STAFF REPORT 03-11-2020 REGULAR MEETING

APPLICATION NUMBER: 20-6655 **ADDRESS:** 445 LEDYARD STREET **HISTORIC DISTRICT:** CASS PARK

APPLICANT: BRENT WALKER, FASTSIGNS DETROIT **PROPERTY OWNER:** EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MICHIGAN

DATE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION: 02-20-2020

STAFF SITE VISIT: 02-28-2020

SCOPE: ERECT NEW MONUMENT SIGN

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building located at 445 Ledyard Street is a 2-story structure that was constructed in 1956 as the Mariners Inn. The horizontal massing is clad in variegated light red/orange brick and features cast stone details. A single-story addition was constructed in 1995 directly east (toward Cass Avenue) of the original structure. The addition is simple in design and is clad in a red/orange brick similar to that of the original building and features buff-colored bands above and below window openings and around the top of the parapet. The original structure includes a symmetrical front façade with the main entrance located at the center of the façade. Landscaping exists between the front façade and the sidewalk. The building addition is surrounded on the south, west, and east sides with surface parking. A paved and fenced-in recreation area exists at the rear (west) of the structure.

PREPARED BY: A. PHILLIPS



PROPOSAL

With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to erect a new monument sign per the attached drawings and application. Included in the proposal are the following scope items:

- New 6'W x 4'H aluminum sign panel between 4" aluminum posts (color: black) to be located in a landscaped area at the southeast corner of the front façade.
- Sign panel to be raised 2' above grade, leaving space between grade and the bottom of the sign panel for an overall sign height of 6'-0".

• Aluminum posts to be embedded in concrete footings which will terminate 42" below grade.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS & RESEARCH

- Cass Park Historic District designated in 2016.
- The area proposed for the sign location is highly visible from the right-of-way.

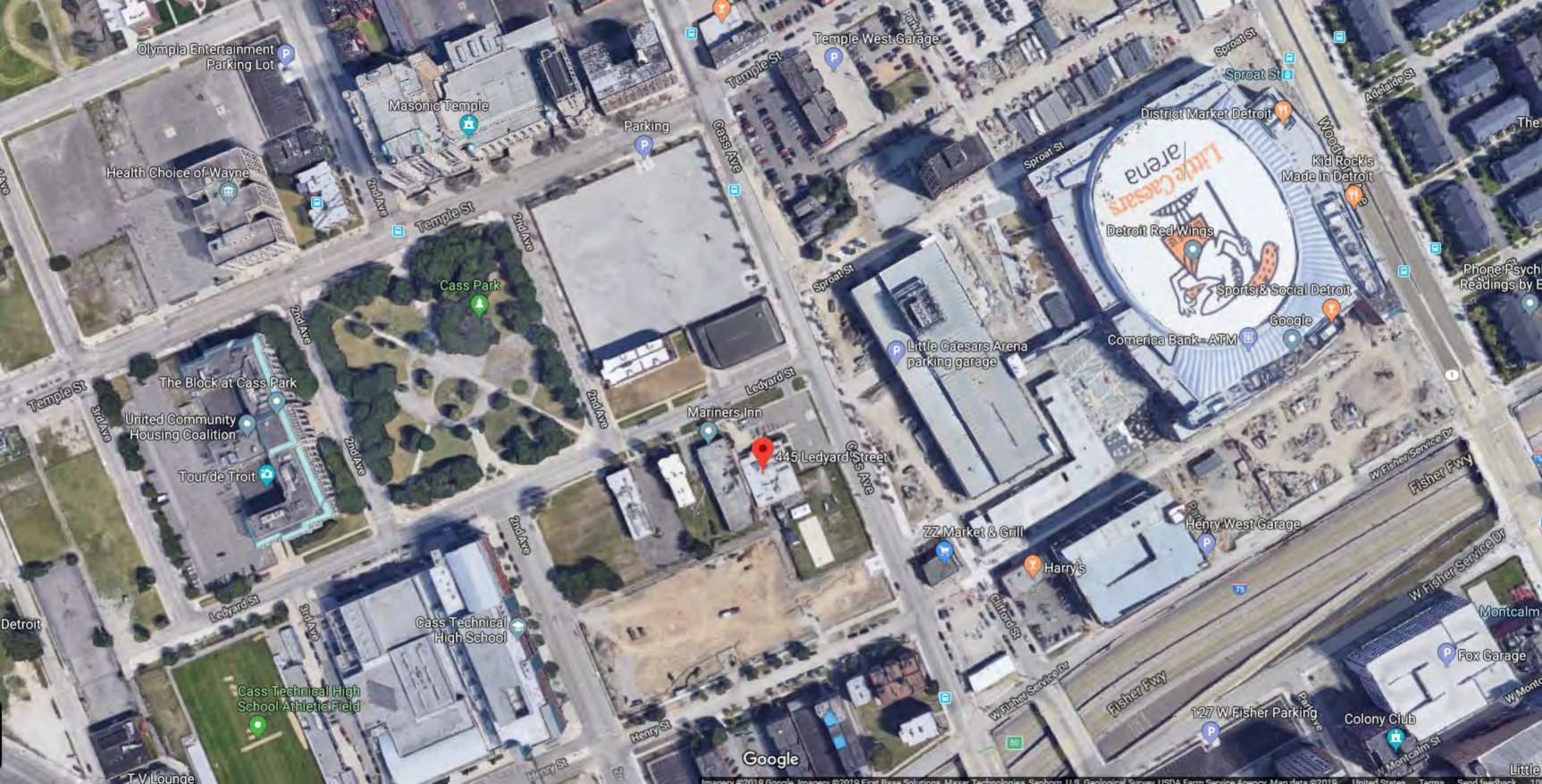
ISSUES

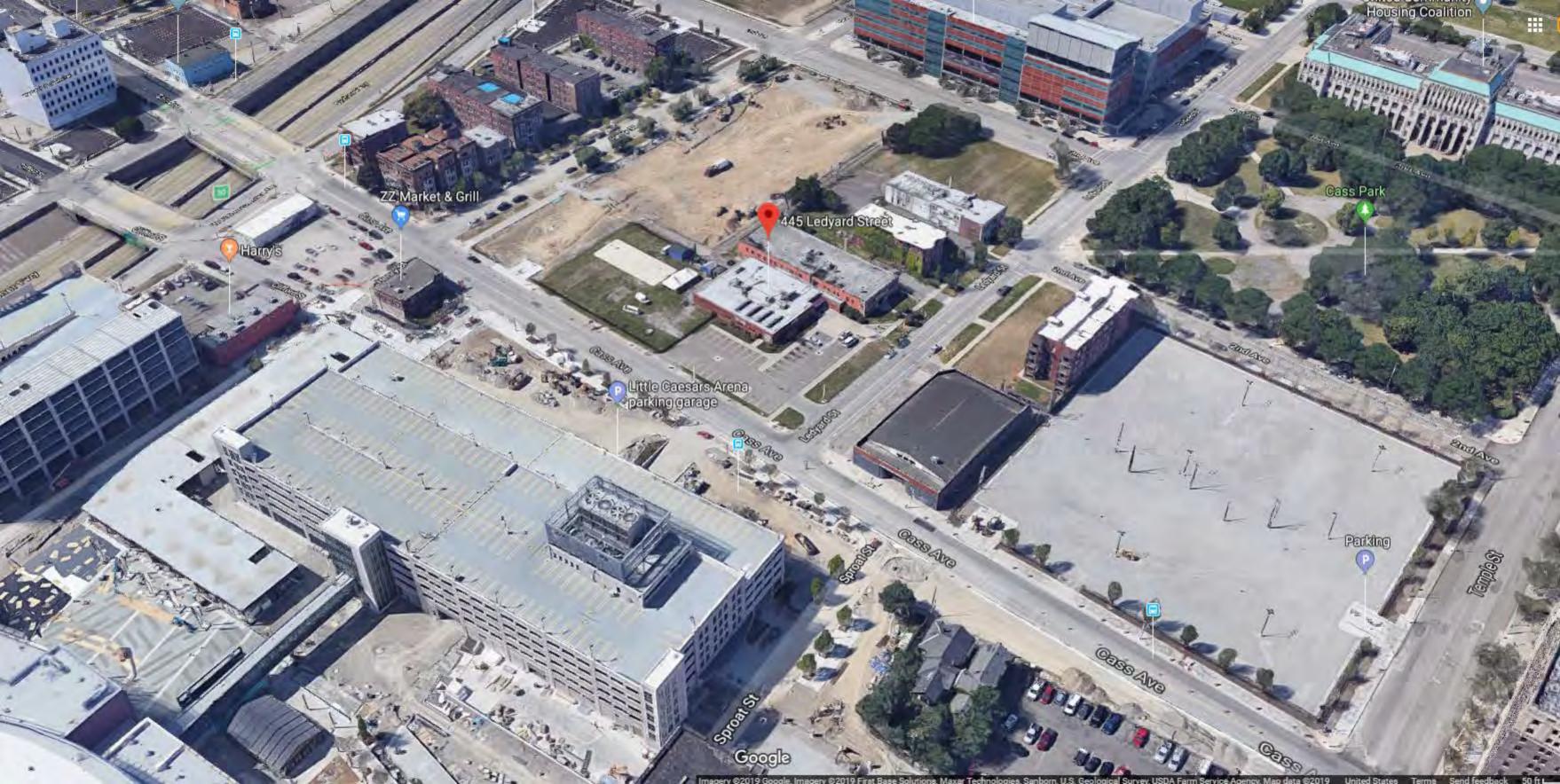
- Sign proposal does not meet the Historic District Commission's Signs and Awning Guidelines specifically the guideline related to the sign base which states, "Provide a sign base of masonry, granite, or concrete with an architectural finish. A metal base on grade is prohibited unless it is 12" above grade."
- It is staff's opinion that although the proposed sign does not meet the Guidelines, it is compatible with the architectural features of the property, and protects the historic integrity of the property. It also does not alter features or spaces that characterize the property.

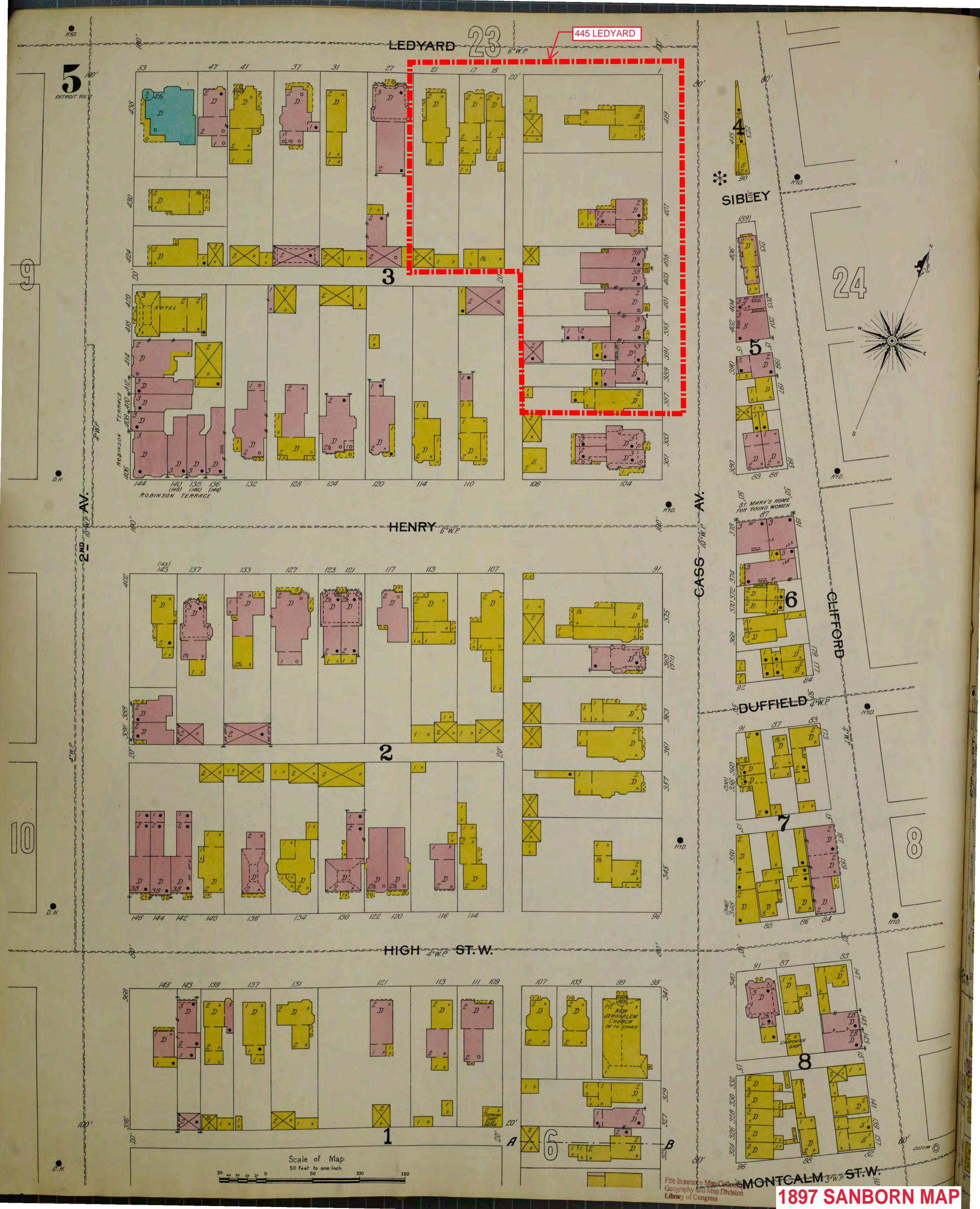
RECOMMENDATION

It is staff's opinion that the work, as proposed, retains and preserves the historic character of the building, its site, and setting. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness as the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, especially:

- #2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- #9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

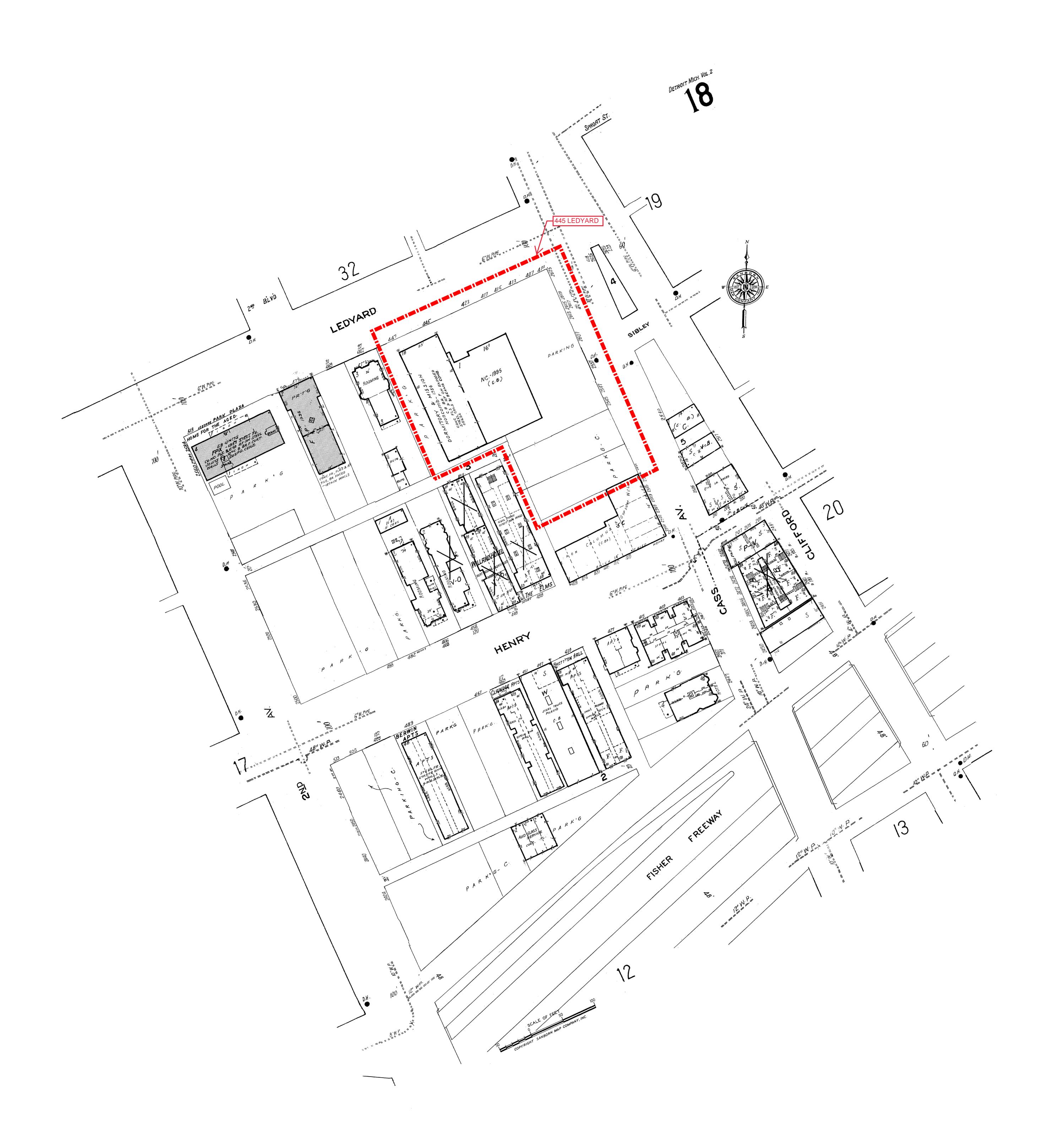


















































Mariners Inn

Historic Building Signage — Project Review Plan 445 Ledyard St., Detroit, MI 48201

Existing Conditions of Signage Area:

Area where 4" black aluminum post and panel sign is to be placed is currently a well-kept landscaped bed of pea gravel and shrubbery surrounded by landscaping pavers.

Project Description/Narrative:

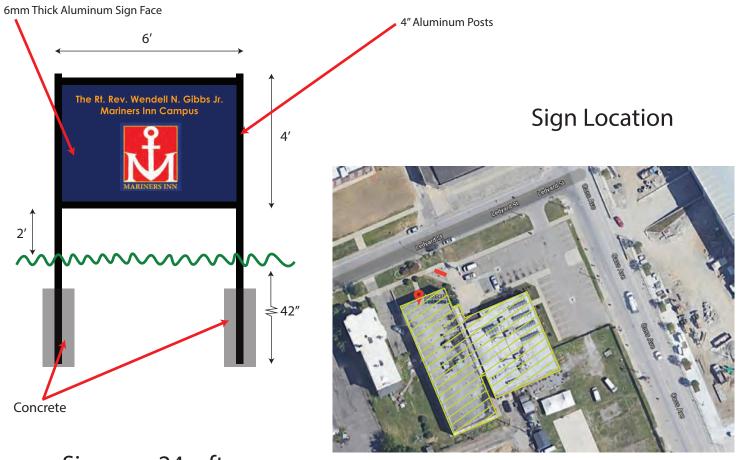
The goal of Mariners Inn is to add a single-sided, elementary post and panel sign facing in the direction of the intersection of Cass Ave. and Ledyard St. to identify the front entrance of the building. This will be the only ground-level sign on this property and will help to better control the flow of vehicle and foot traffic on the premises. Due to this sign's purpose of directing traffic toward the main entrance, it is relatively plain and easy read/understand in comparison to other signage affixed to this historical building.

Scope of Work:

This sign will arrive at the Mariners Inn site preassembled by FASTSIGNS Detroit. Installation of the proposed signage will require two employees of FASTSIGNS Detroit and a single post-hole digger. This installation will not affect the integrity of the historical structure in any way.

*Note: Sign permit has been approved by city. Sign installation is pending bassed on approval by Historic Preservation Department.





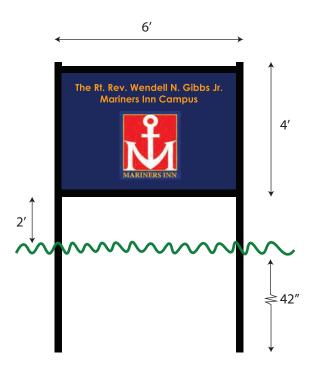
Signage: 24sqft



445 Ledyard St, Detroit, MI 48201





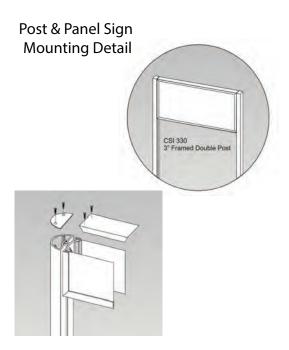


Signage: 24sqft



445 Ledyard St, Detroit, MI 48201





Signs & Awning Guidelines



"Signs often become so important to a community that they are valued long after their role as commercial markers has ceased. They become landmarks, loved because they have been visible at certain street corners--or from many vantage points across the city--for a long time. Such signs are valued for their familiarity, their beauty, their humor, their size, or even their grotesqueness. In these cases, signs transcend their conventional role as vehicles of information, as identifiers of something else. When signs reach this stage, they accumulate rich layers of meaning. They no longer merely advertise, but are valued in and of themselves. They become icons."

Signs as Icons, "The Preservation of Historic Signs," by Michael J. Auer. Preservation Brief, #25 (Technical Preservation Services), National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

The cultural significance of signs combined with their often transitory nature makes the preservation of historic signs fraught with questions, problems, and paradoxes. If the common practice in every period has been to change signs with regularity, when and how should historic signs be kept? If the business is changing hands, how can historic signs be reused? The subject is an important one, and offers opportunities to save elements that convey the texture of daily life from the past.

The Preservation of Historic Signs," by Michael J. Auer. Preservation Brief, #25 (Technical Preservation Services), National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

SIGNS

Objective

• To enhance the integrity of the buildings and community by preserving and appropriately restoring historic signs

Purpose of signage:

- To indicate the original occupants and the area's past. Even with a change in business, retaining historic signage as part of the community memory is desirable
- To identify current businesses and stores

Guidelines

- 1. Preserve historic signage when possible
- 2. Restore signs only when the original has lost its visibility through age, damage, or excessive/inappropriate cleaning
- 3. Create attractive commercial signs that promote business, both pedestrian and vehicular, but are free of visual clutter



- 4. Require that new signage compliment the historic integrity of the building and community. Signs must relate to the building(s) they serve
- 5. Signs shall be restricted to those which identify the name of the establishment and/or the primary business or service provided within.
- 6. Advertising related to businesses or services not provided on the premises shall be prohibited unless, with the approval of the Commission, such advertising is deemed historically appropriate.

7. Signage should make an attempt to recognize the stylistic features and characteristics of the historical districts in their materials and graphics

8. Signage should recognize the scale, massing, style, materials and colors of the building and the district

Common elements of historic signage include:

- Painted facades and fascia signs
- Material inlaid into the buildings façade
- Hanging signs and older neon signs
- Gold leaf or gilded lettering in storefront windows



Signs Mounted on Buildings

Size

Signage must fit within the building design and its storefront and be historically compatible with the site and context; must be compatible with building; and must not obscure architectural elements.

Shape

Shape of sign must be consistent with the character of the historic district in which the signage is located.

Materials

- Material inlaid or carved into the buildings façade should be retained
- Sign materials should be compatible with the design theme and use of materials on the building where the sign is to be placed.
- Painted wood and metal are preferred materials for the signs.
- Metal signs, wood signs, glass signs, and signs painted on masonry are permitted.

Position

- Locate signage above the storefront opening so that it does not conceal architectural details and features
- Signs should be located where architectural features or details suggest a location, size, or shape for the sign
- Signs should be placed on buildings consistent with sign location on adjacent buildings
- Limit the number of projecting signs
- In pedestrian areas, orient signs to sidewalk instead of motorists.

- The bottom of hanging signs should maintain at least a 10 foot pedestrian clearance from the sidewalk.
- Signs on canopies should be twelve (12) inches away from the end edges of such canopies.
- Maintain a physical separation between individual store signs so that it is clear that the sign relates to a particular store below

Illumination

- Consider if the sign needs to be lighted
- Use external or halo lighting to illuminate building and/or storefront signage
- Lighting should fit within the building design and its storefront and be architecturally compatible with the site and context
- With internally illuminated channel letters, limit raceways depth behind letter to five (5) inches (2 inches when using LED light source)

Typeface/Legibility

- Use cast or fabricated metal dimensional graphics
 letters and logos in lieu of plastic or vinyl dimensional graphics
- Use a minimum of ½ deep metal dimensional graphics letters and logos.
- Selected materials should contribute to the legibility of the sign
- Avoid faddish or bizarre typefaces
- Avoid hard to read typefaces and symbols
- Limit the number of lettering styles



Color

- Sign colors should complement the colors used on the structures and the project as a whole
- Sign colors should reflect the color system appropriate to the period of the building
- Limit the total number of colors used in any one sign

Signs not mounted on buildings (commercial development or multi-tenants identification) should reference the following guidelines:

- 1. Use a ground or monumental sign not to exceed six-feet in height including the base
- 2. Provide a sign base of masonry, granite, or concrete with an architectural finish. A metal base on grade is prohibited unless it is 12 inches above grade
- 3. Include landscaping around the base of ground and monument signs
- 4. Limit commercial development identification signage to a maximum of two signs (double face) when development is on two major streets, not to exceed 150 square foot of signage
- 5. For *pylon* sings, limit height to a maximum of (12) twelve foot in height above grade including its base and post. Limit post width to 12 inch face.

- 6. Provide professionally made signage, including design, material, painting and construction.
- 7. Use signage materials that are architecturally appropriate to the historic character of the neighborhood

AWNINGS\CANOPIES

Objective

• To enhance the integrity of the buildings and community by preserving and appropriately restoring historic awnings and canopies

Purpose of awning

• Awnings and canopies provide protection form the elements, expand floor space, provide unity of appearance, and create a decorative backdrop for identification.

Guidelines

- 1. Design awnings and canopies so as not to conceal building features such as pilasters or windows.
- 2. Use color schemes to coordinate with building façade colors
- 3. Use simple and triangular shape awnings with valance face not to exceed ten (10) inches
- 4. Install into mortar joints no fastening into brick, stone or arch details.

Standards

- 1. Locate awnings, canopies and marquees and their supporting structure at a minimum of eight (8) feet, six (6) inches above public sidewalk
- 2. Project awnings and canopies not more than one half the width of the sidewalk and not more than 10 feet, six inches.
- 3. Project awnings and canopy material such as metal, glass, or woven fabric.
- 4. Limit signage on awning to the valance area (e.g., front fascia of the awning, not the sloped area.) Include business name, address, logo, or business "slogan," but not to exceed 40% of the awning valance surface area. Product advertising is unacceptable.
- 5. Limit the signage area of awnings and canopies to tat allowed per Section 61-140292(5) of the City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance.



6. Use external lighting to illuminate awnings. Internally illuminated awnings are unacceptable.

- 7. Use awnings to define individual storefront openings. Continuous awnings along blank walls or awnings located at upper floor windows are unacceptable.
- 8. Use exposed awning design with open ends and no ceiling.

Other

The awning may be attached either just below the storefront cornice or between the transom and display windows (allowing light into the store while shading merchandise and pedestrians from the sun.)

The awning should fit within the storefront opening; i.e., should not cover the piers or space above the cornice. Aluminum awnings or canopies generally detract from the historic character and should not be erected.

New coverings for existing – previously approved – awnings may be administratively approved by the coordinator if the colors, content, placement of printing and materials are appropriate.

"... signs (and awnings) convey the texture of daily life from the past."

Variance to the above guidelines may be granted by the Historic District Commission.

The Historic District Commission reserves all rights to amend and/or update this policy statement. Any questions pertaining to this policy shall be directed to the Historic District Commission, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1300, Detroit, Michigan 48226, telephone (313) 224-06536

Use these guidelines in conjunction with the City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance: Signs – Article VI and Awnings-Article XIV General Development Standards

Adopted: August 13, 2008 Effective: August 13, 2008

Revised: May 12, 2010 and November 13, 2013

Sec. 21-2-233. - Cass Park Local Historic District.

- (a) An historic district to be known as the Cass Park Local Historic District is established in accordance with the provisions of this article.
- (b) This historic district designation is certified as being consistent with the Detroit Master Plan of Policies.
- (c) The boundaries of the Cass Park Local Historic District, as shown on the map on file in the Office of the City Clerk, are as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the center line of Cass Avenue and the center line of Ledyard Avenue; thence westerly along the center line of Ledyard Avenue to the center line of Second Avenue (East of Cass Park); thence northerly along Second Avenue (East of Cass Park) to the south line extended of Lot 17, Block 81, "Subdivision of Blocks 81 and 82 Cass Farm" as recorded in Liber 1, Page 93, of Plats, Wayne County Records; thence easterly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of the north-south public alley first west of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said alley center line to a line extended being the north line of the south five feet of Lot 16, Block 81, "Subdivision of Blocks 81 and 82 Cass Farm" as recorded in Liber 1, Page 93, of Plats, Wayne County Records; thence westerly along above said line extended to the center line of Second Avenue (East of Cass Park); thence northerly along said center line of Second Avenue (East of Cass Park) to the center line of Temple Avenue; thence easterly along said center line of Temple Avenue to the center line of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said center line of Cass Avenue to the center line of Temple Avenue (East of Cass Avenue); thence easterly along said center line of Temple Avenue to the north-south public alley first east of Cass Avenue; thence southerly along said alley center line to the center line of the east-west public alley first south of Temple Avenue; thence easterly along said alley center line to the center line of the northsouth public alley first west of Park Avenue; thence northerly along said alley center line to the extended south line of Lot 21, Block 75, "Plat of the Subdivision of Park Lots 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 City of Detroit" as recorded in Liber 53, Page 196, Deeds, Wayne County Records; thence easterly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of Park Avenue, thence northerly along the center line of Park Avenue to the extended north line of Lot 22, Block 74 "Plat of the Subdivision of Park Lots 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 City of Detroit" as recorded in Liber 53, Page 196 Deeds, Wayne County Records, thence westerly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of the north-south public alley first west of Park Avenue; thence southerly along said center line to the center line of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said center line of Temple Avenue to the center line of the north-south public alley first east of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said alley center line to the extended north line of Lot 30, Block 74, "Plat of the Subdivision of Park Lots 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 City of Detroit" as recorded in Liber 53, Page 196 Deeds, Wayne County Records; thence westerly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along the center line of Cass Avenue to the extended north line of Lot 6, Block 83, "Plat of part of the Cass Farm, Blocks 83 and 84 as recorded in Liber 1, Page 131, as recorded in Plats, Wayne County Records: thence westerly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of the north-south public alley first west of Cass Avenue; thence southerly along said alley

center line to the center line of the east-west public alley first north of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said alley center line to the extension of the easterly line of the west 40 feet of Lot 14, Block 83, "Plat of part of the Cass Farm, Blocks 83 and 84," Liber 1, Page 131, Plats, Wayne County Records; thence northerly along said easterly line of the west 40 feet of Lot 14 and its extension to the center line of Charlotte Avenue; thence westerly along said center line of Charlotte Avenue to the center line of Second Avenue; thence southerly along the center line of Second Avenue to the center line of the eastwest public alley first north of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said alley center line to the extended west line of Lot 21, Block 84, "Plat of part of the Cass Farm, Blocks 83 and 84," Liber 1, Page 131, Plats, Wayne County Records; thence southerly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said center line of Temple Avenue to the center line of a north-south public alley (now an easement) first east of Third Avenue; thence southerly along said alley center line to the center line of Ledyard Avenue; thence easterly along said center line of Ledyard Avenue to the center line of Second Avenue (south of Ledyard Avenue); thence southerly along the center line of Second Avenue to the center line of the east-west public alley first south of Ledyard Avenue; thence easterly along said alley center line to the center line of the north-south public alley, first west of Cass Avenue; thence southerly along said alley center line to the extended south line of Lot 5, Block 79, "Plat of the Subdivision Block 79 and 80 of the Cass Farm," as recorded in Liber 1, Pages 92 and 93, Plats, Wayne County Records; thence easterly along said lot line and its extension to the center line of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said center line of Cass Avenue to the center line of Ledyard Avenue and the point of beginning.

- (d) The elements of design, as defined in <u>Section 21-2-2</u> of this Code, are as follows:
 - (1) *Height.* Heights within the district are varied, from 445 Ledyard, a two-story building with a single-story addition, to 500 Temple, a 14- story building. Commercial, residential, and institutional buildings all vary in height.
 - (2) *Proportion of buildings front façades.* Front façades of all buildings are typically taller than wide, with few exceptions. A notable exception is the building at 2727 Second Avenue, which is four stories tall but is composed of three distinct sections, two of which are taller than wide. Buildings often occupy most or all of deep lots, resulting in side elevations of buildings that are often substantially wider than tall.
 - (3) Proportion of openings within the façades. Openings generally amount to between 20 percent and 35 percent of the front façade, typical of office or apartment buildings from the first half of the 20th Century. Windows are taller than wide on all building types with the exception of Art Deco-influenced buildings at 2906 Cass Avenue and 445 Ledyard. On apartment buildings, sash windows are sometimes arranged in groupings which, together, are wider than tall. A minority of buildings feature arched, mullioned, semi-circular, easement, or dormer windows appropriate to their respective architectural styles. Upper sashes and transoms are occasionally subdivided into smaller panes.

- Casement windows are usually subdivided into smaller panes. Door openings are typically slightly larger in scale than window openings. Primary entrance openings are usually centered on the façades of buildings.
- (4) Rhythm of solids to voids in the front façades. None.
- (5) Rhythm of spacing of building on streets. Rhythm of spacing on streets is generally determined by setbacks from side lot lines. The overall character of the district is one of densely clustered, yet visually distinct, structures separated by narrow side setbacks, or sharing common walls. There is a general irregularity in the widths of buildings, and in the widths of subdivision lots themselves, subdivision lots from one block to another, contribute to an irregular rhythm of spacing of building on streets.
- (6) Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections. Porches and entrance typically do not project. On apartment buildings, entrances are often located several steps above grade to accommodate high basements. Doorways on other buildings are typically centered on building façades. Irregular building widths creates an irregular rhythm of entrance projections. Several entrances of the building at 500 Temple are raised above a high basement and accessed by broad, projecting, limestone steps.
- (7) Relationship of materials. Many buildings are faced with brick and feature stone or cast stone trim. Limestone clads several buildings, including monumental structures at 2727 Second Avenue and 500 Temple. Wood is uncommon other than as a sash window material, but wood brackets and caves adorn the sole building on Charlotte. Metal is used on decorative corbel panels on 2952 Second Avenue, for window spandrels at 2966 Second Avenue, as a window frame material on several buildings, and, notably, for the porcelain enamel steel panels at 2906 Cass Avenue. Stone is used for window sills, belt courses, and strong courses on a majority of buildings within the district. Roofs within the district are generally flat and not visible, but copper accents define the buildings at 500 Temple and 2727 Second Avenue. The statue of Robert Burns is bronze on a granite base.
- (8) Relationship of textures. On a majority of buildings within the district, the major textural effect is that of brick with mortar joints juxtaposed with cast stone or limestone trim. Patterned brickwork is used to create subtle detail on apartment buildings, such as spandrels and rectangle panels. More pronounced textural interest often exists on the upper stories of buildings, such as at the sole building on Charlotte. Where they exist, detailed wooden vergeboards, gables, brackets, and dormers create considerable textural interest on all single-family residential buildings in the district. Rough-cut stone with thick mortar joints creates considerable textural interest on buildings where it exists, while other buildings feature smooth stone with thin mortar joints.
- (9) Relation of colors. Natural brick colors in shades of brown, red, and buff predominate on wall surfaces, while natural stone colors in shades of gray, red, and brown also exist.

- Although most roofs are flat and therefore not visible, roofs on 2727 Second Avenue and 500 Temple are accented by green copper. Wood architectural details are frequently painted in subdued tones appropriate to the architectural style of the buildings, but nonetheless contrast with brick or limestone facing. Apartment buildings are unpainted, with gray stone trim contrasting with brown or buff brickwork. The original colors of any building, as determined by professional analysis, are always acceptable for that building and may provide guidance for similar buildings.
- (10) Relationship of architectural details. Buildings in the district exemplify a broad range of architectural styles, and their architectural details relate to their style. Smaller apartment buildings are Italian Renaissance Revival or Georgian Revival. The building at 2931 Second Avenue is Craftsman style. The building at 500 Temple is Gothic Revival in style. Other buildings are frequently Classical Revival. Buildings range from high style in appearance with the level of architectural detail varying from one building to the next.
- (11) Relationship of roof shapes. Most buildings have flat roofs that are not visible from the ground. At 500 Temple, projecting, domed towers and varying building height creates a dramatic roofline. The building at 2727 Second Avenue features a flat-decked Mansard roof. Flat-roofed apartment buildings often feature parapet walls which add interest.
- (12) Walls of continuity. Setbacks of buildings tend to vary slightly from one to the next, but generally create a wall of continuity on all streets in the district. Significantly, buildings in the district create a wall of continuity surrounding Cass Park. Mature trees create a wall of continuity along the perimeter of Cass Park and provide a sense of enclosure within the park.
- (13) Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatment. Street trees exist only where setbacks are allowed. Alleys provide access to the rear of a majority of lots in the district. Trees, hedges and other landscaping features are regularly spaced where they exist. Trees in the front yards of buildings vary in size, age, and species. Most buildings are built to or near the front lot line. Public sidewalks run alongside all streets in the district. Curbs, while historically stone, have been replaced with concrete in a majority of the district. Public lighting is generally of the modern, steel, pole-mounted variety.
- (14) Relationship of open space to structures. The primary relationship of open space to structures is that of the green space of Cass Park surrounded by a continuous street wall on four sides. Front and side yards range from shallow to nonexistent. Other than public rights-of-way, no other large areas of open space exist. However, outside the district boundaries, vast open spaces exist where they have been created by building demolition; sometimes these spaces serve as parking lots or are maintained as open lawns.
- (15) Scale of façades and façade elements. Buildings are moderate to large in scale relative

- to typical buildings from the period in which they were constructed. Residential buildings range from small to large scale, with the hotel building at 400 Temple being significantly larger than the others. The largest buildings in the district are the institutional buildings at 2727 Cass Avenue, which is four stories tall and a full block wide, and 500 Temple, a portion of which is 14 stories tall. Façade elements are moderate in scale, typical of buildings from the time period.
- (16) Directional expression of front elevations. Façades of apartment structures are generally vertical in directional expression due to tall window and door openings and relatively tall buildings heights. The building at 500 Temple has a strong directional expression. The building at 2727 Second Avenue has a vertical emphasis despite being much wider than tall. Exceptions are Art Deco-influenced buildings at 2906 Cass Avenue and 445 Ledyard, which have a horizontal emphasis.
- (17) Rhythm of building setbacks. While setbacks may vary slightly from one building to the next, the overall impression is one of a consistent rhythm of building setbacks. This rhythm is particularly significant where structures create a street wall effect surrounding Cass Park.
- (18) Relationship of lot coverages. Lot coverages within the district are generally high.

 Buildings typically cover most of their lots save small front or sides setbacks. Exceptions are smaller residential buildings at 2753 Park and 457 Ledyard, which have rear yards.
- (19) Degree of complexity within the façades. The façades within the district range from simple to complex, depending on style. Overall, front façades tend to be simple in their massing and mostly regular in their fenestrations, though a variety of window and door shapes, materials, architectural elements, and details of individual buildings increase the overall level of complexity of the district. A particularly complex façade, however, is that of 500 Temple, with projecting towers, bays, arched door surrounds, and other features that add complexity.
- (20) Orientation, vistas, overviews. Buildings generally face the streets and are entered from the front façades by a single or double doorway. The larger buildings within the district, such as at 500 Temple, 2727 Cass Avenue, and 400 Temple, constitute landmarks that are clearly visible from several blocks away, or in the case of 500 Temple, from a great distance. Buildings flanking Cass Park create a sense of enclosure and contribute greatly to the integrity of feeling and setting within the Park. The statue of Robert Burns sits on the northern edge of Cass Park, centered on its block face, and faces north along Second Avenue. Cass Park bisects Second Avenue and, consequently, provides a vista that is visible from a great distance to the north.
- (21) Symmetric or asymmetric appearance. For the most part, the appearance of front faced in the district is symmetrical. The building at 500 Temple is asymmetrical, but is composed of sections that are symmetrical. Cass Park is highly symmetrical in nature,

- with eight sidewalks converging on the center of the park from each corner and from the center of each of its four sides; this relationship is considered a significant feature of the park.
- (22) *General environmental character.* The general character of the district is that of a dense, mixed-use, urban, neighborhood of apartment, office, and institutional buildings, which surround and complement the green space of Cass Park.

(Code 1984, § 25-2-197; Ord. No. 19-16, § 1(25-2-197), eff. 12-22-2016)

City of Detroit

HISTORIC DESIGNATION ADVISORY BOARD

218 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, Detroit, Michigan 48226 Phone: (313) 224-3487 Fax: (313) 224-4336 e-mail: historic@detroitmi.gov



The Masonic Temple with Cass Park in the foreground. Photo: Aidan Wakley-Mulroney

Proposed Cass Park Local Historic District Final Report

By resolution dated November 25, 2014, the Detroit City Council charged the Historic Designation Advisory Board, a study committee, with the official study of the proposed Cass Park Historic Local District in accordance with Chapter 25 of the 1984 Detroit City Code and the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act.

The proposed Cass Park Local Historic District consists of a collection of twenty-three buildings built between the early 1860s and the late 1920s, and a small historic city park. The Cass Park Local Historic District is located just north of Detroit's downtown business district in an area

known as the South Cass Corridor. The district is cut off from downtown by the east/west passage of the Chrysler Freeway (Interstate-75) to the south. It lies only two blocks west of Woodward Avenue, Detroit's primary thoroughfare. Woodward Avenue, Michigan Heritage Route and designated National Scenic Byway, cuts through the center of the city from north to south, dividing it into the east and west sides. Cass and Second Avenues, secondary north/south transportation routes, pass through the district. Second Avenue divides on either side of Cass Park before it continues northward toward Wayne State University and the New Center Area in midtown Detroit.

BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the proposed Cass Park Local Historic District, shown in bold lines on the attached map, are as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of Cass Avenue and the centerline of Ledyard Avenue; thence westerly along the centerline of Ledyard Avenue to the centerline of Second Avenue (East of Cass Park); thence northerly along Second Avenue (East of Cass Park) to the South line extended of Lot 17, Block 81 "Subdivision of Blocks 81 and 82 Cass Farm" as recorded in Liber 1 Page 93 of Plats, Wayne County Records; thence easterly along said Lot Line and its extension to the centerline of the north-south public alley first west of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said alley centerline to a line extended being the north line of the south 5 feet of Lot 16 Block 81 "Subdivision of Blocks 81 and 82 Cass Farm" as recorded in Liber 1 Page 93 of Plats, Wayne County Records; thence westerly along above said line extended to the centerline of Second Avenue (East of Cass Park); thence northerly along said centerline of Second Avenue (East of Cass Park) to the centerline of Temple Avenue; thence easterly along said centerline of Temple Avenue to the centerline of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline of Cass Avenue to the centerline of Temple Avenue (East of Cass Avenue); thence easterly along said centerline of Temple Avenue to the north-south public alley first east of Cass Avenue; thence southerly along said alley centerline to the centerline of the east-west public alley first south of Temple Avenue; thence easterly along said alley centerline to the centerline of the north-south public alley first west of Park Avenue; thence northerly along said alley centerline to the extended south line of Lot 27, Block 75 "Plat of the Subdivision of Park Lots 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 City of Detroit" as recorded in Liber 53, Page 196 Deeds, Wayne County Records; thence easterly along said Lot line and its extension to the centerline of Park Avenue; thence northerly along the centerline of Park Avenue to the extended north line of Lot 22, Block 74 "Plat of the Subdivision of Park Lots 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 City of Detroit" as recorded in Liber 53, Page 196 Deeds, Wayne County Records; thence westerly along said Lot line and its extension to the centerline of the north-south public alley first west of Park Avenue; thence southerly along said alley centerline to the centerline of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said centerline of Temple Avenue to the centerline of the north-south public alley first east of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said alley centerline to the extended north line of Lot 33, Block 74 "Plat of the Subdivision of Park Lots 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 City of Detroit" as recorded in Liber 53, Page 196 Deeds, Wayne County Records; thence westerly along said Lot line and its extension to the centerline of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along the centerline of Cass Avenue to the extended north line of Lot 2, Block 83 "Plat of part of the Cass Farm, Blocks 83 and 84 as recorded in Liber 1, Page 131 as recorded in Plats, Wayne County Records; thence westerly along said Lot line and its extension to the centerline of the north-south public alley first west of

Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said alley centerline to the centerline of the east-west public alley first north of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said alley centerline to the extension of the easterly line of the west 40 feet of Lot 14, Block 83 "Plat of part of the Cass Farm, Blocks 83 and 84" Liber 1, Page 131 Plats, Wayne County Records; thence northerly along said easterly line of the west 40 feet of Lot 14 and its extension to the centerline of Charlotte Avenue; thence westerly along said centerline of Charlotte Avenue to the centerline of Second Avenue; thence southerly along the centerline of Second Avenue to the centerline of the east-west public alley first north of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said alley centerline to the extended west line of Lot 21, Block 84 "Plat of part of the Cass Farm, Blocks 83 and 84" Liber 1, Page 131 Plats, Wayne County Records; thence southerly along said Lot line and its extension to the centerline of Temple Avenue; thence westerly along said centerline of Temple Avenue to the centerline of a north-south public alley (now an easement) first east of Third Avenue; thence southerly along said alley centerline to the centerline of Ledyard Avenue; thence easterly along said centerline of Ledyard Avenue to the west line of Lot 14, Block 79 "Plat of the Subdivision Block 79 and 80 of the Cass Farm" as recorded in Liber 1, Pages 92 and 93 Plats, Wayne County Records; thence southerly along said Lot line to the centerline of the east-west public alley first south of Ledyard Avenue; thence easterly along said alley centerline to the centerline of the north-south public alley, first west of Cass Avenue; thence southerly along said alley centerline to the extended south line of Lot 3, Block 79 "Plat of the Subdivision Block 79 and 80 of the Cass Farm" as recorded in Liber 1, Pages 92 and 93 Plats, Wayne County Records; thence easterly along said Lot line and its extension to the centerline of Cass Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline of Cass Avenue to the centerline of Ledyard Avenue and the Point of Beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries have been drawn to include the cohesive enclave of historic buildings surrounding and near Cass Park and the properties associated with them. Surrounding properties are largely vacant as a result of piecemeal demolitions. The boundaries for the proposed Cass Park Local Historic District are derived from the National Register boundaries, but are adjusted to exclude non-contributing buildings as well as vacant land created by the demolition of several buildings since the National Register designation in 2005, as well as to include several historically significant buildings at the northeastern edge of the district.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cass Park Local Historic District is a collection of buildings representative of the development of the area from an exclusive residential neighborhood in the late 1800s to an important cultural and commercial district during the 1920s. The district is significant because of the wide array of architectural styles and the different uses of its buildings. Located within the district are important examples of residential architecture from the late 1800s such as the Alhambra Flats at 100-112 Temple. Later residential structures dating from the early 1900s are represented by the Ansonia Flats at 2909-23 Second and the group of three apartment buildings. The Cromwell, The Altadena and The Manhattan, at 2942 Second, 2952-2958 Second and 2966-72 Second. This collection of buildings, together with the adjacent Vernon Murphy at 487 Charlotte and the Boulevard Hotel at 2931-2933 Second, exemplifies the density of residential structures that once existed throughout the South Cass Corridor. The district also contains buildings significant to the history of Detroit's business community including the corporate

headquarters buildings for the Standard Accident Insurance Company and the Kresge Company. The district is also an important site for the location of headquarters for fraternal organizations represented by the Masonic Temple at 500 Temple and the Fort Wayne Hotel at 400-426 Temple.

The contents of the report are taken largely from the Cass Park National Register form (Listed February 2, 2005) prepared by Marilyn Florek of BVH Architecture, Inc., with the Historic Designation Advisory Board. Additional description has been added by HDAB staff.

HISTORY

The area encompassing the Cass Park Historic District was originally part of the early French "ribbon farms," land granted to settlers in the early 1700s. A ribbon farm consisted of a narrow strip of land with river frontage of three hundred to nine hundred feet that then stretched back from the river one to three miles. The river frontage provided the farm with access to the river and transportation; the rear portions of the farm were generally woodlands. In 1808, the United States government fixed the boundaries of the original land claims of "ribbon farm," which became known as the "private claims." The Cass Park Historic District is located in Private Claim 55, most commonly known as the Cass Farm. Lewis Cass (1782-1866) purchased Private Claim 55 in 1816 from John, William and David Macomb. Cass, a brigadier general, had been recently named governor of the Territory of Michigan. Cass purchased the land to move his family from Ohio to Detroit, the territorial capital. His first house was located near the river on the north side of Larned between First and Second Avenues. Cass, who served as governor from 1813 to 1831, was a noted statesman and politician. During this time, and later as President Andrew Jackson's Secretary of War, Cass was instrumental in the formation of many government policies. He was appointed United States envoy to France in 1836, elected Senator from Michigan in 1845, was an unsuccessful candidate for president on the Democratic ticket in 1848. In 1840, Cass built a spacious residence on the northwest corner of Fort and Cass Streets.

Lewis Cass began subdividing the front of his farm in 1836 with the sale of lots between Larned and the river. He proceeded to plat and offer for sale the sections between Larned and Michigan Avenues in 1841, north of Michigan Avenue in 1851 and north of Grand River Avenue in 1859. Cass Avenue formed the east edge of the Cass Farm. The area that includes the Cass Park NR Historic District began to be sold as lots after 1859. Attention was given to the physical appearance of streets in deed restrictions filed with the plat of the Cass Farm. Along the street right-of-way, thirty feet was reserved for sidewalk, shrubbery and ornamental purposes. This setback and the large urban lots encouraged the settlement of the area by professionals and skilled tradesmen.

In 1860, Lewis Cass deeded a section of land, just a little less than five acres, to the city to develop into a park "for public use and enjoyment" subject to the requirement that the land "be used and occupied as a park forever." A further stipulation was that the city would maintain the park and that if the city neglected the conditions, the premises, with all improvements, would revert back to Cass or his heirs. The small park was bounded by Second; Ledyard, Cass and Bagg (later Temple) Avenues. The park and the surrounding area were platted by Henry Ledyard, Cass's son-in-law and attorney. When the gift of the park land was presented to the Common Council, a controversy immediately sprang up. Alderman William Hale led the dissent, stating that the park was just a "mud-hole" that would end up being a financial imposition on the city

and that any improvements that the city made would mainly benefit Cass since it would raise the value of the surrounding property. The grant was eventually accepted by the council and Cass Park became a part of the collection of many small, beautiful parks scattered throughout the city. These parks included School, Randolph, East, Linden, Elton, Crawford, Stanton, Adelaide, Campau and Macomb Parks. A Committee on Parks was first appointed by the city in 1854; in 1863, a superintendent was appointed to serve during the summer season. In 1870, the parks came under the care of the Board of Public Works. Cass Park is the only one of these small parks that is still in existence today.

By 1870, Detroit was buzzing with the production of carriages, railroad cars, cast iron products, pharmaceuticals, seeds, tobacco, paints, and ships. From 1860 to 1870, the city grew by 74% from 45,000 people to 79,600 people. With the expanding population of the city came a corresponding expansion of the professional classes. The 1870 Fifth Ward tax rolls began to show an increase of development in the area of the Cass Park Historic District. The platting of the Cass Farm, together with the beginning of streetcar service along Woodward Avenue, Detroit's major thoroughfare, which ran parallel to the Cass Farm on the east, resulted in a northwest thrust of city expansion. The Detroit City Railroad Company began service in the summer of 1863 with streetcars running along Woodward Avenue. A second company, the Central Market, Cass Avenue and Third Street railway, began operation in 1873 providing service along Third Avenue, which ran to the west of the Cass Farm plats.

The area surrounding Cass Park soon developed into a fashionable residential neighborhood becoming one of Detroit's early streetcar suburbs. The Fifth Ward, the area west of Woodward Avenue and north of Grand River, encompassing the Cass Park Local Historic District, was sometimes referred to as "Piety Hill," according to Silas Farmer in his History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan. It was so named "for the reason that it is largely occupied by well-to-do citizens, who are supposed to largely represent the moral and religious portion of the community" (pg. 928). In 1875, the fence that had enclosed Cass Park was removed and the park was landscaped with a donation of new trees in observance of the nation's Centennial. By the 1880s, many of Detroit's illustrious citizens resided there including Jeremiah Vernor, of Vernor Brothers, insurance agents and brother of James Vernor (of ginger ale fame), and J.B. Wayne, treasurer of the Fulton Iron and Engine Works. The now demolished Romanesque Revival House of Edward W. Voigt at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Ledyard became an architectural landmark in the neighborhood. Voigt was the founder of the Voigt Brewing Company, located nearby on Grand River. He was also one of the first investors in Edison Illumination Company and a founder of the Detroit Arts Museum. His residence was the only stone house located in the area and was said to be the first house in the city to have electricity installed. E.W. Voigt donated a fountain for Cass Park matching a fountain that he had previously seen on his travels to Germany. The erection of an electric arc light tower in the early 1880s made Cass Park one of the most popular summer evening resorts in the city. It was also well-known for concerts held in the park. Nearby, at the site of the former Cass Technical High School at Second Avenue and Fisher Freeway, was the site of the Detroit Riding Club, an institution reflecting the prestigious nature of the neighborhood. Two distinguished churches were located in the Cass Park (National) Historic District. First Baptist Church (also known as Cass Avenue Baptist Church) was built at the corner of Bagg (now Temple) and Cass Avenues. The Gothic structure served the residents of Cass Park and the surrounding neighborhood until 1913 when it was purchased by the Knights of Pythias who converted it into the Wayne Lodge

Hall of the Knights of Pythias, Lodge #104. The structure was then often referred to as Wayne Castle. Central Christian Church was a red sandstone Romanesque church that, designed by Malcomson and Higginbotham in 1891, stood as the northeast corner of Ledyard and Second Avenues across from Cass Park. Both churches have been demolished.

After the turn of the century, Cass Park continued to be the neighborhood of residents conspicuous in the roster of leading Detroit families. "New residents around the park included A.L. Patrick (contractor and builder), Edward Remick (music teacher), Marshall Godfrey (of Dean Godfrey & Company, decorators), who was twice a candidate for mayor; E.W. Stoddard (President of the Detroit Range Boiler and Steel Barrel Company) and William Yawkey, who made a fortune in lumber and was the father of William Yawkey, Jr. one of the early owners of the Detroit Tigers, C.H. Smith (partner of Mayor Hazen S. Pingree in the shoe manufacturing business), and Reverend David Burnham Tracy (founder of the Scottish Rite Bodies).

As the population of Detroit grew larger by the 1890's and the availability of vacant lots decreased, housing densities increased dramatically. It was during this period that Cass Park saw the introduction of the apartment building as a respectable housing alternative. The development of the building in Detroit was due to Almon C. Varney ironically the major architect of single family homes in the city. Varney purchased a site in 1887 at the southeast corner of Park and Montcalm in the downtown section of the city. Five years later, in 1892, he built the Varney Apartment which was a four-story building containing sixteen apartment units. Despite the skepticism of his friends who thought that Detroit would never grow sufficiently for apartment structures to be popular like they were in the East, Varney's investment had been a lucrative one. Just thirteen years later, Varney doubled the number of apartments in the building by cutting each in two, and he was even able to receive increased rent for each unit.

Between approximately 1895 and 1915, similar small scale apartment buildings each containing a small number of spacious apartments, became popular. These buildings were three to four stories tall, generally rectangular in shape filling the footprint of the lot, and designed in the popular architectural styles of the period such as Italian Renaissance Revival or Georgian Revival. Many of these buildings were referred to as flats, a popular term that was used to distinguish these apartments as more spacious residences. Most buildings had two flats per floor with a total of six to eight flats in a building. Flats were considered acceptable substitute living quarters on the same level of a single family house but without the worries of maintenance.

One of the first apartment buildings constructed in the Cass Park Local Historic District, and one of the oldest apartment buildings existing in the city of Detroit, is the handsome Alhambra Flats (100-112 Temple), designed by John R. Gentle in 1895. The six-story Alhambra was one of the largest buildings designed as flats, originally constructed with twenty-four spacious units. The building's first occupants included Harvey S. Firestone, then the manager of the Columbus Buggy Company, and later the founder of the Firestone Tire Company. Other occupants included George A. Foster, local manager of the Standard Oil Company, and George H. Paine, secretary of the National Loan and Investment Company. The building was renamed the Alhambra Apartments in 1910.

The Cromwell Flats (2942 Second), designed by A. C. Varney, was constructed in 1905 and is an excellent example of the small scale, three-story apartment building with two flats per floor. The

Ansonia Flats (2909 Second) was built in 1908 and designed by William S. Joy. The Ansonia is a larger, four-story building constructed with three separate sections and containing a total of twenty spacious flats. The prestige of the Ansonia apartment building is indicated by its first tenants, which included John J. Hayes, manager of Hornblower and Weeks, members of the New York, Boston and Chicago stock exchanges; Arthur W. Kilpatrick of the legal firm, James and Kilpatrick; and Charles A. Wendell, the secretary/treasurer of the Colonial Laundry Company.

As Detroit developed as an industrial center during the 1910s, the ever-increasing population created an overwhelming need for more housing. Instead of flats, apartment buildings with smaller and more numerous units were constructed at an incredible rate in the neighborhood surrounding Cass Park. The architectural firm of Pollmar and Ropes was responsible for a substantial amount of the new apartment house and commercial work throughout the city. The Manhattan Apartments (2966 Second) built in 1905, and the Altadena Apartments (2952 Second) built in 1911, were both designed by the firm. Nearby commercial commissions included the Pierce Brothers Building at 3153-61 Woodward Avenue, former headquarters of the famous candy company.

The growth of the automotive industry in Detroit began to transform the city into one of the world's largest urban centers. The city had become the producer of two-third of the world's automobiles by 1915 with a population increase from almost 500,000 in 1910 to over 1.5 million in 1930. This tremendous expansion in size and population is reflected in the change in character of housing in the Cass Park Historic District during this period. Single family houses disappeared to be replaced by three and four story apartment buildings. Even the prestigious mansions surrounding Cass Park fell victim to the insatiable demand for apartments. Some of the apartment buildings constructed in the district during this period included the thirty-two unit Wilburn Apartments, later renamed the Vernon Murphy Apartments (487 Charlotte, 1916), the thirty-six unit Westchester Apartments (2764 Second, 1916 -demolished), the thirty-seven unit Cass Park Apartments (2714 Second, 1914), the sixty unit Prince Rupert Apartments (439 Temple, 1915), and the twenty-two unit Alden Apartments (145 Temple, 1922). Early occupants of these buildings were business professionals who were drawn to the neighborhood by the perception of Cass Park as a charming, dignified, peaceful area with spacious homes and apartments on tree-lined streets. The district was a residential oasis with close proximity to downtown and easy access to major transportation/commercial corridors of Woodward and Grand River Avenues.

By the 1920s, downtown development, which had spread northward from the river, reached the Cass Park area. The district, a prestigious residential neighborhood, now developed as a prime location for the headquarters of some of Detroit's most prominent businesses. The Standard Accident Insurance Company (640 Temple) was the first to erect their headquarters on Cass Park in 1921. Standard Accident was one of Detroit's prestigious insurance companies, founded in 1884 by many of the city's most respected citizens including Dexter M. Ferry, Francis Palms, Simon J. Murphy, W.C. Yawkey, David Whitney, Jr., and Traugott Schmidt. Dexter M. Ferry was the company's first president and his son, Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. succeeded his father in the position. The company previously had its headquarters in the downtown Penobscot Building, but in 1920 hired one of Detroit's most noted architects, Albert Kahn, to design a new eight story headquarters building. Even though Cass Park was still considered suburban to the downtown area, the decision to move there was based on the beauty and tranquility of the neighborhood.

The relocation of the company led the way for further commercial development on Cass Park.

During the late 1910s, Detroit's Masonic orders, which had outgrown its old lodge headquarters downtown on Lafayette, had been searching for a new site on which to build a larger facility. By 1920, they had acquired an adequate portion of land on Bagg Street (later Temple Avenue) including the former home of the Reverend David Burnham Tracy. Construction on the monumental Masonic Temple (500 Temple) on the north side of Cass Park began in 1920 and was completed in 1926 overwhelmingly changing the character of Cass Park. Designed by George D. Mason and company, the building was a giant ledge hall complex built for Detroit's Masonic bodies, including the oldest lodge of Masons in Michigan. The decision to build on Bagg was made because the site guaranteed a splendid outlook on Cass Park that would forever give an unobstructed approach to the Temple. In addition, Lewis Cass, had been a former Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge. The Temple was built with three separate structures, including a vast, three-level auditorium. It is the largest Masonic Temple ever constructed in the world and one of the most ornate and structurally complex buildings of its kind ever constructed. The temple also served as a civic center for the city and soon became one of Detroit's most important destinations for cultural and social events.

In 1921, the Detroit Burns Club donated a statue of the Scottish poet, Robert Burns that was erected at the north end of Cass Park. The bronze statue of Burns on a granite base is a copy of a statue at Ayr, Scottish artist George A. Lawson. The dedication ceremonies in 1921 included a parade led by Walter Scott, a descendant of the Scottish poet and novelist Sir Walter Scott. Since that time, a ceremony commemorating Burns is held each year on his birthday by the St. Andrew's Society.

In 1922, the Michigan Club planned an elaborate club building comparable to the Detroit Athletic Club, to be built on the corner of Second and Ledyard. The facility, designed by Smith, Hinchman and Grylls, was never built, but the fact that it was planned for this area shows the changing attitude toward Cass Park as a desirable real estate location for large, multi-story business-oriented buildings.

In 1926, the Knights of Pythias demolished its lodge headquarters, the former Cass Avenue Baptist Church at the corner of Temple and Cass Avenues, to build a new eleven story headquarters building, directly adjacent to the Masonic Temple. The Knights of Pythias, a fraternal organization with roots originating during the Civil War, constructed its headquarters together with a hotel of lodging for Pythians visiting from out-of-town. The building, called the Fort Wayne Hotel, also welcomed non-member guests. The hotel remained under Pythian ownership until the late 1930s when it was sold to private owners. Because of its location next to the Masonic Temple, the Fort Wayne Hotel was legendary for housing many performers and celebrities who performed in the Temple's auditorium.

The Kresge Building was another monumental headquarters building to be constructed on Cass Park. Commissioned by Sebastian S. Kresge, founder of the Kresge Corporation, designed by Albert Khan, the building occupied 250,000 square feet and the entire length of the block facing the west side of Cass Park. The Kresge Corporation started in 1898 as a single low-price store and grew to a major national retail chain. It moved to Cass Park in 1927 from its first headquarters building, which was located on Grand Circus Park in the downtown area.

The exclusiveness of Cass Park forced smaller businesses to locate along the more heavily traveled streets such as Cass Avenue that bordered the district. The building at 2930 Cass was constructed in 1915 by A.G. Riesterer for his drug store on the first floor and the Riesterer Apartments on the second and third floors. Albert Kahn designed a two story, film exchange building at 2949 Cass in 1922 which housed the Lasky Corporation that later became a part of the Paramount Pictures Distributing Corporation. In 1923 a three story commercial building (146-166 Temple) was constructed at the busy intersection of Temple and Cass Avenues. The building had storefronts on the first floor and professional tenants such as doctors and dentists on the second and third floors. The increased use of the automobile facilitated the construction of the Will Mar Garage at 131 Temple in 1924. A one story, multiple storefront building was constructed in 1925 at 2906-14 Cass Avenue which housed a grocery, dry cleaners and restaurant. Although development in the area died with the depression, smaller companies continued to move to the Cass Park vicinity. In 1936, William F. Voigt, president of the Voigt Land Company son of E.W. Voigt, prominent businessman and founder of the Voigt Brewery, constructed a film exchange building at 479 Ledyard. (The massive Romanesque Voigt house stood next door at Second and Ledyard.) The building was first occupied by Paramount Pictures, Inc. and included a thirty-five seat theater which still exists in the building today. In the 1960s the building became the home of the Michigan Chronicle, Detroit's first black owned and operated newspaper. The newspaper was founded in 1936 by John Sengstacke, whose uncle owned The Chicago Defender one of the largest black-owned newspapers in the country at that time. Sengstacke hired Louis Martin away from the Defender and with only \$135.00 to start the new newspaper persuaded him to become the first editor. Longsworth Quinn later took over the job and was editor for forty-seven years. The Michigan Chronicle was purchased in 2003 by a new group of investors who have since developed the largest black newspaper chain in the country whose holdings included the Michigan Front Page, the Pittsburgh Courier, the Memphis Tri-State Defender and the Chicago Defender.

In the 1940s war-time manufacturing brought a burgeoning population, resulting in multiple dwelling units being subdivided further to house factory workers employed in the defense plants. In the years since the 1950s, the Cass Park area has declined again in economic terms, becoming home to a transient student and permanent poverty-level population. An example of the neighborhood's evolution is provided by the Alhambra Apartments. In 1927, the Alhambra Apartment was renamed the Embassy Hotel competing with the Fort Wayne Hotel and the many other apartment hotels that were being constructed in the area. The building was subdivided in the 1950s into forty-one units and by the 1970s, had become a substandard apartment building. Although a few of the apartment buildings around Cass Park, such as the Ansonia Apartments, maintained decent living accommodations, many fell into disrepair or were abandoned.

Throughout the 1950s-1970s, a number of charitable organizations located in the South Cass Corridor/Midtown as a result of the neighborhood becoming one of the poorest in economic terms in Detroit. The Mariner's Inn at 445 Ledyard was built in 1955 for the Episcopal Diocese of Detroit. The Inn originated downtown in the early part of the twentieth century as a shelter and treatment center for alcoholic sailors. It was founded by the Episcopal City Mission Society and was operated in cooperation with Mariners Church, an independent Anglican church located on Jefferson Avenue in downtown Detroit (listed NR). Although sailors were housed in a nearby building owned by trustees, there were many instances where sailors slept on the church benches.

During the mid-1950s, the church stood directly in the path of development plans for a new civic center that included the construction of Cobo Hall, Ford Auditorium and the (former) Veterans' Memorial Building. In 1955 the church was moved 880 feet to its present location. That same year the Episcopal City Mission Society decided to build a new dormitory for the Mariners Inn. It was relocated to Cass Park neighborhood and continued operation in association with Mariners Church. By the 1970s, however, legal differences between the Episcopal Diocese and Mariners Church caused a division between the two religious organizations. Although no longer affiliated with the church; Mariners Inn continued to operate as a substance abuse center for men until it closed. The building still has its emblem in the upper front section of the façade of a ship with a cross-like mast and an anchor, the latter symbolic of hope as well as the earlier maritime history.

The physical separation of the Cass Corridor from downtown Detroit by the construction of I-75 (Fisher Freeway) only hastened the decline of the area. Many buildings were abandoned and left vacant. The area surrounding the Cass Park Historic District contains many empty lots, a result of piecemeal wide scale demolition that had its beginnings in the 1950s. As business followed the population movement to the suburbs during the 1960s and 1970s, the buildings in the Cass Park area were often taken over non-profit organizations or city agencies. The Kresge Corporation donated its building to the Detroit Institute of Technology after Kresge moved its administrative offices to Troy, Michigan in 1972. After the closing of the Detroit Institute of Technology, the building was renovated and became known as the Metropolitan Center for High School Technology in the early 1980s. The former Kresge Building in now owned by Wayne State University and houses various university departments and the City of Detroit's Water and Sewage Analytical Laboratories. Wayne County purchased the former Standard Accident Insurance Company building for governmental offices in the early 1980s. The Fort Wayne Hotel was renovated during the 1960s becoming the American Hotel, but was abandoned in the early 1980s. The Masonic Temple continues to be operated by the Masons who have remained strongly committed to the massive structure. The Temple remains an important cultural center within the city of Detroit. By the mid-2000 the Cass Park district began seeing signs of renewal with the renovations of several of the existing apartment buildings and the construction of a new Cass Technical High School on the southern end of the park. In 2013 Olympia Development began plans for a new Events Center which will once again transform the area.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION and LIST OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Cass Park

Planned in 1860 and open for public use by 1870, Cass Park is a contributing resource.

Robert Burns

Located within Cass Park, this is a 1920 bronze standing figure of Burns on a granite pedestal, by George A. Lawson, a Scottish artist. Inset bronze reliefs on the sides and back of the pedestal illustrate verse from various poems by Burns.

Cass Avenue

2906 Cass Avenue

This Art Deco building, the Temple Bar, features glass block windows and porcelain-enamel

steel panels. It is reflective of the later, mid-20th century development of the Cass Park area.

2930 Cass Avenue

Three–story, four bay, brown brick commercial building, 1915. Built by Riesterer, the building housed his drug store on the first floor and ten apartments known as the Riesterer Apartments on the second and third floors. The decorative elements of the building include panels of green tile in the parapet and iron balconets on two of the upper floor windows. Above the boarded storefront is a multi-light transom with fanlight. The arch with keystone and voissoirs above the entrance to the apartments hold a divided fanlight.

2949 Cass Avenue

Two-story, three bay red brick and reinforced concrete commercial building, 1922, Albert Kahn, architect. The building was originally designed by Kahn as a film exchange building. The first floor windows have been filled in with concrete block. The three bays are divided by projecting piers with a set of three windows in each bay on the second floor.

Charlotte Avenue

487 Charlotte

The Vernon Murphy Apartments was built in 1916. is a three-story Arts and Crafts inspired building with wooden brackets, decorative tile, and brick quoins.

Ledyard Street

445 Ledyard — Mariners Inn

Two-story, rectangular limestone and concrete trimmed, brick office building, 1955, Charles Vogel, architect.

This modern, mid-century office building was constructed for the non-profit agency whose name appears in raised letters in a large stone panel over the entrance, MARINERS INN – AN AGENCY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH. Above the door surround is a medallion with a ship and cross that symbolizes the organization.

457 Ledyard — John H. Avery House

Three one-half story, three bay, red brick, Italianate house, 1878, with third floor likely added c. 1900-1910. This house was constructed for John H. Avery, prominent businessman and heir to Newell Avery lumberman and real estate dealer. Windows on the first and second floors of the front façades have elaborate carved stone hoods; the third floor windows have flat arches embellished with stone. A denticulated stringcourse separates the second and third floors. The overhanging flat roof has a modillioned cornice that encircles the entire house. The house is now owned by neighboring non-profit agency, Mariners Inn.

479 Ledyard — Michigan Chronicle

Two-story, three bay, brick office building with a limestone Moderne façade, 1936, H.G. Winter, builder.

Originally constructed as a film exchange building, the building is now the home of *The Michigan Chronicle*, Detroit's first black-owned newspaper. The front façade is composed of horizontal stone bands and large metal framed windows separate d by ridged vertical cast stone

piers or pilasters which also flank the entrance doorway on the east end of the building. The name MICHIGAN CHRONICLE appears in raised letters between the first and second floor.

Park Avenue

2753 Park — William E. Cole House

This building has existed since the 1880s but has been altered. The two-story house has been converted, but the addition of a 1910s facade, into a three-story Georgian Revival-style apartment building.

Second Avenue

<u>2714 Second Avenue — Cass Park Apartments</u>

Four and one-half story, three bay, brown brick apartment building, 1914.

The facade of this building with its four-tiered central portico displays a vernacular Georgian Revival/Arts-and-Crafts design with a prominently profiled overhanging cornice. The center bay consists of covered porches with decorative metal rails supported by paneled brick piers that rise the full height of the building. Originally built with thirty-seven units, the building retains its original nine-over-one double hung windows.

<u>2727 Second Avenue — S.S. Kresge Company / Metropolitan Center for High Technology</u> Five and one-half story, brick and limestone office building, 1928-30, Albert Kahn, architect, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built as the world headquarters for the S.S. Kresge Company, this massive Art Deco building, an outstanding example of the later commercial architecture of Albert Kahn, has a broad façade that fronts Cass Park's entire west side. The building has a projecting five and one half story central pavilion flanked by four story wings with forward-projecting ends. The symmetrical fenestration is broken by three-story fluted Doric pilasters interspersed with carved relief blocks. The fourth floor is visually separated from the lower levels by a bandcourse and different fenestration. The building is capped with a standing-seam copper Mansard roof decorated with terra cotta cresting.

2900-23 Second Avenue — Ansonia Flats / Ansonia Apartments

Four and one-half story, yellow brick apartment building divided into three sections with three separate entrances, 1908, William S. Joy, architect.

The building, originally constructed with twenty units, sits on the northwest corner of Second and Temple with two of the entrances on Second and the third on Temple. The Georgian Revival Ansonia Apartments has an undulating appearance with multiple bays of different composition. The façade facing Temple has three slightly curving "bow front" bays and a semi-octagonal corner bay. The façade facing Second Avenue has three round bays and one square bay. The carved stone entrance surrounds have recessed arches and the name Ansonia in raised letters on the door heads. The old addresses are carved into the stone door jambs. The building has a denticulate stringcourse between the third and fourth floors and a heavy modillion cornice.

2931-33 Second Avenue — Boulevard Hotel

Three and one-half story, brown brick apartment building, 1924.

The building was constructed in the Craftsman style and originally had thirty-six units. The façade is composed of five bays with the central bay flanked by two projecting bays that have

Flemish gables. The central bay has a gable covered entrance that was later enclosed with shingle siding. The central bay has nine-over-nine windows, the remaining bays have unique eight-over-two sash windows. The roof has exposed rafters ends that support overhanging eaves.

2942 Second Avenue — Cromwell Flats / Cromwell Apartments

Three and one-half story, three bay, brown brick apartment building, 1904, A.C. Varney, architect.

The Cromwell is one of three apartment buildings constructed on the east side of Second at Peterboro that complement each other in style and setback. The building displays Jacobethan elements including the stone entrance surround with the name Cromwell carved in the door head. The central entrance bay is flanked by three-sided window bays with alternating bands of brick and stone. The center bay has two arched windows each on the second and third floors. The building has brick quoins at the corners and a parapet detailed with blind pointed arches.

2952-58 Second Avenue — Altadena Apartments

Four and one-half story, brown brick apartment building, 1911, Pollmar & Ropes, architects. Originally designed with twelve units, the building has two entrances at street level. Located between the Cromwell and the Manhattan apartment buildings, the Altadena closely matches its neighbors in setback and design. The entrance surrounds have elaborate Jacobethan detailing with the name Altadena in raised letters in both door heads. Two three-sided window bays rising from elaborately detailed metal corbel panels run from the second to the fourth floor on both ends of the facade. The façade has metal detailing including the bay window spandrels and the paneled cornice.

<u>2966-72 Second Avenue — Manhattan Apartments</u>

Four and one-half story, five bay, brown brick apartment building, 1905, Pollmar & Ropes, architects.

Like its neighbors, the Cromwell and the Altadena, the Manhattan displays Jacobethan detailing in its design. The main entrance sits in the center of the building with an elaborate door surround with the name Manhattan in raised letters in the door head. The second to fourth floors have three-sided window bays that flank the central entrance bay. Decoration includes green painted metal spandrels in the window bays, a cornice detailed with quatrefoils, and a battlemented parapet.

Temple Avenue

100-112 Temple — Alhambra Flats / The Embassy

Six-story, brick and stone, Romanesque Revival apartment building, 1895, J.R. Gentle, architect. The building sits on the northwest corner of Temple and Park. The first and second floors of the east and south elevations are faced in coursed rock-faced stone. Both elevations have recessed entrances under heavy arched doorways. The third through sixth floors are finished in pink brick. The second through sixth floors have rounded bays on the corners and a three-sided bay in the center of the south elevation. Both elevations have recessed open porches supported by single columns; the south porches are covered with a fire escape. The windows are single pane with transom, arched on the first floor and squared on the remaining floors. At the top of the building is a patterned frieze with a finely denticulated stringcourse. The cornice of the building has been removed.

131 Temple — Will Mar Garage

This is a two-story, four-bay brick window with a flat roof. The first floor consists of a central entrance flanked by large window openings, now enclosed, above continuous masonry sills, and a truck bay covered by a rolling metal door at the west end of the building. The cornices and pilasters as well as any ornamental details have been removed from the building.

145 Temple — The Alden

Three and one-half story, brick, with limestone Renaissance Revival facade, apartment building, 1922, George P. Rogers, builder.

Originally built with twenty-two units, a brick and tile addition to the building was constructed six months later with another twenty units. The entire front façade is composed of limestone with Renaissance detailing including festoon reliefs, a denticulated cornice and a balustrade parapet. The entrance to the building is set in a Classic door surround with stylized columns that support an entablature with a rounded pediment. The frieze of the entablature is inscribed with the name ALDEN. The door surround supports two posts with urns and a window with a bracketed pedimented hood. The first floor has arched window openings with French doors and engaged balustrades beneath the windows. The remaining windows are eight-over-eight, one-over-one, or eight-over-one double hung.

146-166 Temple

Three-story, reinforced concrete commercial building, 1923.

This Classical Revival commercial building sits on the northeast comer of Temple and Cass Avenues with its length consisting of seven bays along Temple and its depth consisting of two bays along Cass. The first story is comprised of storefronts and display windows, most of which have been filled in. The second and third floors have 1/1 double hung sash windows in groups of three along Temple and in pairs along Cass. The window groupings are separated by pilasters that span both stories. The pilasters are decorated at both the top and bottom with paterae. Ornamental paneled spandrels separate the second and third floor windows. There is a simple dentiled cornice

400-426 Temple — Fort Wayne Hotel / American Hotel

Eleven-story, brown brick and terra cotta, three-part stacked vertical block building, 1926, Ellington and Weston, architects.

The Fort Wayne Hotel was originally constructed for the Knights of Pythias as a hotel and lodge headquarters. The building sits on the northwest comer of Temple and Cass Avenues. Its design reflects Italian Renaissance styling. The first and second floors are finished in smooth ashlar. The main entrance is in the center of the front façade facing Temple but the door and all first floor storefronts have been altered. A decorative polychromatic band of red and blue terra cotta separates the ninth and tenth floors. The tenth and eleventh floor windows have decorative stone surrounds. A stone cornice supports a balustrade parapet. The windows are 1/1 double hung sash with single windows at the corners of the building and groupings of two and three windows throughout the main wall sections.

<u>500 Temple — Detroit Masonic Temple</u>

Fraternal lodge headquarters building and auditorium, 1922, George D. Mason, architect, listed

on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Temple is a massive English Gothic complex comprised of three distinct structures that are unified by its exterior architectural treatment. The complex consists of two towers, the fourteen-story Ritualistic Building and the ten-story Shrine Club, which are connected by the seven-story Auditorium Building. The three structures are sheathed in Indiana limestone with architectural sculpture by prominent local artist Corrado Parducci. The Ritualistic Building is home to twenty-six lodges and contains a number of ornately decorated meeting rooms, most of which were designed by Anthony DiLorenzo Studios of New York. The 210 foot tower of the Ritualistic Building dominates the neighborhood and can be seen from a distance in many parts of the city. The Auditorium Building is a vast four-level, entertainment and recreational complex consisting of the Drill Hall, the Main Auditorium, the Fountain Ballroom and the Crystal Ball Room. The Shrine Club was built for exclusive use by the members with a lounge, gymnasium and eighty guest rooms. The structure is the largest Masonic Temple in the world and one of the most ornate and structurally complex buildings of its kind ever built.

640 Temple — Standard Accident Insurance Building / Wayne County Department of Social Services

Eight-story, seven bay. brick and stone, two part vertical block office building designed in the Classical Revival style, 1920, Albert Kahn, architect.

The first and second floors have sets of three double hung windows divided by stone pilasters which support a frieze inscribed with the name STANDARD ACCIDENT INSURANCE COMPANY. The windows are set in metal frames and separated between the floors by metal panels. The remaining floors have sets of two 1/1 double hung windows. The main entrance has an austere Classic door surround with a cartouche in the center of the door head. The cornice is decorated with an anthemion patterned copper band under a slightly stepped parapet.

CRITERIA

The proposed Cass Park historic district appears to meet National Register Criteria A, B, and C as well as the following criteria adopted by the Historic Designation Advisory Board

- (1) Sites, buildings, structures or archeological sites where cultural, social, spiritual, economic, political or architectural history of the community, city, state or nation is particularly reflected or exemplified.
- (2) Sites, buildings, structures, or archeological sites which are identified with historic personages or with important events in community, city, state or national history.
- (3) Buildings or structures which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural specimen, inherently valuable as a representation of a period, style or method of construction
- (4) Notable work(s) of a master designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

COMPOSITION OF THE HISTORIC DESIGNATION ADVISORY BOARD

The Historic Designation Advisory Board has nine members, who are residents of Detroit, and three ex-officio members. The appointed members are Kwaku Atari, Melanie A. Bazil, Keith

A.Dye, Zené Frances Fogel-Gibson, Edward Francis, Calvin Jackson, Harriet Johnson, Victoria Bird-Olivier, and Kari Smith. The ex-officio members, who may be represented by members oftheir staff, are the Director of the Historical Department, the Director of the City Planning Commission, and the Director of the Planning and Development Department. Ad hoc members for this study are Francis Grunow and Michael J. Boettcher.

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