

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Birwood Wall

Other names/site number: Eight Mile Wall, Detroit Wall, Wailing Wall

Name of related multiple property listing:

20th Century Civil Rights Sites in the City of Detroit, 1900-1976

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

2. Location

Street & number: Along the alleyway between Birwood Avenue and Mendota Street from Eight Mile Road to Pembroke Avenue

City or town: Detroit State: Michigan County: Wayne

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

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 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ 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(s) ☐
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☒
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: Street Furniture/Object

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: Street Furniture/Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Birwood Wall, built in 1941, is a concrete wall in the residential neighborhood of Eight Mile-Wyoming, in the northwest part of the city of Detroit, Michigan. The wall is located along the alleyway between Mendota Street and Birwood Avenue, running approximately 2,200 feet in length in a north-south direction across three city blocks between Eight Mile Road on the north side, the city of Detroit's northern boundary, and Pembroke Avenue on the south side. The wall is constructed of concrete panels one foot wide by six feet high and twenty feet long set between three foot by three-foot H-shaped posts. Finishes on the wall range from exposed concrete to white paint to a mural featuring scenes of African American history. The wall remains largely intact. A small section of the wall at the Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground steps out of plane with the rest of the wall, and is built of concrete block rather than precast panels but it is unclear when this alteration occurred.

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Narrative Description

The Birwood Wall (also known as the Eight Mile Wall, the Detroit Wall, or the Wailing Wall) was built in 1941 and is located within a chiefly residential neighborhood on the northwest side of Detroit. The neighborhood, Eight Mile-Wyoming, is a historically working class African American neighborhood that was developed in the early twentieth century as an alternative to the highly segregated Black Bottom/Paradise Valley area immediately east of downtown Detroit. The neighborhood was relatively isolated at the time of its initial settlement, with the city growing around it as it expanded in the mid twentieth century. It is bounded approximately by Eight Mile Road on the north, Santa Barbara Drive on the east, Pembroke Avenue on the south, and Mendota Street on the west.

At the north end of the wall is Eight Mile Road, the city's northern boundary. Eight Mile Road is a major east-west boulevard lined with commercial, retail, industrial, and office development. North of Eight Mile Road in this vicinity is Royal Oak Charter Township, a remnant of a larger township that originally included a number of what are now suburban cities including Oak Park to the west and north, and Ferndale to the east. The commercial development along the south side of Eight Mile Road is relatively shallow, transitioning immediately to residential neighborhood beyond the row of businesses fronting the road. At the south end of the wall is Van Antwerp Park, a City of Detroit park. East and west of the wall are residential streets.

The neighborhood is arranged on a typical city grid pattern. The blocks are rectangular and longer north to south than east to west. Houses are oriented chiefly along the north/south streets and have uniform setbacks. The streets are lined with sidewalks and have mature vegetation, including street trees and alley trees, front and rear lawns, and domestic plantings. The houses are typically one to one-and-a-half stories, of frame construction with horizontal siding and side or front gabled roofs. A few houses have brick exteriors, or brick or stone accent walls. Most are vernacular in character and date from the early to mid-twentieth century with some later additions.

Within the neighborhood is the Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground, a small park between Mendota Street, Norfolk Street, Griggs Avenue, and Chippewa Avenue. Birwood Avenue, which would bisect the park, has been closed off in the center with cul-de-sacs at each end. The playground contains a central rectangular asphalt playing surface, a small dirt area with playground equipment, and various benches. The remainder of the park is manicured lawn with meandering concrete and asphalt paths and mature deciduous trees.

The Birwood Wall itself is a discontinuous concrete masonry wall, stretching from Eight Mile Road to Pembroke Avenue, approximately 2,200 feet in length, or around half a mile, stretching across three city blocks. It is located between Mendota Street on the west and Birwood Avenue on the east, running in a north-south direction along the alley or rear lot lines where parcels

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fronting on each street meet in the middle of the block. At each cross street, the wall stops just short of the sidewalk on either side, and on the north side it terminates at the east-west alley just south of the commercial lots fronting on Eight Mile Road. It appears to be continuous within the blocks, but is obscured by heavy vegetation in some areas. The wall is generally in a straight line, except for one area on the west edge of Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground, where it steps out to the east for several yards. This was likely a later modification as its construction is different from the rest of the wall.

For almost its entire length, the wall is constructed of concrete panels, approximately one foot thick by six feet high by twenty feet wide. The panels were pre-cast and slotted into channels within three foot by three-foot H-shaped posts. Regular indentations visible on the wall panels are formwork lines. At the stepped-out location, the wall is constructed of standard eight inch by sixteen inch concrete blocks. The wall has a variety of finishes from exposed concrete to paint. While most of the painted portions are white, the central three hundred feet of the wall adjoining Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground is painted with a colorful mural, dominantly blue in hue. The mural depicts multiple scenes featuring African American history and people, such as Sojourner Truth leading children through the Underground Railroad, on the backdrop of a stylized residential streetscape. The mural was painted in 2006 and is a direct response to the history of the wall as a symbol of segregation due to the practice of redlining.

Integrity

The wall remains largely intact along its entire length. A small section of the wall at the Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground steps out of plane with the rest of the wall, and is built of concrete block rather than precast panels. It is unclear when this alteration took place, as aerial photographs are not at a high enough resolution to evaluate changes at this scale. Historic aerials do show an outbuilding backing up to the wall on its west side in this area, so it may have been demolished when the outbuilding was removed. The wall section may also have been removed when the playground was installed to provide access from the neighborhood to the west, and later infilled. Otherwise, the wall retains a high degree of integrity.

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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.)

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic History

Politics/Government

Social History

Period of Significance

1941-1950

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Birwood Wall (also called variously the Eight Mile Wall, the Detroit Wall, or the Wailing Wall), is significant under National Register Criterion A, at the national level, for its association with the history of segregation, and particularly the practice of redlining, during the mid-twentieth century. The Birwood Wall is a physical embodiment of the practice of *de jure* and *de facto* segregation in the United States during the middle years of the twentieth century, in which federal and local government policies and private real estate and banking institutions conspired to enforce African American segregation. The wall is largely unchanged from its original construction, with the exception of a small replaced section and painting where it adjoins Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground. The period of significance for the wall is from 1941, when it was constructed, to 1950, when African American families first began moving beyond the wall to the formerly white neighborhood to the west.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Birwood Wall (also called variously the Eight Mile Wall, the Detroit Wall, or the Wailing Wall) is nominated under the Multiple Property Submission (prepared concurrently) for 20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites in the City of Detroit, Michigan. It meets the registration requirements for the property type of Sites, Structures, and Objects for that cover document under Criterion A, at the national level. The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) is organized according to four periods of significance identified in the National Park Service's *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*. The Birwood Wall's significance falls under the second period covered in that document, "Birth of Civil Rights, 1941-1954." As described in the MPDF, the demand for fair housing was one of Detroit's most important civil rights issues, and it became increasingly critical as more and more African Americans arrived in the city as part of the Great Migration from the South. While most of the city's black population was crowded into the segregated Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods on the lower east side, a few middle- and working-class enclaves were founded in less developed areas, including the West Side, Conant Gardens, and Eight Mile-Wyoming. However, blacks who attempted to move outside of segregated neighborhoods met resistance, frequently violent, and were often forced to abandon the homes they had legally purchased. Public housing in the 1930s, such as the Brewster Homes, and defense housing in the 1940s, such as the Sojourner Truth Homes, provided some relief, but in the case of the latter, also touched off violent protests from nearby white neighbors. White neighborhoods also enforced the color lines around their neighborhoods through the formation of "improvement

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associations” that informed residents if a black family tried to purchase or rent a home in the neighborhood, and applied pressure on white homeowners not to sell to blacks. Despite the Supreme Court’s ruling overturning the legality of racially restrictive covenants in 1948, based partly on a Detroit case, *de facto* segregation and social pressure continued to limit African Americans’ housing choices, their economic opportunities, and often their personal safety well past the end of the theme period. The Birwood Wall was built in 1941 as what planning historian June Manning Thomas terms a “bizarre” outcome of the practice of redlining.¹ While most of redlining played out at a macro scale—the placement of subdivisions, the legacy of disinvestment and discrimination in majority African American cities—the Birwood Wall is a rare surviving, tangible, human-scale example of the lengths to which federal and local governments, the real estate profession, private developers, and white residents were willing to go to preserve racial segregation in the mid twentieth century and deny African Americans the economic benefits of homeownership available to whites.

The Development of Eight Mile-Wyoming as an African American Working-Class Neighborhood

The wall is located in a historically African American neighborhood on the northwest side of Detroit. In the early twentieth century, as African Americans began migrating to the city in large numbers from the South, most were confined to the existing lower East side neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. Some middle-class blacks were able to escape into residential enclaves far from established white districts in the 1920s, like Conant Gardens on the northeast side and the West Side neighborhood. Working class blacks found it very difficult to leave the confines of Black Bottom, but during the same period, a community of about one thousand people founded a small settlement on former farmland in the Eight Mile Road and Wyoming Avenue area of northwest Detroit. There were no racially restrictive covenants on land in this area due to its remoteness from the more settled parts of the city; the upper middle-class white neighborhoods of Palmer Park and Sherwood Forest, settled around the same time, were about half a mile to the east. The prospective residents of Eight Mile-Wyoming, unlike their wealthier counterparts in Conant Gardens and the West Side, had very little means to purchase their land or to build houses. Instead, they bought land on contract from a friendly white land speculator and scraped together the resources to slowly build very modest houses.

The neighborhood, bounded approximately by Pembroke Avenue, Santa Barbara Drive, Eight Mile Road, and Mendota Street, was platted in the late 1910s and early 1920s, while the area was still Greenfield Township. The land on which the wall stands was platted as the Grand Park Subdivision by Hugo Miller and Hugo Scherer of the Hugo Scherer Land Company in 1920. It encompassed both sides of Mendota, Griggs, and Washburn Avenues and the west side of Wyoming Avenue between Eight Mile Road and Pembroke Avenue.

Burniece Avery, an early resident of Eight Mile-Wyoming, painted a vivid portrait of the remoteness of the neighborhood in its early years. There was no public transportation to the area, so residents traveling from downtown Detroit had to walk from Woodward Avenue two miles

¹ June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 85-86.

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west to the neighborhood or take one of the irregularly scheduled private buses. Here, Avery recorded, “(o)ne pushed aside giant ferns to travel the path that wound diagonally through the neighborhood. Here and there, small spaces were cleared for gardens, otherwise, the undergrowth was broken only by towering trees, until one reached the house and lot of a distant neighbor.”²

After paying between 800 and 1,200 dollars for a forty-foot-wide lot on contract, there was little cash left over for the working-class residents to build houses. Most embarked on what they considered temporary houses, built by their own labor. Avery recalled that:

“(b)uilding material was purchased on the pay-day plan - \$10.00 worth now, and \$15.00 worth again...” and that “it was not unusual to hear the ringing of hammers late at night, putting down the flooring, or nailing on the beaver board walls by flickering lamp light...tar paper siding was the fashion—rooms were added as the family grew.”

Residents looked forward to the day they could build permanent houses “with running water instead of the old pump, and modern sanitation to take the place of outside toilets and the tin tub to bathe in.”³ While the lot sizes were not large, the amount of unused space in the area meant that residents could use the adjoining empty lots to raise food. Children attended the small brick Lockwood School (location undetermined).

Portions of the neighborhood east of Wyoming Avenue were annexed into the city of Detroit in 1922, with the rest added in 1925. While the annexation brought city services like bus transportation into the neighborhood, the steady expansion of white people into the area brought difficulties for the established black residents. Birdhurst School, built in the early 1920s on Woodingham Drive just south of Eight Mile Road, was initially intended to be open to both white and black students. However, according to Avery, white parents objected to an integrated school after only two years in operation, and it was closed, forcing the black students to return to the old Lockwood School. The Detroit Board of Education did build Higginbotham School at the northeast corner of Chippewa Avenue and Indiana Street in 1927, well within the borders of the segregated neighborhood, but not before their attempts to build a school on Pembroke between Roselawn and Northlawn ran up against “the invisible, impassable line over which no common path may be beaten.”⁴ In other words, Pembroke was the *de facto* segregation line.

The Great Depression and the Creation of the HOLC and FHA

For a community already on the economic edge, the Great Depression that began in 1929 was devastating, and it “wiped out” many of Avery’s neighbors, as it did many others in the Detroit area and across the country. Homeownership was already a difficult achievement for many

² Burniece Avery, “The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952,” Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 1.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

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middle- and working-class Americans even before the Depression. Lending agencies required upwards of half the loan amount as a down payment and repayment in less than ten years, making the financial commitment out of reach for many. With the onset of the Depression, widespread unemployment, and the failure of numerous banks, many homeowners were forced to default on their mortgages, which were in many cases already overinflated due to the pre-Depression real estate bubble. By early 1933, millions were threatened with losing their homes, banks faced the loss of those payments as well as being saddled with properties at a greatly reduced value, and construction work, which in normal times was a significant contributor to economic growth, had virtually ceased.⁵ After taking office in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt instituted a series of programs to stabilize the economy and provide relief to the American people. To assist homeowners with existing mortgages, Roosevelt created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC). Under the program, mortgages threatened by foreclosure were purchased by the HOLC, and reissued with lower interest rates and longer repayment schedules that applied payments to both the principal and interest so homeowners could build equity in their properties.

To ensure that the HOLC did not back risky mortgages, the program engaged local real estate agents to appraise neighborhoods. The HOLC then created color-coded “residential security maps” of the “safest” neighborhoods (colored green or blue), where there was a high demand for houses, and the “riskiest” (colored yellow or red). In practice, however, African American neighborhoods were invariably colored red, even in well-maintained, middle-class neighborhoods. From this color coding system arose the term “redlining” to describe the systematic exclusion of minorities from eligibility for mortgages based on racial composition of a neighborhood rather than its physical or economic condition.⁶ African Americans were thus virtually shut out of the mortgage relief offered to white Americans under the HOLC.

It is perhaps not surprising that the real estate agents engaged by the HOLC coded African American neighborhoods as undesirable. Since 1924, the National Association of Real Estate Boards had included an article in its “Code of Ethics” that explicitly stated “A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to the property values in that neighborhood.”⁷ This provision remained in the Code of Ethics until 1950, but it did not stop mortgage brokers from practicing “block busting”: engaging in tactics to deceive white residents into believing that blacks were moving into their neighborhoods, inducing them to panic-sell their houses at lower prices. Real estate speculators would then buy up the houses and sell them on contract to African Americans, who could not get bank mortgages and were thus vulnerable to predatory lending practices.⁸

⁵ C. Lowell Harriss, *History and Policies of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation*, (New York: H. Wolff Book Manufacturing Co., Inc., 1951), 7-9.

⁶ The term is often attributed to John McKnight, who described the practice in Chicago during the 1960s, when he was the Director of the Midwestern Branch of the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

⁷ National Association of Real Estate Boards, “Code of Ethics,” adopted June 6, 1924, <http://archive.realtor.org/sites/default/files/1924Ethics.pdf>.

⁸ Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*, June 2014. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>.

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It was not only existing African American homeowners that were shut out of mortgage assistance. Another Roosevelt administration agency, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), insured bank-provided mortgages for first-time buyers, and the FHA's underwriting manuals enshrined segregation. The language of the April 1936 underwriting manual was clear in favoring racially restrictive covenants in property deeds, writing in one section that "(d)eed restrictions are apt to prove more effective than a zoning ordinance in providing protection from adverse influences. Where the same deed restrictions apply over a broad area and where these restrictions relate to types of structures, use to which improvements may be put, **and racial occupancy**, a favorable condition is apt to exist" (emphasis added). Among the measures suggested by the FHA was the use of "...natural or artificially established barriers" to protect a neighborhood from adverse influences, among which were "infiltration of...inharmonious racial groups." In the case of undeveloped or partially developed subdivisions, the FHA actually recommended the implementation of deed restrictions such as "...prohibition of occupancy of the properties except by the race for which they were intended..." to supplement zoning ordinances.⁹ As a result of these policies, the FHA would not ensure mortgages in racially mixed neighborhoods, or even in white neighborhoods that were too close to black neighborhoods, in case integration took place in the future. In the view of the FHA and the HOLC, stability was explicitly equated to segregation, and most private banks and insurers followed their lead.

By the late 1930s the situation in Eight Mile-Wyoming was mixed. A real property survey in 1938 documented that over ninety percent of residents lived in single-family detached homes, and two-thirds of them were owner-occupied—higher than the overall city average. Almost half owned their land free of mortgage or land contract. At the same time, the residents were among the city's poorest, and their housing among the worst, with less than half including a toilet and a bath and over two-thirds in poor condition.¹⁰

The Redlining of Eight Mile-Wyoming

It is unsurprising, given the conditions in Eight Mile-Wyoming and the fact that it had been nearly surrounded by white neighborhoods by this time, that, as Avery put it "the real estate interests awoke one bright morning to the realization that Detroit was growing in the North Western direction, and that out west of Palmer Woods was a beautiful site far away from the smoke of factories, unmarred by rail roads, high and dry with no hint of flooded basements, a wonderful place—the fly in the ointment—Negroes had control of it."¹¹

⁹⁹ Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act With Revisions to April 1, 1936* (Washington, D.C.), Part II, Section 2, Rating of Location, sections 228-229 and 284.

¹⁰ Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 40.

¹¹ Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952," Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 5-6.

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In fact, it was a city entity, the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council, that sent sociologist Marvel Daines, a white woman, to survey the neighborhood. Daines' report, published in 1940, alternated between admiration for the courage and persistence of the residents, shock at the dilapidated conditions she found, and outright racism and patronizing. In the conclusion to her report, Daines briefly questioned whether "any group, economically more secure and higher up in the social scale, (has) the moral right to go into an area such as this...and take away something they have struggled to keep at real deprivation?...Would we force them back into the already congested downtown slums from which they came twenty years ago in quest of air and sunshine and a garden spot?"¹² Her proposal, however, was not, as would seem logical, to assist the black residents to build new dwellings in their current location. Instead, she recommended that it be "converted to a white area" by the formation of a non-profit corporation to purchase the land and build a "comparable area...close to the industrial center of employment [i.e. closer to existing African American neighborhoods]" where "small cottages" could be built for the displaced Eight Mile-Wyoming residents, who would be "given the privilege of buying one of these modern, sanitary convenient houses." A credit on the appraised value of the resident's existing property would go toward the purchase of a lot and house in the new neighborhood.¹³ Given that nearly half of the residents owned their property outright, and that Daines' report on slum conditions in the neighborhood had just given appraisers ammunition to undervalue the property, it seems unlikely that Eight Mile-Wyoming residents would find a great deal of benefit from the plan.

The HOLC's 1939 residential security map for Eight Mile-Wyoming classified it in the "D-Hazardous" category and colored it red. The area description for the map noted its "Negro concentration" and described the characteristics of the area as "35% improved. Unpaved and poorly graded streets. Gas, light, water, sewers. Stores on 8 Mile Road." An adjoining neighborhood to the east had a similar description, with a note that there was "considerable foreclosure." However, this area was colored yellow ("Definitely Declining"), not red. An additional note in its description may explain its classification: "adjoins negro area." Indeed, across the city, African American neighborhoods, even middle-class ones like Conant Gardens and the West Side, were colored red, and yellow-rated areas often noted "infiltration" by African American and Jewish people. For example, the Boston-Edison neighborhood, one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods in the 1920s, was classified yellow. Despite a population of executives, business people, professionals, and teachers with relatively high salaries, a ninety-five percent occupancy rate, and buildings rated as in good repair, the area's description noted the "better element moving out...Restrictions expiring," and recorded a mixture of African Americans and Jewish people moving in. The assessment was that the "conversion rates this area 3rd grade." The assessment for the area north of Tireman Avenue, the traditional northern boundary of the black West Side neighborhood, was even more explicit, recording the "danger of negro infiltration which gives the area a "C" rating" despite the neighborhood being otherwise comparable to more highly rated areas across the city.¹⁴

¹² Marvel Daines, "Be It Ever So Tumbled: The Story of a Suburban Slum," Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of Detroit, March 1940, 48-49.

¹³ Ibid., 49-50.

¹⁴ "Mapping Inequality," (Online collection of HOLC Residential Security Maps, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>).

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The Building of the Birwood Wall

It was against this backdrop of a struggling African American community surrounded by an expanding white city that the Birwood Wall was constructed. The land west of Eight Mile-Wyoming was not covered by the 1939 HOLC maps, because it was still largely farm and woodland. The area had been platted in 1925 as Blackstone Park Subdivision No. 6 by the Nottingham Land Company, although it appears no construction took place before the Depression. Interestingly, there was a conflict between the subdivision plats for Blackstone Park No. 6 and Grand Park to the east. Grand Park, which was within the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood, was platted earlier, in 1920, and its western border was along the alley between Mendota Street and the next street west, what is now Pinehurst Street. Blackstone Park's plat map, however, put the border of the subdivision between Mendota Street and Birwood Avenue, the next street east. It is unclear how this discrepancy occurred, but it seems that it was ultimately resolved in favor of the later Blackstone Park No. 6 plat.

In 1940 the property was owned by James T. McMillan,¹⁵ who intended to develop it for residential construction. By this time, the construction industry was beginning to recover with the easing of the Depression and the availability of FHA-backed loans for white developments. The newspaper real estate sections during this period carried articles on how to secure FHA loans, and new (white) developments often advertised that their houses were available for FHA funding. In March 1940 the Builders' Association of Detroit opened thirty-two model homes on Littlefield Street, between Pembroke and Chippewa Streets at the western end of the Blackstone Park No. 6 subdivision, as the location of their 1940 Home Demonstration Show. The "Homes on Parade" "embody the latest developments in design, equipment and utility, and provide prospective home builders and buyers an opportunity to see in one concentrated area a wide range of architectural styles, plans, and use of materials..." In conjunction with the Homes on Parade, the Kern's Department Store in downtown Detroit held a display of all thirty-two homes in miniature. A preview of the exhibit was attended by FHA officers from Washington, D.C., Illinois, and Michigan.¹⁶

Construction of additional homes in the Blackstone Park No. 6 subdivision began that same year, but obtaining FHA-backed mortgages for homes close to the eastern end of the subdivision near the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood ran into the FHA's ban on funding developments in close proximity to a black neighborhood. The FHA would, however, support such developments if there was a barrier of some sort between the black and white areas to "protect" the neighborhood from integration. Usually, this took the form of a virtual separation such as wide streets, parks, or even disconnections in the street grid that discouraged interaction between neighborhoods. But the Blackstone Park subdivision's border with Eight Mile-Wyoming was merely an alley. So to provide the necessary degree of separation, the developer erected a

¹⁵ McMillan's ownership was cited in "Oppose Plan to Establish Negro Ghetto," *Michigan Chronicle*, July 5, 1941, 1. No further information was found on McMillan or his ownership of the property. He may have been the James T. McMillan who was the president of the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company during the same period.

¹⁶ "Builders Association Opens '40 Home Demonstration Show," *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1940.

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physical barrier, a wall six feet high, one foot thick, and half a mile long between the two neighborhoods.

It is unclear how the developer of Blackstone Park got the idea to build the wall. No sources were found that described any communications between the developer and the FHA, or City of Detroit records that illuminate the decisionmaking process. It may not have required formal communications at all. Given that proximity to an African American neighborhood alone was sufficient to downgrade a nearby white neighborhood's rating under the HOLC's residential security maps, and that the FHA's underwriting manual's gave a clear preference for the use of physical or natural barriers in segregating neighborhoods, there may have been no need for discussion with the FHA at all; it would have been clear that a barrier of some sort would improve the chances of securing FHA-backed mortgages.

It is possible that the developer was influenced by another wall that had been built shortly before the Birwood Wall. This was the Liberty City Wall, built in Miami in 1939 to separate a new African American public housing development from a white neighborhood to the east. This wall, which was reported to be either seven or eight feet high, ran for a half mile along Northwest 12th Avenue from Northwest 62nd Street to Northwest 71st Street. Like the Birwood Wall, no official records were kept of its construction or the decisionmaking process that went into it. However, unlike the Birwood Wall, the Liberty City Wall has been largely demolished, with only a few segments measuring less than a foot high remaining along a major street which has been widened and altered extensively over the decades.¹⁷ Another wall divides portions of Pompano Beach, Florida's white Kendall Green neighborhood from several black neighborhoods to the west. The history of this wall is less clear, although it appears it is similar to the Birwood Wall in that it ran along the alleyway between two residential streets. It too, has been largely demolished, with only a short, diminished segment remaining. The Birwood Wall appears to be the most well-known and intact of the so-called "segregation walls" in the country, although there may well be other examples whose history has remained undocumented.

Construction of the wall was underway in the summer of 1941, but its construction did not pass unnoticed, either in Eight Mile-Wyoming or among the city's African American population. The *Michigan Chronicle*, one of Detroit's African American newspapers, carried it as a front-page item in July 1941, along with a photograph of the wall. Reverend Horace White, pastor of Plymouth United Church of Christ and the only black member of the Detroit Housing Commission, denounced the construction of the wall at a commission meeting, charging that it was designed only to separate black and white residents. A representative of Blackstone Park subdivision owner James T. McMillan denied that the wall was a tool to enforce segregation, claiming that the wall "is being put up simply to improve our subdivision by giving it a fixed border and trim." The *Chronicle's* opinion page, however, was not deceived.

Indeed, the invisible walls of racial prejudice confront us daily in this democracy and the appearance of an actual wall of concrete represents the measure of this racial bigotry. It may

¹⁷ Theresa Joseph, "The Untold History of Liberty's Segregation Walls," NBC Miami, May 4, 2018, <https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/The-Untold-History-of-Liberty-Citys-Segregation-Walls-481781631.html>.

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represent too the mad folly of the dominant group who, like the ostrich, dare not face reality and stick their heads in the sand. The whole housing problem in Detroit, for whites as well as Negroes, has been handled with the same blind stupidity.¹⁸

Burniece Avery of the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood put it more bluntly. "Another type of pressure took the form of a 6ft concrete wall at the alley behind Birwood, separating the neighborhood from Blackstone Park. Unlike Pembroke, this was a visible line over which 'thou shalt not pass'."¹⁹

The wall was completed in 1941, and the FHA backed mortgages for properties west of the wall, but no FHA funding was made available for black residents on the other side of the barrier. As Richard Rothstein observed, the Birwood Wall demonstrated that the FHA was not attempting to mask the racial basis of its decision making, even when it resulted in an absurd interpretation of their standards.²⁰

Public Housing and Urban Renewal in Eight Mile-Wyoming after the Wall

The construction of the wall did not end the development pressure on Eight Mile-Wyoming. Much of the land still remained vacant, in the hands of either black families who hoped to someday build permanent homes, or banks that had repossessed the lots after their owners defaulted during the Depression. Between that, and the substandard condition of the housing, it was seen by many in the city as a blank slate. The city government considered putting an airport there in 1941 and again in 1945, but both times turned elsewhere. Although Daines had rejected public housing in her 1940 report, the United States Housing Authority at least briefly considered it for the Eight Mile-Wyoming area. Matters came to a head following the United States' entry into World War II, when housing for workers flocking to the city to work in the defense industry made an already difficult housing situation critical. The City Plan Commission, as part of its master planning process and designation of Eight Mile-Wyoming as "blighted," proposed building one thousand five hundred units of temporary war worker housing at Eight Mile-Wyoming, in the form of barracks and Quonset huts, to be designated for black workers (the thinking being that building such housing in an established African American neighborhood would avoid the protest inevitable if it was built in a white area).²¹

In the view of Eight Mile-Wyoming residents, this plan was merely another tactic to clear them off their land. Avery observed that "(t)he thought behind this action...was 'When the war is over, we will declare the whole area a slum, and move in with a Master Plan under the authority

¹⁸ "Oppose Plan to Establish Negro Ghetto," *Michigan Chronicle*, July 5, 1941, 1.

¹⁹ Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952," Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 6.

²⁰ June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 85-86; Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 64; Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017), 65, 74.

²¹ Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 64, 68-70.

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of the Urban Redevelopment Plan; clear the land, and resubdivide the lots, making them 50 ft instead of the present 40 ft.' There was something familiar about that re-subdividing angle that made us remember Shacktown [Daines' report], and we renewed our fight against it."²² Indeed, Avery and her neighbors used the federal government's own stated goals—to encourage single-family homeownership—to argue for providing FHA-backed loans to the African Americans of Eight Mile-Wyoming. The neighbors took collective action, forming two community groups, the Carver Progressive Association and the Eight Mile Road Civic Improvement Association, to lobby the government. They managed to interest Raymond Foley, the director of the FHA in Michigan, in their efforts, and the whole neighborhood turned out to polish up the area the night before Foley visited.²³

In the end, the city, the FHA, and the neighborhood reached a compromise: in return for FHA subsidizing the construction of single-family housing for African Americans, the community supported the siting of six hundred units of temporary war housing. As Sugrue put it, "It was a partial victory for black community groups, a showpiece for the FHA, which could claim that it worked for the benefit of black Detroiters, and an acceptable result for public housing officials, who hastily constructed temporary structures in the Eight Mile Road area." As a result, "the neighborhood became a bastion of black homeownership, 'one of the very few areas in Detroit where Negroes can buy land, build, and own their own home.'" Over the next ten years, over one thousand five hundred single-family homes were built in the neighborhood.²⁴

Much of the temporary war worker housing was built immediately adjacent to the Birwood Wall. A 1949 aerial photo shows hundreds of barracks and smaller temporary buildings in the six blocks east of the wall between Eight Mile Road and Pembroke. The white neighborhood west of the wall was divided from the black neighborhood not only by the wall itself, but by a kind of no-man's land along Mendota Street. Another stretch of barren land south of Pembroke Avenue separated the black neighborhood from the white areas to the south. However, in the early 1950s the first black families began to move beyond the wall: Katherine Brown's family moved two blocks west to Pinchurst in 1950, joining the Foremans, another black family who had recently moved west of the wall.²⁵ The reaction of the Blackstone Park neighborhood to what the HOLC had earlier called "infiltration" was not recorded. The neighborhood did have a homeowners association that in the past had attempted to enforce the racially restrictive covenants on their subdivision. In 1944, members of a family with Chinese ancestry moved to Littlefield Street on the west side of the subdivision after being repatriated from a Japanese concentration camp. The Blackstone Park homeowners association attempted to exercise the subdivision clause, which read that "No part of said property shall be used or occupied in whole or in part by an persons not of pure, unmixed, white Caucasian race," arguing that if they failed to enforce the provision,

²² Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952," Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 7.

²³ Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 66-67; Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952," Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 10.

²⁴ Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 71.

²⁵ Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017), 160.

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it would endanger its legality in the future. However, churches, civic organization, and many of the family's neighbors opposed the ouster and some members of the association resigned in protest. The family was eventually allowed to stay.²⁶ By 1950, however, restrictive covenants had been struck down by the United States Supreme Court, and homeowners associations had to resort to more informal means to discourage African Americans from moving into their neighborhoods. The "Blackstone Park No. 6 Improvement Association" was still in existence in 1953, but no information was found on its activities or its response to African American families moving beyond the wall.²⁷

Although the federal government approved Title 1 funds for a new type of urban renewal program, neighborhood conservation, for Eight Mile-Wyoming in 1954, it did not result in the degree of controversy that had occurred in 1940-1943. Indeed, while the conservation program in Detroit was generally considered a failure, its rehabilitation activities were judged a success in Eight Mile-Wyoming perhaps, as June Manning Thomas has suggested, because the neighborhood was already fairly stable.²⁸ Between 1952 and 1956, the temporary war housing in Eight Mile-Wyoming was removed and single family homes began to be constructed in their place. The city also implemented a "scattered site" public housing plan in the late 1960s, with single-family homes built on already vacant lots. The *Detroit Free Press* later observed, in commenting on a similar plan, that the program at Eight Mile-Wyoming had yielded results that were "greater than expected," perhaps because "it uses vacant lots (that) eliminate a painful clearance and relocation problem," and was a "workable alternative to large-scale public housing projects, which have been little more than concentration camps for the poor."²⁹ The urban renewal program also avoided the large-scale clearance that had occurred in other areas of Detroit. While about twenty-five percent of the homes in the area were demolished, the program also invested in the rehabilitation of another twenty-five percent through low-interest loans to homeowners. Rather than displacing the black residents, many were accommodated in homes rebuilt on the cleared lots, or in older homes that the Detroit Housing Commission purchased and remodeled.³⁰

While most of the neighborhood filled in with single-family homes, the conservation/urban renewal project also created a small urban park, constructed in the late 1960s. Birwood Avenue between Norfolk Street and Chippewa Street was closed, with internal cul-de-sacs created. Between them, a playground was installed backing up to the wall on the west. It was laid out with winding concrete paths, open lawns, shade trees, and a basketball court. The park was later named for Alfonso Wells, an African American man who had lived for a time in the war worker housing on Birwood before moving elsewhere in the neighborhood. Wells was a political and social activist in the neighborhood who also helped to expand the facilities at the park. Ironically,

²⁶ "Move to Evict Refugees Hit by Neighbors," *Detroit Free Press*, April 7, 1944, 13; "Plans to Oust Refugees from Asia Dropped," *Detroit Free Press*, April 12, 1944, 4.

²⁷ "Improvement Association General List, 1953," in folder "Neighborhood Improvement Associations," Box 40, United Community Services Central Files, Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

²⁸ June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 91-92, 98.

²⁹ "Scatter the Public Housing," *Detroit Free Press*, April 5, 1970, 20.

³⁰ Dorothy Weddell, "Happy Ending to Urban Renewal," *Detroit Free Press*, July 25, 1970, 8.

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the creation of this playground has kept the wall highly visible. As the houses filled in and trees and domestic plantings grew to maturity, the wall was hidden along much of its length. At the park, however, it is open and visible. In 2006 the three-hundred-foot portion adjacent to the park was painted with a mural depicting scenes African American history, local, state and national, as well as a portrait of Alfonso Wells. The mural was the work of Motor City Blight Busters and a cadre of residents and volunteers.³¹

Conclusion

The Birwood Wall stands as a powerful reminder of the institutional discrimination in housing African Americans endured well into the latter part of the twentieth century. It is, quite literally, concrete evidence of what Richard Rothstein has called a “consistent government policy that was employed in the mid twentieth century to enforce residential racial segregation,” in which “scores of racially explicit laws, regulations, and government practices combined to create a nationwide system of urban ghettos surrounded by white suburbs.”³² Practices across the housing spectrum, ranging from government-sanctioned discrimination such as redlining and racially restrictive covenants to more informal tools like block busting, homeowners’ associations, and the threat of violence, conspired to confine African Americans into racially segregated neighborhoods whatever their economic means. Although racial covenants were overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1948 and redlining was outlawed with the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, this by no means outlawed informal, social enforcement of segregation. Furthermore, the economic, social, and legal impacts of redlining continue to affect African Americans today. As author and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates has argued, housing segregation practices created two housing markets, one for whites, “legitimate and backed by the government” and one lawless and predatory for blacks.³³ Economists have demonstrated that children of homeowners are statistically likelier to become homeowners themselves in comparison to the children of renters, and homeownership builds wealth from generation to generation. Furthermore, a recent study found that redlined neighborhoods had nearly five percent lower home prices as late as 1990, a disparity that was not present prior to the institution of the maps, and which suggests that the assessments of the HOLC’s appraisers were prescriptive, not descriptive.³⁴ The Birwood Wall embodies the discriminatory housing practices across the United States that conspired to keep African Americans from participating in an equal housing market, a legacy that continues to be felt today.

Period of Significance

³¹ “Wall that Once Divided Black, White Detroit Gets Mural Makeover,” *Lansing State Journal*, May 18, 2006, 20.

³² Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017), x, xii.

³³ Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*, June 2014.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

³⁴ Ian Appel and Jordan Nickerson, “Pockets of Poverty: The Long-Term Effects of Redlining,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, October 15, 2016.

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The period of significance for the wall is from 1941, when it was constructed, to 1950, when African American families first began moving beyond the wall to the formerly white neighborhood to the west.

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Journal*. May 18, 2006, 20.
Weddell, Dorothy. “Happy Ending to Urban Renewal.” *Detroit Free Press*, July 25, 1970.

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Birwood Wall
Name of Property

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North End

1. Latitude: -83.095900 Longitude: 42.262021

South End

2. Latitude: -83.095813 Longitude: 42.262021

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary consists of the alley line between Mendota Street and Birwood Avenue from Pembroke Avenue on the south to Eight Mile Road on the north.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the footprint of the wall.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Saundra Little, Architect, and Ruth Mills, Senior Historian,

organization: Quinn Evans Architects

street & number: 4219 Woodward Avenue, Suite 301

Birwood Wall
Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan
County and State

city or town: Detroit state: Michigan zip code: 48201
e-mail rmills@quinnevans.com
telephone: 313-462-2550
date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Birwood Wall
Detroit
Wayne County, Michigan

Photographer: Unknown
Date Photographed: Ca. 1941
Description: Wall shortly after construction, unknown view/location
0001 of 0012

Photographer: Unknown
Date Photographed: Ca. 1941
Description: Wall shortly after construction, looking west, unknown location.
0002 of 0012

Photographer: Unknown
Date Photographed: Ca. 1941
Description: Children standing in front of wall, looking west unknown location.
0003 of 0012

Photographer: Unknown
Date Photographed: Ca. 1941
Description: Wall shortly after construction, looking north.
0004 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans
Date Photographed: May 2019
Description: North end of wall south of Eight Mile Road, looking southwest
0005 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans
Date Photographed: May 2019
Description: Central area of wall, looking east
0006 of 0012

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Name of Property

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Photographer: Quinn Evans

Date Photographed: May 2019

Description: Painted area of wall at the Alfonso Wells Playground, overall view looking northwest

0007 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans

Date Photographed: May 2019

Description: Painted area of wall, closeup looking north

0008 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans

Date Photographed: May 2019

Description: Painted area of wall, showing concrete block bumpout, looking north

0009 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans

Date Photographed: May 2019

Description: Painted area of wall, from concrete block bumpout north, looking north

0010 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans

Date Photographed: May 2019

Description: Closeup of wall construction

0011 of 0012

Photographer: Quinn Evans

Date Photographed: May 2019

Description: South end of wall at Pembroke Street, looking northwest

0012 of 0012

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Birwood Wall, Alley between Birwood and Mendota Streets
National Register of Historic Places Nomination
Location Map 1

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
February 2019



Boundary

Geographical Coordinates

North End

Latitude: -83.095900

Longitude: 42.262021

South End

Latitude: -83.095813

Longitude: 42.262021



Birwood Wall, Alley between Birwood and Mendota Streets
National Register of Historic Places Nomination
Location Map 2

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
February 2019



Geographical Coordinates

North End

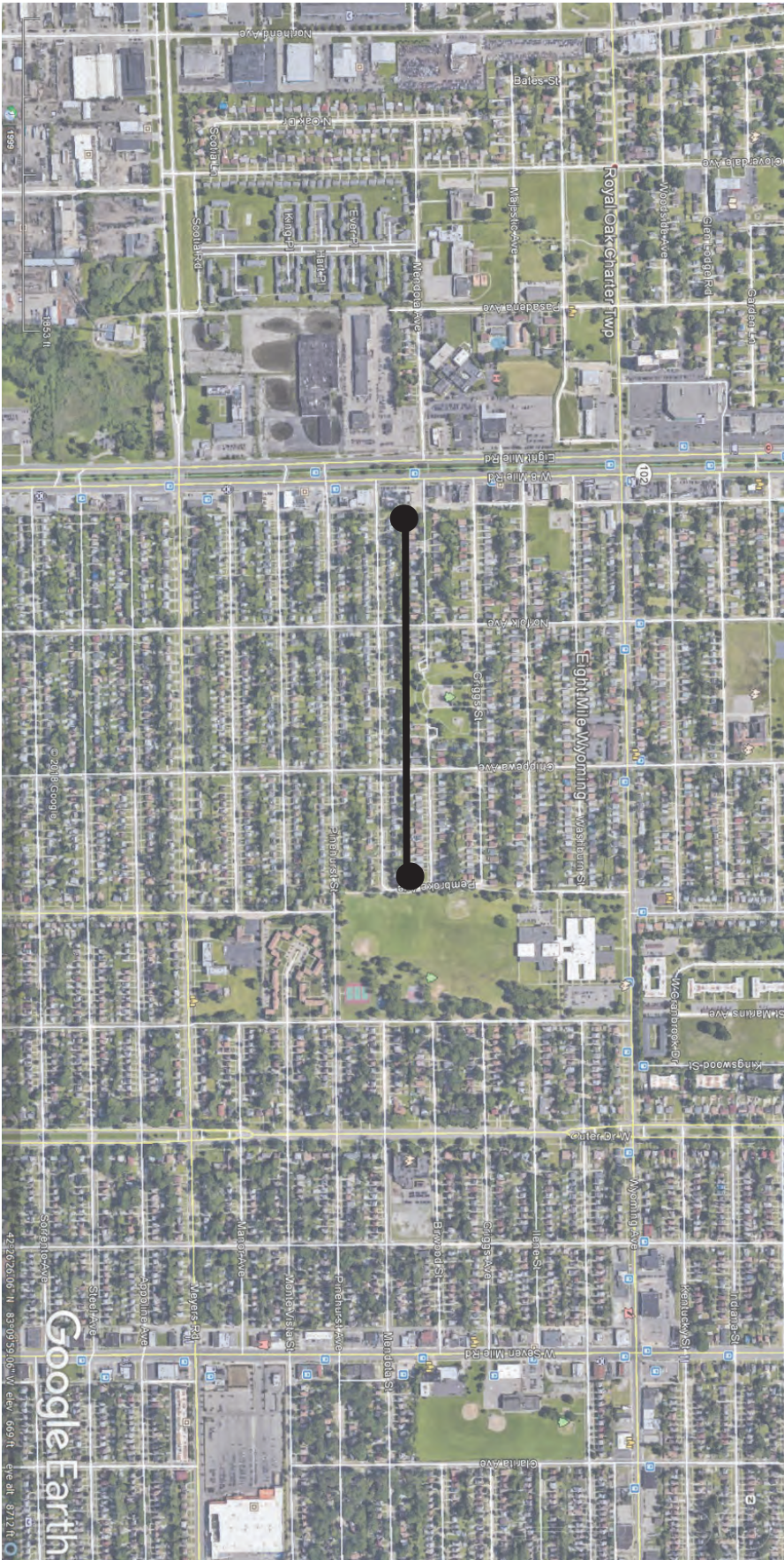
Latitude: -83.095900

Longitude: 42.262021

South End

Latitude: -83.095813

Longitude: 42.262021



Birwood Wall, Alley between Birwood and Mendota Streets
National Register of Historic Places Nomination
Boundary Map

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
February 2019



Birwood Wall Boundary

1 Contributing Structure







FOOT

MAISON

BASE



