

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING A HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION DISTRICT – PRAIRIE GROVE  
CHAPEL AND CEMETERY.**

**WHEREAS,** the Common Council of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, by passage of Ordinance Number G-06-08 has established Chapter 151 of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana Code of Ordinances entitled "Historic Preservation and Protection Districts;" and

**WHEREAS,** Section 151.030 of Chapter 151 provides procedures by which areas may be designated as "Historic Districts;" and

**WHEREAS,** pursuant to Section 151.030 of Chapter 151,

|                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| PRAIRIE GROVE CHAPEL AND<br>CEMETERY | 6000-6200 OLD TRAIL ROAD |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|

is designated as a Historic District.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE, INDIANA:**

**SECTION 1.** The property listed as :

|                                      |                          |  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| PRAIRIE GROVE CHAPEL AND<br>CEMETERY | 6000-6200 OLD TRAIL ROAD |  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|

is hereby designated a Historic Preservation District, in compliance with Section 151.030(E) of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana Code of Ordinances .

**SECTION 2.** The map submitted herewith as Exhibit “A” is approved and it is noted that all legal steps have been taken by the Historic Preservation Commission pursuant to Section 151.030 of Chapter 151 of the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana Code of Ordinances.

**SECTION 3.** That this Ordinance be in effect from and after its passage and any and all necessary approval by the Mayor.

Council Member

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

**Carol Helton, City Attorney**

**STAFF REVIEW OF  
LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PETITION**



(Photo by Joan M. Smith, 2018)

**Petitioner:** Prairie Grove Cemetery Association, Inc.; submitted by Janice Hoke Baber, Secretary of the Association

**Case No.:** HPC 1-28-19-LHD-1

**Subject Property:** 6000-6200 Old Trail Road  
Note: Allen County tax records provide the address 6000 Old Trail Road; the association used the address 6200 Old Trail Road on the LHD Petition.

**Historic Name:** Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery

**Legal Description:** From Allen County Property records:  
A portion of the cemetery parcel: SP ADJ ON W OF PT LOT 8 RICH RES W OF BLUFFTON 8 RICH RES W OF BLUFFTON RD EXC W 22 A: Please see the map provided.

**Date of Review:** January 28, 2019

**Cultural Resources Survey Information:**

|                           |                               |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Rating:</b>            | Outstanding                   | <b>Style:</b>             | Gable front church |
| <b>Construction Date:</b> | c.1875; (c.1855 via petition) | <b>Architect/Builder:</b> | Unknown            |
| <b>Condition:</b>         | Good                          | <b>Integrity:</b>         | Unaltered          |
| <b>Use:</b>               | Periodic special events       | <b>Survey No. (1996):</b> | 003-215-54030      |

### **Reason for Application:**

Recognizing the architectural and historical significance of this property to the Fort Wayne and Waynedale communities, the owner, Prairie Grove Cemetery Association, Inc., prepared a "Petition for Historic Property or District Designation." The completed petition was signed and submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission on November 14, 2018. The petition requests local historic district designation of the Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery at 6000-6200 Old Trail Road.

### **Staff Comments:**

### **Criteria for Local Historic Designation:**

Section 151.030 (titled Local Historic Districts) of the Fort Wayne Historic Preservation and Protection ordinance allows for the designation of historic districts. The ordinance provides that:

A local historic district shall not be established unless the proposed map includes a building, groups of buildings, structures, sites, objects, streetscapes, or neighborhoods which meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) Are associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (2) Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, that represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and/or
- (4) Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

In applying the criteria set forth in the ordinance, historic preservation staff has determined that the Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery meets two of the four possible criteria for Local Historic Designation. The property is significant under Criterion one (1) because it is "associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." The property is associated with the history of early settlement and the building of rural communities in Wayne Township. This role in the development of the area contributed to founding the community of Waynedale. The property is also significant under Criterion three (3), as a property that "Embod(ies) the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, (and) represent(s) a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction." Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery is an outstanding example of a simple rural church and cemetery that represents mid nineteenth century construction of a rural chapel, and typical development of an associated rural cemetery. The cemetery was established first, with a burial as early as 1833. The church building dates to c.1855 or later, with construction sometime in the nineteenth century.

### **Description (Please see the accompanying photos):**

The Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery Local Historic District is a landmark within the Waynedale area of Southwest Fort Wayne. The district is composed of a wood-frame church building with an associated iron fence, a simple wood-frame outhouse, and an associated cemetery that grew from its roots as a pioneer cemetery to become a large rural cemetery.

The site is located on Old Trail Road; Old Trail was once a Native American and pioneer trail, and it became a nineteenth century highway called the Bluffton Plank Road. Later it was called Fort Wayne-Bluffton Road, or simply Bluffton Road. Approximately concurrent with the construction of Baer Field Army Air Base (c.1940) the current alignment of Bluffton Road was built to the east, and the old segment was renamed Old Trail Road.

The Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery is located north of what became the village of Waynedale, at the crossroads of Old Trail and Lower Huntington roads; it is nearly equidistant south of the historic Chief

Jean-Baptiste de Richardville House. Waynedale never incorporated, and it was annexed by the City of Fort Wayne in 1957.

### **Prairie Grove Chapel:**

#### **Exterior:**

The Prairie Grove Chapel is located on the west side of a curve in Old Trail Road, near the south end of the proposed historic district. The building is a relatively small, wood-frame structure with a gable roof that faces Old Trail Road. The structure is rectangular, with the exception of a shed-roofed extension on the west side that expands the altar area within the building. The building rests on a low rubble-stone foundation.

The gable-front shape is simple, but it is punctuated by a square belfry placed in alignment with the east wall of the building. The belfry rises above the ridge of the roof, but it does not project forward with any expression on the east wall of the building. The belfry is capped by a pyramidal roof with boxed eaves. (Although not currently mounted on the building, the belfry was once topped by a turned finial approximately 5 feet tall.) Each of the four sides of the belfry is filled with large wood-slatted vents that enclose the church bell. The trim on the sides of the belfry is simple and flat; the base of the structure, beneath the vents, is constructed of vertical boards. The eaves are plain boxed-eaves with a friezeboard accented by simple moldings and drip edges. The roof is covered with dimensional shingles. Half-round gutters and round downspouts are located on both sides of the building. There is evidence the building once had a central chimney; an exterior chimney was removed from the north wall within the last ten years.

All the walls of the chapel have clapboard siding that is completed by cornerboards; a wood water table surrounds the building just above the low stone foundation. The walls of the shed-roofed extension on the west wall are finished in the same way. The north and south side-walls of the chapel each have four pointed-arch Gothic windows, for a total of eight large windows. Each of the windows has a four-over-four double-hung sash capped by a fixed transom. Each transom has two Gothic-pointed panes of glass that are separated by a single pane with a stylized diamond shape. The east gable, facing Old Trail Road, has a small, single pane Gothic window. The only door of the structure also faces Old Trail Road. It has a relatively narrow opening that contains two narrow, single-paneled doors. The door opening is topped by a large transom that matches the smaller transoms above the side windows. A flat slab of stone serves as a low stoop at the door. The building is simply painted; it is all white, with green trim, windows, and doors. The overall effect is much like the traditional color scheme of public buildings in New England.

#### **Interior:**

The interior of the chapel is composed of one large room with plain plaster walls. The north and south walls have a cove at the top to allow extra ceiling height. A chair rail surrounds the space; it is placed at the window sill height to create a horizontal line around the room. Below the chair rail is painted beadboard wainscoting that is finished at the bottom with a large quarter-round molding. Smooth plank floors have a natural wood finish. The room is lit by simple lights with schoolhouse-style globes, mounted from the ceiling. A rope descends from a small hole in the ceiling at the north edge of the entry doors; the rope is used to manually ring the bell located in the bell tower.

At the west end of the large room is a raised platform that fills the recessed area within the extended structure at the west gable end of the structure. This platform serves as the altar and also allows for the pastor to look out over the congregation. The side walls of the recessed area are coved, but more dramatically than the north and south walls of the building. The recessed area has a baseboard. The sides of the elevated platform have recessed panels and there is a lower platform at each side that serves as a step to better reach the platform. The recessed area is trimmed with decorative molding.

The chapel has sixteen pews that allow a center aisle that terminates at the raised platform. There are eight pews on each side of the aisle. The pews all have scroll-carved end arm rests; one end of each pew

has a decorative recessed panel. There are racks on the back of each pew that allow storage of Bibles and hymnals. The pews have a natural wood finish.

A small basement is located in the northeast corner of the structure; it can only be reached by a trapdoor in the chapel floor. This basement is the location of a modern high-efficiency furnace and air conditioning equipment.

In 2008 vandals broke into the chapel building; they damaged windows, interior furnishings, and started an arson fire. The altar area and northwest corner of the chapel were substantially damaged. Volunteers led by Glenn Ellenberger stepped in to repair and restore the chapel, both inside and outside, on behalf of the cemetery association. The outhouse has also seen repair. The chapel restoration has been based on photographs and the surviving materials of the church. Restoration was performed from 2008 to 2018, and it included updates to the electrical and HVAC systems. The building still does not have plumbing.

### **Outhouse:**

Directly behind the chapel, immediately west of the "Original Plat" of the Prairie Grove Cemetery, is the location of the outhouse or "privy." The structure is located in a grassy area that separates burial plots from a drive to the west. This simple yet necessary structure measures slightly over four feet square. It has a shed roof that slopes to the south. The corrugated metal roof is pierced by a vertical steel flue (vent) pipe. The eaves are open, with exposed rafters. The eaves are finished on each side by a plain fascia board. The walls are covered with vertical tongue and groove milled siding. On the east, west, and south sides the siding is cut shorter in the center of the wall, so it does not extend fully to the eaves; this allows narrow, slotted vents at the top of the walls. The single door is offset to the west, within the north wall. The door is constructed of the same material as the walls. Large strap hinges mount the door to the exterior of the building. The structure rests on a low, flat concrete slab.

Within the outhouse, the slab is not only the foundation of the structure, but it also functions as the interior floor. (It is required to step up from the cemetery lawn into the outhouse.) An oval concrete "pot" is found near the south wall and slightly offset to the east. There is a portion of the wooden seat structure that remains on top of the pot. A relatively new round, galvanized flue pipe has been inserted into a round vent hole at the rear of the pot; it extends through the roof. The outhouse pit has been back-filled.

In the southeast corner of the slab there is an imprint of a project number stamped into the surface of the concrete. The imprint of "#2648" is visible. The number is located to the left of the pot, and it is oriented to be read by a person facing south.

### **Prairie Grove Cemetery:**

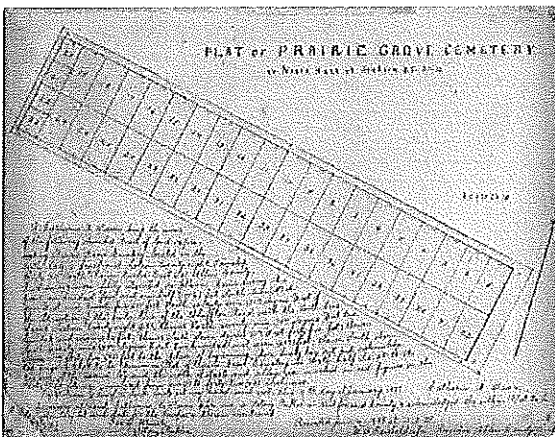
The Prairie Grove Cemetery was first established in the area immediately surrounding the Prairie Grove Chapel. The first burials were in 1833 and 1839, prior to establishment of a formal cemetery; however the cemetery remains active for new burials today. The cemetery has grown substantially to what is now a parcel of 17 acres; however the entire parcel is not included in the map of the historic district. The cemetery is organized into numerous sections that are designated by letters (e.g. Section A).

It does not appear that there was a formal survey of the cemetery until 1898; and this appears to be the first expansion of the cemetery. It is a narrow strip that is located south of the chapel, extending west from Old Trail Road. The cemetery was further formally organized by platting several sections and service drives in 1930. This 1930 plat included the "Original Plat;" it included the 1898 expansion and extended north to the Richardville Reserve line that extends through the parcel from southeast to northwest. To the north of the reserve line are seven sections that are lettered A-G. Two of those sections were reorganized in 1953 by vacating service drives and creating additional burial plots. The cemetery and its service drives were enlarged in 1941, and enlarged again in 1959 by adding "Section H extended." By 1959 the cemetery plots extended to the north and west property lines. These sections represent the historic development of the site, and the historic district boundary is based on the expansions to 1959. The most recent organization was in 1970, when the southwest portion of the parcel was organized with

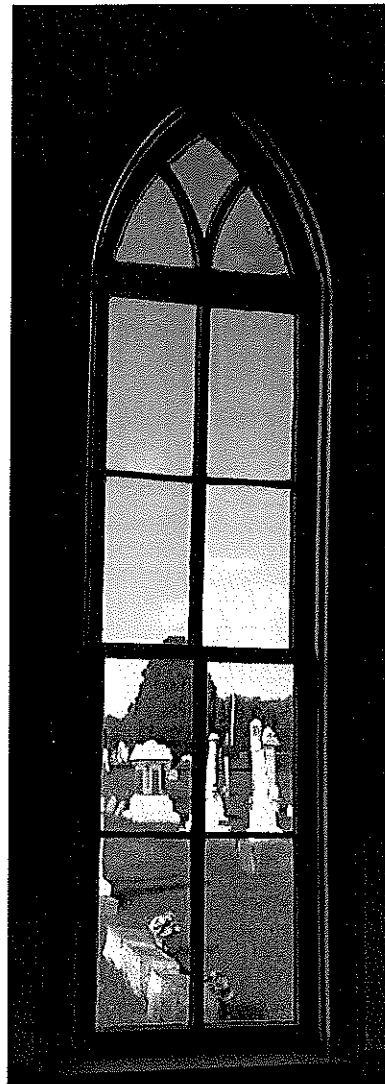
Sections P, Q, R, S, and T and their associated service drives. The 1970 plan also designates the south end of the parcel for a service building; this is the location of the service building that is onsite today. Much of the southwest portion has not yet become active for new burials.

The cemetery is located on gently rolling land that slopes slightly down from Old Trail Road. There are six active service drives into the cemetery from Old Trail Road. An additional drive is located south of the chapel, but outside the district boundary. The service drives extend west to meet two drives that provide north-south circulation within the cemetery. Only the north and south drives provide access to the western drive. The graves and the rows of headstones are generally oriented in north-south rows; however none of the rows correlate to the cardinal directions. Most run from south-southwest to north-northeast. Rows in the newer sections at the rear of the parcel, platted in 1941 and later, are oriented on a stronger diagonal of southwest to northeast.

The monuments and memorial stones within the cemetery show a wide variety of available stone types and decorative themes that are representative of the period from the 1850s to the present. The earliest stones are located near the chapel. The burials get more recent toward the north and west within the cemetery. There are limestone, granite, and marble stones, ranging in type from tablet, to obelisk, to more contemporary bevel monuments. The stones are typically simple, but there are elaborately carved monuments within the cemetery. Many of the oldest grave markers are now unreadable or have become broken. Trees are found in the cemetery; they range from cedar trees that were common in nineteenth century cemeteries, to one large walnut tree. Various evergreen trees and shrubs are also present.



Plat of Prairie Grove Cemetery, 1898



### **Fencing:**

The property has decorative iron and steel fencing that extends both north and south from the front corners of the chapel building along the west edge of the Old Trail Road right-of-way. The fencing allows a small gravel parking lot directly in front of the chapel. The fencing extends south to a gravel parking lot, and it extends north along Old Trail Road to the north property line. Small segments of the fence, primarily gates at each side of the chapel, are historic. One of the gates has an iron shield that reads, "The Stewart Iron Works Company, Cincinnati, Ohio." The company is still located in Cincinnati and it

continues to manufacture fences. What became Stewart was established in 1862 in Covington, Kentucky, and it was incorporated under three different names in 1902. One of the three names was "The Stewart Iron Fence Works."

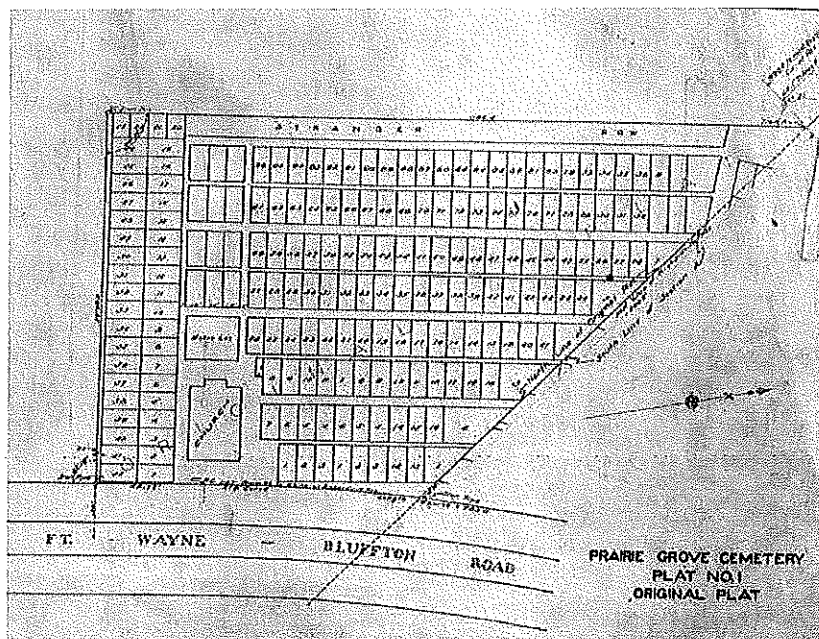
The historic gates near the chapel are remnants of a larger fence that has now been replaced with contemporary steel fencing designed to suggest the appearance of a historic iron fence. North of the chapel there is a decorative entry gate arch located at the former location of a service drive into the cemetery. The arch reads "PRAIRIE GROVE CEMETERY: EST. 1833." It has decorative scrollwork at the top. This decorative arch is less than ten years old. Most of the fencing is composed of relatively recent steel fence that follows the curve of the right-of-way of Old Trail Road, but with breaks for the active service drives into the cemetery from Old Trail.

#### **Site and district boundary notes:**

The boundary of the local historic district reflects the historic development of the Prairie Grove Cemetery; it is designed to include the chapel, the outhouse, and the historic development of the cemetery to c.1959 to include the historic context of the chapel and outhouse structures. The district is a portion of the larger cemetery parcel owned by the Prairie Grove Cemetery Association. Please refer to the map.

Starting at the northeast corner, the district boundary extends along the cemetery's curving frontage along the Old Trail Road right-of-way. It meets the south edge of a planned drive (planned on the 1970 survey). The boundary extends west along the south edge of the planned drive to meet the east edge of existing internal drives within the cemetery. The boundary follows the edge of the drives northwesterly until it meets and extends west on the boundary between cemetery sections "L" and "P" until it meets the west edge of the parcel. The boundary then extends north on the parcel edge to the north edge of the cemetery property line; then it extends east along the north property line (and its direct extension through a parcel owned by the association) to meet the right-of-way of Old Trail Road. The included cemetery sections are the Original Plat (Plat No. 1), and sections A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, N, and O. (Sections P, Q, R, S, and T are excluded from the historic district.)

The boundary excludes cemetery sections that were planned and platted after 1959 (in 1970); this is primarily the south and southwest areas of the larger parcel. Much (but not all) of the excluded area has not been used for burials. In the south the excluded area includes a large gravel parking lot and a relatively new maintenance building. There is residential development on all three sides of the parcel.



Prairie Grove Cemetery Plat No. 1: Original Plat, recorded 1930 (North is to the right.)



### **Historical Significance:**

**The Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery is locally significant for its association with the settlement history of rural Wayne Township, and the area that would later become Waynedale.**

In the 1850s the United Brethren in Christ was expanding its missionary efforts to the west from Ohio into Indiana. The intent was to plant new churches that would be served by circuit rider preachers who served several rural congregations. The United Brethren Church made the initial purchase of land at the future site of the Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery on April 21, 1855. At the time what is today Old Trail Road was the Fort Wayne-Bluffton Plank Road, so the location was on (what was at the time) a major highway. This was advantageous for both access to the church from the rural area, and ease of access for circuit rider preachers.

The land was purchased from Richard Beck, a farmer who lived on or near the site. Beck had already buried two young sons on the site that would become the cemetery, and they are the first burials in the cemetery records. His two-year-old son Richard Jr. was buried in 1833; son Elijah, age four, was buried in 1839. Richard Beck would also be buried at Prairie Grove in 1861. Numerous burials had already occurred on the site when trustees of the church, C. McNair and J. Miller, moved to formalize the cemetery use. In August of 1858 they recorded the first plat of the cemetery, and it includes a sketch of the chapel in its current location. The plat also shows the Richardville Reserve line and the "plank road."

It is unknown exactly when the Brethren Church built the chapel that we see today. Because the 1858 document shows a simple chapel it is possible that the church was built around that early date. It is also possible that there was an earlier chapel building that was replaced by the current building. It was often the practice in the settlement of rural areas, both by farmers and by churches and their congregations, to build a structure quickly that would be used until the farm or the congregation was more firmly established. Typically in the range of ten to twenty years later a permanent structure was often built. The Prairie Grove Chapel may have been built as early as c.1858, but the building is typical of simple church structures that were built in the period of c.1865 to c.1885. Again, there is no precise record of the construction of the building.

The Brethren Church congregation was active at Prairie Grove, and services were held there by circuit riders of the denomination until at least 1901. Among the preachers that likely visited Prairie Grove was Rev. Milton Wright. Wright became a bishop in the church, and was the leader of one faction in a split of the Brethren Church in 1889. Rev. Wright was among the key people that founded nearby Huntington University. As the Bishop of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Milton Wright laid the cornerstone of the school's first building in August, 1896; he also offered the prayer of dedication of the new university when the building was completed in 1897. (Rev. Milton Wright also had two sons, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who built the first successful aircraft in 1903.)

At the end of the nineteenth century changes were occurring in the Prairie Grove congregation, as the "Plat of Prairie Grove Cemetery" (the south section) was recorded in January of 1898. The Prairie Grove Cemetery Association was organized in April of 1899 "for the purpose of caring for the cemetery." The chapel appears to have been unused or under-used for several years until community residents started a Sunday school in the building. The cemetery association used the chapel for funeral services; it bought the chapel from the Brethren church in 1913. The cemetery association records show there were slow updates to the chapel, but no major changes. For example, electricity was added in 1923, and a furnace was installed in 1935.

In the 1920s students in training for missions and ministry at the Fort Wayne Bible Training School began having bible study and church services in the building; this was the genesis of what was to become the Prairie Grove Missionary Church. It was timely to foster a new Missionary congregation in the Waynedale area in the 1920s. Waynedale was first platted by Abner Elzey as a community focused on the intersection of Bluffton Road (now Old Trail) and Lower Huntington Road. Elzey would eventually plat out 110 acres of land for lots and streets, as the community became a desirable place to reside outside of the City of Fort Wayne. As the population grew, Waynedale became a thriving (but unincorporated) small

town. In the 1920s and 1930s Old Trail Road was the combined route of Indiana State Road 1 and State Road 3. Around 1940, the State Highway system went through various reconstruction phases to provide more direct routes to accommodate the increased utilization of trucks for transport and delivery of supplies. It was at this time that Indiana Highway 1 and 3 was rerouted to the east along a newer alignment that is now known as Bluffton Road. After World War Two the population of Waynedale quickly grew; in 1957 the City of Fort Wayne annexed the area.



September 19, 2017

In this context of a growing nearby population from the 1920s to the 1950s, Prairie Grove Missionary Church became a thriving congregation; by the late 1950s it had outgrown the chapel. Without enough land at the Prairie Grove site to expand, a new church building was built on Lower Huntington Road. The last services were held at the Prairie Grove chapel around 1959. To recognize the changing suburban character of the Waynedale area, the church adopted the name "Avalon Missionary Church" to correspond with the surrounding residential development.

After 1959 the chapel has sporadically been used by Christian groups, but none with regularity or great attendance. The building suffered long periods of vacancy. Vandalism and an arson fire in 2008 sparked a revival of interest in the chapel and its preservation. Volunteers and donations were instrumental in the restoration of the structure. The chapel was opened for special Christmas Services in 2009; these services have become an annual event.

The cemetery is significant for its representation of the history of the settlement of the rural community of southwest Wayne Township. As Waynedale grew around Prairie Grove, the cemetery also represents the history and the builders of Waynedale. Generations of local residents have used the cemetery as the primary location for burials in the immediate area. It is still in use today.

### **Architectural Significance:**

**The Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery is locally significant for its architecture.**

### **Prairie Grove Chapel:**

The Prairie Grove chapel is an outstanding example of a simple, rural church building of the nineteenth century. Despite its wood-frame construction, and the undocumented date of actual construction, the chapel is among the oldest church buildings in Fort Wayne. The property has exceptional historic integrity, and it is certainly the best example of a rural chapel and cemetery within the City of Fort Wayne.

Small rural churches buildings such as Prairie Grove Chapel were once common across the rural landscape of Indiana and Allen County. They represent service to the simple needs of pioneer farm families in the nineteenth century. Due to wood-frame construction, the small size of the buildings, the changing needs of growing congregations, and the encroachment of suburban development on formerly rural areas, these structures have all but vanished from the landscape. The few that remain have often been altered and enlarged several times, losing the original historic character and identity.

Prairie Grove Chapel is pristine in its historic integrity. Although the building has seen changes, recent restoration efforts have returned the church to the condition and appearance it would have had in the late nineteenth century. There are no comparable churches within the Fort Wayne, and it is likely this is the best example in Allen County. Although the Historic Preservation Commission traditionally limits review

of changes to exterior appearance, it is worth noting that the historic integrity of the interior of the chapel is equal to the exterior of the building.

### **The Prairie Grove Outhouse:**

The design of the Prairie Grove outhouse (or privy) was described above under "Description." The design and construction of the outhouse is consistent with privies that were built across the United States following designs distributed by the United States Public Health Service. In the 1910s and 1920s the U.S. Health Service worked to promote public sanitation, and partnered with state health departments to assist with public education and encouragement of modern sanitation systems. In 1933, the U.S. Public Health Service published plans for various types of sanitary privies, including a sanitary privy that incorporated a poured concrete vault as seen in Prairie Grove.

The Civil Works Administration (CWA), a short-lived New Deal job creation program, operated from November 8, 1933, to March 31, 1934. The CWA created construction jobs, and among the projects were "sanitary privies." The CWA experimented with construction of several of the plans, but quickly learned the preferred option was the concrete vault plan.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was begun May 6, 1935. It became the largest New Deal program, providing relief by putting men and women to work. The WPA operated its projects in cooperation with state and local governments; typically materials and supplies were provided using local funds. Some WPA projects were extensions of earlier programs; among these was the construction of sanitary privies.

WPA privies were built across numerous states in cooperation with local governments. Although some were built in urban areas, the majority of these privies were built on farms or other rural properties. During the period from December, 1933, through June, 1942, 2,911,323 sanitary privies were constructed in 38 states and in Puerto Rico through the cooperative effort of the CWA, FERA, WPA, state health departments, and the U. S. Public Health Service.

The Prairie Grove outhouse closely follows the plans used by the CWA, with an oval "pot." Although sources say that WPA privy projects simplified the U.S. Health Service plan by making the pot square, it appears that locally the earlier CWA plan was followed. The construction of the slab, the pot, and the wood structure all closely follow the standard for a "New Deal privy." The project number, "#2648," pressed into the slab is the key evidence this outhouse was built by the WPA, although no known project records survive. This outhouse replaced an earlier outhouse on the property.

These outhouses were built by the millions, however few survive today. New Deal National Register historic context studies in more than one state have included the outhouses as a resource type. Kennedy and Johnson wrote in the east Kentucky study that, "the survival rate of the sanitary privies is likely to be minuscule given their wood-frame construction." The North Dakota study makes a point that these outhouses are so rare that "there is scant documentation in site files for this commonplace historic feature."

The Prairie Grove outhouse retains excellent historic integrity. Historic Preservation staff is not aware of another example within Fort Wayne or Allen County.

### **Prairie Grove Cemetery:**

The cemetery is the final element in the complete composition of a rural church and cemetery complex. The cemetery is a typical example of a rural cemetery that shows the changing population and the changing styles of grave markers from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Cemeteries such as Prairie Grove are common, yet very few have retained a historic church or chapel in association with the cemetery use. The cemetery has excellent historic integrity to 1959, the same year the chapel passed from regular use. The boundary of the district reflects the end of the period of significance in 1959. The same

district boundary is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by staff of the Indiana DNR—Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology.

### **Staff Recommendations:**

For the reasons stated above, staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) should approve the petition, recommend the Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery for Local Historic Designation, and submit a historic district map for City Council approval. Further, staff recommends that any motion to recommend Local Historic Designation by the Commission must refer to specific boundaries that are clearly identifiable or identified on a map.

Staff further recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission should **consider** if the property is threatened and shall be declared to be under interim protection under the Historic Preservation and Protection Ordinance; however **staff does not recommend interim protection for this property.**

If the property is placed under Interim Protection, the Commission shall, by personal delivery or first class mail, provide the owner or occupant of the building, structure or site with a written notice of the declaration within two (2) working days. The written notice must:

- (1) Cite the authority of the Commission to put the building, structure, or site under interim protection under this section;
- (2) Explain the effect of putting the building, structure, or site under interim protection; and,
- (3) Indicate that the interim protection is temporary.

### **Procedural Notes:**

If Local Historic District Designation is recommended for the Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery by the HPC, the Commission's recommendation and a map of the recommended historic district is then forwarded to the Fort Wayne City Council. The City Council makes the final determination of whether to create a Local Historic District. If a new local historic district is subsequently approved by City Council and the Mayor, the map establishing boundaries of the local historic district will be recorded in the Office of the Allen County Recorder. In addition, the owner(s) of the property in the local historic district will be notified by mail of the designation within 60 days following approval by City Council. All designations shall also be recorded on a map and/or mapping system maintained by the organization(s) for land use management that serve(s) the City of Fort Wayne.

A building, structure, or site, placed under interim protection by the HPC, remains under interim protection until the historic district map is approved in an ordinance or rejected by the City Council. While a building, structure, or site is under interim protection under this section:

- (1) The building, structure, or site may not be demolished or moved; and,
- (2) The exterior appearance of the building, structure, or site may not be conspicuously changed by addition, reconstruction, or alteration.

### **Bibliography:**

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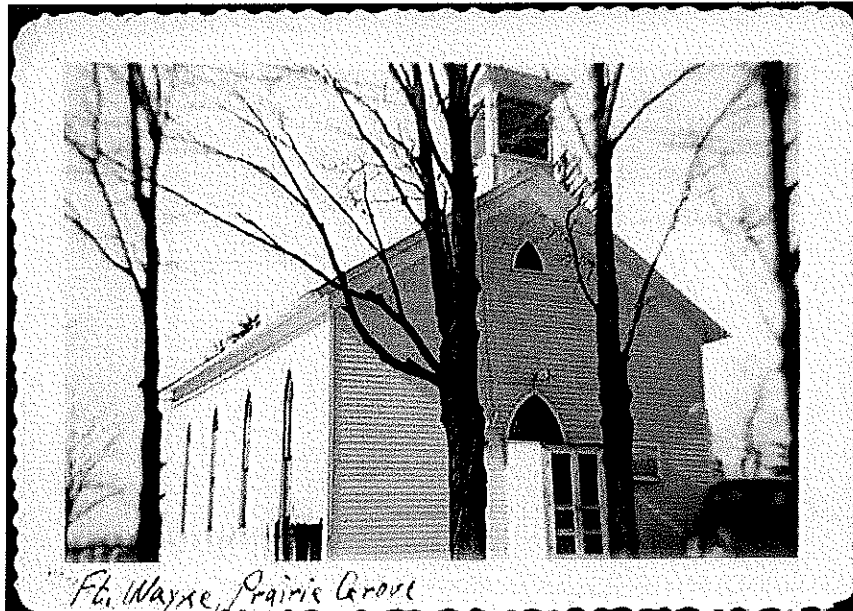
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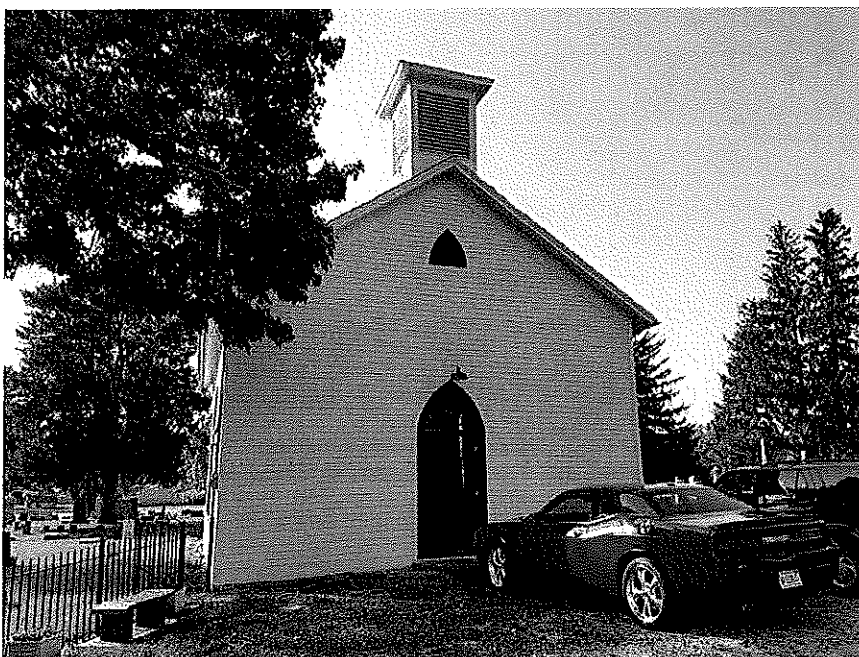
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**Photos:**

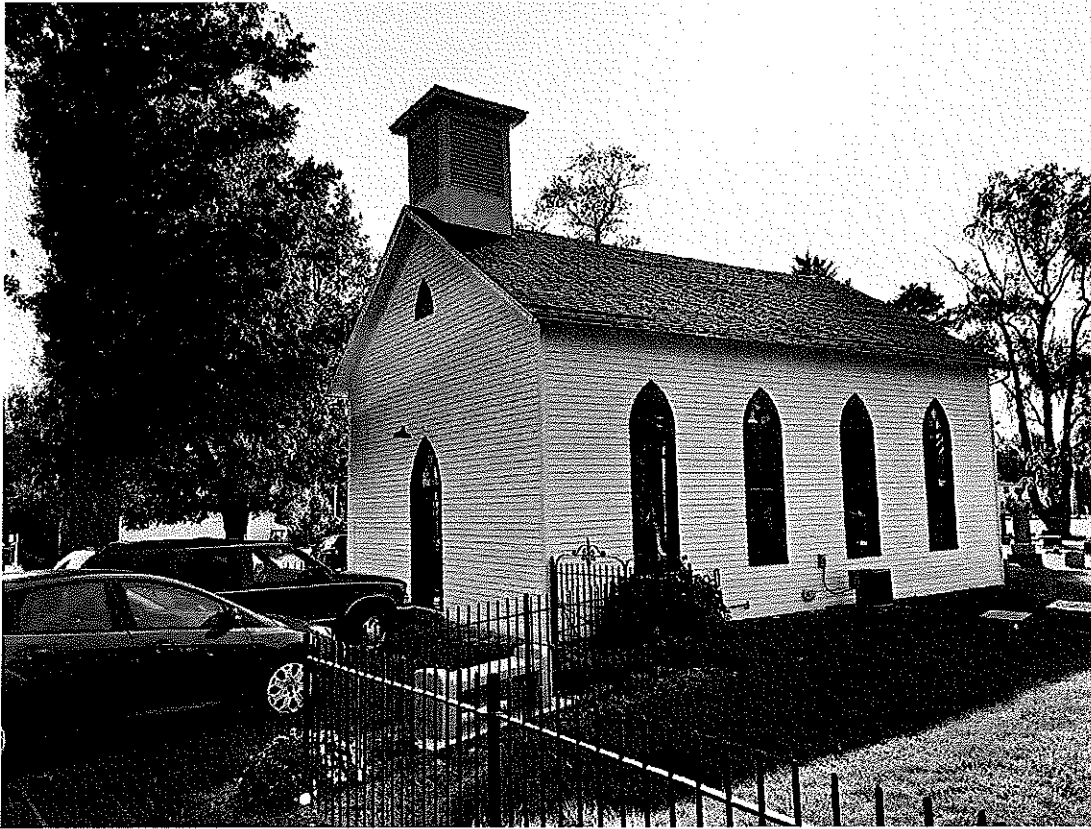
All photos were taken September 26, 2017, unless otherwise noted.



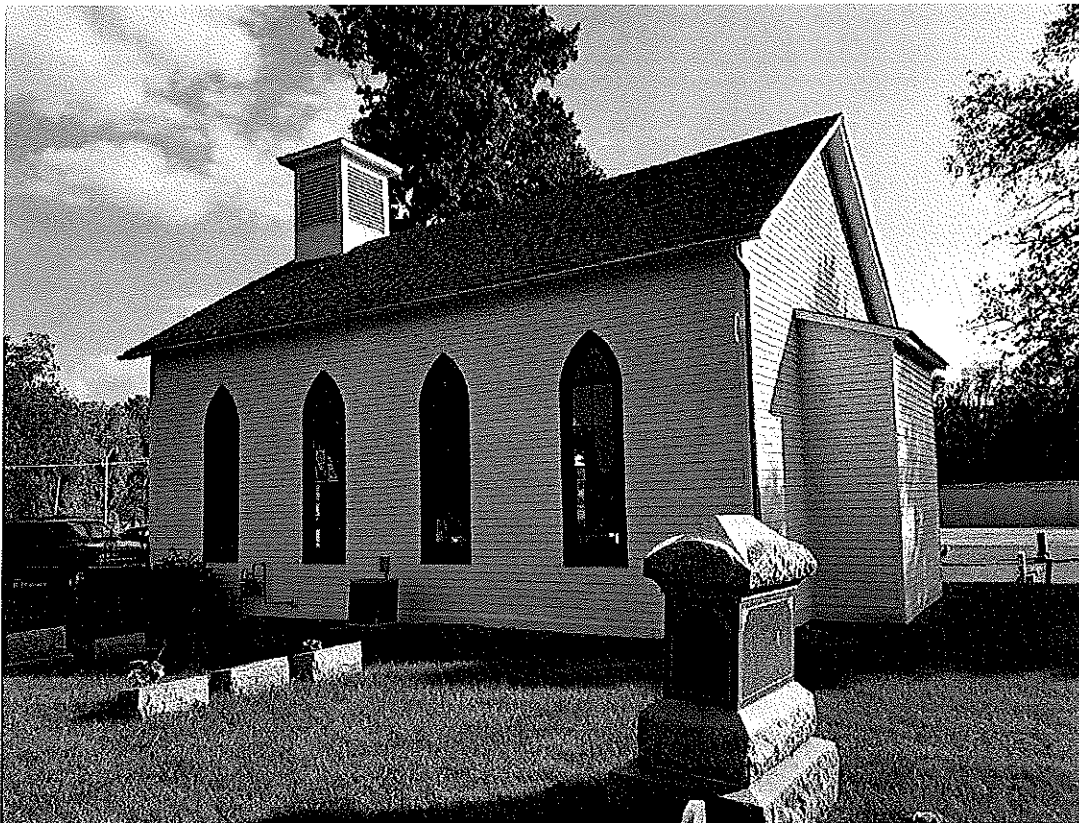
Prairie Grove Chapel; 1945 (Missionary Church Archives & Historical Collections.  
<http://www.mcarchives.org/gsd/collect/missiona/index/assoc/HASHd3aa.dir/000154.jpg>).



Prairie Grove Chapel; façade. Photo looking west. (September 26, 2017)

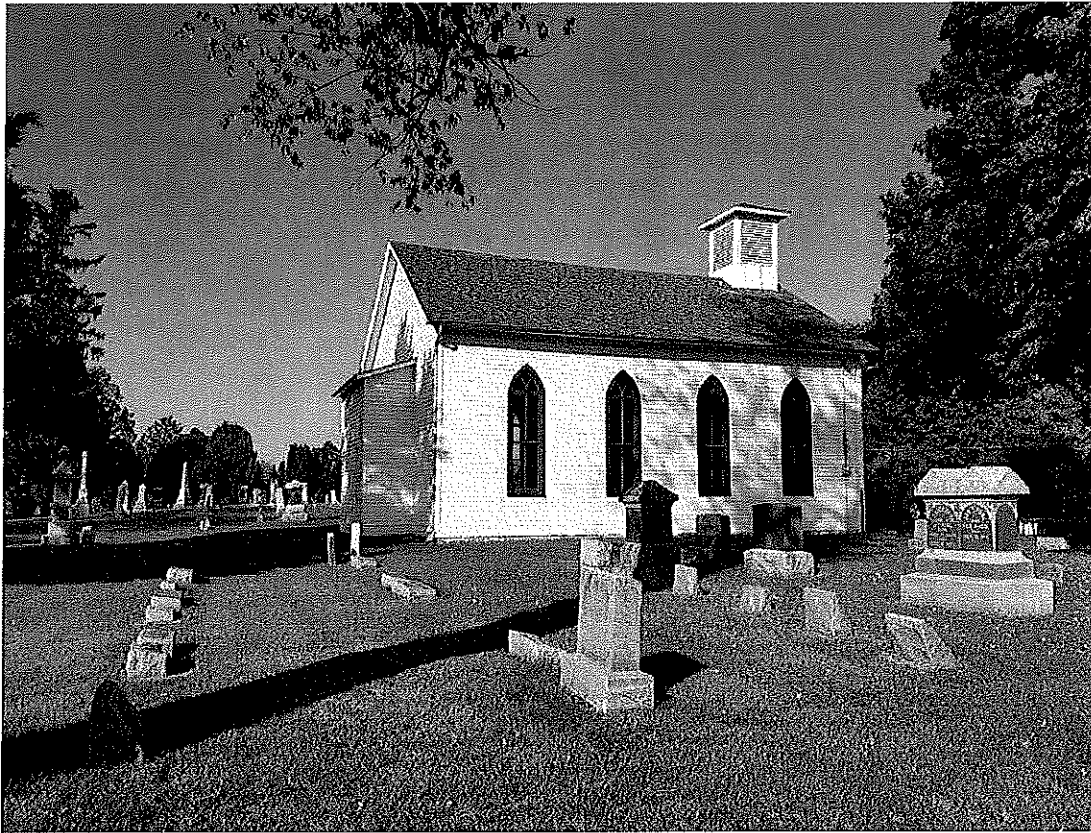


Prairie Grove Chapel; façade and north elevation. Photo looking southwest.



Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery; north and west elevations. Photo looking southeast.

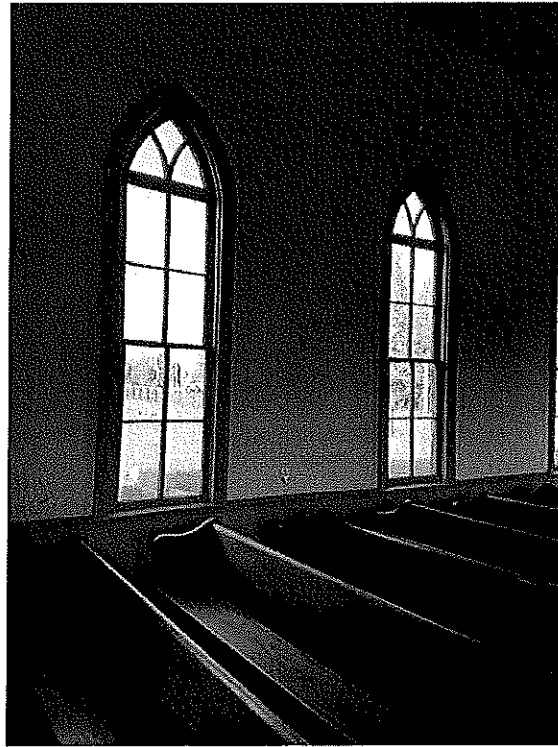




Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery; south elevation. Photo looking north-northeast.



Prairie Grove Chapel; front doors. Photo looking southwest.

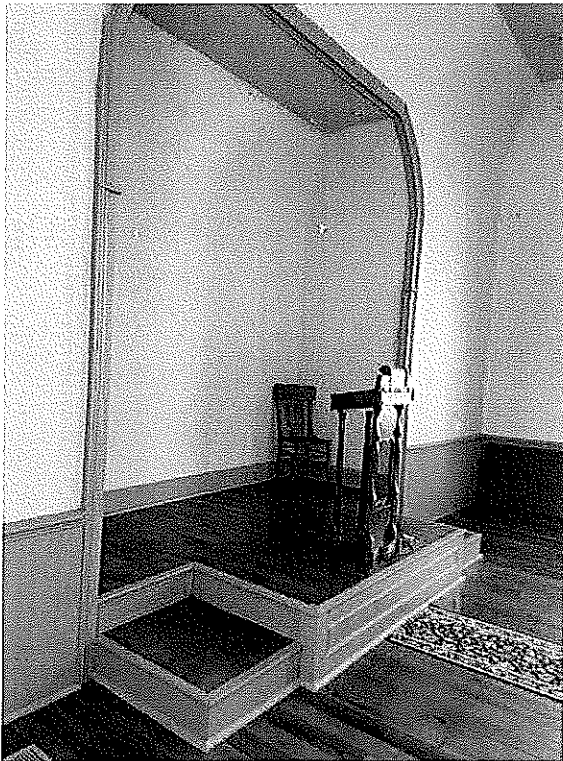


Prairie Grove Chapel; interior. Photo looking north-northeast.

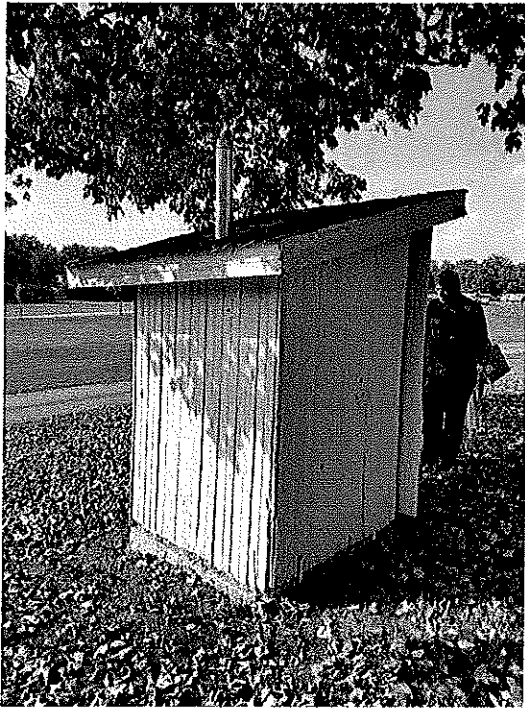




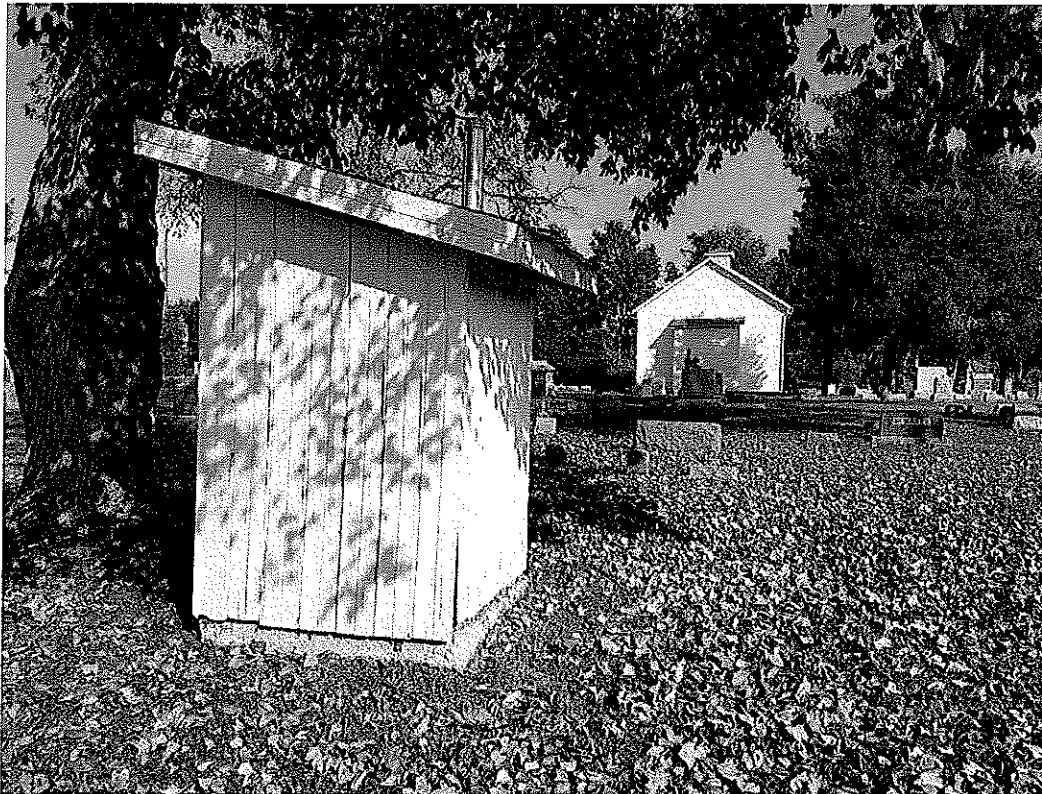
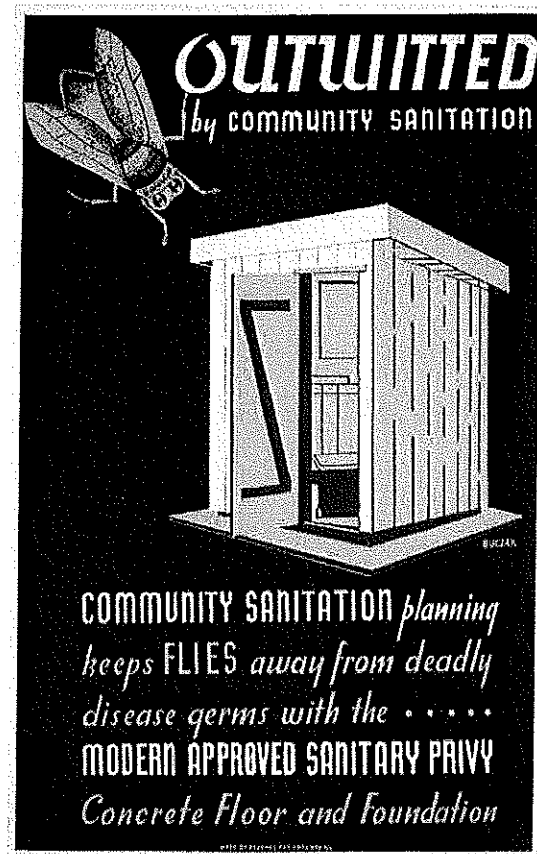
Prairie Grove Chapel; interior. Photo looking west.



Prairie Grove Chapel; interior—altar area.  
Photo looking northwest



Prairie Grove Outhouse; south and west elevations. Photo looking northwest.



Prairie Grove Outhouse; west and south elevations, with Chapel in the distance. Photo looking east.



Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery;  
Richard Beck grave marker, 1861;  
looking east.



Prairie Grove Cemetery and fencing; Old Trail  
Road frontage. Photo looking north.



Prairie Grove Cemetery; near the Richardville Reserve line; Photo looking north.



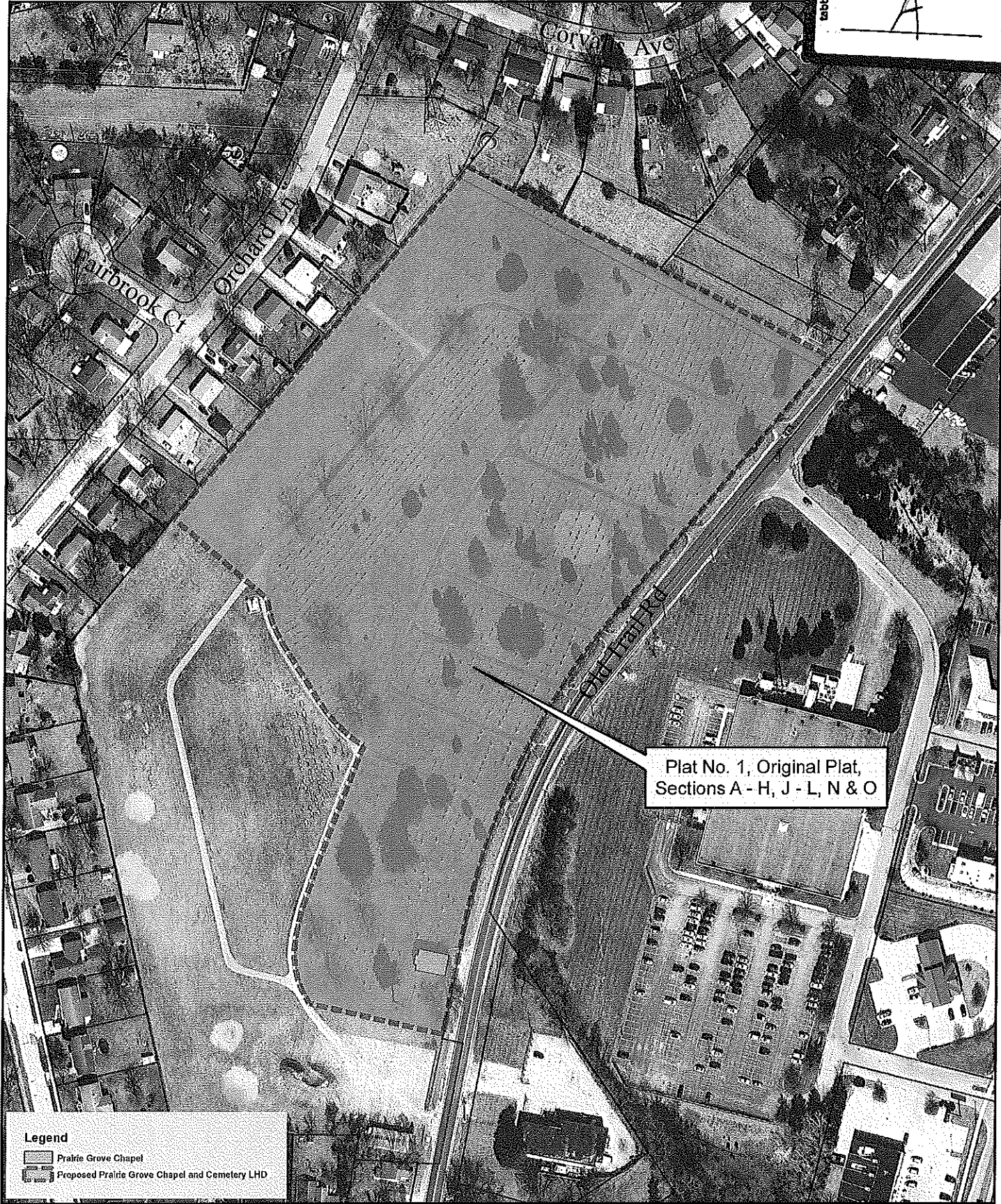
PRAIRIE GROVE CHAPEL AND CEMETERY - PROPOSED LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

6000-6200 Old Trail Road

tabbles

EXHIBIT

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## Memo

**To:** Fort Wayne Common Council  
**From:** Creager Smith, Historic Preservation Planner; Community Development  
**Date:** February 22, 2019  
**Re:** Local Historic District Designation: Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery

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Fort Wayne's Historic Preservation and Protection Ordinance was established to preserve and protect those historically or architecturally worthy structures, sites, and districts which impart a distinct aesthetic quality to the city and which serve as visible reminders of the historic heritage of the city. To assist in achieving this goal, criteria are set forth in the ordinance for the establishment of multiple and single property historic districts.

Pursuant to Chapter 151 of the municipal code, the HPC held a public hearing on January 28, 2019, and voted to recommend designation of the following property as a local historic district:

**Prairie Grove Chapel and Cemetery  
6000-6200 Old Trail Road**

The Prairie Grove Chapel & Cemetery is significant for association with the history of early settlement and the building of rural communities in Wayne Township. This role in the development of the area contributed to founding the community of Waynedale. The property is also significant in the area of local architecture and design; it is outstanding example of a simple rural church and cemetery that represents mid-nineteenth century construction of a rural chapel, and typical development of an associated rural cemetery. The cemetery was established first, with a burial as early as 1833. The church building dates to c.1855 or later, with construction sometime in the nineteenth century. The design and construction of the outhouse at Prairie Grove is consistent with privies that were built in the United States by the Works Progress Administration; few of these structures remain.

Recognizing the historic and architectural significance of the property, a "Petition for Historic Property or District Designation" was prepared and submitted by the owner, the Prairie Grove Cemetery Association, Inc.

Local historic designation requires that the Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Commission review any future conspicuous exterior changes to the property. This does not affect regular repair and maintenance procedures that do not involve a conspicuous exterior change, nor does it mean that buildings/structures cannot be altered or demolished, or that new buildings cannot be constructed. In this case there will be no effect on the continuing use of the cemetery for new burials. Local designation also has no jurisdiction over use.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the Council adopt the attached ordinance amendment in recognition of the historic value of the property and to afford its protection for future generations.

Attached, please find the required map of the proposed district as well as the full review detailing its significance. Please contact me at 427-2161, [creager.smith@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:creager.smith@cityoffortwayne.org), or Don Orban at 427-2160, [don.orban@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:don.orban@cityoffortwayne.org) if you have questions.