late 19th century but continued well into the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, after WWII, a period of decline began that did not begin reversing until the early 1980s. The buildings that remain today comprise a fragment of what once existed. They are essentially "what's left" after a 50-year period of decline. In the 1960s, when interstates I-65 and I-70 were constructed through downtown, many historic buildings were demolished and several streets and alleys were dead-ended to accommodate the new beltway system. While losing historic resources and infrastructure dealt a strong blow, the interstates equally afflicted the areas by creating a large physical barrier that separated and isolated Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue from the adjacent residential neighborhoods to the north and east. Disinvestment and demolition occurred at a much faster rate coincident with this than at any other time in history.

By the early 1980s, the concept of historic preservation had emerged as a method to stimulate neighborhood revitalization. Several factors contributed to its emergence, including: an increased interest in our heritage on both a national and local level; a growing desire to live and work close to the city center; economic incentives to rehabilitate buildings in our cities; and a new appreciation of the need to conserve rather than discard the building fabric that we have inherited. Both Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue played a part in this trend towards revitalization through historic preservation.

In 1980 and 1982, Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue (respectively) were listed in the National Register of Historic Places and awarded federal historic district status. Also in 1982, Chatham-Arch was designated by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission as a locally protected historic district for the purpose of preserving the surviving historic resources,
encouraging sensitive new development, and protecting the general residential character of the neighborhood.

Since the early 1980s, both Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue have experienced a tremendous rebirth and significant reinvestment. Dilapidated houses and abandoned commercial buildings have been carefully restored. Once vacant lots are now occupied by single-family houses, condominiums, and businesses. Street trees, street lights, and public art line Massachusetts Avenue, and the once deserted commercial corridor is now frequented by people both day and night. In 2003, Massachusetts Avenue was named one of Indianapolis’ six cultural districts.

But this rebirth and revitalization also brings new challenges. Rehabilitation and redevelopment continues to occur at a rapidly increasing pace, and the demands of the current real estate market sometimes encourage overdevelopment or new construction that is not sensitive to the historic built environment. With respect to new development and neighborhood amenities, the popular belief that “bigger is better” and “new is better than old” is often ingrained in the minds of today’s younger generations, many of which are choosing to live and work downtown. Although building rehabilitation, redevelopment and population increases in urban areas are typically welcome changes; they can also be challenging and problematic when there are weak or non-existent development guidelines.

Both Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue responded to these recent challenges. In April 2004, the Chatham-Arch Neighborhood Association requested the existing historic area preservation plan be updated for the following reasons:

1. Outdated, weak and/or non-existent land use and zoning recommendations,
2. Non-existent architectural and design guidelines for commercial buildings,
3. Ambiguous and vague architectural and design guidelines overall, and
4. The existing plan is no longer servicing the neighborhood and does not reflect recent development trends.

After investigating and evaluating Chatham-Arch’s request, the IHPC found their concerns valid and unanimously voted to allow IHPC staff to collaborate with the neighborhood to create and develop a new preservation plan.

While Chatham-Arch focused on the creation of a new preservation plan, a movement gradually emerged along Massachusetts Avenue to designate the area as a locally protected historic district. For several years, there has been great concern about the lack of protection for some of the City’s most significant architectural resources and the lack of enforceable design review. In the Indianapolis Regional Center Plan 2020 recently published by the City’s Department of Metropolitan Development, it states “New Local Designations: Consider local designation of potential historic districts. Districts: Evaluate Washington Street, Massachusetts Ave., Holy Rosary-Danish Church . . . that may have been overlooked as traditional districts but are collections of historic resources.” To carry out the recommendations in the Indianapolis Regional Center Plan 2020, the Massachusetts Avenue Commercial Development Plan was developed in 2001. The plan was sponsored by Riley Area Development Corporation and Indianapolis Downtown, Inc., and involved extensive community consensus building, including interviews, focus groups, public workshops and surveys. In the plan, it recommends “Adopt
design and development guidelines.” Several subcommittees were subsequently created to accomplish the numerous recommendations in the Massachusetts Avenue Commercial Development Plan, including a subcommittee to focus on historic preservation and local historic district designation.

In 2003, the subcommittee discussed local designation with IHPC staff, Chatham-Arch and Lockerbie Square neighborhoods, Riley Area Development Corporation, the Massachusetts Avenue Merchant’s Association and other interested parties, and in November 2003 the subcommittee formally began the petition process.

The IHPC encountered an unusual situation, one it had never been faced with before. While the Chatham-Arch preservation plan was being rewritten and updated, the Massachusetts Avenue subcommittee was petitioning for historic district status. All parties involved were perplexed with how to address the 600-700 blocks of Massachusetts Avenue since this area has a dual designation: it lies in both the Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue National Register Historic Districts.

However, this situation presented a unique opportunity. Many components of a preservation plan are applicable to both Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue, particularly land use and zoning recommendations and design guidelines. Rather than creating two separate preservation plans that contain much of the same information, the IHPC created one comprehensive preservation plan for both areas. It should be noted that the creation of one mutual preservation plan is for planning purposes only, and it does not control the boundaries that any neighborhood or community organizations choose for themselves.

There were several benefits to creating a comprehensive Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area Preservation Plan, including:

1. A comprehensive preservation plan avoided unnecessary repetition because numerous plan components are applicable to both Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue.
2. The “framework” already existed. IHPC staff began working with the Chatham-Arch neighborhood in 2004 to update their existing preservation plan, and new land use/zoning recommendations and design guidelines for commercial buildings were developed for the 600-700 blocks of Massachusetts Avenue. IHPC staff also incorporated the “Massachusetts Avenue Development Guidelines,” which were created by Riley Area Development Corporation, and the Regional Center “Infill Guidelines.”
3. A comprehensive plan saved time for IHPC staff and helped expedite the local designation process for Massachusetts Avenue. Staff did not have to create two separate planning documents, and instead melded sections of a Chatham-Arch plan and a Massachusetts Ave. plan into one all-inclusive planning document.

The Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area Preservation Plan was prepared by IHPC staff in consultation with the following:

1. The Strategic Neighborhood Action Planning (SNAP) Committee – a special liaison committee between IHPC staff and the Chatham-Arch neighborhood, and
2. The Massachusetts Avenue Historic District Subcommittee – a subcommittee of the Massachusetts Avenue Financial Planning Committee, which was formed to encourage and guide redevelopment along Massachusetts Avenue. Throughout the planning process numerous committee meetings and public workshops were held to educate the public about the planning process, inform them of specific recommendations and changes, and gain public input and feedback regarding the proposed plan.

Staff members of the City’s Division of Planning – Subarea were consulted in the formulation of land use and zoning recommendations. Also, to assist IHPC staff, two consultants were retained to research and develop specific sections of the plan. Jill Owens-Siegel, project manager for Community Solutions, Inc., completed the “Historical & Architectural Significance” section and components of the “Existing Conditions” section, and Leah Orr conducted the research for the “Building Inventory” section. Photography for the “Building Inventory” section was completed by Thavary Krouch, a student volunteer from Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis.

When undertaking such a large project and working with various neighborhood-based organizations, business owners, consultants, and volunteers, there are numerous occasions where differences of opinions can overwhelm and impede such a project. The outstanding success of this preservation plan is a result of a dedicated group of people who truly came together to achieve a common goal: to encourage sensitive new development and to protect the existing historic resources in Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue. Their commitment to historic preservation has helped preserve a visual and physical piece of Indianapolis’ history and ensured the existence of the city’s architectural masterpieces for many years to come.
The Davlan, built in 1915. *Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society*
HISTORIC AREA DELINEATION

BACKGROUND
Located in the northeast quadrant of Indianapolis’ Regional Center, the historic area encompassed by this preservation plan contains over twenty city blocks, including several large irregular-shaped parcels. Interstates 65 and 70 form the north and eastern boundaries, and the west and southern boundaries continuously zigzag due to the diagonal street pattern of Massachusetts Avenue. The majority of the historic area lies just beyond the city’s original Mile Square as platted in the 1820’s, although approximately six city blocks are included within those boundaries. Massachusetts Avenue, one of Indianapolis’ original four diagonal streets that radiate from the city center, traverses the district in a northeasterly direction.

The boundary of the Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area includes the existing Chatham-Arch neighborhood (which was designated a locally protected historic district in 1982); the 300-900 blocks of Massachusetts Avenue; and several city blocks east of College Avenue. In determining the boundaries the following were taken into consideration:
- The existing boundaries of the Chatham-Arch historic district,
- The boundaries of the Massachusetts Avenue National Register Historic District,
- The existence of well defined barriers (i.e. interstates, adjacent historic districts, etc.)
- Consultation with the Chatham-Arch and Lockerbie Square neighborhoods, Riley Area Development Corporation, Indianapolis Downtown Inc., Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, and the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission.

AREA BOUNDARY
The boundary officially designed by this plan is described below and is depicted on the map on page 16.

Beginning at the southwest corner of the traffic island at the intersection of E. New York Street and N. Delaware Street, proceed north along the east curbline of Delaware Street to the northern curbline of E. Vermont Street. Turning east, proceed along the south property line of 401 N. Delaware Street (Robert’s Park United Methodist Church) to the east curbline of Hudson Street. Turning north, proceed to the north property line of 225 E. Michigan Street, then turn east and proceed to the east curbline of Alabama Street. Turning north, proceed along the east curbline of Alabama Street to the south curbline of E. North Street. At the intersection of Alabama and E. North Streets, turn east and proceed to the east curbline of N. New Jersey Street.

At the point southeast corner of E. North Street and N. New Jersey Street, proceed north along the eastern curbline of N. New Jersey Street to the southern curbline of Walnut Street, turning east (crossing N. Cleveland Avenue) to the eastern curbline of N. Cleveland Avenue. At that juncture, proceed northerly along the eastern curbline of N. Cleveland Avenue to the intersection of the southern curbline of E. St. Clair Street. Proceed east to the point in N. East Street that is perpendicular to the eastern curbline of N. East Street. Proceed northerly (crossing E. St. Clair Street) along the eastern curbline of N. East Street. At the point where N. East Street conjoins
with N. Central Ave., continue to proceed northerly to the southern boundary of the Interstate I-65 right-of-way.

At this juncture, proceed easterly along the southern boundary of the Interstate 65 right-of-way. At the point where the Interstate I-65 right-of-way merges with the Interstate I-70 right-of-way, crossing the intersection of E. 10th and Bellefontaine Streets, continue to follow the right-of-way line along Interstate I-70 until reaching the southern curbline of E. Walnut Street.

At this point, proceed west along the southern curbline of E. Walnut Street to the intersection of the eastern curbline of Spring Street. Turning south, proceed along the west property line of 718 Fulton Street to the north property line of 628 Fulton Street. At this juncture, turn east and proceed along the north property line of 628 Fulton Street to the eastern curbline of E. Fulton Street. At this juncture, turn south and proceed along the eastern curbline of E. Fulton Street to the northern curbline of E. North Street. Turning east, proceed along the northern curbline of E. North Street to the I-70 right-of-way. Turning south, proceed along the I-70 right-of-way to the northern curbline of E. Michigan Street.

At the point of the Interstate I-70 right-of-way and the northern curbline of E. Michigan Street, turn west and proceed to the east curbline of Spring Street. Turning north, proceed along the eastern curbline of Spring Street to the southern curbline of the alley (Alley 585 N). Turning west and crossing Spring Street, proceed west along the north curbline of the alley to N. College Avenue.

At this point, turn southwest and proceed in a southwesterly direction to the southern property line of 623 E. North Street (the former St. Joseph's Church). Turning west, proceed westerly along the southern property lines of 623 E. North Street (former St. Joseph's Church, Rectory, Hall), 617, 613, and 601 E. North Street until reaching the eastern curbline of Park Avenue. Turning north, proceed to the northeast corner of the intersection at Park Avenue and E. North Street, and then turn west and proceed to a point due north of the west curbline of Leon Street. From this point, proceed south to the intersection of Michigan and Leon Streets, turning west and following the north curbline of Michigan Street to a point due north of the west curbline of Cleveland Street. Proceed south to the first alley, turning west and following the north curbline of the alley to the west curbline of New Jersey Street.

At this point, turn south and proceed to the intersection of Vermont and New York Streets. Turning west, follow the north curbline of New York Street westward back to the point of origin.
The Hammond Block, located at 301 Massachusetts Avenue, was built by Rezin R. Hammond in 1874. Over the years, this 3-story Italianate commercial building has housed physician and surgeon’s offices, a saloon, college classrooms, a trading mart, and law and architectural offices. Notice the absence of overhead electric or trolley car lines, and Massachusetts Avenue and New York Street are still dirt. Date of photo unknown. Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society
INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
The Chatham-Arch Historic Area exhibits both historical and architectural significance. Its irregular street pattern, most of it dating to before the Civil War, recalls life in Indianapolis when the city was just beginning to expand beyond the original Mile Square plat. In the case of Broadway, today one of the city’s principal residential streets, Chatham-Arch has special importance, for it was there, in Young’s Subdivision, that Broadway originated.

The area also boasts a group of Civil War-era, workers’ cottages on Arch, St. Clair, and 9th Streets. These houses represent the workingman’s presence in the early stages of Indianapolis’ growth in the industrial metropolis. Only a few pockets of these 1860s and early 1870s cottages survive in the downtown area out of hundreds that once covered the near east, west, and south sides of the city.

The northern portion of Chatham-Arch illustrates an unusual mixture of housing types. Here workers’ cottages, middle-class residences, rental duplexes, apartment buildings and flats, commercial buildings with second-floor sleeping rooms, and a few large homes of the well-to-do all existed at the turn of the century.

The Chatham-Arch area also contains the historical roots of several major religious denominations of the city. One of the oldest black congregations in Indianapolis, Allen Chapel AME Church, has occupied a location in the area for over 116 years. The former First United Brethren Church (now part of the United Methodist Church), once the principal Indianapolis congregation of its denomination, was represented by two different church buildings on Park Avenue. One the largest German Reformed congregations of the city built Zion Evangelical Church at the west edge of Chatham-Arch. Finally the Roman Catholic Church was represented from 1880 to 1949 in the area by the former St. Joseph’s Parish, located at its southern edge.

Massachusetts Avenue is the primary commercial district that transverses the Chatham-Arch Historic Area in its southernmost area. The Avenue exhibits several fine post-Civil War and early-20th-century commercial buildings, which recall the close relationship between the neighborhood merchants on the Avenue and neighborhoods to the north and south. Industrial significance is provided along Massachusetts Avenue by the former Coca-Cola Bottling plant and on College Avenue by the Real Silk Hosiery Mills complex, formerly the home of one of the country’s principal silk hosiery factories. The Avenue is one of four original diagonals laid out in the 1821 Ralston plan of Indianapolis.

Architectural styles along Massachusetts Avenue range from commercial Italianate buildings (such as the Hammond Block) to the German Romanesque/Renaissance Athenaeum to a Middle Eastern mosque (the Murat) to an excellent example Art Deco architecture in the former Coca-Cola Bottling facility at the north end of the Avenue. In general, however, the majority of the commercial structures are best described as storefront vernacular – small and simple buildings without undue ornamentation. As such, the district is distinguished by the general uniformity of the design of the commercial buildings. When taken as a whole, the area resembles a typical
Main Street with consistent materials, styles, and scale throughout. Because of the diagonal nature of the street, flatiron buildings were fairly common throughout the commercial district. Although the Avenue is characterized by commercial structures, two significant buildings exist just off the corridor but are included in the district: the Athenaeum and the Murat Temple.

Massachusetts Avenue is significant by virtue of its history as an important secondary retailing district and service and employment center for nearby residential areas. It is architecturally significant on two levels: 1) the uniform design and setting of buildings creates an atmosphere of an early 20th century “Main Street” and 2) individual architecturally significant buildings that are among the most outstanding in the city still exist. The Murat Temple, the Athenaeum, the Hammond Block, and the old Coca-Cola Bottling Company give the district architectural distinctiveness beyond its collection of commercial storefront buildings.

Much of the history of Chatham-Arch that follows has been taken from the Historic Area Preservation Plan, prepared in 1982 by Perry Associates for the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission. The National Register of Historic Places nomination provided much of the history for Massachusetts Avenue. Additional research covering the latter part of the 20th century was conducted to bring the information up-to-date. The detailed history and development of the Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue Historic Area is outlined below and organized in two sections to fully address each sub-area:

1. Chatham-Arch
   - First Real Estate Subdivisions – 1821-1856
   - Early Settlement – 1840s-1861
   - Civil War and Post-War Settlement – 1861-1895
   - Early 20th Century – 1895-1920
     - Residential Developments
     - Churches in Chatham-Arch
     - Civic Improvements
   - Years of Decline – 1940-1980
   - Reinvestment and Rebirth – 1980-present

2. Massachusetts Avenue
   - Distinctive Street Layout – 1820-1860
   - Early Development around the Streetcar – 1860-1870
   - Second Generation of Building – 1870-1950
   - Mid-Century Decline – 1940-1980
   - Commercial and Mixed-Use Revitalization – 1980-present

CHATHAM-ARCH
First Real Estate Subdivisions – 1821-1856
The beginning of the area now called Chatham-Arch goes back to the founding of Indianapolis itself. In 1820-21, the U.S. government donated to the State of Indiana four square miles of federal land for the site of the new Indiana capital. The federal grant became known as “The Donation.” In 1821 Alexander Ralston and Elias P. Fordham laid out a “Mile Square” city plat
in the midst of the Donation. It was then thought that the Mile Square would be adequate for any
growth by the capital. The remaining land was divided into four-acre “outlots” and sold for farm
land.  

One of the outlot buyers was John Wood, Sr., who filed a residential plat for outlots 1, 2, 39, 40,
41, and 42 in 1836. “Wood’s Subdivision” lay along the north side of North Street and
Massachusetts Avenue and extended from New Jersey Street on the west to present College
Avenue on the east. The subdivision was an early venture at extending the platted area of
Indianapolis outside the Mile Square and was the first portion of what is now Chatham-Arch to
be platted.

Wood, a native of New York State, arrived in Indianapolis in 1834 and almost immediately
purchased the land intended for Wood’s Subdivision. It is quite possible that he filed his plat in
anticipation of a boom following the passage by the legislature of the Internal Improvements Act
in January 1836. The act authorized the State to build an extensive canal system in Indiana. He
also bought a farm elsewhere in the Donation and started what became one of the leading livery
stables in the Mile Square. It was Wood who first used the name “Chatham” in connection with
present Chatham-Arch area. The name “Chatham” was associated in England with the name of a
city. It was also known in the United States as the title of William Pitt the Elder, Earl of
Chatham, popular in the American colonies before the American Revolution. It is not known
why Wood chose the name—he may have been familiar with it in the above connections or as a
place name in New York State.

John Wood called the present day 700 block of Park Avenue “Chatham Street.” The central
feature of the plat, an open triangle at the juncture of present Walnut, Park, and Massachusetts,
Wood named “Chatham Square.”

Wood’s efforts at subdivision were premature. The State fell into bankruptcy in 1839-40,
leaving the ambitious canal system far from complete. The canal boom collapsed, leaving
Indianapolis still isolated from the outside world. Wood’s Subdivision continued as farm land
for at least another decade.

Just as John Wood probably anticipated a canal boom in the 1830’s, Abraham Bird undoubtedly
foresaw expansion for Indianapolis a decade later in the completion of the Madison and
Indianapolis Railroad, the first railroad to be finished to the state capital. Bird’s Subdivision of
Outlot 178 (filed in August 1847) extended west of present Park Avenue to New Jersey Street
and north of Wood’s plat to present 9th Street. Bird’s action was well timed; the railroad helped
Indianapolis to grow into a city after 1847.

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1 Ignatius Brown, “History of Indianapolis from 1818,” in Logan’s Indianapolis Directory for the Year
Commencing July 1, 1868 (Indianapolis: Logan & Co., 1868), 3.
2 Land Records Book G. p. 563, Marion County Recorder’s Office. (All Land Records and Plat Books cited
hereafter are located in the Recorder’s Office.)
3 Berry R. Sulgrove, History of Indianapolis and Marion County (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Co., 1884),
152-53.
4 Land Records Book T, 628.
The railroad boom began in earnest in the present Chatham-Arch area in 1849, when William (Billy) Young filed an extensive plat designed for railroad use. Young, a prominent man of affairs in Indianapolis, had purchased Outlots 142 and 182 along with Oliver H. Smith, president of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad Company, founded in 1843. The two men bought the tract with the expectation of the Bellefontaine Railroad building its passenger and freight depots there, thereby creating a lucrative real estate market in the environs.

Accordingly, Young’s plat provided for a central, five-acre “depot grounds,” running east and west from present College to Park Avenues. Under a contract with Smith’s railroad company, Young deeded the depot grounds to the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad for the nominal price of $25. In 1851 the Railroad erected a “brick depot and shops” on the depot grounds for its passenger and freight business. Nevertheless, it soon became apparent that the center of rail traffic was to be in the vicinity of the new Union Depot, along South Street. When the Union Depot was completed in 1853, the directors of the Bellefontaine Railroad voted to move the line’s freight depot and shops to Virginia Avenue and to join in the Union Passenger Depot. The railroad sold the old depot and grounds in Young’s Subdivision to Joseph Farnsworth, who operated a “(rail) car factory” there from 1853 to 1859. During the Civil War, the government used the depot buildings for an army stable. Fire destroyed the stable buildings in 1865. In 1871 H. R. Allen replatted the old depot grounds as a residential subdivision (see below).

Although the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad depot and shops disappeared after only 15 years, several other features of Young’s plat survived to shape the settlement of the Chatham-Arch area. Most important of all was Young’s creation of a wide thoroughfare leading to the depot grounds from the north and south. This street, originally boasting a right-of-way of 100 feet at its southern end, Young called Broadway, a name that was carried northward in succeeding additions.

Another durable feature of Young’s plat was the narrow lots that he laid out immediately north and south of the depot grounds. Young apparently expected shall shops, railworkers’ houses, or both to be attracted to the depot. Nevertheless, no known merchants located in Young’s Subdivision, and it was not until the 1860s and 1870s that workers and their cottages began to appear on the narrow lots of Arch and Vine (now 9th) Streets.

North of Vine (9th) Street Young provided more ample, 40-by-140-foot lots, intending apparently to provide for a residential suburb north of the railroad depot. In time, this design of Young’s also partially came to pass. Some large residences were erected beginning in the 1860s north of 9th Street, close to what was then heavily wooded country. Nevertheless, cottages also continued to be built along Park Avenue and Broadway north to present 11th Street.

In addition to Broadway, William Young also contributed “Arch Street” to Chatham-Arch. All of Young’s other street names have disappeared but were suggestive of fruits: Plum (College),

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6 Plat Book 1, 7 and 41.
7 The Diary of Calvin Fletcher, 5:4-5 (note) (1853-1856).
8 Brown, 53.
Walnut (Park), Vine (9th), and Cherry (10th). Young’s Subdivision was a large subdivision for its time, extending from St. Clair Street four-and-a-half blocks to the “Donation Line,” north of present 10th Street. With some later modifications, the subdivisions shaped the development of much of the character of the Chatham-Arch district north of St. Clair Street.

Real estate activity began south of Massachusetts Avenue in July 1849. Two German immigrants, Christian F. Wishmire, a cabinet and chair maker, and William F. Piel, a cooper, filed a plat for the land between Michigan Street, Noble Street (now College Avenue), North Street, and East Street. Whismire and Piel may have been anticipating the rapid expansion of the Mile Square’s population into the agricultural donation lands to the east.

In a rapid succession, the remaining Donation lands east of the Mile Square were platted. In 1850 the real estate holdings of Samuel Goldsberry (d.1847) between Massachusetts Avenue and North Street were subdivided (Goldsberry’s Heirs’ Subdivision). The final piece of Donation Land in what is now Chatham-Arch was held in the early 1850s by Ovid Butler, owner of a large estate north of present 11th Street and founder-to-be of North Western Christian (now Butler) University. In 1854 Butler decided to take advantage of a discernable movement northward by the City’s middle and upper-income residents. He filed a plat (Butler’s Subdivision-Addition) for his holdings south of present 11th Street. The oddly shaped plat included outlot 179, the area between present 10th, 9th, East, and New Jersey Streets, and the half block north of the Donation line east to present College Avenue. The lots were 40 feet in width and 140 feet deep, in keeping with the suburban atmosphere Butler desired to stimulate.

Butler’s Subdivision Addition was the final real estate subdivision to be laid out in the Chatham-Arch area before the Civil War. These early plats accomplished the Subdivision of nearly all the land now encompassed by the historic district and helped to define settlement patterns and the area’s physical character. (For an outline of later plats, see Appendix C.)

**Chatham-Arch**

**Early Settlement – 1840s to 1861**

Probably the first homes were erected in the earliest plat, John Wood’s Subdivision (1836). Today, two small residences in the 700 block of N. Park Avenue (originally called Chatham Street) recall the earliest period of Chatham-Arch’s history. A frame Greek Revival cottage at 727 N. Park Avenue may date to the 1840s, making it the oldest surviving building in the district. Across the street at 734 N. Park Avenue stands a small brick residence built by the John Koch family, dating probably to the mid-1850s. The Shawver-Heath-Moore House, a two-story frame residence with Greek Revival features, stood at 729 N. Park Avenue until its demolition in 1975. It was probably built in the 1850s by John Shearner, a carpenter. It is probable that other houses that once stood in Wood’s Subdivision along New Jersey, East, and Walnut Streets also dated to the 1840s and 1850s. In Young’s Subdivision (1849), the houses that survive today along St. Clair, Arch, and 9th Streets belong to the post-Civil War period.

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9 Plat Book 1, 29-30.
10 Probate Court Order Book 6, p. 116, City Microfilm Division.
11 Plat Book 1, 231.
12 Outlot Tract Books, Pioneer National Title Insurance Co., and selected Indianapolis city directories, 1885 to 1914.
A final area that very possibly experienced pre-war settlement lay south of Massachusetts Avenue, in Goldsberry’s Heiars’ and Wishmire and Piel’s Subdivisions. The greater proximity of the southern two subdivisions to the Mile Square helped to attract new residents during the railroad boom of the 1850s. In particular, German immigrants, such as the Wishmires and PIELS, settled in sizeable numbers east of the Mile Square.13

**CHATHAM-ARCH**

**Civil War and Post-War Settlement – 1861-1895**

Just at the point that the railroad construction boom had connected Indianapolis with most of the rest of the state and the Midwest, the Civil War broke out (1861). The war brought a great increase in commerce and population to the state capital. The city’s central location in the State, coupled with its new rail lines and position as the center of Indiana’s war effort, all brought a sizeable increase in commerce, industry, and population. For example, the population rose from 18,611 in 1860 to nearly 48,244 in 1870.14 Entrepreneurs and workers of all trades came to Indianapolis to seek their fortunes. The impact of this dramatic increase in the City’s growth may be readily seen in the Chatham-Arch area.

In Young’s Subdivision, workers’ cottages of frame and brick construction filled the narrow lots along Arch, St. Clair, and 9th Streets during the 1860s and early 1870s. Some were built by construction artisans—carpenters, masons, plasterers, etc—for their homes, e.g., 602 Arch Street (c. 1860-66); the Matthias House, 614 Arch Street (1870-71); the Voorhees House, 668 Arch Street (1867); the Lane/Butler House, 645 E. 9th Street (1868); and the Fiscus House 614 E. St. Clair Street (1864). Others, including 619 E. St. Clair Street (c. 1870); 621 E. 9th Street (1871); and the Meier House at 606 Arch Street (1867), were built by carpenters, builders, or real estate agents for rental or resale to working class tenants.

Workers’ cottages also sprang up on Chatham Street (now Park Avenue) and south of Massachusetts Avenue. By the mid-1870s, a belt of one-and-one-half-story cottages occupied by artisans, factory workers, and laborers extended along the east side of the Mile Square from Market Street north to 11th Street. As noted above, many of those early residents were German immigrants.

In addition to producing rows of workers’ cottages in Young’s Subdivision and in the subdivisions south of Massachusetts Avenue, the post-Civil War era was noted for the development of new “suburban” subdivisions and additions to the north of the settled areas of Indianapolis. In the Chatham-Arch area, the first major effort at laying out a spacious plat for homes of the well-to-do occurred in 1862, when Ovid Butler decided to subdivide the forest land lying south of his home. The plat, which Butler called College Corner, recalls the presence in 1862 of North Western Christian (now Butler) University at what is now 13th Street and College Avenue. The unusually large, 32,000 to 40,000-square-foot lots Butler visualized as being

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13 For more information on the German settlement in the Eastside, see Lockerbie Square Historic Preservation Area Plan (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, 1978), 16-17.

suitable settings for substantial “suburban residences.” Most were subsequently subdivided into lots of more salable size. The original boundaries of College Corner ran between present 11th and 13th Streets and between Central and College Avenues. Today, the northernmost blocks of the addition may be seen north of Interstate 65 in the Old Northside Historic Area. Of the rest of Butler’s “suburban” plat, only the north side of 11th Street, in the Chatham-Arch area, survives. One of the few lasting features of the College Corner plat in Chatham-Arch was the southern border, which Butler named Christian Avenue (now 11th Street), probably in honor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in which he was an influential layman. Butler apparently intended Christian Avenue to be a southern promenade or boulevard for College Corner, in that he provided for an unusually wide, 80-foot right-of-way.15

Nearly a decade later, another suburban-styled plat made its appearance in William Young’s Subdivision. In the midst of the real estate boom that succeeded the Civil War, Dr. Horace R. Allen, founder of the National Surgical Institute in Indianapolis, purchased the five-acre, former railroad depot grounds and subdivided them. Allen intended to attract more substantial residences to his subdivision then had arisen on Young’s narrow lots to the north and south. Accordingly, Allen’s plat, filed in 1871, provided for 38-by-137 (or 145)-foot lots along its central street, Broadway, and on College and park Avenues to the east and west.16

That Allen’s business intuition was sound is illustrated by the group of large, Italianate houses that still stand in the 800 block of Broadway. The Eversen/Spahr House, 826 Broadway (1873); Webb House, 829-31 Broadway (1876); Eversen/Noelke House, 830 Broadway (1873); and the Hazzard/Gilette House, 839 Broadway (1874) all were erected immediately following the filing of Allen’s plat. Most of these were built by professional men or businessmen for their own residences.

After the Civil War, prosperous businessmen also erected homes or rented existing homes along New Jersey and East Streets and along Park and College Avenues. Surviving examples on East Street include the Roberts/Fish House, 715-17 N. East Street (1865) and the Butterfield House at 712-14 N. East Street (1868). On College Avenue, two Italianate houses recall the post-Civil War era, including the Strong House, 922-924 N. College Avenue (1868), and the McGinnis/Thomas House, 920 N. College Avenue (1871).

The 800 block of Park Avenue, lying partly in H. R. Allen’s Subdivision, also attracted larger residences. Most of the remaining houses in the 800 block were built as rental homes and erected later, during the 1880s. Striking duplexes of the period include 837-39 N. Park Avenue (c. 1882-87); the house at 841-43 N. Park Avenue (1881); and the Lowes House at 847 N. Park (1881). William P. Jungclaus and his partner and brother-in-law, John A. Schumacher, erected their own matching residences at 831 and 833 N. Park (1883-84), near the site of their lumberyard.

In Ovid Butler’s suburban College Corner addition, larger homes of the wealthy were built from the 1860s to the 1890s. Unfortunately all have been demolished south of 12th Street. Butler’s other plat, his Subdivision-Addition south of 11th Street, saw the erection of both worker’s

15 Plat Book 2, 71.
16 Plat Book 3, 215.
cottages and middle-class houses after the Civil War. The area between 10th and 11th Streets became a transitional zone between the mixed income character of most of the Chatham-Arch area and the affluent nature of College Corner.

**CHATHAM-ARCH**

**Early 20th Century – 1895-1920**

**Residential Developments**

Like the rest of Indianapolis, the Chatham-Arch area was affected in its rate of development by the health of the local economy. The boom enjoyed by the city after the Civil War lasted about ten years, until the Panic of 1873 struck the city. The rest of the 1870s saw much unemployment and labor unrest. Residential construction occurred mainly during prosperous periods. Although a few homes were built during the early 1880s, it was not until the discovery of natural gas created an economic boom in Central Indiana (1886) that home-building in Indianapolis began again in earnest. The new age of prosperity, interrupted briefly by the Panic of 1893, continued through the 1920s. It brought great increases in manufacturing and commercial enterprises to Indianapolis. The population of the city rose from 105,436 in 1890 to 314,194 in 1920.17

In the Chatham-Arch area, this period of great growth and prosperity brought considerable increase in population density. An unprecedented demand for housing brought a shift in the types of residences available in the neighborhood. Although building houses for rental was not new to the neighborhood, its dominance after 1890 in the construction of new housing was a new development.

One type of rental housing, the duplex, had been constructed in Indianapolis since before the Civil War. Beginning in the 1890s, the duplex began to be built in increasing numbers in Chatham-Arch. To the speculative builder, the duplex had the attraction of creating two rental houses on a single lot. To the prospective renter, the duplex offered an often spacious residence without all the responsibilities of ownership. Duplexes especially arose during the turn-of-the-century period north of 10th Street and along East Street and Park and College Avenues. Examples include the three duplexes erected by Henry Dollman at 1011-13 and 1015-17 Central Avenue and 505-07 E. 11th Street (all built in 1901) and 1002-04 N. College Avenue (c. 1910). Duplex construction remained profitable in the area through the 1920s and into the 1930s: three brick duplexes at 851-53, 855-57 and 859-61 N. Park Avenue all date to 1924-25.

Apartments and flats were two variations of another residential rental building type that appeared in the Chatham-Arch area (and the city as a whole) about 1900. Just as duplexes offered some reduction of home owning responsibility to families, the original apartment buildings frequently provided spacious rental units to couples or single individuals.

In the historic area, several buildings in particular recall apartment living in its first flowering. The Richelieu Flats, 440-448 and 450-458 E. North Street, and the Richelieu Apartments, 610 N. East Street, were built in 1905 and 1913 respectively as an investment by printer Joseph Ratti and his partners. John S. Spann & Company, one of the city’s oldest real estate firms, constructed the Argyle Apartment Building, located at 600-622 Massachusetts Avenue, in 1911.

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17 Geib, 90.
Fredohema Terrace, which was built in 1906 by prominent local builder William P. Jungclaus, is located at 726-728 N. East Street and originally contained 20 townhouse-type units. A smaller apartment building known as the Clifford Flats, 709 N. Park Avenue, contained six units at the time of its construction, although it was later subdivided.

Many of the new early 20th century duplexes and apartment buildings removed a previous generation of homes on the same sites. Smaller one or one-and-a-half story houses of the 1860s and 1870s often were razed to build the new, income-producing buildings. This particularly occurred in the northern section of the Chatham-Arch area, between 10th and 11th Streets, and on developing north-south thoroughfares, such as East Street and College Avenue. The result is that much of Chatham-Arch now appears to date only to the early 20th century, though its history is much older.

**Churches in Chatham-Arch**

The first two decades of the 20th century saw the erection of several substantial church buildings in Chatham-Arch. The congregations of the area experienced considerable growth during this period of general optimism and prosperity.

The oldest congregation in Chatham-Arch is also today the only remaining church from the area’s early history. The Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was started in a simple frame building in 1866 that still stands in remodeled form at 1017 Broadway. Allen Chapel possesses considerable historical significance to local black history, in that it was one of the first AME churches founded in Indianapolis. Moreover, it has continued at the same location for 116 years. Although a few members of the congregation lived in Chatham-Arch, most appear to have lived immediately east of Plum Street (now College Avenue); to the northeast, in the vicinity of Yandes Street, Columbia Avenue, and Martindale Avenue; or in the Indiana Avenue neighborhood northwest of the Mile Square.18

The former St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church stands at North Street and College Avenue. St. Joseph’s Parish was founded in a building at Liberty (now Park) and Vermont Streets to minister to German immigrants residing in the east side. In 1879-80 the parish moved to the present church building. As the number of parishioners grew, a rectory and parish hall was built on North Street and an academy on College Avenue (razed in 1997). The opening of new parishes, such as St. Mary’s German Catholic Church at 317 N. New Jersey Street (1912) gradually sapped the vitality of St. Joseph’s Church.

North of Massachusetts Avenue the former First United Brethren Church built two buildings. This congregation, which dated its existence to 1851, erected the first church building at 739 N. Park Avenue in 1907. Growth of the church during the teens made a much larger building necessary. In 1921 a much larger church was built at 704 N. Park Avenue. The erection of the new church less than a block away from the previous one suggests that in 1921 much of the congregation still resided in the Chatham-Arch area. The first church at 739 N. Park Avenue

18 Judge Kelly, *First History of Allen Chapel AME Church* (Indianapolis, 1916); selected Indianapolis city directors, 1867 to 1915.
was converted into a theatre in 1988. The second church at 704 N. Park was razed in 1997 due to advanced deterioration.

A major church located on the periphery of the Chatham-Arch area stands at North and New Jersey Streets. Built in 1913, Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ was in the early 20th century the leading Evangelical and Reformed church in the downtown. Its appeal was to German immigrants and their descendants who had been raised in the German Reformed Church. As such, its congregation came from all over the downtown and later the city.

Civic Improvements
As the near Eastside section of Indianapolis became an established residential area, its citizens sought civic improvements to adorn their rights-of-way. In the Chatham-Arch area, this spirit of improvement resulted in “street centers” (commonly known as esplanades) and public fountains.

The street centers logically went into one of the widest streets. With its 80-foot width, Christian Avenue (renamed 11th Street in 1893), had for a time served mule car tracks as early as 1871. With the founding of a municipal park system in the 1890s, much interest arose in providing “breathing spaces” in densely populated sections of the city. Accordingly, from Central to College Avenues, the street received six centers containing 13 flower beds. During the late 1890s a dozen varieties of flowers were planted in the esplanades during the warmer months. The street centers remained at least through the second decade of the 20th century but eventually were removed.

In an age in which people walked or traveled in horse-drawn conveyances, public fountains were essential features in public places. Chatham-Arch enjoyed two such conveniences. One stood at the intersection of 11th Street and College Avenue. The other was for a time the pride of the Chatham-Arch vicinity. The Nathan Morris Memorial Fountain was erected by friends of a popular Indianapolis attorney, who tragically killed in a fire in 1903. The fountain was erected in Chatham Place (originally “Square”), the triangle at Park Avenue, Walnut Street, and Massachusetts Avenue. Two sides of the fountain supplied water to pedestrians; the other two to horses.

With the advent of the automobile, the need for such utilitarian fountains decreased. The Morris fountain apparently also suffered the indignity of being rammed repeatedly by automobiles. At length, probably during the 1920s or 1930s, the City of Indianapolis removed it.

**CHATHAM-ARCH**

**Years of Decline – 1940-1980**

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20. Annual Messages of various mayors, 1897 to 1912.
The years since 1920 have brought changes in the nature and distribution of housing in the Chatham-Arch area. One of these changes had been at work since the turn of the century. The trend toward more rental properties had begun with the duplexes and apartment buildings already mentioned. During the “teens” an increasing number of single-family residences were converted into multiple-unit rental properties. Between the two world wars, the neighborhood became predominately rental in its residential sections. After World War II, the composition of the population became largely lower income, as middle class residents died or moved to newer neighborhoods.

Industrialization was a second major force at work during the Inter-War period. Virtually all of the 19th-century houses between Massachusetts Avenue and North Street disappeared, to be replaced by factories and small commercial buildings. Chief among these was the Real Silk Hosiery Mills complex, which at its height in the 1940s covered nine acres of land along College Avenue and became one of the largest silk hosiery factories in the United States. The surviving Real Silk buildings, erected from 1919 to 1926, have in recent years become recognized as historic in their own right, providing a character for the southern section of Chatham-Arch quite different from the original one.

For several churches of the area, the 1920s was a decade of continued growth. As noted above, the First United Brethren Church completed a new building in 1921. At 11th and Broadway, Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church erected the larger present building in 1927-29. For one large church of the Near Eastside, the 1920s brought decline. St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church continued to lose members to new parishes formed elsewhere in the city. After 1920, with the increased industrialization of the surrounding neighborhood, members began to move from the parish. In 1949 the Catholic Archdiocese closed the church, using the buildings for other purposes.

During the Depression, little new construction occurred in the Chatham-Arch area. An exception was the new Firehouse No. 8 at 636 E. 11th Street, constructed in 1932 by the City of Indianapolis to replace the original engine house on Massachusetts Avenue. Following World War II, the residential fabric of the area north of Massachusetts eroded. Deterioration in housing, urban renewal, new industrial and institutional buildings, and a demand for parking lots all were responsible for demolition of many pre-World War I houses of Chatham-Arch.

Chatham-Arch experienced its greatest period of development in the 1870s. Development continued until the late 1930s and early 1940s, when a trend of decline began that continued into the 1980s. The construction of Indianapolis’ inner loop segments of the interstate highway system in the 1960s dealt a strong blow to the area. In addition to the demolition of much housing for the highway’s right-of-way, Chatham-Arch became somewhat isolated from residential neighborhoods to the north and east by the barrier of the highways. Disinvestment and demolition occurred at a much faster rate coincident with this than at any other time in its history.
CHATHAM-ARCH
Reinvestment and Rebirth – 1980-Present

Although more than 140 historic buildings had been demolished in Chatham-Arch since 1968, urban pioneers began to come downtown to reclaim and restore some of the historic buildings in the 1980s. The federal government officially recognized the Chatham-Arch area’s historical and architectural significance in March 1980 with the placement of the district in the National Register of Historic Places. This district is smaller than the “historic area” encompassed by the local Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) preservation plan that was completed in March of 1982. This preservation focus in Chatham-Arch was launched in 1977 when the area was “discovered” through a countywide survey of historic resources conducted by IHPC. Under the auspices of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, concentrated research was undertaken in 1978 which led to the National Register designation in 1980. This historic research also coincided with renewed interest in the area as demonstrated by the Chatham-Arch Neighborhood Association. This group was beginning to plan for the future of the area while attending to the immediate concerns of life in the neighborhood and they expressed interest to IHPC in the preparation of the historic area plan. The Riley Area Revitalization Program (now known as Riley Area Development Corporation) was created in 1979 to revitalize the area.

An article in the Indianapolis Star in September 1981 entitled “Two Near-Northside ‘Islands’ Join in Trend of Rebirth” began with the following quotation: “For years it was a dead-end zone of forgotten people who lived in crumbling buildings. It was the type of place you drove through to get somewhere else.” But slowly and steadily during the last two decades of the 20th century, Chatham-Arch has benefited from an overall renewed development interest in downtown and from the unique historic living opportunities that exist in the neighborhood. In the 1980s, Renaissance Place condominiums, which are located on the western edge of the district, were constructed. Not only was new housing introduced into the area, but the development of Renaissance Place also proved that there was a market for downtown housing. Additional interest in downtown was spurred with the opening of Circle Center Mall in 1995, which breathed new life into all of downtown Indianapolis. However, by 1995, urban pioneers had already made an impact in the neighborhood by restoring historic homes, which subsequently spawned compatible infill development that attracted still others to the area. Since becoming a locally protected historic district in 1982, Chatham-Arch’s built environment and quality of life has continued to develop and improve. The combination of new construction and renovation projects created a critical mass of energy and activity that truly transformed Chatham-Arch and downtown Indianapolis.

From 1990 to 2000, renewed interest in Downtown was making its impact in Chatham-Arch. According to census data, the median age of residents in the neighborhood dropped from 54 to 40. Changes were also evident in household incomes and the value of homes. Both figures nearly doubled over that 10-year-time-period. As of year-end 2005, Chatham-Arch is a mix of single-family homes and condominiums that range in price from $150,000 to more than $600,000.

As of this writing, new residential projects in Chatham-Arch include: the Waldorf at 704 N. Park (6 custom built brownstones priced at $650,000); Broadway Lofts at 10th and Broadway Sts. (1 bedroom up to 2-3 bedroom condominiums priced from $159,000-$469,900); Lockerbie Park at
Michigan Street and College Avenue (approximately 95 condominiums priced from $200,000 to $400,000); Mill No. 9 at College Avenue and Walnut Street (84 condos priced from $149,000- $400,000); and Myron Place at 620 E. 11th Street (16 attached townhomes and 4 detached homes priced from $279,000-$289,999).

**Massachusetts Avenue**

**Distinctive Street layout – 1820-1860**

Massachusetts Avenue is the primary commercial district that transverses the Chatham-Arch Historic Area in its southernmost portion. The Massachusetts Avenue district, however, extends beyond the Chatham-Arch district to the west by three blocks and to the east by about 1½ blocks. The entire Massachusetts Avenue district runs from Delaware St. and New York St. on the west to I-70 on the east – a length of seven blocks (300-900 Massachusetts Avenue). It began as a commercial area that mainly served the surrounding residential area. The lower leg of Massachusetts Avenue, extending to the intersection of East and North streets, was one of four original diagonals laid out in the 1821 Ralston plan of Indianapolis. The diagonals are a significant departure from an otherwise typical grid pattern. As Indianapolis grew beyond the bounds of the original Mile Square, the Avenue was also extended by approximately six miles. As it exists today, the commercial district was truncated at either end – first with the construction of I-65 in 1968 at the north end, and then in 1970 with the construction of the Indiana National Bank Tower (now Regions Bank), which eliminated the first (200) block of the corridor.

Although platted as early as 1831, documentation indicates that significant commercial activity didn’t develop along Massachusetts Avenue until the early 1850s. Henry Bertelmsmann erected a grocery store (razed) at what is now 726-23 Massachusetts in 1855. Evidence of a frame dwelling built in 1858 may be seen at the rear of 613-15 Massachusetts, and a brick residence built about 1864 stands to the rear of the Knauf Block, 707-11 Massachusetts. The Avenue was the most direct access to the Mile Square for those living in the northeastern portion of the Donation. From 1851 to 1853, it carried much passenger traffic to and from the Bellefontaine Railroad passenger depot in Young’s Subdivision. With the conversion of the depot first to a factory and later during the Civil War to government stables, the traffic on Massachusetts must have increased, helping to lure additional merchants and residents to this section of the Avenue.

Like Chatham-Arch, Massachusetts Avenue also benefited from the population increase around the time of the Civil War. Increases in construction of both commercial buildings and homes occurred almost immediately after the outbreak of the war. During the 1860s and 1870s, Massachusetts Avenue became a natural location for neighborhood retail activities and small manufacturers. By 1870, the city directory listed a baker, blacksmith, carpenter-builder, cigar and tobacco manufacturer, hardware store, meat market, physician, stove and tinware shop, four grocers, two wagonmakers, and two saloons in the two-block section in Chatham-Arch alone. At this early date, 1870, the pattern of residents patronizing neighborhood merchants for basic household goods and services had already become firmly established.

With rapid population increases occurring to the north and south of Massachusetts Avenue and with new real estate additions opening up to the east and northeast of the Chatham-Arch area, a wave of substantial business “blocks” appeared on the Avenue. Those new, imposing masonry

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buildings provided space for merchant-tenants on the street level and living quarters for either merchants or sleeping rooms for boarders in the upper stories.

One of the most imposing “blocks” built during the decade was the McBride (later Chatham Place) Block, 706-10 Massachusetts Avenue. Built by Michael McBride in 1875 on a choice site overlooking Chatham Square, the Italianate block has dominated the 700 block of the Avenue since its construction. Its contemporaries from the 1870s included Bugbee’s Block at 625-27 Massachusetts Avenue (razed); the Van Vorhis (later Spades Place) Block, 635-41 Massachusetts Avenue (razed); the Knauf Block, 707-11 Massachusetts Avenue (1874); the Beck Block, 719-21 Massachusetts Avenue (1874); and the Moore Block, 760-76 Massachusetts Avenue (razed). The growing importance of this portion of Massachusetts Avenue and of the residential neighborhood it served was demonstrated by the erection in 1871 of Fire Department Engine House No. 2 at 748 Massachusetts Avenue.

**MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

**Early Development Around the Streetcar – 1860-1870**

For Massachusetts Avenue, the presence of a streetcar line was important in stimulating the growth of commerce on the street and in making it the principal thoroughfare of the northeast portion of Indianapolis. First installed as mule cars in 1871, the streetcars underwent “electrification” in the early 1890s and continued to channel potential customers past Massachusetts Avenue stores until 1953.

Development of these streetcar lines was the single major factor in the conversion of Massachusetts Avenue from a mixed-use to a commercial corridor. Evidence of this transformation is visible in the handful of old residences which were converted into shops. Many remaining commercial buildings on Massachusetts Avenue date back to the 1870s and 1880s although most were erected in the early 20th century.

Early commercial buildings include the old Neerman Shoe Store at 731-733 Massachusetts Avenue built about 1865 and 609-611 Massachusetts Avenue, probably built around 1868 and used as a saloon. The Avenue continued to have a mix of residences and commercial buildings until a wave of commercial construction began in the 1870s. This second generation of building reached a peak about 1910, but continued well into the 1930s. Most of the structures were built for speculative purposes with businesses coming and going quite often.

**MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

**Second Generation of Building – 1870-1950**

The Massachusetts Avenue commercial corridor thrived from approximately 1870 to 1930 when it consisted of, for the most part, shops that catered to small retail operations and neighborhood services. The commercial activity extended generally only a half block deep and was surrounded by a residential base which relied on service-oriented establishments.

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Because of the 45-degree angle along which Massachusetts Avenue runs, unique six-way intersections were created yielding triangular shapes of land where “flatiron” buildings were constructed to fit these irregularly shaped lots. An impressive flatiron building still stands at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and New York Street, acting as a gateway to the district. The building, known as the Hammond Block, is a three-story red brick commercial Italianate structure that was built in 1874 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rezin R. Hammond built the structure but owned the building only one year before selling it to J. Swigart, a physician and surgeon, who used it as an office and residence. By 1886, a saloon operated by John Whitson occupied the building. Between 1886 and 1891, the Central College of Physicians and Surgeons utilized the upper floors. More recently, it was known as Budnick’s Trading Mart before renovation for office use in 1979 occurred. Today, it is used for lawyers’ offices.

The Argyle building at 600-622 Massachusetts Avenue, which now houses several retail tenants on the ground floor including Aesop’s Table restaurant, is another example of a flatiron building. Built in 1911, the Argyle originally contained 90 sleeping rooms located above 10 storefronts. Since its time of construction, the Argyle has experienced only minor exterior alterations. The structure was renovated in 1980 and now contains 46 residential units.

Located in the 700 block, Chatham Place was a significant early feature of the Avenue serving as a “town square” for the area. Chatham Place was created by the convergence of Massachusetts Avenue, Walnut Street, and Park Avenue and originally there was a horse fountain in the square. One of the remaining buildings that used to line this intersection is located at 706-710 Massachusetts Avenue (now a salon). Dating from 1875, this building’s unusual shape was dictated by the peculiar boundaries of the lot and the configuration of the Chatham Place intersection. The building extends along Massachusetts Avenue and wraps around Chatham Place to Walnut Street where it angles again into Park Avenue. The Chatham Place building is a three-story brick structure with a street level arcade of arches supported by cast iron columns that first housed a harness and saddle manufacturer. A variety of other businesses including a druggist, bicycle shop, and cigar manufacturer have used the building.

The original fire station in the district is located at 633 E. St. Clair Street and 748 Massachusetts Avenue and was built in 1871. Although it has been altered over the years, it now houses a fire museum and the Indianapolis Firefighters Union and often serves as a public meeting space.

The 400 block of Massachusetts Avenue is composed entirely of Avenue-typical storefront vernacular buildings. Dating back to the 1880s, the north side of the block will play a major role in revitalization efforts in the late-20th century. At the southern point (the intersection of Alabama Street and Massachusetts Avenue) is one of the oldest buildings on the block. Built in 1887, the Old Point Tavern, located at 401-403 Massachusetts Avenue, is a three-story brick commercial structure. The c.1900 building at 421-447 Massachusetts Avenue is another three-story structure that housed storefronts at street level and residential flats above. The 1914 City Directory shows that at that time an electrical contractor and chandelier supplier, the Globe Soap Company, and R.W. Magee Co. “Suppliers of Deformity Apparatus, Trusses and Artificial Limbs” were located within the building. Along the remainder of the block in 1914 would be found Edward Foster’s saloon, A. Van Treese & Co. Wallpapers, V.C. Wolf’s saloon, H.A. Graffon’s Printing Company, Isaac Prince’s Grocery, and a millinery shop. All of the above
reflect what was the typical pattern along the Avenue: small single proprietor shops that serviced
day-to-day needs and provided employment opportunities for nearby residents.

The history of the commercial activity along Massachusetts Avenue indicates that most of the
shops were relatively short-lived. Exceptions to this rule include the Christian Neerman Shoe
Store (731-33) which operated from 1865 to 1928; the Budnick Trading Mart (301/Hammond
Block) which operated for 40 years; and two of the oldest family-run businesses in the city:
Stout’s Shoes (318) and Jungclaus-Campbell Construction Company (825) which still exist and
have a combined history of service along the corridor of more than 200 years. A visit to Stout’s
Shoe Store recalls the flavor and outlook of the original shop that opened there in 1886. The
store is one of the few in downtown Indianapolis that has continued and prospered in its original
location for more than a century.

Jungclaus-Campbell Construction Company was started in 1895. As a builder of all types of
structures – residential, office, public, and industrial – Jungclaus-Campbell was responsible for
building such important Indianapolis landmarks as the former English Hotel and Theatre, the
Murat Temple, the Real Silk Hosiery Mills, the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Merchants
National Bank, the Circle Tower Building, the Columbia Club, and several public schools.
Today, the Jungclaus-Campbell complex still includes several buildings which house offices, a
planning mill, and warehouse and storage space.

The sustained period of prosperity enjoyed in Indianapolis from the early 1890s to World War I
resulted in the gradual transformation of Massachusetts Avenue from a mix of retail buildings
and dwellings into a solid commercial district, capable of attracting customers from areas beyond
Chatham-Arch. Although the number of merchants in the 600 and 700 blocks of Massachusetts
Avenue actually declined after reaching a high point about 1890, the prosperous nature of the
period manifested itself in replacing dwellings with new commercial buildings and with new
mixed apartment and commercial “blocks.” Examples of new commercial buildings included
the former Massachusetts Avenue Stables, 750 Massachusetts Avenue (1894); 637
Massachusetts Avenue (c. 1910); and 745-47 Massachusetts Avenue (1912). Commercial
buildings also began to appear at other locations in the area. At 11th and College, August
Buschmann erected the Buschmann Building, a three-story edifice providing space on the street
level for Buschmann’s plumbing supply business and in the upper stories for apartments. Later,
in 1916, the Walbrook Building provided apartments and a drugstore on the northwest corner.

In 1906, George J. Marott, a prominent local entrepreneur, built a five-story structure at 340-358
Massachusetts Avenue in an attempt to create a new retailing center that could rival the
downtown. His thinking was that the heavy traffic that rolled by on the streetcar and interurban
lines would provide customers. Hyman’s Handbook of Indianapolis, An Outline History,
published in 1909, touted Massachusetts Avenue as the new shopping district:

“The most remarkable improvement in Indianapolis in recent years has been made in the
territory embraced north of Ohio Street on Massachusetts Avenue. This avenue is the

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27 R. L. Polk and Co., Indianapolis City Directory (Indianapolis: R. L. Polk and Co., 1890, 1895, 1900 and
great artery that taps the most populous section of the city and surrounding territory, and more people travel this thoroughfare than any other. Realizing the needs of a suitable building for department store purposes and one that would meet the growing demands of this busy avenue, Mr. George J. Marott erected in 1906 one of the largest and most commodious buildings in the city at Nos. 342 to 358 Massachusetts Avenue. It is a five-story and basement structure with all the latest improvements necessary to modern store construction, and its great expanse of front is the largest in the city for the display of merchandise. The store contains one of the largest and most complete stocks of everything from edibles and wearables to home furnishings in the state. To enable one to get a proper estimate of the value of the location of the Marott Department store, which marks the heart of the new shopping district of Indianapolis, consideration must be given to the enormous traffic that passes its doors. Seven of the most important street car lines, tapping the most populous section of the city to the north and northeast and five interurban lines bring their passengers to this building.”

Unfortunately, by 1919 the store was no longer successful and it closed. The building stood vacant for much of the 20s and 30s until the federal government purchased it in 1935 to house the U.S. Resettlement Administration and, later, the U.S. Farm Security Administration. Today, it still home to other office users. George J. Marott went on to make an impact elsewhere in Indianapolis with the construction of the Marott Hotel at Meridan Street and Fall Creek Parkway.

Commercial enterprises were not the only activity along Massachusetts Avenue. A large residential population lived here, mostly in flats above shops or in apartment buildings. The majority of apartment buildings or “flats” in the district were built to house transient residents. Most of the units, such as those in the Argyle building at 600-622 Massachusetts Avenue (described above), consisted of sleeping rooms that rented on a weekly basis. The Richelieu, a three-story brick apartment building built in 1904 still stands at 440 E. North Street. An addition to the building was made in 1913. Buildings with commercial uses on the street level and apartments above were common in the district and still are today – although many residential units are now used for offices. The Baker Apartments (now the Massala Building), located at 335-345 Massachusetts Avenue is an example of this type of building. Other apartment buildings along the Avenue included the Coredgeo Flats, 626 Massachusetts Avenue (razed); the Gassaway Block, 739 Massachusetts (razed); and the Milligan Block, 755 Massachusetts (razed). 28

Although the Avenue is characterized by commercial and mixed-use structures, two significant buildings existing just off the corridor (but are included in the district). The Athenaeum and the Murat Temple both began as large-scale institutional, meeting, and entertainment uses.

Das Deutsche Haus, as the Athenaeum was formerly known, was built as one of the finest German clubhouses in the country. It is the result of a resolution passed by the Socialer Turnverein of Indianapolis in 1891 to build a larger facility. The Socialer Turnverein Society was formed in 1851 in Cincinnati for the purposes of promoting physical activities and endeavors through gymnastics, music, and other forms of recreation and encouraging the practice of the German language and customs in the United States. A building association was founded

28 Polk, 1914 City Directory, 1724-25.
and incorporated with a capital stock of $100,000, which was later increased to $160,000 and land was purchased at the southeast corner of Michigan Street and Massachusetts Avenue. Before the building operations began it became evident that the time was right to build a club house large enough to accommodate the Turnverein and other German literary, musical and dramatic societies. The Athenaeum (a National Register building) was designed by Indiana’s first licensed architect, Bernard Vonnegut, and was built in two phases – the east part of the building is German and the west is Renaissance. The older section (1893) is built of dark red brick and has two distinctly styled towers. The Renaissance section (1897) is elaborately detailed but constructed of the same red brick. In pursuance of the plan of the builders, Der Deutsche Klub, a social club, was organized upon completion of the first building. Der Musikverein was founded in October, 1897, and in 1899 these two clubs were merged under the name of Der Deutsche Klub and Musikverein of Indianapolis. Throughout the building decorative shields bear the initials “D-H” for “Deutsche Haus,” as the building was known prior to the intense anti-German sentiment that occurred during World War I. The Athenaeum is now home to the YMCA, Rathskeller Biergarten and Kellerbar, and the American Cabaret Theatre.

Located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Alabama and Michigan Streets (to the northwest of the Athenaeum), the Murat Temple is one of the most unique buildings in Indianapolis. The corner stone for the original temple was laid March 13, 1909, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the charter of Murat Temple of the Mystic Shrine. Designed by Oscar D. Bohlen, the building is a four-story Middle Eastern-styled building with turrets and stained glass windows. Contrasting yellow and brown brick banding encircles the building. Intricately designed terra cotta trim surrounds the doorways, arches, and windows. On the south facade is a tablet that reads “A.A.O.N.M.S.” which stands for the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. A tower at the southeast corner rises 208 feet above the street making the Temple visible from beyond the Avenue. For most of Indianapolis, the most familiar aspect of the building is its theatre that opened on February 28, 1910. At that time, the theatre was considered the most modern such facility in the region. The worst seat in the house offered an 82% view of the stage. As a Schubert-managed theatre many prominent popular entertainers performed at the Murat including Marie Dressler, the Marx Brothers, Fanny Brice, and Eddie Cantor. A 1922 addition on the north of the building designed by Rubush and Hunter, houses the Egyptian Room which was modeled after the tomb of King Tutankhamen. A later addition dating from 1968 consists of concrete facades; to the north there is a large tiled mural of three Arabians crossing the desert. Two-color brick banding, identical to that on the first building, helps to bring continuity to the three structures. The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra called the theatre home for 300 years before the construction of Clowes Hall. Today, it still attracts popular entertainers and Broadway-style musical productions to its 2,000-seat theatre.

Another Rubush and Hunter design, the former Coca-Cola Bottling Company at 858-868 Massachusetts Avenue may be the finest collection of Art Deco buildings in Indianapolis. William P. Jungclaus Construction Company built the first section of the plant in 1931 at a cost of $354,888. Successive additions occurred in 1941 and 1949-50. Garage facilities were built in 1932, 1938, 1941, and 1954. By 1954, this was the largest bottling plant in the world, turning out 2,352,000 bottles of Coca-Cola weekly and employing 260 people. However, within 10 years of its period of peak operation, the bottling works became outdated. In 1968, the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners purchased the complex. The plant has undergone
remarkably few alterations despite its dramatic change of use to a warehouse and central kitchen for the Indianapolis Public Schools.

**MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

**Mid-Century Decline – 1940-1980**

In the early part of the 20th century, the storefront vernacular buildings described above created a continuous urban wall along the street, screening from view the residential neighborhoods a half block away. Today, demolition has taken its toll. Surface parking lots dot the area; however, enough of the fabric remains – particularly in the 300, 400, 600, and 700 blocks to provide a window to the former bustling shopping district that once existed there. Built intrusions into the district also exist and present a different architectural and land use story than was historically found on the Avenue. Small one-story commercial structures at 637 and 901 Massachusetts Avenue were built in the 1950s and 60s. Perhaps the most dramatic intrusions are in the 500 block, where the fire station and the John J. Barton Apartments provide a marked break in the pedestrian-oriented storefront fabric.

The John J. Barton Apartments for the Elderly were constructed in 1968 and 1971 for the Indianapolis Housing Authority. The apartments, which were heavily praised in architectural journals in the late 1960s, were designed by architect Evans Wollen and are examples of Modernist architecture. These senior apartments were some of the earlier public housing structures in Indianapolis. The 20+story tower building alone contained 247 housing units when it was first constructed in 1968. The tower’s double-loaded corridor plan, which allows for an effective economical use of space, is revealed on the exterior by the projecting stair towers at both ends of the concrete structure. The tower was sited well back from the Avenue so that a landscaped ‘front yard’ is exposed to passing motorists. Although this site plan was described in *Forum* magazine as creating a type of public square with buildings around it, the effect on the Avenue was one of disruption to the continuous storefront character. A second apartment building was physically connected to the original tower and actually spanned over East Street. The “bridgelike” apartment building was removed in 1994 – much to the dismay of local architects who felt that the proposed alterations “represent a drastic change to the building.” The 500 block of Massachusetts Avenue had already been impacted by the construction of the fire station on the north side of the street. The fire station is also set back from the street providing needed access for large fire trucks. However, an existing building at the south end of the block, which houses the Firefighter’s Credit Union, has an historically appropriate footprint although its façades have been significantly altered through renovations.

The changes above occurred amid other dramatic changes along the Avenue. Also in 1968, I-65 was constructed, which disrupted the northward continuation of the Avenue. Then, in 1970, the first block of the corridor was completely eliminated with the construction of the Indiana National Bank Tower (now the Regions Bank building).

**MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

**Commercial and Mixed-Use Revitalization**

In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of buildings in the district underwent renovation projects, including the following: the former Christian Meyer Building at 314-16 Massachusetts Avenue (built 1872-3) was rehabilitated in 1983; the Hammond Block at 301 Massachusetts Avenue
(built 1874) was renovated in 1980; the Marott Center at 342 Massachusetts Avenue underwent renovations in 1986 and the Oxford Building at 316 E. Vermont was rehabilitated in 1990. In-fill development also took place during that same period, including Three-S Reproductions, located at 643 Massachusetts Ave., was built in 1992 and Dean Johnson Gallery, at 646 Massachusetts Ave., was constructed in 1996. Although the new construction, these buildings are built to a similar scale and mass as other historic buildings along Massachusetts Avenue and compliment the historic character of the area.

By 1990, although investment had been occurring, development was still “a little spotty on the wide street” – this according to a 1990 article in Nuvo. O’Malia’s Grocery store at the west end (actually at 320 N. New Jersey Street) had sparked development all over downtown although vacancies and “for lease” signs were common on the east end. Young and Laramore Advertising, a younger agency with a reputation for spotting trends, renovated the historic building at 409 Massachusetts Avenue for its offices. The American Cabaret Theatre relocated from New York City to make its home in the district in the Athenaeum in 1990. At that time, the budding art district was making a new name for itself – away from the strip clubs and boxing gyms that characterized in only eight years earlier. Galleries were starting to spring up and “destinations” such as Stout’s Shoes of one type and the Chatterbox jazz club were anchors along the corridor.

In fact, these anchors were gaining such a reputation as to attract visitors from beyond Chatham-Arch or even Indianapolis. In December 1989, Rolling Stones’ lead singer Mick Jagger and guitarist Ron Woods, who were in Indianapolis to perform a concert, came to the Chatterbox to hear live music. But members of the Rolling Stones weren’t the only first famous people to grace the Chatterbox. Dennis Hopper came in during the filming of Hoosiers. Lou Rawls came in while in town for a concert. Once Liza Minelli’s band stopped by and sat in with the musicians. Christopher Lloyd often visited the Chatterbox during the filming of Eight Men Out.

By the mid-1990s, Massachusetts Avenue (now fondly referred to as “Mass Ave”) had benefited from City planning attention through studies of the Northeast Quadrant of downtown Indianapolis. The vision for the Avenue at that time was described as follows:

_A commercial corridor featuring continuous fully merchandised storefronts, pedestrian friendly sidewalks, and historic streetscaping. Newly constructed in-fill buildings that complement the existing urban design have replaced surface parking lots. Greenspaces soften the urban setting and link the commercial areas with residential neighborhoods._

Additionally, the Riley Area Development Corporation (RADC), in conjunction with Indianapolis Downtown, Inc., began steering commercial development through the preparation of the Massachusetts Avenue Commercial Development Plan. RADC had been impacting the area with its housing renovations projects since the late 1970s, and had recently become a commercial landlord through the renovation of the former Davlan Hotel in the 400 block of Massachusetts Avenue. The Davlan now provides 50 residential apartments in its upper floors and ground floor retail space that houses a Starbucks and a gift shop called At Home in the City/Silver in the City. Because RADC utilized federal funding for the project, 36 of the 50 new apartments are reserved for low- and moderate-income residents.
In recent years, investment interest has continued along Massachusetts Avenue. The Scholars Inn restaurant opened in a renovated building at 725 Massachusetts Avenue in August of 2002. This 310-seat, two-story restaurant has two custom bars, two private dining spaces, and an outdoor back patio with a fireplace. At the time of this writing, a significant mixed-use building is under construction at 757 Massachusetts Avenue at the intersection of College Avenue. The building, which replaces a modest one-story structure that formerly housed a Hook’s Drugstore and the popular local Abbey Restaurant for many years, will contain 24 condominium units and retail space. Condominium prices will start at $290,000 and exceed $1,000,000.

In 2003, Massachusetts Avenue was designated as one of Indianapolis’ six cultural districts, due to its concentration of art galleries, performing arts theatres, eclectic shops, and public art. The historic commercial buildings fronting the corridor house a variety of businesses, public services, offices, residential, and mixed uses. Today, the street experiences a high amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Sculpture, painting, photography, and architecture draw people to Massachusetts Avenue. Nine art galleries offer a variety of art media, including glass, paintings and sculpture. Outdoor art is scattered along the Avenue. *Viewfinders* (by Eric Nordgulen), one of the four permanent public sculptures, marks the gateway into the Avenue. Rotating pieces change twice a year and are for sale after their public installation.
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Position Statement: John J. Barton Apartments from the American Institute of Architects, Indianapolis Chapter to the Indianapolis Housing Authority.