

WEST CANFIELD 1972

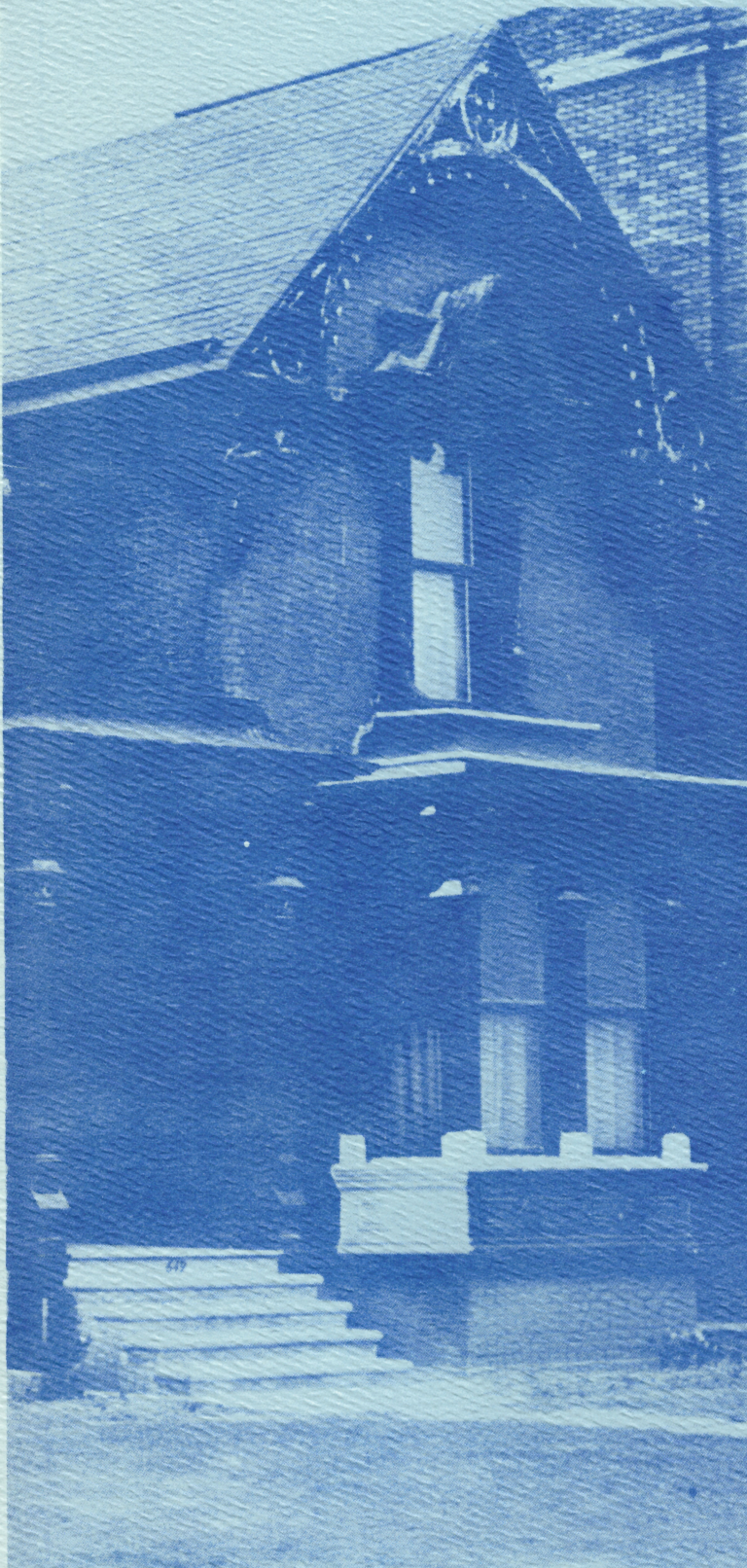


A NEW INTEREST IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Since 1968, something quite new has begun to happen in this area as it has in many areas around the country. There has been a new realization that there is enormous value in fine old buildings, and that new is not synonymous with better. A new spirit and awareness has sprung up amongst the owners in residence that this area is rare, beautiful and precious and that it must be saved. This realization, coupled with an urban convenience and sense of being in the center of things which is rare in Detroit, has resulted in a number of new people purchasing houses on West Canfield and moving in to restore these buildings for both their architectural value and for the life style which the area offers.

A history of the area has been written. The area has been designated an Historic District by the City of Detroit. It has been placed on the Michigan Official State Register of Historic Sites and on the National Register of Historic Places. Several of the houses have been completely restored and most of the others are in the process of being restored. If the present trend continues, it will be a very short time before all of the houses are owned and occupied by people who are dedicated to restoring the entire block to its original function as a charming, beautiful and attractive place to live.



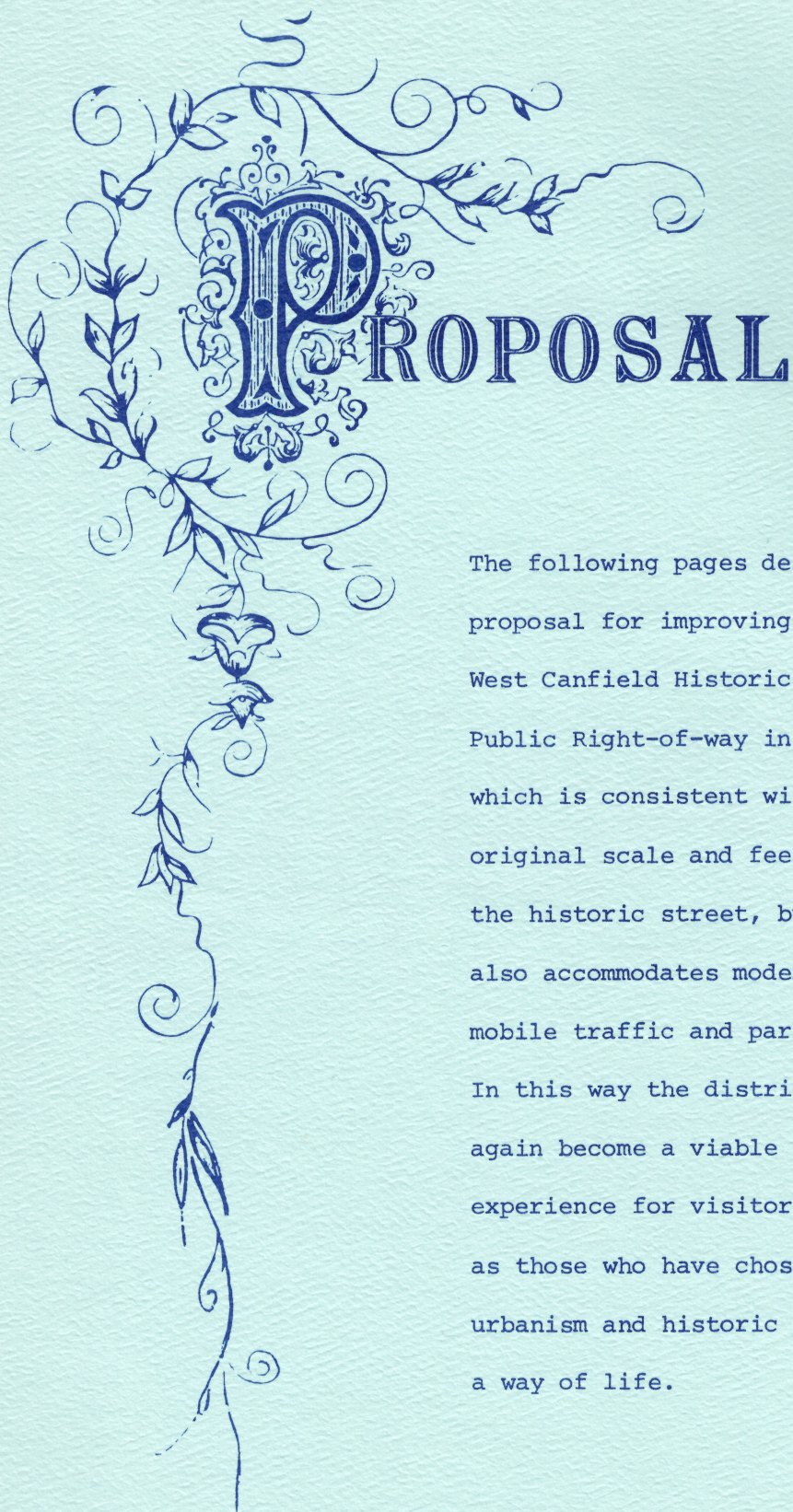


THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

The street of Canfield itself, the public right-of-way, has not unfortunately, been undergoing the same kind of regeneration as the privately owned historic houses which line it. The public street remains a grim expanse of blacktop and parked cars. The trees have almost all been cut, the curb lawns removed, the texture of the original street paving covered over with blacktop, the original gaslights long since replaced with electric lights and the tungsten bulbs recently replaced again with the blue-white glare of mercury vapor lamps.

It becomes increasingly clear that no matter how perfectly the individual houses are restored by their owners and no matter how beautifully the yards are maintained, the present street itself will prevent the historic district from becoming the tribute to the past which is its potential.





PROPOSAL

The following pages describe a proposal for improving the West Canfield Historic District Public Right-of-way in a manner which is consistent with the original scale and feeling of the historic street, but which also accommodates modern automobile traffic and parking. In this way the district can again become a viable living experience for visitors as well as those who have chosen to make urbanism and historic preservation a way of life.

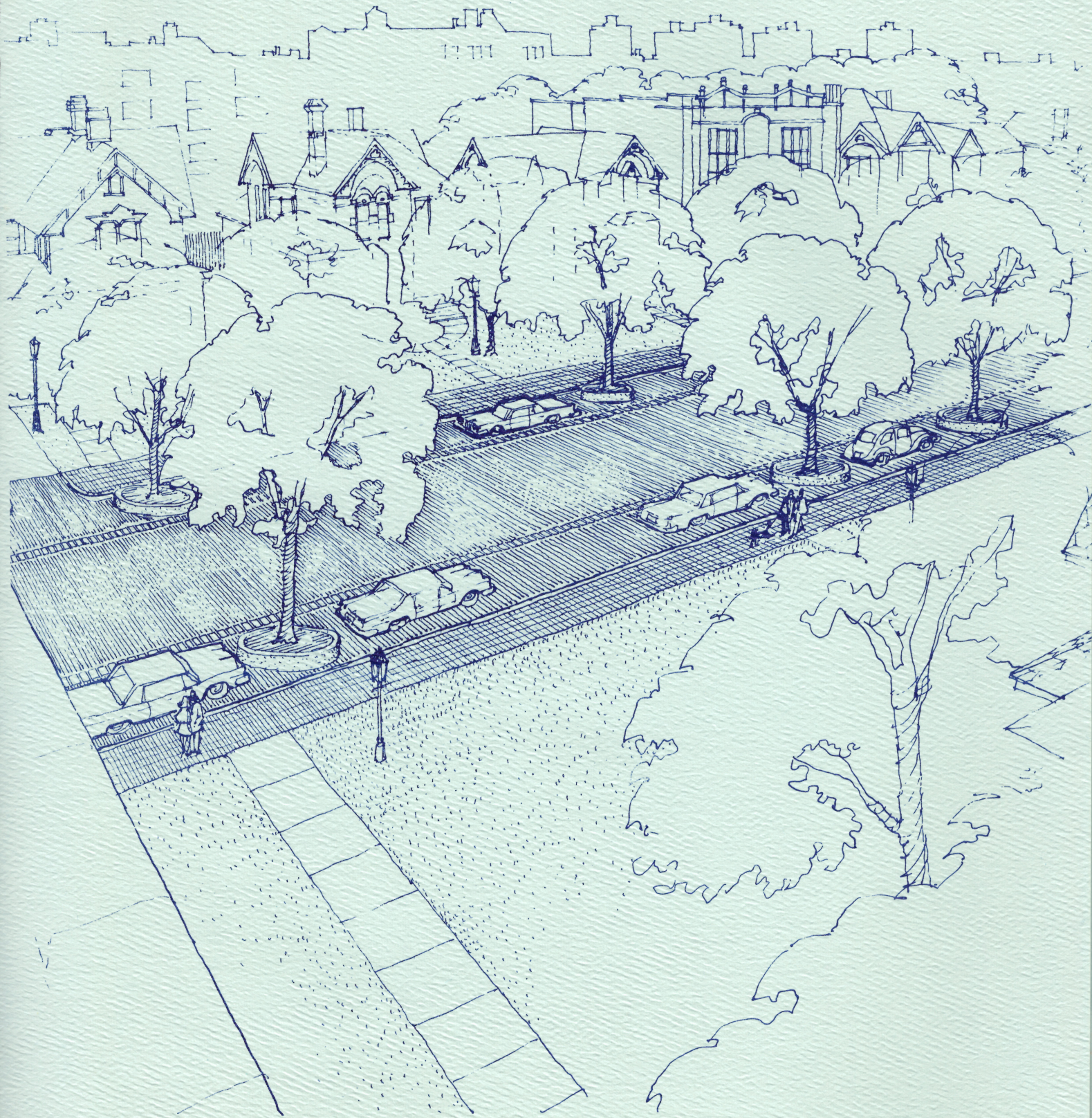
PROPOSAL

The following pages describe the design proposal for development of the West Canfield public right-of-way in the West Canfield Historic District. The proposal consists primarily of the following improvements:

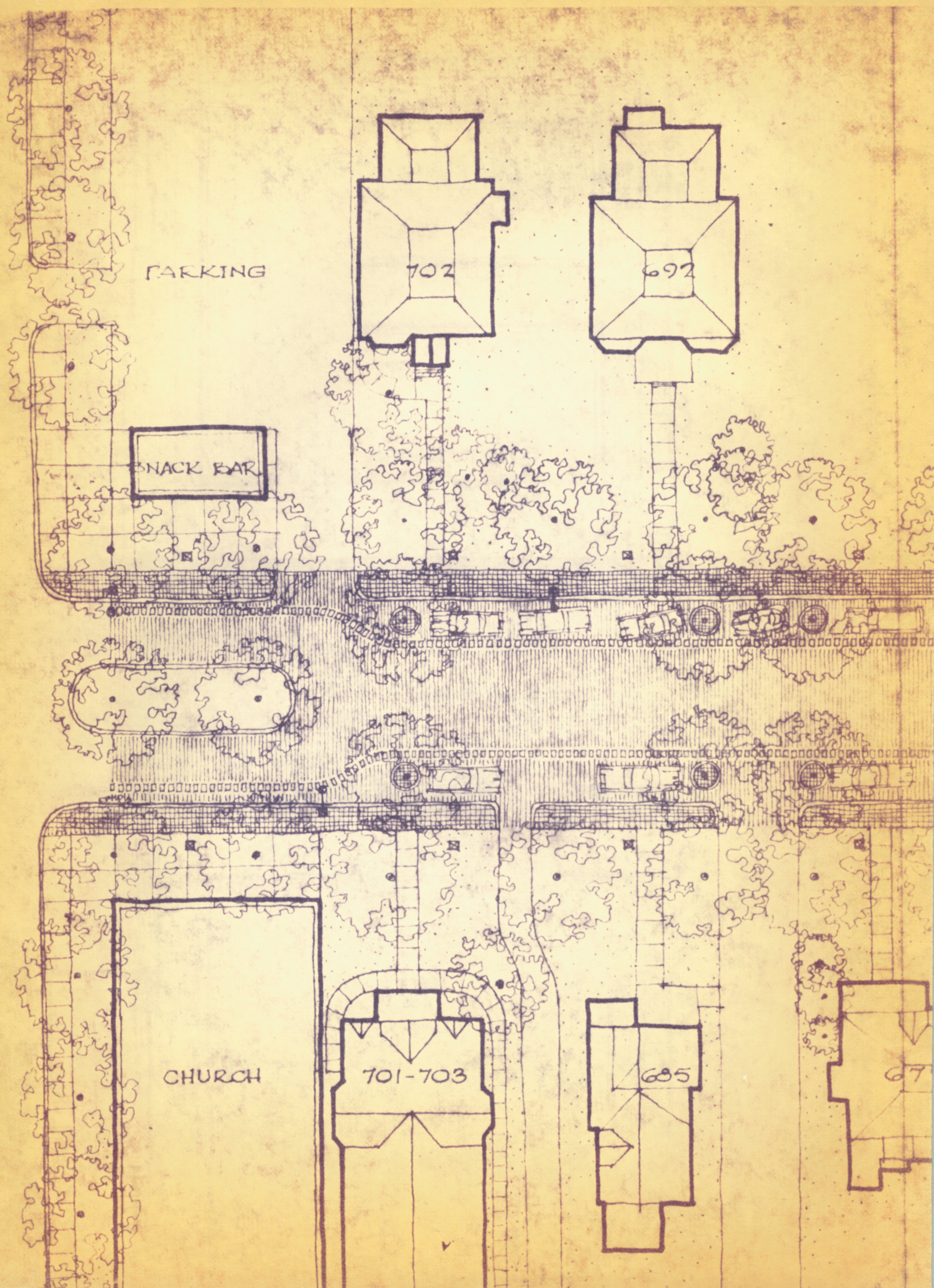
- 1) Add brick topping to the existing street.
- 2) Locate a series of tree planters between the traffic lanes and the existing curb which will break up the parking lane into spaces to accommodate two cars each and introduce a row of trees in the approximate location of the original curb-side row of trees seen in the 1893 photograph at the beginning of this brochure.
- 3) Replace the existing concrete sidewalk with a new brick sidewalk.
- 4) Add a boulevard at both ends of the block which will serve to differentiate the commercial frontage along Second and Third from the residential property along Canfield, will slow traffic entering the historic district and serve to identify the district and separate it from the surrounding more recent developments.
- 5) Add second row of trees on the house side of both sidewalks, again consistent with the original tree planting scheme.
- 6) Add pedestrian level sidewalk lighting to supplement the existing street lighting. The proposed lighting will be electric tungsten filament for economy and ease of maintenance, but will be in the style of the original gas lights. The existing mercury vapor heads on the street lamps will be changed back to the

tungsten filament bulbs which have been used until recently and still are being used extensively throughout the city. The existing heads give quantitatively adequate light, but are cold and glaring and violate the spirit of an historic district. The proposed decrease in the amount of street lighting will be more than offset by the addition of new sidewalk lighting.

- 7) Bronze markers designating the West Canfield historic district at each end of street.



THIRD AVENUE

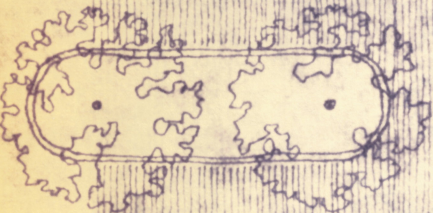


PARKING

SNACK BAR

702

692



CHURCH

701-703

685

67



674



662



650



640

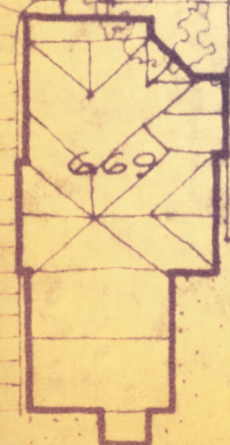
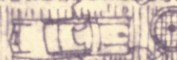


WEST CANFIELD AVENUE

BRICK ST

CONCRETE PLANTER

STREET



669



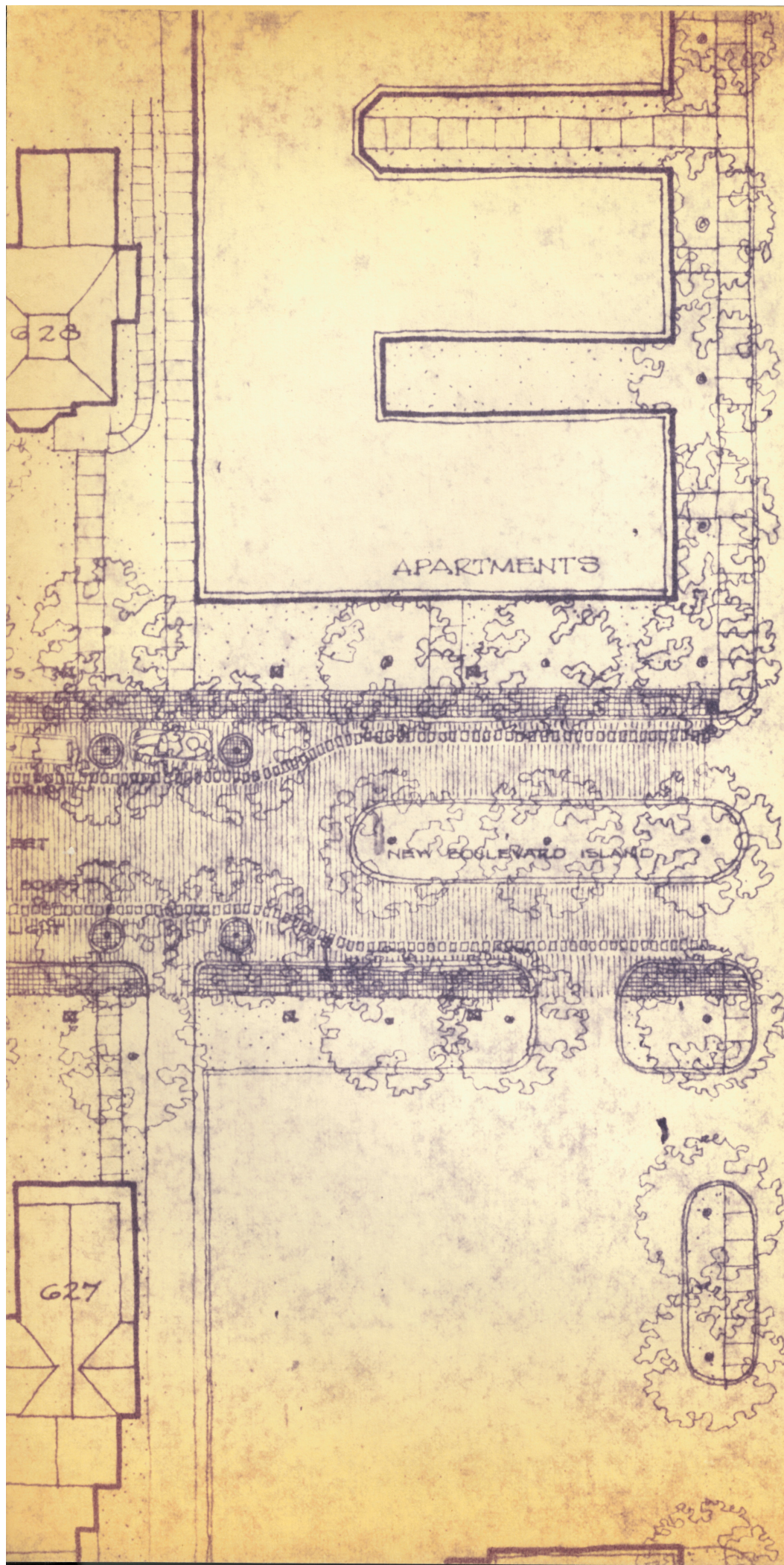
659



649



639



SECOND BOULEVARD

WEST CANFIELD



HISTORIC DISTRICT