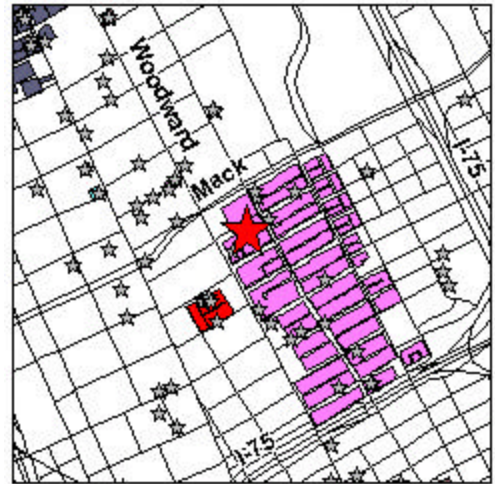# Brush Park Historic District

General boundaries: Woodward Avenue, Mack, Beaubien, and the Fisher Freeway.

Local   **v**   1/23/80
State
State Marker
National

200 Block Eliot

Historic overview:

The Brush Park Historic District encompasses the farm that once belonged to the well-known Brush family of Detroit. Late in the eighteenth century, the Brush holdings came into the possession of John Askin, an Irish trader, by inheritance from his wife's family. Askin's daughter, Adelaide, married Elijah Brush; the couple inherited the farm, which ran from the river to about where grand Boulevard is today. Elijah's son Edmund subdivided the farm during the second half of the nineteenth century. Some downtown sites remained in the hands of the Brushes into the 1960s as investments.

Many of the street names in Brush Park maintain names closely associated with the family. For example, Alfred, Edmund and Eliot are all named after Edmund Brush's sons, and Watson was named after a friend. The earliest street in the district, Windler, opened in 1852. The Brushes created a distinctive and desirable neighborhood by holding land until the surrounding area was well on the way to complete development, and placing high standards and restrictions on lots. Many notable Detroiters lived in these grand houses including J.L. Hudson and David Whitney.

By the turn of the century, families of means began to move to the newly developed Boston-Edison and Indian Village areas, and Brush Park diminished. This period of the neighborhood's existence is memorialized in Russel J. McLaughlin's *Alfred Street*, and account of his childhood in a still-substantial neighborhood. A number of apartment buildings appeared in from 1915-20, reflecting the factory workers pouring into Detroit. By the 1960s the physical condition of the neighborhood was poor. In recent years, there has been new development and some rehabilitation, in hopes that residents will be attracted again to the convenient downtown location.

City of Detroit Planning and Development Department