

**ADDRESS: 2458 BRUSH**

**APPLICATION NO: HDC2024-00660**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BRUSH PARK**

**APPLICANT/OWNER: MONA ROSS**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 11/25/2024**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 11/18/2024**

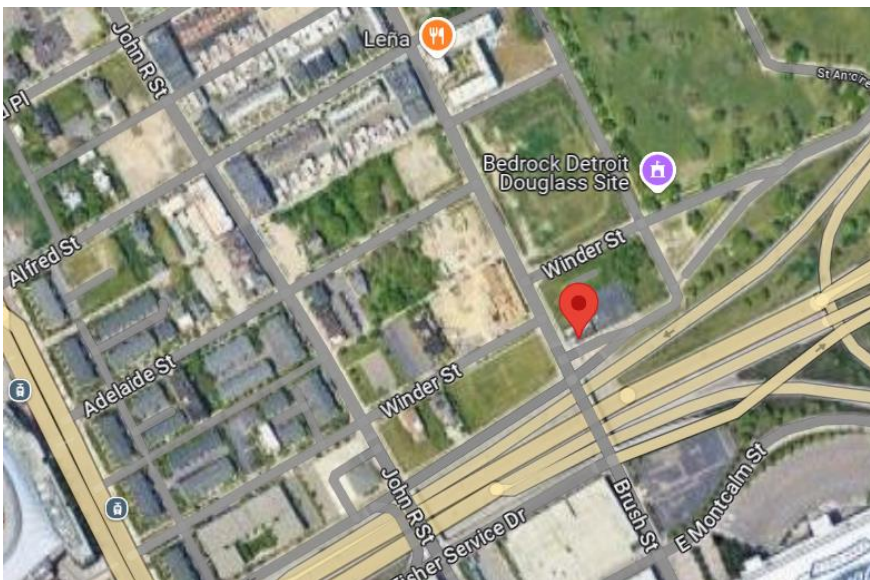
**SCOPE: INSTALL A LED SCREEN**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The building at 2458 Brush was constructed in 1946 in the Streamline Moderne style. Exterior walls are brick at the front façade and concrete block at the side and rear walls. The masonry at the front is unpainted, while side and rear elevations are currently painted black. A single brick chimney (unpainted) tops the building’s flat roof. Windows are aluminum-sash, fixed units. The building is in a relatively isolated location within the district. It is surrounded by empty lots to the east, west and north. The Fisher Freeway and associated service drive is to the south.



**2458 Brush, current appearance. Staff photo taken 11/25/2024**



**2458 Brush (indicated by red pin). Note that the site is generally surrounded by vacant lots**

## PROPOSAL

Per the submitted materials, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to install a 100"x50" LED message screen at the building's the south side concrete block wall, facing the Fisher Highway.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Brush Park Historic District was designated in 1980
- As noted above, the building sits within a relatively isolated location at the southeast edge of the district. The Fisher Freeway access road is directly to the south. Empty lots are to the direct north of the building while empty lots and newly constructed building are to the west of the subject parcel. Despite the Relative isolation of the building and lack of historic-age structures in the immediate surrounds, please note that any proposed work must still be compatible with the building's and district's historic character.
- Per the HDC's Sign and Awning Guidelines section entitled *Materials*, "sign materials should be compatible with the design theme and use of materials on the building where the sign is to be placed." The section entitled *Position* further states the following:
  - 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
  - In pedestrian areas, orient signs to sidewalk instead of motorists

It is staff's opinion that the proposed LED screen does not meet the HDC's guidelines. Staff has therefore forwarded the proposal to the Commission for review.

- The HDC's guidelines appear to closely align with the National Park Service's (NPS) guidance [Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs](#) as it too states the following:
  - New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building
  - New signs should also respect neighboring buildings
  - Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building... Materials characteristic of the building's period and style, used in contemporary designs, can form effective new signs
  - Signs should work with the building, rather than against it

It is staff's opinion that the proposed screen does not conform to the above listed guidance.

Staff notes that the NPS guidance does also recommend that "new signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building" and "new signs should be attached to the building carefully" to avoid damage and be reversible. Staff acknowledges that proposed new screen does meet these two points.

## ISSUES

- Note that signage of this type (LED screens) does not currently exist within the district. Rather, signage is typically static in nature and when affixed to a building, is generally situated at a pedestrian level and is installed at a location which bears a direct relationship to the building's existing architectural features. The current application proposes to install the LED screen on a blank concrete side wall, facing the highway/in a position that is not pedestrian oriented and displays no architectural features which suggest that such signage is appropriate at that location. It therefore is staff's opinion that the project does not conform to the above-noted National Park Service guidelines and does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation - Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Denial: Install a LED screen**

It is staff's opinion that the proposed screen is not compatible with the character of the building and historic district for the following reasons:

- The current application proposes to install the LED screen on a blank concrete side wall, facing the highway/in a position that is not pedestrian oriented and displays no architectural features which suggest that such signage is appropriate at that location.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission deny the application because the work does not conform to the district's Elements of Design, nor does it meet Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards #9, which states the following:

*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.*