

SUMMARY

AN ORDINANCE to amend Chapter 21, Article II of the 2019 Detroit City Code by adding Section 21-2-253, Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A Building) Historic District, and to define the elements of design for the district.

BY COUNCIL MEMBER _____

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IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT THAT:

Section 1. Chapter 21, Article II, of the 2019 Detroit City Code is amended by adding Section 21-2-253 to read as follows:

Sec. 21-2-253. Conductors Protective Assurance Building (CPA Building) Historic District.

(a) A historic district to be known as the Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A Building) 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.

(c) The boundaries of the Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A Building) Historic District are as shown on the map on file in the office of the City Clerk, and are as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of Michigan Avenue with the centerline of Fourteenth Street; thence northerly along the centerline of Fourteenth Street to the centerline extended of the East-West alley first north of Michigan Avenue; thence westerly along said alley centerline to the westerly line extended of Lot 3 "Subdivision of the Godfroy Farm, P.C. 726 lying between Michigan Ave. and Grand River Ave." as recorded in Liber 1, Page 293 Plats, Wayne County Records; thence southerly along said westerly line of Lot 3 extended to the centerline of

Michigan Avenue; thence easterly along the centerline of Michigan Avenue to the centerline of Fourteenth Street and the Point of Beginning. (legal description: Lots 3 and 4 “Subdivision of the Godfroy Farm, P.C. 726 lying between Michigan Ave. and Grand River Ave.” as recorded in Liber 1, Page 293 Plats, Wayne County Records. Lot Four (4) west of Lot Three (3) of the subdivision of the Godfroy Farm, containing the parking lot and former drive-through structure/canopy, is considered noncontributing to the C.P.A Building Historic District.

(d) The defined elements of design, as provided for in Section 21-2-253 of this code, are as follows:

(1) *Height.* The Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A Building) is six (6) stories tall.

(2) *Proportion of Building's Front Façade.* The C.P.A Building has three primary façades. The Michigan Avenue (south) façade is composed of three (3) bays and is taller than wide, and the Fourteenth Street (east) façade is composed of six (6) bays, and is approximately as tall as wide. The corner (southeast) façade is a single bay wide and is much taller than wide.

(3) *Proportion of Openings Within the Façades.* The first floor of the corner (southeast) façade and the fourth bay from the southeast corner of the Fourteenth Street (east) façade are each occupied by a double-door entrance opening with a square transom above, resulting in an opening taller than wide. The ground floors of the façades along Michigan Avenue (south) and Fourteenth Street (east) have large openings originally occupied by display windows with segmentally arched three (3)-part subdivided transom windows above. The ground floor of the rear

(north) elevation has a single large square window opening to the east of its single-door-wide entrance opening. Window openings above the first floor of all elevations are two (2) times taller than wide and are occupied by double-hung sash windows, with the exception of the rear elevation, which has square openings, each containing a pair of similar double-hung sash windows. First floor openings are covered with wood protective boarding.

(4) *Rhythm of Solids to Voids in the Front Façade.* A regular rhythm of solids to voids exists on all primary façades. The entrance to the first floor is located on the single-bay corner (southeast) façade. The entrance to the upper floors is located in the fourth bay from the southeast corner of the Fourteenth Street (east) façade, interrupting the regular rhythm of the display windows. Window openings above the ground floors of the multi-bay Michigan Avenue (south) and Fourteenth Street (east) façades contain two (2) separate openings per bay, creating a strong regular rhythm.

(5) *Rhythm of Spacing of Buildings on Streets.* Not applicable to single building district.

(6) *Rhythm of Entrance and/or Porch Projections.* Not applicable to single building district.

(7) *Relationship of Materials.* Bedford limestone is the major building material and contrasts with a six (6) foot tall granite base. Glass used in display windows and sashes was originally a major material, its transparency contrasting with solid masonry, although first floor display windows are presently boarded for protection. Cast masonry is used for decorative panels, dentils, rosettes and other

details. Window frames and sash are wood. The unembellished west elevation is brick.

(8) Relationship of Textures. Limestone with a matte finish and mortar joints contrasts with the texture of the granite base, originally smooth. The textures created by the repetition of elements such as pilasters and spandrels, and of details such as rosettes and dentils, creates textural interest, as does the low relief ornamentation surrounding the two (2) major entrances.

(9) Relationship of Colors. The off-white limestone contrasts with the light gray granite base. Window frames and sash are green. The majority of the brick on the west elevation is off-white; its lower stories that originally abutted a lower building are now painted white. The neon signage over the primary entrances is green with white lettering.

(10) Relationship of Architectural Details. Regularly arranged, repetitive details in the reserved Neoclassical style embellish the C.P.A Building. Pilasters rising six (6) stories define the bays; beneath the windows in the second through sixth stories are spandrels, each with a rosette in its center. The finished façades are capped by dentilled cornices. The two (2) entrances are heavily embellished with large beaded consoles holding up the dentilled cornice. The upper panels between the console brackets, originally incised with the name, "C.P.A. Building," were covered with neon C.P.A. Building signs. The flat, precast panels framing the doorways feature symmetrically arranged, low relief ornamental details representing garlands, cornucopias, and shields, and are framed with bead and reel and egg and dart moldings. A large, square clock is situated beneath the lintel of

the Michigan Avenue and Fourteenth Street corner entrance, although a historic photograph shows a round clock originally affixed at that location. The current clock is non-original. Original ground-level windows and doors were replaced at an unknown time. Non-historic black security window bars also were added at a later date.

(11) Relationship of Roof Shapes. The flat roof of the C.P.A Building cannot be seen from the street.

(12) Walls of Continuity. The C.P.A Building, sitting on its front lot line, continues the pattern of the commercial row to its east across Fourteenth Street. West of the C.P.A Building, the wall of continuity is broken by the absence of other buildings once comprising the streetscape.

(13) Relationship of Significant Landscape Features and Surface Treatments. No significant landscape features and surface treatments exist within the district. Curbs and sidewalks are concrete.

(14) Relationship of Open Space to Structure. The C.P.A Building occupies its original footprint. A former drive-through structure/canopy was added after the period of significance to the west side of the C.P.A Building and is considered non-historic; a large paved lot extends westward to the western property line of Lot Three (3) to the west of the C.P.A Building.

(15) Scale of Façade and Façade Elements. The scale of the six (6) story, full lot C.P.A Building is greater than the row of two (2) to three (3) story commercial buildings in its vicinity. Façade elements such as pilasters, display windows, and entrances are also large in scale.

(16) Directional Expression of Front Façade. The directional expression of the corner and south façades are vertical; the length of the east façade is tempered by the verticality of the pilasters separating the bays.

(17) Rhythm of Building Setback. Not applicable to single-building district.

(18) Relationship of Lot Coverage. The C.P.A Building occupies almost all of its triangular lot, Lot Four (4), except for a small portion abutting its rear (north) wall. Lot Three (3), containing the non-historic addition of the former drive-through structure/canopy and a parking lot, is mostly vacant land. Lot 3 is considered non-contributing to the district.

(19) Degree of Complexity Within the Façade. The corner location and triangular lot of the C.P.A Building results in three (3) major ornamental façades and five elevations. The major façades are not complex due to the building's straightforward Neoclassical style. Surrounding the two (2) entrances is a hierarchy of classical detail, resulting in greater complexity.

(20) Orientation, Vistas, Overviews. The C.P.A Building, sited on the angled corner of Michigan Avenue and Fourteenth Street facing Michigan Central Station and Roosevelt Park, is primarily oriented towards the southeast corner of the site. Due to its height, location and surroundings, dramatic views of downtown Detroit to its east and Michigan Central Station to its south, C.P.A Building is one of the most prominent buildings in the Michigan Avenue corridor.

(21) Symmetric or Asymmetric Appearance. The general appearance of the major façades is symmetrical. On the Fourteenth Street (east) façade, the entrance bay is

located in the fourth of the six (6) bays from the southeast corner, resulting in asymmetry only on the first floor.

(22) General Environmental Character. The C.P.A Building is located on the western end of the commercial corridor of Corktown, a neighborhood of small-scale residential and commercial buildings from the Victorian era (mid 1800s) to the early twentieth century. Its Neoclassical design relates to the grandiosity of the classically inspired Michigan Central Station to its south, causing it to stand out from the earlier commercial row to its east. The construction of I-75 alters its relationship to the original street pattern and neighborhood northward.

Section 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinances, or resolutions or parts of resolutions, in conflict with this ordinance are repealed.

Section 3. This ordinance is declared necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety and welfare of the people of the City of Detroit.

Section 4. If this ordinance is passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of City Council members serving, it shall be given immediate effect and shall become effective upon publication in accordance with Section 4-118(1) of the 2012 Detroit City Charter; otherwise, it shall become effective in accordance with Section 4-118(2) of the 2012 Detroit City Charter.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel