

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Flanner House Homes  
other names/site number Project Area "A" (Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission)

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Dr. M.L. King Jr. Dr., 12th St., Fall Creek Parkway East Dr. and Lynn Street N/A  not for publication  
city or town Indianapolis N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Marion code 097 zip code 46237

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

8.8.03  
Date

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
180	105	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
180	105	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

RELIGION: Religious Facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

RELIGION: Religious Facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN:

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL HISTORY \_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNITY PLANNING & \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c1910 \_\_\_\_\_

1950-1959 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Cohin, Leslie (contractor) \_\_\_\_\_

Meranda, Alden (architect) \_\_\_\_\_

Baxter, Emory R and Robert R \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Indiana Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** \_\_\_\_\_ 34 acres \_\_\_\_\_

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	571150	4404280	3	16	571250	4403790
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	571240	4404260	4	16	570790	4403610

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Preservation Interns

organization HLFI date 12-16-2001

street & number 1028 N. Delaware St. telephone 317/639-4534

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name See attached list

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Flanner House Homes**  
**Marion County, Indiana**

### Narrative Description

The Flanner House Homes, Inc. project area is a residential neighborhood of small, postwar houses with tidy lawns in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana. The district is characterized by mature trees, shallow setbacks, and well-kept lawns. All houses have approximately the same setback from the street with a concrete path leading from the sidewalk through the small front yard to the front door. Owners have landscaped to their own tastes and over the years large, shady trees have grown throughout the neighborhood. The houses are painted a variety of colors, the most popular being white. The streets are in a grid pattern, except for Lynn where there street is in a horseshoe shape and Fall Creek Parkway, which has a serpentine curve.

This neighborhood is just northwest of the original plat of the Mile Square and is quite easily distinguished from the city surrounding it. To the south is Crispus Attucks Middle School (NR date 1-4-1989), an apartment complex, and a branch of the YMCA. The western border is a natural one created by Fall Creek. The northern border is the northern most property lines of West and East Lynn Streets. The eastern boundary is Martin Luther King Jr. Street (formerly known as West Street), a main thoroughfare in the downtown area and the western edge of the original plat of Indianapolis. At the time of the initial construction of the Flanner House Homes, the eastern boundary was West Street. In the mid-1980s, the name of West Street was changed to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street.

There are 180 contributing buildings and 105 non-contributing buildings (81 of which are detached garages) in the Flanner House Homes district. The neighborhood consists of 183 single-family dwellings and 21 multiple family units. Besides houses and apartments, the district contains one church (contributing) and various detached garages. Since this district's significance stems from its ethnic heritage, social history and community planning ties rather than its architecture, determining whether a building was contributing or non-contributing was primarily based on whether the massing and form of the buildings had changed. Also, in addition to the 81 garages, the district includes 13 double houses and 8 apartment buildings that are not historically associated with the Flanner House Homes program. Homes or apartments not constructed through the Flanner House program were rated as non-contributing. Most of the houses in the district have had siding installed and/or doors or windows replaced, but these changes did not impact the massing or form of the houses. All of the contributing houses have some original elements remaining and all were in existence during the neighborhood's period of significance.

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

Before 1950, this area had smaller neglected houses and structures built between the 1870s and 1890s, and similar to those found in the Ransom Place Historic District (NR Date 12-10-1992). During the postwar years, the district was selected as a city redevelopment site and the land subsequently cleared and resold. The district was built in project phases from approximately 1950 through 1959 by Flanner House, an Indianapolis settlement house, and the Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission. As part of the redevelopment of the area, streets were changed and added. Brook Lane, Ransom Street, and East and West Lynn Drives were created as well as Fall Creek Parkway East Drive. Other streets including Darnell Street, Collins Street, Oregon Street, and 14th Street were removed altogether.

The homes on the west side of Brooks Street are among the earliest in the district, dating from 1950-1953, and are fairly close to the street. They are set up on a rise on both sides, which helps distance them from the noise and traffic of Brooks Street, one of the busier streets in the area. Another group of houses dating from the first project phase is on the curve of Ransom Street. Several of these houses have hipped roofs and are closely spaced together. Brook Lane is lined on both sides with houses built circa 1954-55. The lots are relatively narrow and have small front yards. Many trees shade this street and the homes are well-kept and inviting. The lots on Fall Creek Parkway East Drive are much larger than the others in the district and therefore, the setback of the houses is much greater. Many large trees lend to a park-like setting which is increased by the quiet of the park across the street and the slope down to Fall Creek. Most of these houses were also built during 1954-55. The homes on the western sections of 13th Street, Drake Street, and West 12th Street all date from circa 1954-55. The doubles on Drake Street and the apartments on Ransom Street were also constructed by 1955. The houses on the north side of 13th Street were built around 1955 and 1958. The streets of East and West Lynn Drive form a horseshoe shape, creating a small neighborhood within a neighborhood. These homes were all built around the same time, circa 1957-58. The houses on the south side of 13th Street and Drake Street and the north side of West 12th Street were constructed at the end of the building campaign circa 1957-59. Thus, by 1959, most of the neighborhood was built.

The original house plans were rectangular and approximately 950 square feet. All houses in the different phases featured three-bedroom floor plans. The first group of houses had basements, but subsequent houses were built with concrete slab foundations. Another change made after the first section was built was constructing wall sections, roof trusses, and gable ends in the Flanner House shop. The houses were then covered with bevel siding, and roofed with asphalt shingles. The work groups installed windows and doors, painted, and planted grass and shrubs. Jobs that required

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

skilled labor, such as plumbing, electrical work, and furnace installation, were subcontracted, and this was negotiated by each of the group supervisors. The houses in each phase are quite similar with only slight variations in the size of the front gable or distance of setback. These do not obviously mark the different building phases but instead serve to add variety to the district.

Several different house types can be identified in the district based on their massing and window location. Within these types, there exist variations in wall cladding and window types since some have been altered since the house was constructed. Type A is a one-story house with a side-gabled roof. The front elevation features a centered door with two different window types on either side: one to two small double-hung windows and a triple window group (double hung-picture-double hung). The first example of this is 714 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street (photo 3), which retains its original stone veneer though aluminum siding has been added to the other sides of the house. There are two small double-hung windows to the left of the door. Aluminum awnings were also added over the doors and windows. The next example is 520 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street (photo 1, house furthest on right), which has a brick kneewall veneer capped with a limestone stringcourse. There is a single fixed pane window to the right of the door, and aluminum awnings have been installed over the triple window group and the front door, as well as on windows on the side of the house. 1341 Fall Creek Boulevard (photo 9) is another example of Type A, similar to 714 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street in its window types. This house has a full-height limestone veneer and a small aluminum awning over the centered front door. 1218 Brooks Street (photo 20, house on left) features two double-hung windows of different heights to the right of the door and a full-height brick veneer. The smaller of the two double-hung windows appears to be a later addition due to its size. 1122 Brook Lane (photo 5) has a set of two double-hung windows and a partial limestone façade. Aluminum awnings have been added to the windows on the front façade, as well as over the front door.

Type B is a one-story house with a side-gabled roof and a front cross gable. The front door and a window are located in the cross gabled section of the front façade. 818 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street (photo 6) has a limestone kneewall veneer and aluminum siding. The triple window group is located to the left of the front door and a pair of double-hung windows are located in the cross-gable. The upper portion of the cross-gable has vertical siding rather than horizontal. 532 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street (photo 2) has a limestone veneer for the cross gabled section of the front façade, as well as a single double-hung window. Aluminum awnings have been added over the single window and a larger awning was installed over the front door and triple window group. 1335 Fall Creek Boulevard (photo 8) has a pair of double-hung windows in the limestone veneered cross gable and the rest of the house is sided with aluminum. The upper portion of the cross gable has horizontal rather than vertical

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

siding. 1417 West Lynn Drive (photo 17) has a short limestone kneewall and a single double-hung window in the cross gable. The house is sided in aluminum, and there are aluminum awnings over the front windows and front door. 1449 East Lynn Drive (left in photo 18) also has a limestone veneer and single double-hung window in the cross-gable. Awnings have been added over the windows and door.

There is also a variant of Type B, which consists of the cross gable being more narrow and only containing a window on the front façade. 733 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street (photo 11, house on left) has a limestone veneer on the cross gable, where a single double-hung window is located. The door is slightly off-center and a triple window group is located on the other side of the door. Aluminum siding has been added to this house since its construction, including horizontal siding on the upper portion of the cross gable. 577 Ransom Street (photo 12, house on left) has a limestone veneer on the entire front façade, and a hipped roof as opposed to a side gable one. The cross-gable section has a triple window group, and the upper portion of the cross gable has horizontal siding. 1418 West Lynn Drive (photo 15, house on right) has a pair of small, high-set double-hung windows located in the cross gable portion. The front façade is covered with a stone veneer and vertical wood siding. Awnings are located over the trio of double-hung windows to the left of the door, the front door, and the pair of double-hung windows. 1441 West Lynn Drive (photo 16) also illustrates another example of the Type B variant. A single double-hung window covered by an aluminum awning is located in the cross gable portion of the front façade that is covered with a stone veneer. The other part of the façade is covered with aluminum siding. A large awning has been installed over the front door and triple window group, and a concrete slab projects outward from the house to form a front porch. A one-car attached garage has been added to the house as well. 1234 Brooks Street (photo 19) has a full-height limestone veneer, a large picture window, a pair of double-hung windows, and a single double-hung window. The double-hung pair is part of the cross gable part of the façade, and the upper portion of the cross gable has horizontal aluminum siding. Individual awnings cover the windows and door.

There are several different window types found on the primary façades in the Flanner House Homes district. The most prevalent window type is a large fixed center pane with a tall and narrow divided light casement window on either side. This window type is seen in 1223 and 1227 Fall Creek Boulevard (photos 8 and 9). Another popular window on the façade is a one-over-one double-sash, but some houses also feature large nine-pane picture windows, such as on 1231 Brooks Street (photo 27). 818 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street (photo 6) features a window type that is seen on



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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

several other houses on Brook Lane (photo 5): a pair of double-hung windows with horizontal muntins on each sash.

Most of the major additions have occurred on the back or side of the houses. This is partly due to the narrow width of the average lot, but has served to maintain the original look of the neighborhood. One exception to this can be found at 715 W. Drake (photo 26), a non-contributing side-gabled home with beveled siding and a front addition. According to a photograph found in a June 1954 newspaper clipping, this house originally had a full-height brick veneer on the primary façade, which is now covered by a large screened porch and a small front-gabled addition. The front-gabled addition is covered with red vertical siding, and the gable portion is covered with white siding. There were originally two windows on the front of the home: one large nine-paned picture window and a large square window with four panes. These windows have since been replaced, though the size of the picture window opening does not appear to have been altered. The front door is set in the center of the façade, and originally was recessed slightly. A detached garage has also been added to the rear of the property.

Most of the houses have alley access so few driveways or attached garages mar the continuity of the streets. The fact that the houses appear very much as they did when they were built does not mean that the neighborhood has not undergone changes over the years. It is simply that the majority of changes have taken place behind or within the houses in an unobtrusive fashion.

The thirteen multi-family dwellings on Drake and West Streets are doubles (photos 23 and 25). They are constructed of a gray concrete block with slightly varying front detail. Small concrete sidewalks lead up to the front doors from the main sidewalk. The multi-family apartments on Ransom Street are of red brick with white wood trim (photos 13 and 14). There are eight separate buildings containing apartments for 44 families, separated from the street by a small parking lot. These two housing projects were completed by private builders other than Flanner House Homes, Inc. They are considered to be non-contributing structures in the Flanner House Homes.

The only other building in the neighborhood is the Revival Temple Church at the southwest corner of Drake and Martin Luther King Jr. Streets (photos 28 and 29). Despite the fact it was not built by Flanner House, it is a contributing structure in the Flanner House Homes district because it played an important role in the community by providing activities for the neighborhood. The large Neoclassical brick structure built circa 1910 is also significant for its architecture. The primary façade consists of a grand concrete staircase leading to a pedimented portico that is supported by

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### **Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana**

four Tuscan columns. The three wood entry doors have an atypical pediment in the form of a flattened pyramid. This east side of the building also features a pair of tall and narrow stained glass windows that flank the portico. The north, south, and east sides of the building feature a pair of wood cornices painted white. These sides of the church also have a limestone stringcourse.

The south side of the building has seven stained glass windows. Two rectangular pairs border a trio of arched stained glass windows found in the center of this façade. The north and south sides of the building are nearly identical, but the north façade has an entry near the rear of the building which takes the place of a narrow stained glass window. The majority of these windows are intact, with a portion of one on the south façade covered with plywood. The basement windows have been covered as well. The rear side on the west is a blank brick wall with two tall windows located on the extreme left and right of the façade. The flat roof of the church is accented by a small dome in the center of the roof. This white wooden dome has ten small square windows on all sides of the dome, presumably for the purpose of providing more light for the interior of the church.

In general, the neighborhood is very well-kept and the houses appear largely unaltered from the street. Mature trees and vegetation screens the area from the surrounding major streets. The park and the school also act as buffers between the neighborhood and the urban community around it. Continuity remains not only in the look of the neighborhood, but in the inhabitants as well. Many of the original residents and/or their descendants still live in the district. This includes several of the owners of houses in the original phase of the project.

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**Flanner House Homes  
Marion County, Indiana**

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The neighborhood of Flanner House Homes, Inc. is important to the history of Indianapolis as the site of the Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission's Project "A" fight against slum and blight and as Flanner House's (a settlement house) first project in cooperative housing. This effort to clear slum areas and offer low-income African Americans the chance to own their own homes is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Social History, Ethnic Heritage--specifically Black heritage, and Community Planning and Development. The Revival Temple Church, located at 1226 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, is significant under Criteria A and C. The church has two periods of significance, one for its ca. 1910 architecture, and one concurrent with the overall district's period of significance. The church offered meeting space to the Flanner Homes effort during the project. Although both the redevelopment commission and Flanner House were involved in the project area soon after World War II ended, this district is significant for the main years of construction, from 1950-1959. From the partnership of the Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission and Flanner House grew a unique post-war neighborhood that today retains much of its historic fabric and many of its original residents. In regards to Criteria Consideration G, most of the homes in the district are not yet fifty years old, but the significance of the project lies in its groundbreaking nature. The Flanner House Homes, Inc. (FHH) program was foremost of local significance, but it was also nationally known as a success in self-help housing as demonstrated by the awards it won and national press coverage.

As the first agency aimed at serving the African American community in Indianapolis, Flanner House is an important part of the social and ethnic history of Indianapolis. The settlement's aim since their 1903 constitution has been to promote the "social, spiritual, moral, and physical welfare of Negroes in Indianapolis, the establishment and maintenance of industrial and other lines of education."<sup>1</sup> The methods of the settlement stressed self-help, training, and quiet, healthy living. The age of defiance and demands for equality for black citizens had not yet arrived and Flanner House urged the African American citizens of Indianapolis to better themselves and their lives within their own community. While this kind of self-help project was new to city planning and development, the concept of self-help was not new in a social history aspect. Booker T. Washington years before had stressed "economic self-help and racial solidarity...[and] urged Blacks to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and not let grievances blind them to

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Hutchinson Crocker. *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 73.

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

opportunities."<sup>2</sup> The Flanner House Homes neighborhood attests to the leadership and programs of Flanner House. It is also testimony to the efforts of many Indianapolis African Americans trying to better their lives and living conditions through hard work.

Flanner House was the first social service agency devoted solely to meeting the needs of African Americans in Indianapolis. It was organized in 1898 by the Charity Organizations Society, a white settlement house that established a branch of its organization to help African Americans. This branch was housed in a cottage donated by Francis (Frank) William Flanner on Rhode Island (later Colton) Street. Frank Flanner was a local mortician who, with his brother-in-law Charles J. Buchanan, co-founded the Flanner and Buchanan mortuary, which still exists in Indianapolis. He was also involved with other community organizations such as the Civic League, the Indianapolis Art School, and the Commercial Club. In 1908, the Flanner Guild Rescue Home opened to help unmarried women and their children. When Flanner donated more land the next year, Flanner Guild boasted a full-time employment department, a day care, a music department, and a recreation department. After the death of Flanner in 1912, the Christian Women's Board of Missions took over support of the organization and renamed it Flanner House. In 1918, Flanner House moved to 802-814 N. West Street. The larger facilities allowed the settlement house to increase its training of domestic servants and offer more self-help classes. It also housed a branch tuberculosis clinic and other health programs.

When Cleo Blackburn was named director of Flanner House in 1936, he ushered in an era of expanded activities and success. He received a grant from the Indianapolis Foundation to evaluate his target audience, the lower-income African American community, as well as Flanner House's programs and facilities. The study, which became known as "The Indianapolis Study", emphasized the need for better childcare and guidance, housing, health education, counseling, recreation, and economic resources. "The Indianapolis Study" described the challenge for Flanner House "to become the example - the place where community leadership finds expression - the focus for balance, the insurance of growth, the place where young and old learn to find meaning for life and training for becoming the quiet, useful citizens that make for wholesome living for all in Indianapolis."<sup>3</sup> Blackburn reorganized the programs into five divisions: vocational aids, social services, health, housing, and self-help. He also formulated a long-range plan which included a

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<sup>2</sup> Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies, Second Edition* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1993), 153.

<sup>3</sup> *The Indianapolis Study*, (Indianapolis: Flanner House, 1939), 45.

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

new headquarters building, a medical center, a cannery and workshop building, and a housing program.

By 1944, Blackburn had gained enough resources to build a new headquarters at 333 W. 16th Street. A cannery and shop building were added to the facilities in 1949. Around this same time, a cooperative building program was instituted that would result in the Flanner House Homes neighborhood, providing national recognition for the Flanner House organization. Blackburn decided to model a self-help housing program on an initiative by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) that had been aimed at coal miners in Penncraft, Pennsylvania. Blackburn had seen this program at work while in Pennsylvania and thought the model could be used to help address the housing needs of the African American population in Indianapolis. The opportunity to try the program came when two vital pieces of legislation were passed on both a state and national level: The Indiana Redevelopment Act (1945) and the Federal Housing Act of 1945. These acts allowed cities to create a department of redevelopment with a commission authorized to buy and clear slum property for resale and private rebuilding. With help from AFSC, Flanner House formed a non-profit entity called Flanner House Homes, Inc. in 1944.

The Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission targeted the area bounded by 16th Street, West Street (now known as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street), Milburn, and 10th Street as Project "A". This neighborhood was selected because of its severely dilapidated state. Though other urban clearance projects had been previously undertaken, such as Lockefield Gardens (NR date 2-28-1983), this project was the first to have a non-governmental agency planning the redevelopment. The commission relocated residents, cleared the land, and sold it to private builders. Flanner House Homes, Inc. was one of three builders in Project A; the other builders were responsible for the doubles on Drake Street and the apartment buildings on Ransom Street. FHH supplied the training and organized cooperative work groups to build houses. The first building phase began in September 1950 and was completed in January 1953.

The first project group consisted of 21 African American families, most of whom were also veterans. Participants were chosen based on a history of steady work, a minimum yearly wage, an ability to make a small down payment, and a good credit rating. Workers were expected to put in 20 hours of labor per week toward construction until all the homes in that project group were finished. This requirement was a difficult one to enforce at times, particularly after an individual had already completed his home. Therefore, for later projects, no one was allowed to move into his house until every one in his project was completed. The work hours of each man were subtracted

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

from the value of his house. Thereafter, each homeowner made small monthly payments on his house, allowing a man to purchase a house that was more valuable than he could have normally afforded. The first house required 5,600 man hours to construct. That time was reduced to 2,000 hours by the ninth house and even fewer for subsequent homes as efficiency increased with on-the-job training and basements were excluded from later sections. The builders had to pay an average cost of \$8500 to \$9000, though the houses were appraised for \$12,000 to \$14,000.

For many families, this project gave them a "beginning" and "a start in life" in the words of original resident Mrs. Nora Hall of 1234 Brooks (photo 19). "It was a blessing and a sacrifice to have this house," she stated. While her husband Yancey Hall was working on this project, he was employed full-time as a janitor at Eli Lilly. He even worked weekends to put in extra hours on his own house, which he could only do if he had put in his full twenty hours in during the week. Even today, Mrs. Hall wonders, "Where would we have been if we'd stayed where we were?" Before moving to Flanner House, the Hall family was living in "a rat-infested double" for \$20 a month. The house mortgage of \$51 from Railroadmen's was more than twice their rent, but it was worth it for the Halls to own their home.<sup>4</sup>

Flanner House was instrumental in the existence of this program. An operating fund was set up to finance land and material costs. They were also responsible for organizing the work groups, assigning shifts and training the men. This project was considered a method of "upgrading skills, revitalizing community areas, teaching citizenship, and maintaining a spirit of friendliness, neighborliness and continued cooperation in an urban community."<sup>5</sup> Mr. Fred Page of 564 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, an original resident, said, "To me, you got more than a home. You were taken through an educational process about how homes were built and how to take care of them."<sup>6</sup> Flanner House was the moving force behind these projects. The skills that these homeowners learned helped them later find jobs. For example, Carl Radford of 726 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street became a project supervisor for FHH's project near Douglas Park. Other residents were employed as postal workers, teachers, policemen,<sup>7</sup> accountants, and general laborers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nora Hall, 1234 Brooks Street, 27 January 2003.

<sup>5</sup> *Flanner House Homes, Incorporated: The Story of a Self-Help Housing Project* (Indianapolis: Board for Fundamental Education, 1956), 22-23.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Mr. Frederick D. Page, 27 January 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothea Kahn Jaffe, "Self-Help Housing in Indianapolis," *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 July 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Van Cleve, "Do-It-Yourself Down Payment Saves \$3,500," *Indianapolis News*, 19 May 1962, 1.

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### Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana

After the completion of the Project "A" area, Flanner House Homes, Inc. began construction in other areas, such as Ralston, Schofield, and Sangster streets near Douglas Park and the Barrington area on the southeast side of Indianapolis. But this first area had been the proving ground for the program and Flanner House considered it a success. In 1957, *Look* magazine gave one of its nine awards for community home achievement to the city of Indianapolis because of the work of Flanner House. The magazine stated, "The success of Flanner House Homes, Inc. has set an example to the cities of the nation in what can be achieved in raising the living standards of self-respect of low-income families through self-help and community effort."<sup>9</sup> By the 1960s, Flanner House Homes became the largest urban self-help housing developer in America.<sup>10</sup> In a 1966 study for the Ford Foundation, Richard J. Margolis found that in reference to the total number of self-help housing units built in the United States, more than half were in Indianapolis and built by Flanner House Homes.

The architecture of the Revival Temple Church displays several key features of the Neoclassical Revival style. This style was popular from 1895-1950, particularly for residential and government buildings. Its beginnings are rooted in the 1893 World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago in which many classically inspired buildings were featured. This style is a combination of the Early Classical Revival, Georgian, Adam, and Greek Revival styles, which means that features from all of these styles can be seen in an eclectic classical mix on a building from this style; those previous styles employed a more disciplined use of classical elements. The full-height pedimented portico and the symmetry of the primary façade are typical of the style, though the Tuscan columns are usually not seen on Neoclassical Revival buildings (these columns were used in Early Classical Revival buildings). The heavy cornice lines, and the rectangular and arched window shapes are also common traits of Neoclassical Revival. The dome is a form that was part of the Early Classical Revival style, particularly buildings designed by Thomas Jefferson.<sup>11</sup> This was originally a Christian Methodist Episcopal church named Phillips Memorial Temple that hosted a variety of activities for the residents of the Flanner House Homes neighborhood. As congregations have changed, this relationship has weakened over time.<sup>12</sup>

The neighborhood is the result of a city commission, a non-profit social agency, and the hard work

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<sup>9</sup> "Flanner Project Wins Housing Award for City," *Indianapolis News*, 16 April 1957, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Maher, *Participation and Commitment in Urban Renewal: The Flanner House Homes Experiment*, (Indianapolis: Apple Press, 1986), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 343-346.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nora Hall, 1234 Brooks Street, 27 January 2003.

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### **Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana**

of the builders/residents. Working together they created better lives for themselves and a community of which they could be proud. Mrs. Hall of 1234 Brooks stated of her experience, "It was like a family—everybody helped each other." Their house was "built from sweat, hard work, love, and determination." That sense of pride is evident today in the well-kept houses and lawns and the number of original residents who still call this area of Indianapolis home.



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**Marion County, Indiana**

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**Flanner House Homes**  
**Marion County, Indiana**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the northwest corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street and West 12<sup>th</sup> Street on the southeast property corner of 1214 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street in Center township in the city of Indianapolis, IN; thence westward along West 12<sup>th</sup> Street until it stops at the southeast corner of 1202 Brooks Street. Continuing on Brooks Street going south to the southeast corner of 1109 Brooks Street; thence west along Brooks Lane and continuing west along the southern line of the properties of 1102 Brooks Lane and 1101 Fall Creek Parkway East Drive. At the southwest corner of the property at 1101 Fall Creek Parkway East Drive the boundary line goes north along Fall Creek Parkway East Drive until turning easterly along the northwestern property line of 1341 Fall Creek Parkway East Drive, continuing eastward along the northern property lines of 568 Ransom Street and 564 Ransom Street. At the northeast corner of 564 Ransom place the boundary line travels directly north along the northwestern property line of 556 Ransom Street; thence north along the northwestern property lines of 1412, 1418, 1424, 1430, 1436, 1442, and 1448 West Lynn Drive. The boundary line turns east at the northwest corner of 1448 West Lynn Drive and continues along the northern property lines of 1448, 1454. At the northeast corner of 1454 W. Lynn Street the boundary line turns north and continues to the northwest corner of 1460 W. Lynn Street. The boundary line turns east and continues along the northern property lines of 1459, 1453, and 1449 West and East Lynn Drive. At the northeast property corner of 1449 East Lynn Drive the boundary line turns south and continues southward along the eastern property lines 1445, 1441, 1435, 1429, 1423, 1417, 1411 East Lynn Drive and 514 Ransom Street. The line stops near the northeast corner 549 Ransom Street and then turns east; thence in an eastward direction to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street turning south at the northeast corner of 1352 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street. The boundary line continues south along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street to the starting point at the northwest corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street and West 12<sup>th</sup> Street on the southeast corner of 1214 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

See attached boundary map.

### **Boundary Justification**

The existing boundary is close to the original neighborhood of Flanner House Homes, Inc., the site of the Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission's Project "A" fight against slum and blight and as Flanner House's first project in cooperative housing. The Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission targeted the area bounded by 16th Street, West Street, Milburn, and 10th Street as Project "A." As such, the boundaries closely match this original target area. Current boundary

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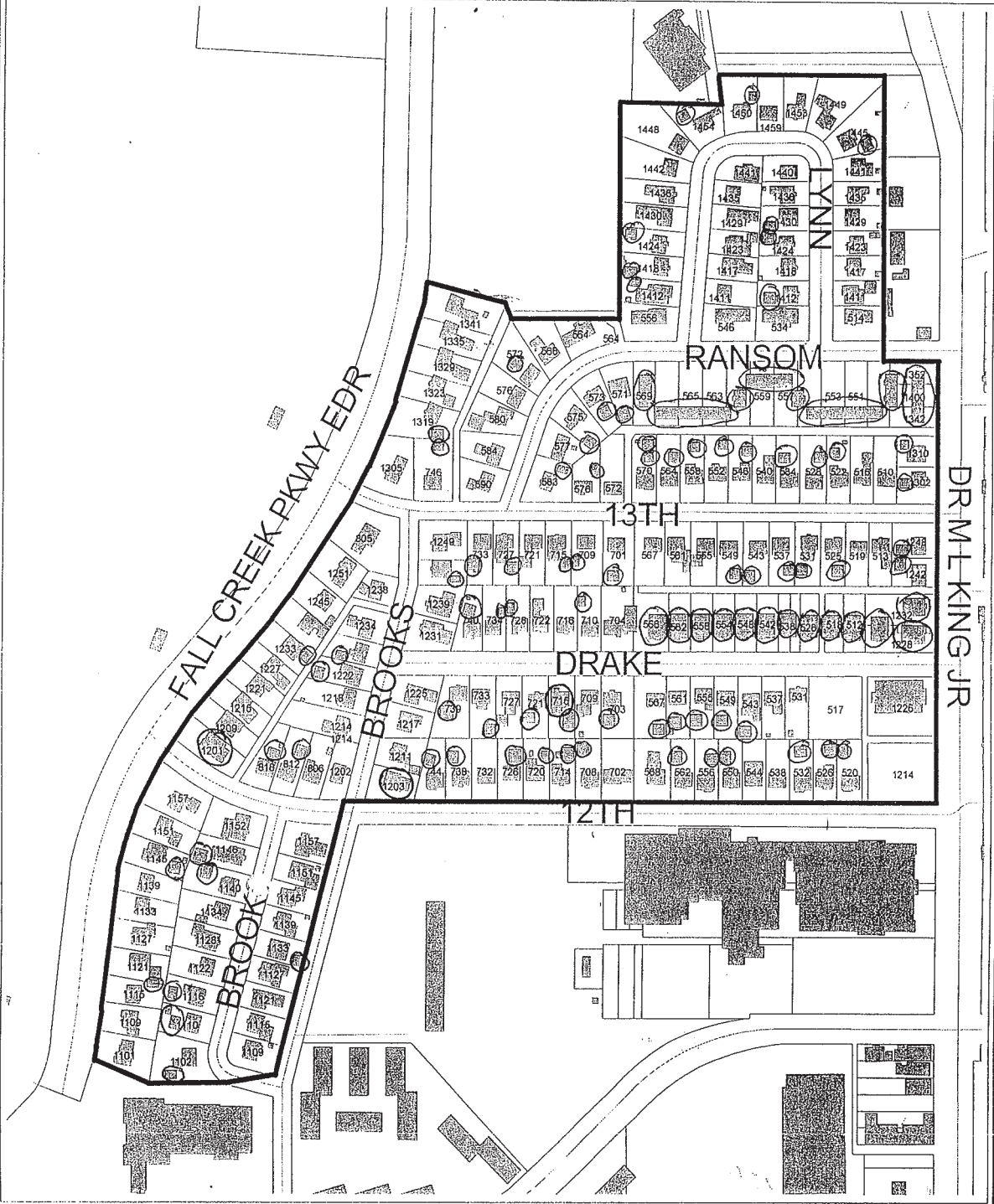
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### **Flanner House Homes Marion County, Indiana**

lines include the northern most property lines of West Lynn and East Lynn Streets. The eastern boundary is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street, formerly known as West Street.

# Flanner House Historic District

## Indianapolis, Indiana



100 0 100 200 300 Feet



- NC Buildings
- △ Street Centerlines-All
- ▨ Buildings
- Parcels

*FILE*

September 27, 2001

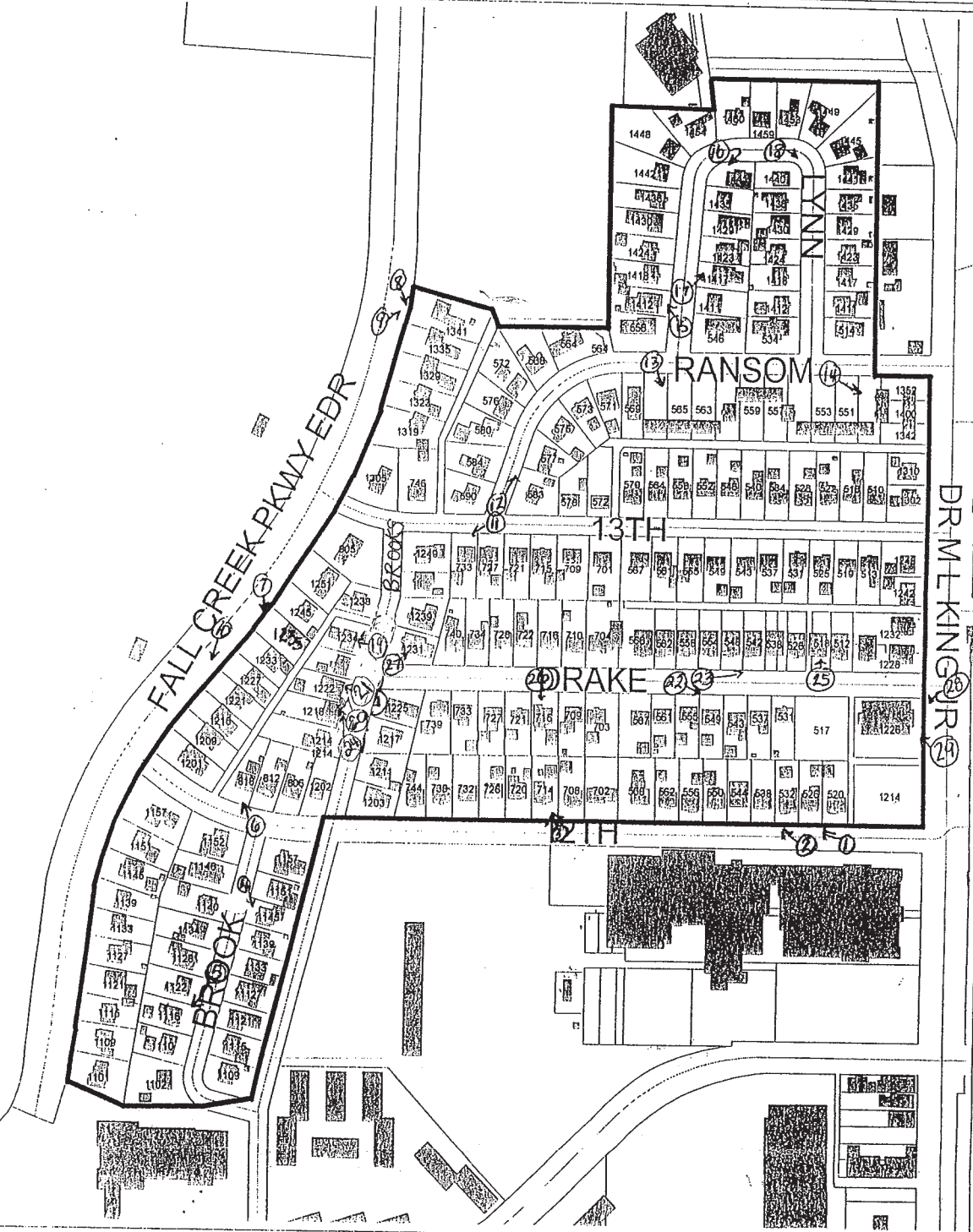
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Data Source: The City of Indianapolis  
Geographic Information Systems

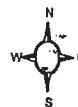


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# Flanner House Historic District Indianapolis, Indiana



100 0 100 200 300 Feet






September 27, 2001

Produced By: The GIS Section

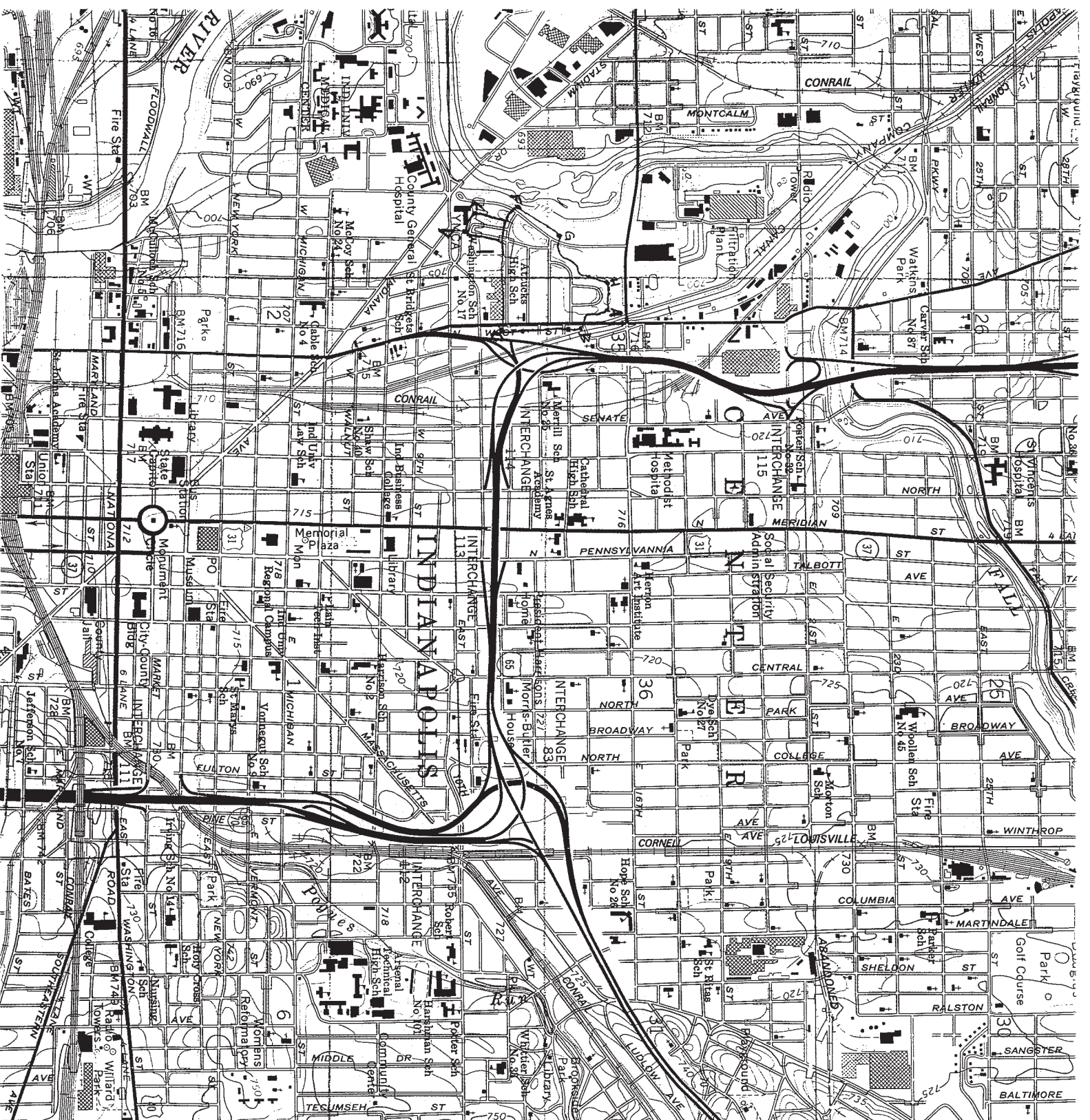
Data Source: The City of Indianapolis  
Geographic Information Systems



-  Street Centerlines-All
-  Buildings
-  Parcels

FINAL

This map does not represent a legal document, it is intended to serve as an aid in graphic representation only. Information shown on this map is not warranted for accuracy or merchantability.



4.2 MI. TO IND. 100  
GREENFIELD 19 MI.

1 MI TO INTERCHANGE 85

4402000m. N.

4403

4404

4405

47°30"

FLANNER HOUSE  
HOMES HISTORIC DISTRICT

A 16 571150 4404260  
 B 16 571240 4404260  
 C 16 571250 4403790  
 D 16 570790 4403610  
 E 16 570700 4403660  
 F 16 570680 4403850  
 G 16 570800 4404050  
 H 16 571020 4404280