

Donovan Smith
Chairperson
Melanie Markowicz
Vice Chair/Secretary

Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director

City of Detroit
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-6225 Fax: (313) 224-4336
e-mail: cpc@detroitmi.gov

Kenneth R. Daniels
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Lauren Hood, MCD
Gwen Lewis
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel M. Udabe

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Eric Fazzini, Staff
Jamie Murphy, Staff

RE: Request of Mariners' Church of Detroit for PC (Public Center) Special District Review of a proposed sign at 170 East Jefferson Avenue – Mariners' Church of Detroit (**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**)

BACKGROUND

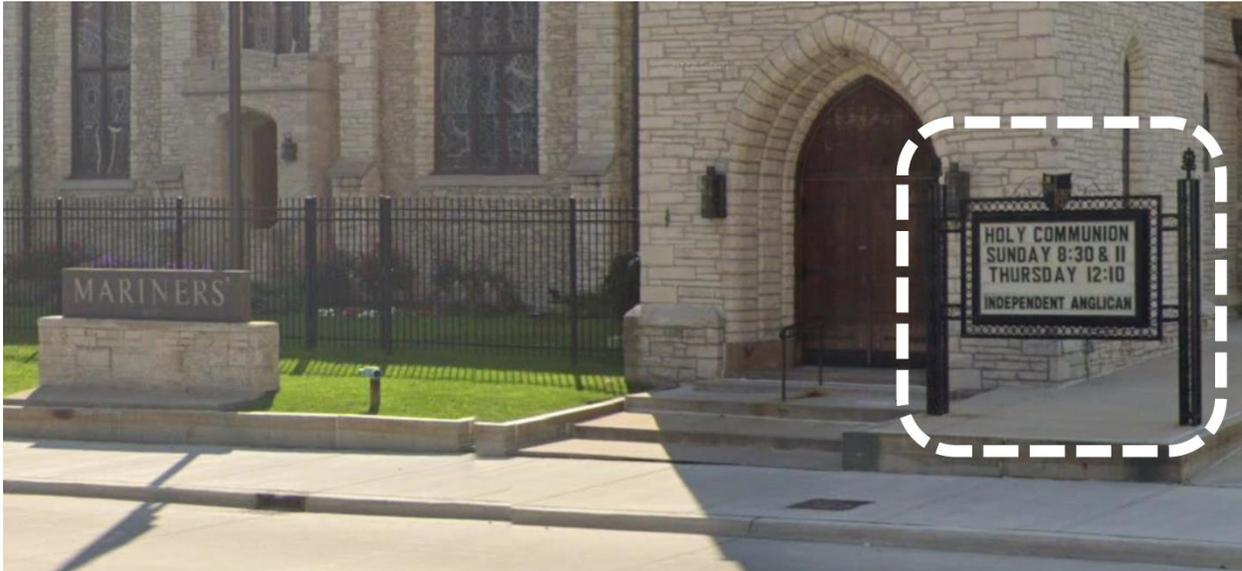
On April 4, 2023, City Council approved a resolution authorizing exterior alterations at the subject site commonly known as Mariners' Church. This approval included reconstructing new pinnacles at the top of existing building turrets at each corner, adding focused uplighting to highlight the building's historic architecture, reopening two façade areas facing Hart Plaza, and other relatively minor site and building enhancements. Site plan review was not required based on the limited extent of exterior modifications. Please refer to the attached City Council report dated March 23, 2023, for more information on the exterior alterations previously approved by City Council.

During this 2023 consideration, the applicant had indicated their desire to restore or replace an existing readerboard type pole sign facing East Jefferson Avenue that was removed from the site sometime in 2022. As the applicant had not finalized the design of the replacement sign prior to City Council consideration, City Council included the following condition of approval #2, at staff's recommendation, to allow the minor site and building enhancements to proceed, with the replacement sign delegated to the City Planning Commission for future consideration.

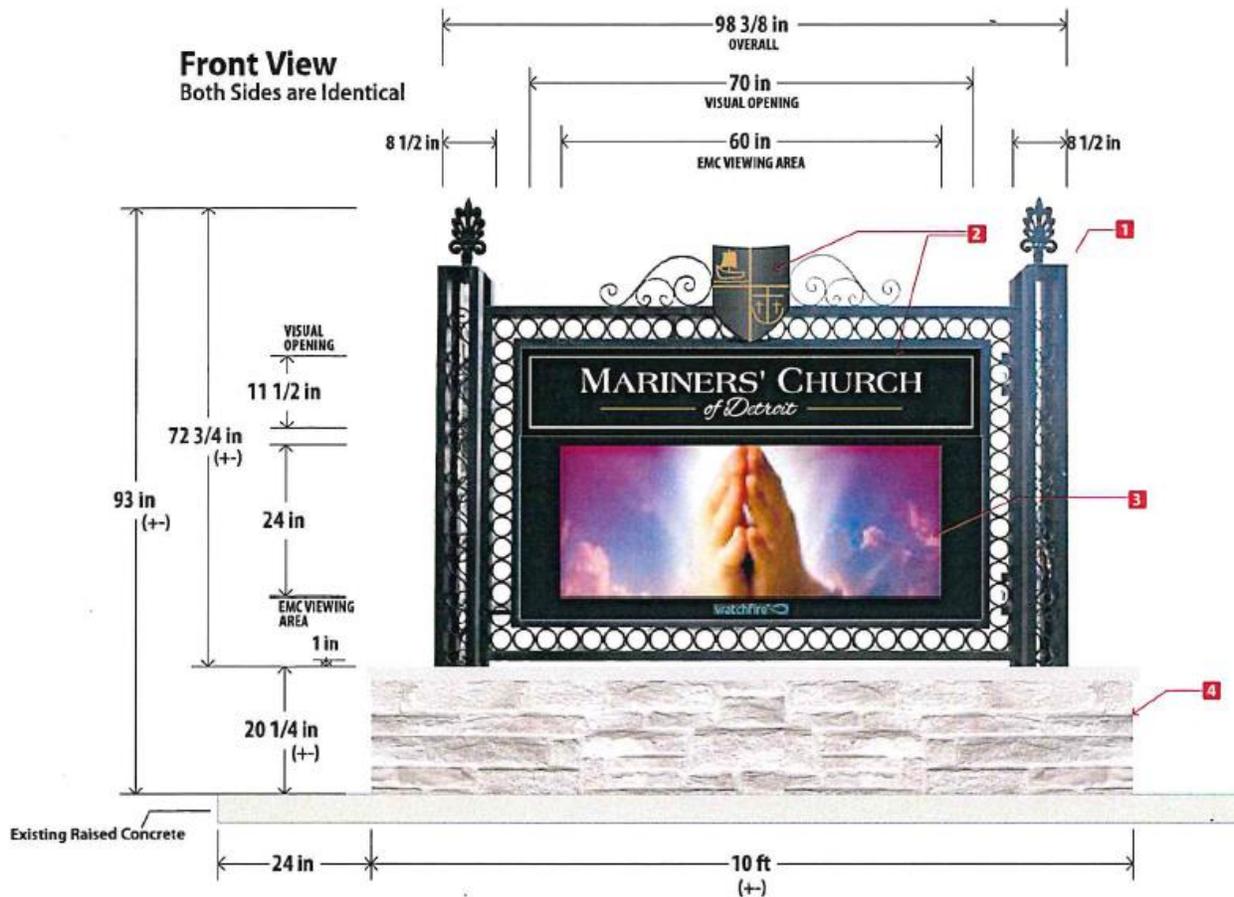
- That City Council delegate PC Review and approval authority of any future replacement sign as indicated in this report and the Master Plan to the City Planning Commission for review of a sign that complies with Chapter 4 of the 2019 Detroit City Code. City Planning Commission approval shall be required prior to BSEED granting a sign permit.*

PROPOSED SIGN

The applicant is now proposing to install a new monument sign along East Jefferson Avenue near the location of the removed readerboard pole sign. The proposed sign would constitute a second monument sign along East Jefferson Avenue. On the following page are images of existing and proposed signage. Please refer to the attached signage package for full details. The proposed sign would face east-west travel lanes where it previously faced the sidewalk, and the original metal sign structure would be renovated with a new L.E.D. display area and masonry base added.



August 2021 Google Streetview of Existing Monument Sign (L) and Removed Pole Sign (R)



Proposed Sign in location of Removed Pole Sign

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS – City Code Ch. 4

Chapter 4 of the Detroit City Code, Advertising and Signs, includes requirements for signs citywide. Below is a summary of Chapter 4 as it relates to this proposal.

- The Mariners’ Church site is located within the Central Business District. The Central Business District corresponds with the *High-density commercial/industrial sign district* (Sec. 4-1-1).
- The proposed sign meets the definition of *monument sign*: a type of ground sign that is supported primarily by an internal structural framework concealed in an opaque covering or solid structural foundation with no air space between the ground and the sign face.
- Monument signs are permissible in the *high-density commercial/industrial sign district* which the Mariners’ Church site is located within. For this sign district, the area of each face of a monument must not exceed 20 square feet, the height must not exceed 10 feet, and any monument sign located in the Central Business District may be illuminated and animated (Sec. 4-4-39).

Based on the above analysis, it appears that the proposed sign design would comply with Chapter 4 of the City Code subject to BSEED granting a sign permit.

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS – PC Review Criteria

There are eighteen PC District Review Criteria listed in Section 50-11-67 of the Zoning Ordinance. As stated in Section 50-3-225, the purpose of this design review “is to ensure harmony with the Public Center and for consistency with the spirit, intent, and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.” Criteria #11 below is the most applicable to the proposed sign:

(11) Signage and graphics should be tastefully designed to be visually appealing and in character with surrounding development; they should provide needed information, direction and orientation in a clear and concise manner.

Staff comments: The proposed sign would be in character with surrounding development as larger digital signs exist to the east of the site at the Renaissance Center (multiple digital signs) and the west of the site at the main Hart Plaza entrance. Additionally, the proposed sign would include ornate metal framing and would allow for church-related information to be displayed digitally with an orientation that would improve readability from East Jefferson Avenue and traffic entering the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the above, City Planning Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed sign.

Attachments: Mariners’ Church Master Plan CC Report 03232023
 2023 Mariners’ Church Master Plan
 Proposed Sign Plan 1
 Proposed Sign Plan 2

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD
 Greg Moots, PDD
 Russell Baltimore, PDD
 Dave Bell, Director, BSEED
 Charles Reed, BSEED
 Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
 Bruce Goldman, Law Department
 Daniel Arking, Law Department