

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

Historic Designation Advisory Board

FINAL REPORT

PROPOSED ST. ALBERTUS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HISTORIC DISTRICT

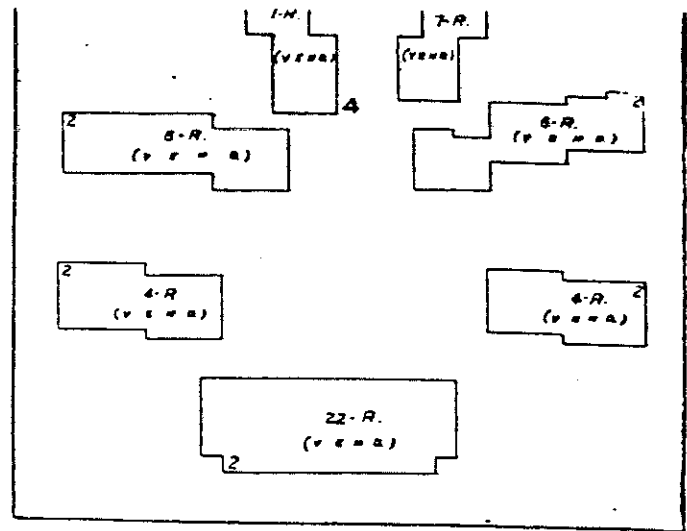
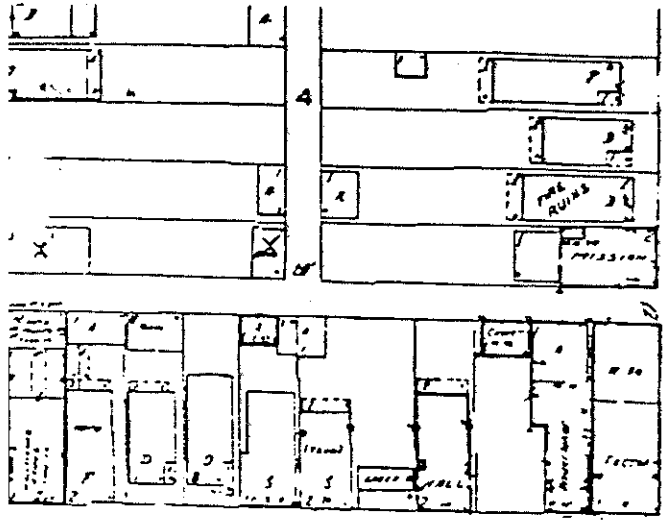
The proposed St. Albertus Historic District consists of a church building built for St. Albertus Roman Catholic Parish in 1885, designed by the architect Henry Englebert, and the adjoining rectory, apparently designed by Peter Dederichs of Detroit, and built in 1890. Both buildings are located on the west side of St. Aubin at the southwest corner of its intersection with Canfield.

BOUNDARIES: The boundaries of the proposed district are as follows:

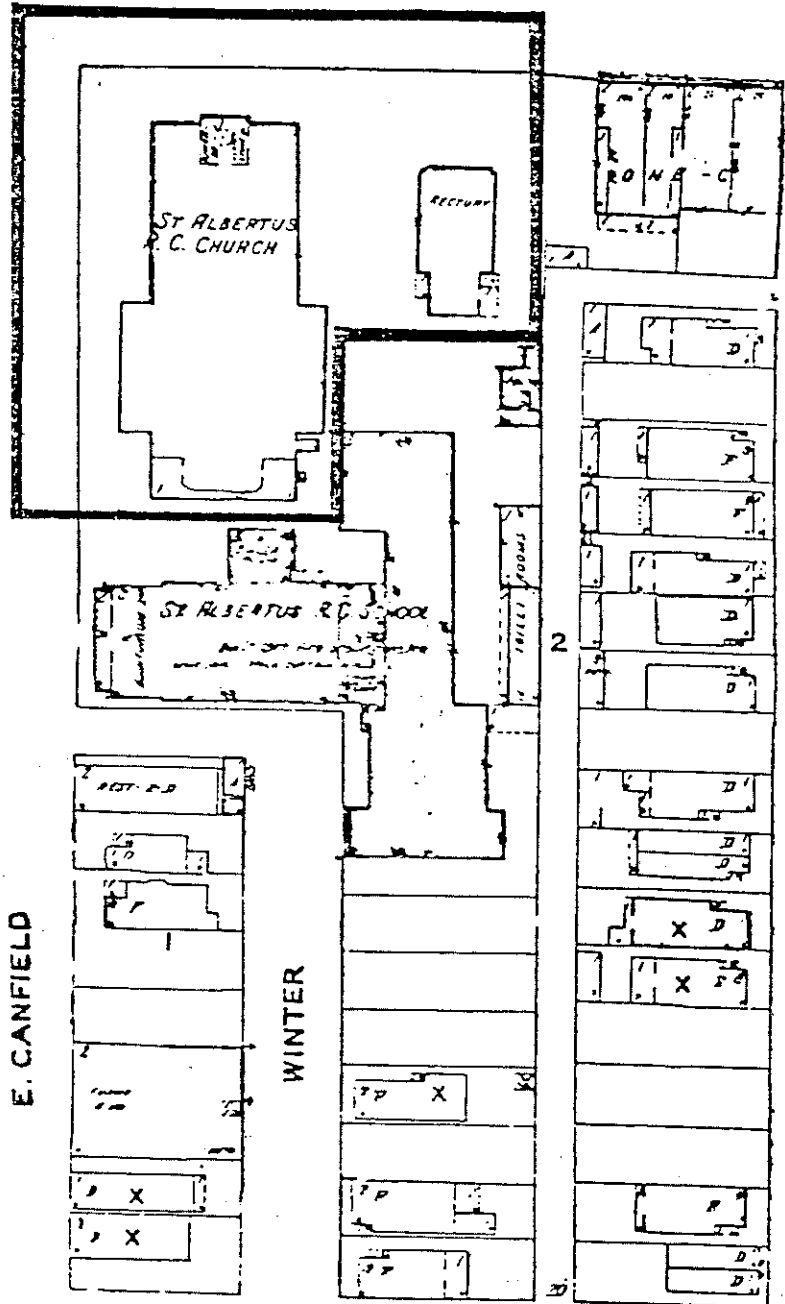
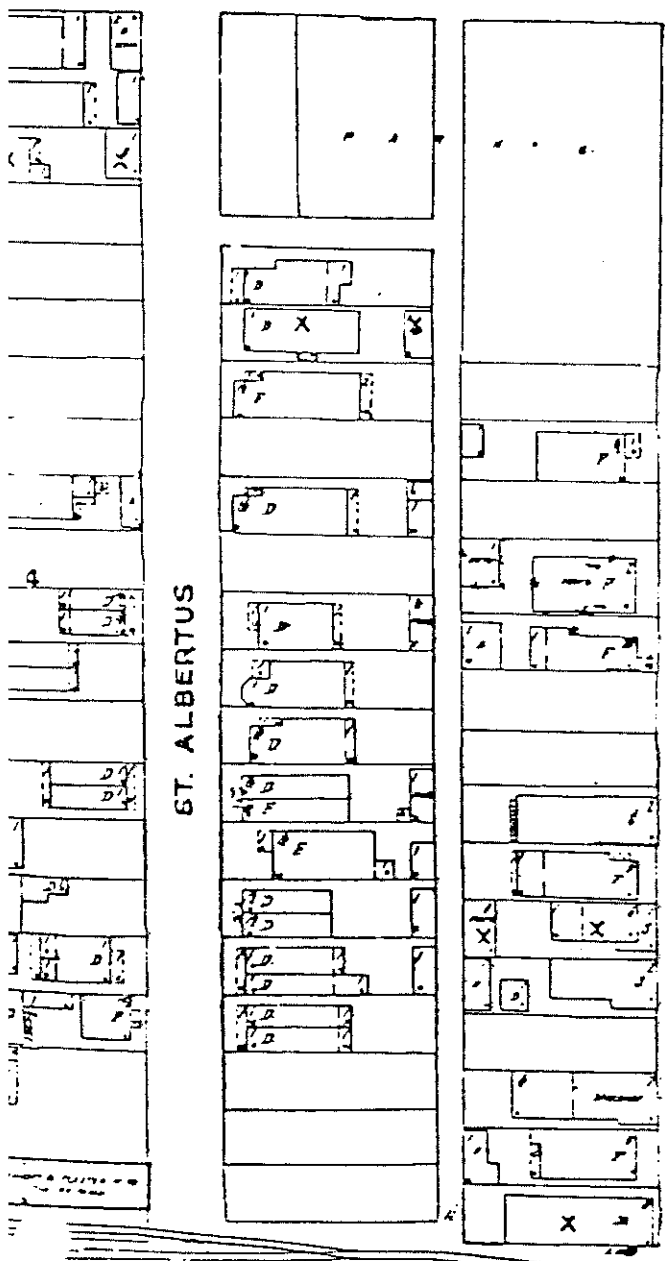
1. *On the north, the centerline of East Canfield;*
2. *On the east, the centerline of St. Aubin Avenue*
3. *On the south, the southerly boundary of Lot 36 of the Sub division of Out Lot 42 of the St. Aubin Farm (P.C. 14 & 587, L.1, P. 299) extended to intersect the centerline of St. Aubin Avenue.*
4. *On the west, beginning at the centerline of East Canfield, thence southerly along a line 35 feet east of the Western boundary of the St. Aubin Farm, and parallel to that boundary, to its intersection with the south line of Out Lot 43 of the St. Aubin Farm; thence easterly along said southern boundary of Out Lot 43 to a point 125 feet from the westerly boundary of the St. Aubin Farm; thence southerly along a line 125 feet from the western boundary of the St. Aubin Farm and parallel to it to its intersection with the southerly boundary of the said lot 36 of Out Lot 42.*

HISTORY: Detroit's early Polish immigration, which began in the 1850's, consisted mostly of persons who came from Prussian-dominated sectors of partitioned Poland. Because at least some of them understood German, and because they were accustomed to German influence in their lives, they tended to locate in or near the German communities of Detroit, and at first attended German ethnic churches, notably St. Joseph's at Jay and Orleans. This was not, however, a satisfactory arrangement, and in 1871 the Polish community took steps to establish their own parish. On July 14, 1871, a frame church was dedicated by Bishop Caspar Borgess to St. Wojciech. This Polish saint's name has no English equivalent, and the name St. Albertus, long established in English usage for the parish, is not the "official" name of the parish.

Located on St. Aubin south of Canfield, the frame church was a simple and unpretentious building of the sort still found today in rural communities. The existence of the parish led to the formation of a Polish neighborhood around it, which was likely further encouraged, since the area was adjacent to the German areas around Gratiot. Even today, some Polish families remain in the neighborhood, and several other churches testify to the extent of the Polish community that was created. The area is, however, very much changed.



ST AUBIN AVE.



PROPOSED ST. ALBERTUS CHURCH HISTORIC DISTRICT
 (Proposed district outlined in heavy black line)