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PART VIII: DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND STATEMENT OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE WEST TOWN HISTORIC COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

"Quantification of District Attributes,
Boundary Description, and Rationale for
Boundary Selection"

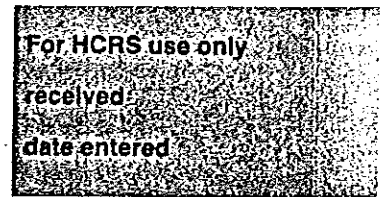
The West Town Historic District is commercial and industrial in character, an area with boundaries carefully selected to include within them a concentration of Owosso's early shop and factory architecture (PHOTOS #46 and #47) (See Map #7 - "West Town Historic Commercial and Industrial District"). The District includes thirty-five buildings housing forty-one separate ground-floor businesses today. Because the arrival of the railroads during Owosso's second major era of development spurred the District's initial growth, thirteen of the area's first buildings, or thirty-four percent of the total number of structures within the District, date from between 1856 and the 1890s. Fifteen of the District's buildings, or forty-five percent of the total, date from between the turn-of-the-century to the beginning of the Great Depression. Seven of the District's thirty-five buildings, or twenty-one percent of the total, have post-1929 construction dates and are considered "intrusive" in character. Fortunately, only the storage garage located at 919 West Main and the paint shop located at 806 West Main display materials out of character with the District, styles with scales that break the visual continuity of the streetscape, and set-backs from West Main Street that create gaps in their commercial blocks. The "intrusive" character of the other five buildings stems more from their post-1929 construction date than from an architectural style that actually detracts from the District's overall appearance (PHOTO #48).

The boundaries are drawn to enclose within the District those structures along both sides of Main from State on the west to Cedar on the east, and, to include that property that stretches from a narrow frontage on Main just east of the railroad tracks northward to Beehler Street. So defined, the District is approximately thirteen acres in size. While these boundaries clearly delineate an area of good commercial and industrial material within, they also delineate a business neighborhood clearly distinct from its surroundings. To the north and east, modest residential material dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century flanks the District. To the south, the purely industrial section of the City defines the District's boundaries.

"Historical Overview of the West Town
Historic Commercial and Industrial District"

Owosso's commercial activities centered in a business district located to the east of the Shiawassee River and to the north of the millrace before establishment of

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the West Town Commercial and Industrial District. With a population of less than 1,000 people to serve before mid-century and with most of the community's growth activities limited to the eastern bank of the Shiawassee River, this first commercial area successfully met the shopping needs of the community's early residents.

Beginning in the 1850s, however, several forces were coming into play and promoting the establishment of a second commercial area. First, the all important arrival of the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad Line in 1856, the successful connection of the Amboy, Lansing, and Traverse Bay Railroad Line in 1862, and, most significantly, the completion of the Jackson, Lansing, and Saginaw Railroad Line in 1867 focused new attention on the southwest section of the City's settlement area; the arrival of the Ann Arbor Railroad in 1888 further intensified growth activities. With the tracks of four separate railroads intersecting at the southern tip of Lansing Street, the West Main Street of the 1890s was teeming with traffic travelling to and from the depots and warehouses springing up along the right-of-ways. Second, with the crux of Owosso's railroad traffic developing in the southwest section of town, industrial development soon followed. Businesspeople realized that they could eliminate in-town transport costs for their seasoned lumber, furniture, caskets, cabinets, carriages, and trims if they located their operations just north of the rail intersection on such streets as Cass, Lynn, Clinton, Howell, and Elm. And third, those who worked for the City's new wood-based industries and manufacturers developing west of the Shiawassee River also grew interested in living within walking distances of their jobs. Thus, residential neighborhoods such as the Michigan Avenue/Genesee Street District began to grow and attract both old residents and newcomers to the area.

Shrewd businesspeople involved in the establishment of this new center of transportation, industry, and residential growth, also realized that a commercial district was needed to meet the heightened demand for groceries, hardware, home furnishings, and personal services. Thus, a commercial area filled with shops, businesses, and several industrial operations briskly developed along West Main Street between State on the West and Cedar on the east. While the District never surpassed Owosso's original downtown area in size or in the variety of shops and services it offered, it successfully reached a position of economic health, developed a distinctive appearance, and promoted a dedicated patronage from Owossoites who lived and worked west of the Shiawassee River.

"Architectural Overview of the West Town
Commercial and Industrial District"

The West Town District developed as a broad commercial street lined on both sides by attractive two story brick store buildings ornamented with cast iron, tin, stone, and tile details. During its initial period of growth from 1856 to the 1890s, the streetscape displayed buildings in a variety of locally interpreted Italianate and Romanesque commercial styles. At 900 West Main Street, for example, a local baker built an Italianate-inspired commercial building in 1890 to house his business (PHOTO #49).

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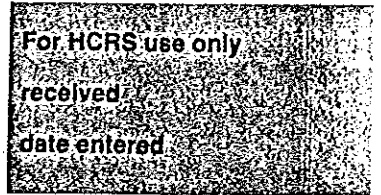
The building is a three bay, two story red brick structure hosting tall one-over-one double hung sash in simple trabeated enframements at the second story level, and, at the roofline, corbelled brick brackets. Hiram M. Post, a local hardware merchant, constructed a modest building next door at 902 West Main Street in 1892 (PHOTO #50). While still Italianate in styling, this shop features fluted cast iron columns, cast iron show window kick-plates, and delicate wood door and window frames at the first floor level. At the second story level, tall windows capped by pressed tin lintels and decorative dentilated brickwork offer additional detailing.

Across the street at 807-809-811 West Main Street, a local investor utilized a Romanesque style for his three-shop commercial block (PHOTO #51). During many years of service dating from its construction in the late 1880s, the block housed the W. S. Lusk boot and shoe shop (809 West Main), the drug stores of J. S. Haggart and W. D. Whitehead (811 West Main), the glassware, grocery, and crockery store of John Walsh (807 West Main), and a wide assortment of other shops for groceries, mens' wear, and womens' apparel. Today, while the first floor level has been insensitively modernized, the second story level still displays its rich fenestration of rounded arch windows separated by one-over-one double hung sash in unornamented trabeated enframements. The fanned brick over the rounded arch windows, the checker-board brick detailing over each window opening, and the corbelled brick brackets of the corniceline all reflect the individualized styling that marked each of the District's early buildings.

The West Town District began its second spurt of growth when Owosso's economy slowly turned from industries based on wood to those based on iron and steel during its third era of development from the 1890s to the Great Depression. While Italianate commercial styles remained popular through the first years of the twentieth century, the less elaborately styled buildings marking the 1910s and 1920s soon grew dominant. A commercial building constructed in 1925 at 911 West Main Street, for example, displays the clean lines, the brick uprights defining each bay, and the decoratively bracketed stepped corniceline that gained popularity in the 'teens (PHOTO #52). At 810-812 West Main, a circa 1920 red brick commercial block that one housed two separate shops utilizes the brick uprights to frame each bay but displays a flat corniceline marked by checker-board brick detailing and, below, spandrels of very simple brick diaperwork (PHOTO #53).

With cleaner, simpler architectural styling growing more popular during the early years of the twentieth century, J. Edwin Ellis, president of the Independent Stove Company, was determined to be up-to-day when he moved his firm from Detroit to Owosso in 1908 and built a new manufacturing plant. Thus, he instructed the craftspeople responsible for constructing the huge building where the "Renown Kitchen Range" would soon be manufactured, to utilize a clean, contemporary commercial style and adapt it to his new industrial building (PHOTO #54). Located at the western edge of West Town on a large funnel-shaped property stretching from Main Street northward to Beehler,

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the stove company building is a large rectangular red brick structure, two stories high at its southern end and four stories high on the north. Brick uprights define the bays on all facades while four-over-four double hung sash at the first floor level and twelve-over-twelve double hung sash at the second, third, and fourth stories pierce the walls and bath the interior work spaces with light. The Independent Stove Company Building is a handsomely utilitarian structure that serves to anchor the District at its western end. The "Renown Kitchen Ranges" sign that still highlights the building from its original location reminds Owossoites of West Town's importance as an early commercial district that supported the growth of Owosso's southwest section between 1856 and 1929 and continues effectively to serve the community today.

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Eli Gregory Residence 416 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Gerald Grindley 539 E. Mason Owosso, MI. 48867	West Section:c. 1860 East Section:c. 1875
421 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Bruce Allen 6430 Lounsbury, Rt. 2 Williamston, MI. 48895	c. 1890
420-422 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Robert Lund Box 186 Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
424 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Stanley Colando 424 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1885
427 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Francis Cartwright 427 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1885
429 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Gary Sensabough 429 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1885
430 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	W. A. Holzauer 430 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1860
435-437 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Matthew Koschmider 3244 Friegle Rd. Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1885
436 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Harry Havelhurst 436 Genesee Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1880

WEST TOWN HISTORIC COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

800 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Mildred Rohke 533 Ada Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
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801 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Long's Auto O. C. Waugh 1120 Riverside Dr. Owosso, MI. 48867	1927
805 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Culligans Leonard Schneider 809 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1900
806 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Intrusion)	Donald Weekley 2355 E. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1960
808 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Donald Weekley 2355 E. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1925
807-809 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Schneider's Appliance 809 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
810-812 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	C. W. Lewis 652 N. Adams Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1920
811 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	J. F. Wager 811 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
813 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Westside Cleaners Wm. Gillett 813 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	1915
814 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Jerry Soupal 814 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1910
815-817 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Al Shepherd 321 Oakwood Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1920

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816 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		William Harr 816 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1885
818 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		G. F. Whybrew 818 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1890
820 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		James Miner Miner Building Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1890
819 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		Leroy Winkler 823 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1895
819-823 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		Leroy Winkler 823 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1895
822 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Intrusion)		Greg Brabo 400 N. Cedar Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1940
900 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		Sherry Woodard 900 W. Main Apt. B Owosso, MI. 48867			1890
902 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		Mr. & Mrs. C. Lamphere 902 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867			1892
904 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Intrusion)		Fred B. Himburg 702 Campbell Dr. Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1945
905 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		Debra Law 1221 Willow St. Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1910
907-909 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)		Donato Hernandez 907-909 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867			c. 1910

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908 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Mary Goodman 908 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1920
910 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Carl Lamphere 902 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1920
911 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Owosso Bottling Works 911 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	1925
912-914 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Greenwood Party Store 912 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1910
916 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Pete Provenzano 201 N. Lansing Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1925
919 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Intrusion)	Hood Beverage Co. 911 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1950
1001-1003 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Robert Hoffman 1001-1003 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
1005 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Al Shepherd, Jr. 321 Oakwood Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
1007 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Loyal Order of Moose %Austin Bruce 420 Huggins Owosso, MI. 48867	1907
1008 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Fréd Himburg 902 Campbell Dr. Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1900
1009 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	William Mallory 1009 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1900

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1010 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Parking Lot)	Fred Himburg 902 Campbell Dr. Owosso, MI. 48867	N/A
1011 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Sportsman's Inn %Gary Wyrick and Ernest Schmiedeknicht 1011 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1920
1013 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	Donald Crowfoot 508 W. North Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1890
1015 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Intrusion)	Frank Spanials 1015 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1930
1017 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867 (Intrusion)	Frank Teets 1017 W. Main Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1930
Independent Stove Company 1000 Bradley Owosso, MI. 48867 (Contributing Building)	David Vaughn 1210 W. Oliver St. Owosso, MI. 48867	1908
<u>INDIVIDUAL SITES</u>		
Lyman Woodard Co. Workers' Housing 601 Clinton Owosso, MI. 48867	Harold Allen 608 Elm St. Owosso, MI. 48867	c. 1885
Lyman Woodard Furniture & Casket Co. Bldg. 216-222 S. Elm Owosso, MI. 48867	Gladden-Hass, Inc. 1000 Bradley St. Owosso, MI. 48867	North Section: 1885 South Section: 1888
Lee Woodard and Sons Building 306 S. Elm Owosso, MI. 48867	Lee Woodard and Sons 317 S. Elm Owosso, MI. 48867	Built: 1902 Addition: 1925