

Ms. Jennifer Ross

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Detroit Historic District Commission

Dear Ms. Ross,

My name is Larry Wilk, and I am the project manager for the proposed roof replacement at Sweetest Heart of Mary Parish. I was also the project manager for the recent restoration of the parish's two, 214' tall steeples which took place between 2018 and 2020. My parents and grandparents have a deep and dear association with the parish, and for that reason, I have offered my services on a total volunteer basis to the parish.

Attached you will find our answers to the questions which you emailed to me on 1-23-24. Also included are various pictures to help illustrate and explain some of our answers. The pictures are also labeled accordingly to assist in describing and demonstrating the condition of the existing roofing system.

In general, the entire 135 year old roofing system is in dire need of replacement. The existing slate tiles are in extremely poor condition and are well beyond their life expectancy. The tiles are showing severe signs of delamination and have become very soft in certain areas of the tiles due to moisture ingress thus losing their strength and structural integrity. The tiles are no longer repelling water as they were intended to do, but rather absorbing water in many cases. Randomly, and after each wind storm, tiles have fallen from the church's roof causing a danger to any passersby on the ground. The steel nails securing the tiles have rusted over the past 135 years and have lost their original nail head size leaving only a portion of the nail head. Further, the wind causes the tiles to flap up and down thus enlarging the nail opening within the tiles themselves and eventually causing the tiles to loosen and slide and fall off the roof. When attempting to re-secure any unbroken tiles, the tiles are weak and delaminated and are not suitable to re-use. Over the decades other various repairs have been made to the roof including repairs from water damage to the attic areas and repairs made to prevent any possible water damage to the church's interior, particularly the exquisite 55' high domed ceiling which is hand plastered and finished with fresco religious paintings and accented in gold leaf trim. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to properly repair any possible damage to the church's interior ceiling and restore it to its original condition. The skill and craftsmanship used in its design and creation is a lost art. Also attached are pictures showing the current condition and architecture of the church's interior ceiling.

I understand and respect the Historic District Commission's role and duty in ensuring the preservation and architectural integrity of the city's deemed historic sites, and for that reason, I and the parish have attempted to be as compliant as possible in our approach to ensure that the architectural integrity of the roofing system is not deviated from. Every attention to detail will be employed from the color, profile and dimension of the slate, to the exact fabrication of the fascia, coping and gutter system, to the fabrication of all the ornamental fixtures being replaced and being formed out of the same original materials and to the exact original profile and dimensions as currently exist.

It is my intention to bring actual samples of the failed roofing system to the commission's hearing on February 7<sup>th</sup> should the commission choose to inspect the samples. We hope we have answered all your questions to both your and the commission's satisfaction. If there is anything further we can provide, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Larry Wilk

Volunteer Project Manager

Sweetest Heart of Mary Parish