

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2024

Michigan History Center

Board Room

Commissioners in attendance: Laura Ashlee, Joe Calvaruso, Tim Chester, Brian Egen, Eric Hemenway (via Zoom – Harbor Springs), Delia Fernandez-Jones, and Larry Wagenaar.

Staff: Stephanie Arwady, Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis, and Steven Hilberg

Public: William Arnold, Development Director, Michigan History Foundation

At 10:02 a.m. Egen called the meeting to order.

Clark introduced Stephanie Arwady, the historian who recently started working for the center. Stephanie's first priority is to help with several historical marker program projects: the Detroit markers, various revised replacement markers, and the Great Lake marker revisions. She will also work with various history-related research projects at the center.

Clark also introduced William Arnold, the new development director at the Michigan History Foundation.

Approval of Agenda: Wagenaar moved to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Ashlee moved to approve the August 22, 2024, meeting minutes as presented; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously adopted.

Local Historic District Committee Reports

➤ Village of Clarkston Historic District, Oakland County

Ashlee moved approval of the draft comments for forwarding to the State Historic Preservation Office; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously accepted.

Michigan Historical Marker Program

➤ Public Comments on Marker Topics – no public comments were provided.

➤ Marker Updates

- ◆ **Principles and Standards** – The principles and standards document was distributed prior to the meeting. Wagenaar moved to approve the principles and standards as amended; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.
- ◆ **Evaluation Criteria** – The evaluation criteria document was distributed prior to the meeting. Calvaruso moved to approve the evaluation criteria as amended; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved.
- ◆ **Supplemental Form for Cemeteries** – The document was distributed prior to the meeting. Fernandez-Jones moved to approve the supplemental form for

cemeteries to be amended by staff adding definitions to the cemetery type; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved. Ashlee agreed to talk with retired State Historic Preservation Office staff member Robert Christensen about the definitions.

- ◆ **Supplemental Form for Religious Organizations and Buildings** – The document was distributed prior to the meeting. Ashlee moved to approve the supplemental form for religious organizations and buildings to be amended by staff adding some examples added to the questions; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.
- ◆ **Internal Processes (taken as a whole)**
 - **Program Style Guide** – The document was distributed prior to the meeting. The commission reviewed and made a few minor adjustments to the style guide.
 - **Synopsis Guidelines** – The document was distributed prior to the meeting. It will be used as an internal document to assist staff in preparing a marker application synopsis.
 - **Determination of Eligibility** – The document was distributed prior to the meeting. This form is intended for staff use to help determine eligibility when reviewing applications.

Wagenaar moved to approve the program style guide, synopsis guidelines, and determination of eligibility as amended; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved.

During discussion commissioners suggested that the center provide one or two online examples of applications that have been well-done.

➤ **Request to Move**

◆ **Howarth School, L1059, Oakland County, Orion Township**

Fernandez-Jones moved to decline the request to move the Howarth School historical marker noting that the portion of the text that states “the Methodists moved to a new building across the road in 1898” is no longer accurate. The marker also does not note the move or the original location of the building. The commission requested that the marker be taken down and returned to the center by February 7, 2025, (ninety days) for proper salvaging. The commission also noted that if there is interest in having a Michigan Historical Marker on the structure, an application for a revised accurate marker will need to be submitted along with the primary source documentation. The motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.

◆ **Early Michigan Coal, L1470, Shiawassee County, Corunna**

Wagenaar moved to approve the request to move the revised replacement marker for Early Michigan Coal noting the new location further east on M-21 provides a safer environment for the public to read the marker text; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Commissioners suggested adding the artifact status policy and request to move policy as a future agenda topic to discuss adding appropriate deadlines to have the work completed.

➤ **Approval of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided for six new marker applications. (Appendix A)

◆ **Hobart D. Churchill Residence, Alpena County, Alpena**

- ◆ **Wright Opera House Block, Gratiot County, Alma**
- ◆ **Bishop's Retreat, Mackinac County, Mackinac Island**
- ◆ **Milford Presbyterian Church, Oakland County, Milford**
- ◆ **Early Detroit Bicyclists, Wayne County, Detroit**
- ◆ **St. Hedwig Cemetery, Wayne County, Dearborn Heights**

Wagenaar moved to approve the Hobart D. Church Residence marker application; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved.

Chester moved to approve the Wright Opera House Block marker application; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Chester moved to approve the Bishop's Retreat marker application; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.

Ashlee moved to decline the Milford Presbyterian Church marker application since the numerous additions and changes to the structure have significantly altered its historical architectural integrity; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones, and it was approved by a vote of 5-1.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Early Detroit Bicyclists marker application; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved. The commission suggested asking the sponsor to consider making this a two-post marker with different text on each side and possibly including a photo of the velocipede on one side.

Ashlee moved to approve the St. Hedwig Cemetery marker application; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

➤ **Approval of Marker Texts** – Draft marker texts were provided for the following six markers:

- ◆ **Battle Creek City Hall, L1103, Calhoun County, Battle Creek**
- ◆ **City Opera House, L162, Grand Traverse County, Traverse City**
- ◆ **Lincoln at Kalamazoo, S44, Kalamazoo County, Kalamazoo**
- ◆ **Holland Harbor/Holland Harbor Lighthouse**
- ◆ **Second Baptist Church, L346, Wayne County, Detroit**
- ◆ **St. James Episcopal Church, L122, Wayne County, Grosse Ile**

Wagenaar moved to approve the revised Battle Creek City Hall marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Fernandez moved to approve revised City Opera House marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

Wagenaar moved to approve the revised Lincoln at Kalamazoo marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Chester moved to table the revised Holland Harbor/Holland Harbor Lighthouse marker text; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Wagenaar moved to approve the revised Second Baptist Church marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.

Ashlee moved to approve the revised St. James Episcopal Church marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

➤ **Reports**

- ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting.
- ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Foundation Update – William Arnold reported that the foundation recently moved its website to a new platform and is currently updating the various pages. He noted the first online newsletter will be sent out soon. Arnold stated that the foundation is moving forward with reaching out to individual and corporate donors, as well as foundations, to find additional funding to support the Grant House project and the Heart of the Great Turtle Island project.

Arnold shared that the marker program represents a potential for a public/private partnership to help share historical stories around the state. He noted the importance of engaging with citizens and communities across Michigan about history and helping them find ways to connect with each other. He is interested in discussing ways the foundation could play a role in the marker program.

Arnold stated that he plans to reach out to commission members to have individual conversations. He would like to hear their perspectives and experiences on how the foundation can play a role in supporting the commission's work and where they see opportunities within the state to have a greater impact.

Egen thanked Arnold for his update and expressed support for working with the foundation.

Director's Report – The report was distributed prior to the meeting.

- **America250MI update** – Clark noted that the America250MI committee is considering having two tiers of grants: one for larger dollar amounts and one for smaller dollar amounts. Clark asked the commission for its input on what those dollar ranges might look like. The intent is to award funds to projects that have a lasting impact on the community. Chester recommended that the committee think carefully about capital projects and the extra administrative work this can add. It may be best to avoid projects that involve roofs, windows, siding, and labor. Things such as shelving, fire alarms, and collections could be more easily managed.

Wagenaar announced the recent hiring of Roger Doran-Brockway as the project director for the America250MI committee.

Clark stated the funds will be managed through the DNR. The application will include evidence of the applicant's capacity/ability to complete the work and require a final report to show that the work has been completed.

Commissioners mentioned having a pool available with different options - up to \$5,000, up to \$10,000, and then a few for up to \$25,000.

Clark asked that any other ideas be shared with her or Wagenaar.

Business Updates

Awards Program – Wagenaar stated that the award’s committee met and discussed the Swainson and the Milliken, Adams, Austin, Kelley (MAAK) awards. The committee recommended Geneva Wiskemann for the MAAK award barring any other nominations that might be received prior to December 31. Davis noted that the center had not yet received any nominations.

- **2025 Meeting Dates** – Davis shared the dates prior to the meeting. She asked commissioners to check their calendars and let her know of any concerns as soon as possible.

Public Comment – No public comments were provided.

Commissioner Comments

- Chester shared that Arnold visited him in Grand Rapids and is meeting with all of the foundation board members. The foundation’s executive committee is putting together expectations and obligations of board members.
- Fernandez-Jones shared that she is enjoying working with Clark and Tobi Voigt, museum director, on the Sites of Conscience IMLS grant with the Latino community. She and Voigt have presented at conferences and Voigt is incredibly dynamic and an amazing ally. Fernandez-Jones attended the Día de los Muertos Celebration held at the center. More than 960 people attended, including many of her extended family members. She was amazed at the outpouring of community support.
- Wagenaar reported that the Historical Society of Michigan is in the middle of conference planning for 2025. He also mentioned that the pipeline for submitting magazine articles is not as robust as they would like, especially for people and communities of color. He asked for help in finding individuals to submit content.
- Ashlee reported that she was interviewed by a Wayne State University graduate student who is doing her master’s thesis on historical markers in Detroit and Memphis related to African American history and looking at the archaeological research potential. She suggested that the individual also talk with Clark.
- Egen shared that the two halves of the Jackson House are now back together, and the house is sitting on its permanent foundation at Greenfield Village.

Egen reported that Ashlee has stepped down from the nominating committee and Fernandez-Jones has joined the committee.

Wagenaar moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Ashlee; and the meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.



Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses
Michigan Historical Commission
November 7, 2024

Hobart D. Churchill Residence

Applicant: Avery Aten | aveaten@gmail.com

Location Address: 311 South Second Avenue, Alpena, 49707, Alpena County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Building/Person

Requested Marker Type: Small one post marker with different text on each side.

Criteria:

Significant as the residence and only remaining structure of the Churchill family, who were leaders in the state lumbering industry from 1872 to 1914.

Historical Summary:

Brothers Worthy Lovell Churchill (1839-1913) and Hobart D. Churchill (1848-1904) moved to Alpena in 1872. Originally in the sash, window, and blind industry, they left Chicago after the great fire of 1871 to invest in and operate eastern white pine lumbering mills and camps on the shores of Lake Huron.

The brothers opened Hilliard, Churchill, & Co. mill and general store in 1874. That same year, Worthy was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives. As a representative, Worthy advocated for the booming lumber and shipping businesses of northern Michigan. This included repealing the Harbor Tariff Act of 1861. He served as Alpena's mayor from 1881 to 1882 and supported electrification and railroad expansion in the Thunder Bay area.

Hobart Churchill was the finance officer and general manager of Churchill Lumber Mills, Thunder Bay Boom Company, the Churchill general store, and the Churchill farm. Hobart and his wife Ella May Hyde Churchill (1857-1923) hired C. N. Cornell as the architect for their home in 1882. Completed in 1884, the home was designed in the Queen Anne style. After Hobart's death in 1904, his widow added a porte cochere to the house. She married Dr. James McGuire in 1907. They added a ballroom to the second floor in 1919.

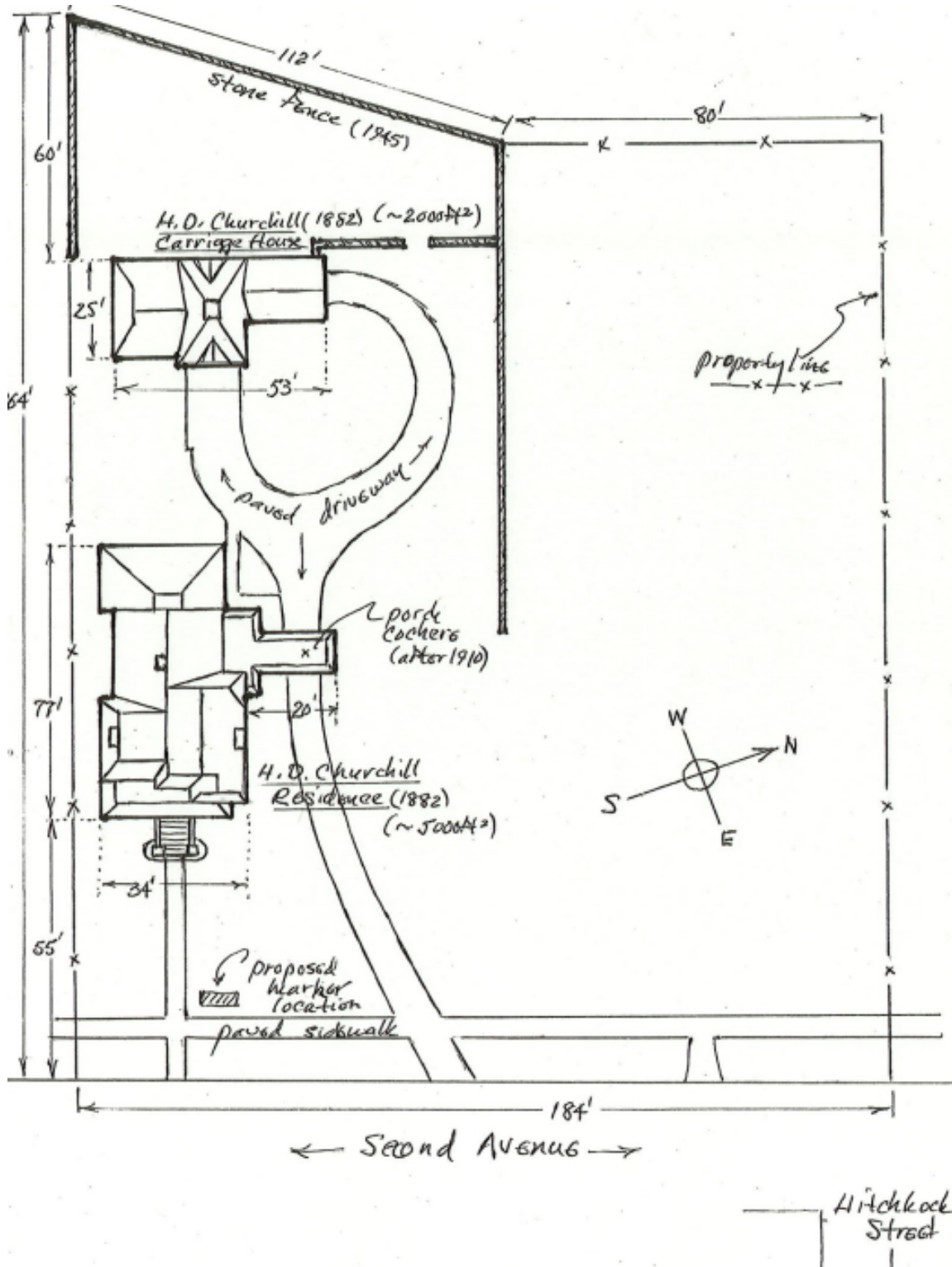
The Union School District City of Alpena purchased the property in 1953 with the intent of turning the residence into additional classroom space for Alpena Community College. The school board leased the property to Dr. W. Bruce and Roberta M. Kane. When the state fire marshal estimated the cost of bringing the home to modern public use standards at \$40,000, the board abandoned its plans to remodel. It sold the property to the Kanes in 1956.

Summary of Integrity:

The house retains its original Queen Anne architectural elements, including intricate millwork, bay windows, and gabled roofs. The original carriage house also remains on the property. The interior was renovated into a single-family residence in 1985.

Recommendation: Approval

Proposed Marker Location: Near sidewalk at the front of the house along Second Avenue.





Oldest available photo from *Picturesque Alpena*, published in 1905 by the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Alpena, printed by the *Alpena Evening Echo*.



Photo of the Hobart D. Churchill Residence from Second Avenue, 2024.

Wright Opera House Block

Applicant: Tim Rath | rathtj@alma.edu | 989-463-7290

Location Address: 101-113 E. Superior St. and 408 N. State St. Alma, 48801, Gratiot County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Site/Person

Requested Marker Type: Small Wall-Mounted Marker

Criteria:

This building's significance is demonstrated by its designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historical Summary:

Ammi Williard Wright (1822-1912) relocated to the Saginaw Valley region from Vermont and established farm and lumbering industries in the 1850s. Wright and his business partner James Dawson opened a branch of their Saginaw general store in Alma in 1875. When a fire destroyed the store in 1876, they purchased a lot at the northeast corner of State and Superior Streets for a new building. Wright and Dawson's partnership dissolved, delaying construction until 1879. Constructed by the George S. Young Construction Company, the Wright Opera House block opened in 1880. The structure featured Italianate architectural elements made from brick with space to accommodate five stores. Wright and his brother-in-law, George Barton, opened the Barton and Company general store in one of the building's five shop fronts.

The opera house occupied the two upper floors above the corner store and was initially referred to as Barton's Hall. Wright's Opera House Band regularly performed in the hall and at local events in the 1880s. The founding of the Central Michigan Normal School (Alma College) was announced in this opera house in 1886.

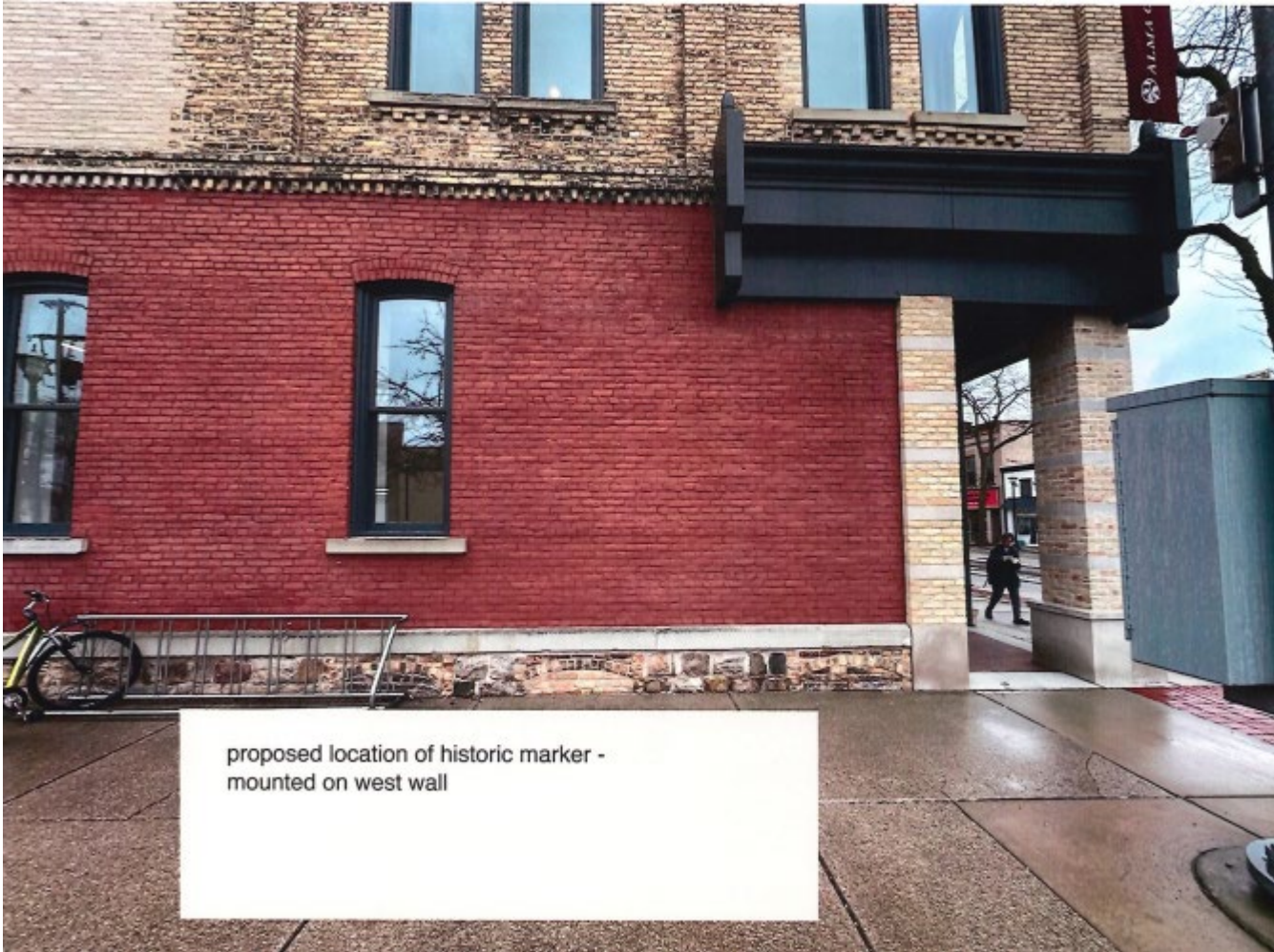
After the building fell into disuse, Wright's son-in-law Henry Lancashire purchased the block in 1894 and began remodeling in 1897. Built in 1899, the Lancashire Building addition adjoins the Opera House on its east side with two floors of office space. The Masons leased the opera house space in 1919 and used it until 1961. The lower storefronts housed various businesses throughout the twentieth century. A fire extensively damaged the building in 2010, leaving the upper levels abandoned. A mixed-use rehabilitation project began in 2012 followed by the building's listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. Rehabilitation of commercial spaces on the ground floor and residential units for Alma College students on the upper floors was completed in 2019.

Historic Integrity:

This three-story, cream brick Italianate commercial property retains many of its original architectural elements on its Superior Street façade. Decorative cornice, windowsill, and hood elements remain intact. Extensive modifications have been made to the first floor's exterior.

Recommendation: Approval

Proposed Marker Location: West wall of Opera House, at the corner of Superior St. and State St.



proposed location of historic marker -
mounted on west wall



Opera House exterior, 1910.



Opera House exterior abandoned after 2010 fire, National Register of Historic Places, 2013.



Opera House's front side, facing north, 2024.



Opera House interior, 2024.

Bishop's Retreat

Applicant: Jeff Steiner | jeff@lifesfood.net

Location Address: 8332 Lake View Blvd., Mackinac Island, 49757, Mackinac County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Site

Requested Marker Type: Small one post marker with different text on each side.

Criteria:

Designed by a significant architect (Charles Caskey), Bishop's Retreat is part of the religious history of Michigan and Mackinac Island, specifically its relation to both the Diocese of Michigan and Diocese of Northern Michigan.

Historical Summary:

Before he was commissioned to oversee the construction of the Grand Hotel in 1887, architect Charles Caskey designed and built this cottage in the summer of 1885 on land deeded by Gurdon Hubbard to the Trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the Diocese of Michigan. It is one of several cottages designed by Caskey in Hubbard's Annex. From its completion in 1885 to 1913, it served as the summer retreat for three bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan.

Samuel Smith Harris was the first occupant from 1885 until his death in 1888. Harris, born in Antauga County, Georgia, practiced law before volunteering in the 3rd Regiment Alabama Infantry of the Confederate Army. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Ordained in 1869, Harris ministered in Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana, until he was called to St. James' in Chicago in 1875. He was elected Bishop of Michigan in 1879 and served until his death from apoplexy in 1888.

Thomas Frederick Davies was elected as Bishop in 1889 following the death of Bishop Harris. Davies was born in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1831 and studied at Yale University, where he was made a deacon in 1857 and served as the chair of Hebrew at the Berkely Divinity School. He ministered at St. Peter's in Philadelphia before his election to the Diocese of Michigan in 1889. He died of pneumonia in 1905.

Charles David Williams was the last Bishop to occupy the cottage – from his election in 1906 until the property was sold in 1913. Born in Bellevue, Ohio, in 1860, Williams graduated from Kenyon College in 1880 and was ordained in 1884. He served as the dean of Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland, before his consecration as the Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan. During World War I, he served as a Red Cross appointee in France. Williams believed that the church played a significant role in solving social problems. He joined a commission of church leaders that investigated the steel industry and was national president of the Church League for Industrial Economy. In 1921, he conducted a group of Americans through England and studied the

relationship of the church to the labor movement. He died in office from a cerebral hemorrhage in 1923.

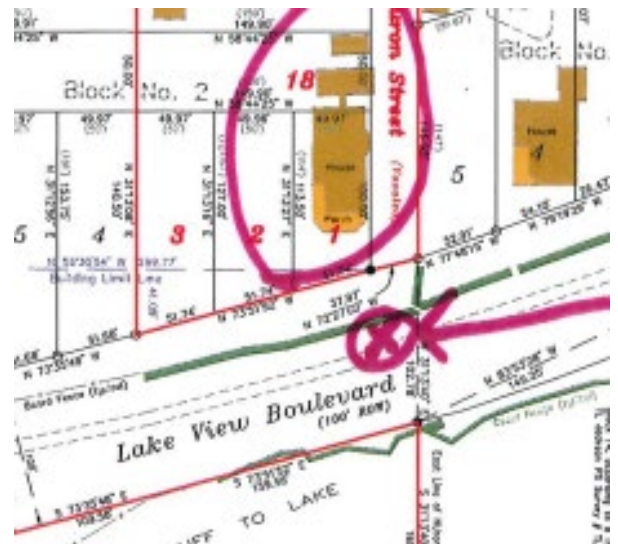
At the 1892 Diocesan Convention, an independent missionary was established by Bishop Davies under archdeacon Reverend Gersham Mott Williams for the portion of the diocese in the Upper Peninsula. Williams believed the needs of the Upper Peninsula's churches were ignored in its status as a Missionary District. At the district's 1895 convocation in Marquette, delegates organized the Diocese of Northern Michigan. The General Convention did not recognize the diocese and requested that it be called the Diocese of Marquette instead. A special convention was held in November 1895 in which the diocese was reorganized, and Bishop Williams was elected and ordained. Mackinac Island was left out of the Diocese of Marquette's jurisdiction until 1937, when Bishop Hayward Ablewhite formally changed the organization's name to the Diocese of Northern Michigan and assumed jurisdiction over the islands in the Straits of Mackinac.

Historic Integrity:

The Charles Caskey designed home retains its original elements with the addition of shutters to the side windows and redesigned landscaping. The house is significant for its architectural history pre-dating the Grand Hotel.

Recommendation: Approval

Proposed Marker Location: On the lawn in front of the house on Lake View Boulevard.



Location for marker in front of the house on Lake View Boulevard.



Photo comparison of the front of the home estimated around 1914 and how it appears today.



Photos from the second private owner, estimated to be from the 1940s.



Milford Presbyterian Church

Applicant: Jackie Swenson | jacquyn.swenson@gmail.com | 248-770-1374

Location Address: 238 N. Main Street, Milford 48381, Oakland County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Site

Requested Marker Type: Large marker with different text on each side.

Criteria:

The establishment of the Milford Presbyterian Church is unusual in its combining of two protestant denominations. The core exterior of the church building is an example of early twentieth-century Romanesque architecture; however, it is enveloped in modern additions.

Historical Summary:

On September 2, 1835, the Organization of Detroit Presbytery approved the admission of a Church at Milford. Established a year after Michigan became a state, the church was organized by six charter members in the village schoolhouse in 1838 with the Reverend Albert Worthington serving as the first pastor.

Under The Plan of Union doctrine adopted by the Connecticut General Association in June 1801, Presbyterian and Congregational churches often formed a singular society in newly established communities. Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Milford merged into the United Presbyterian and Congregational Church of Milford in 1845. The church remained in this unity until 1957, when the Congregational part of the name was dropped, and the church officially became The Milford Presbyterian Church.

In 1844, construction began on the original church building located at West Huron Street. It was completed and dedicated as the United Presbyterian and Congregational Church of Milford in 1846. The “Little White Church” or “church over the river” as it was referred to underwent extensive repairs in 1877 and 1881. It was abandoned in 1900.

To accommodate the growing congregation, the Detroit architecture firm Spier and Rohn designed a new Romanesque Revival church. The church was dedicated on April 8, 1900, and remains standing at the corner of North Main Street and East Liberty Street.

The new building underwent two phases of additions, beginning in 1957 with a one-story Midcentury Modern designed section on the building’s south and west sides, completed in 1962. The second phase added a second floor over phase one and was completed in 1965. In 1984 the entrance was remodeled to better reflect the original church building.

Historic Integrity:

Historical Architect, Robbert McKay, concluded that the building “lacks sufficient integrity of design either as an example of Romanesque Revival or Midcentury Modern Religious architecture to warrant recognition.

Recommendation: Review

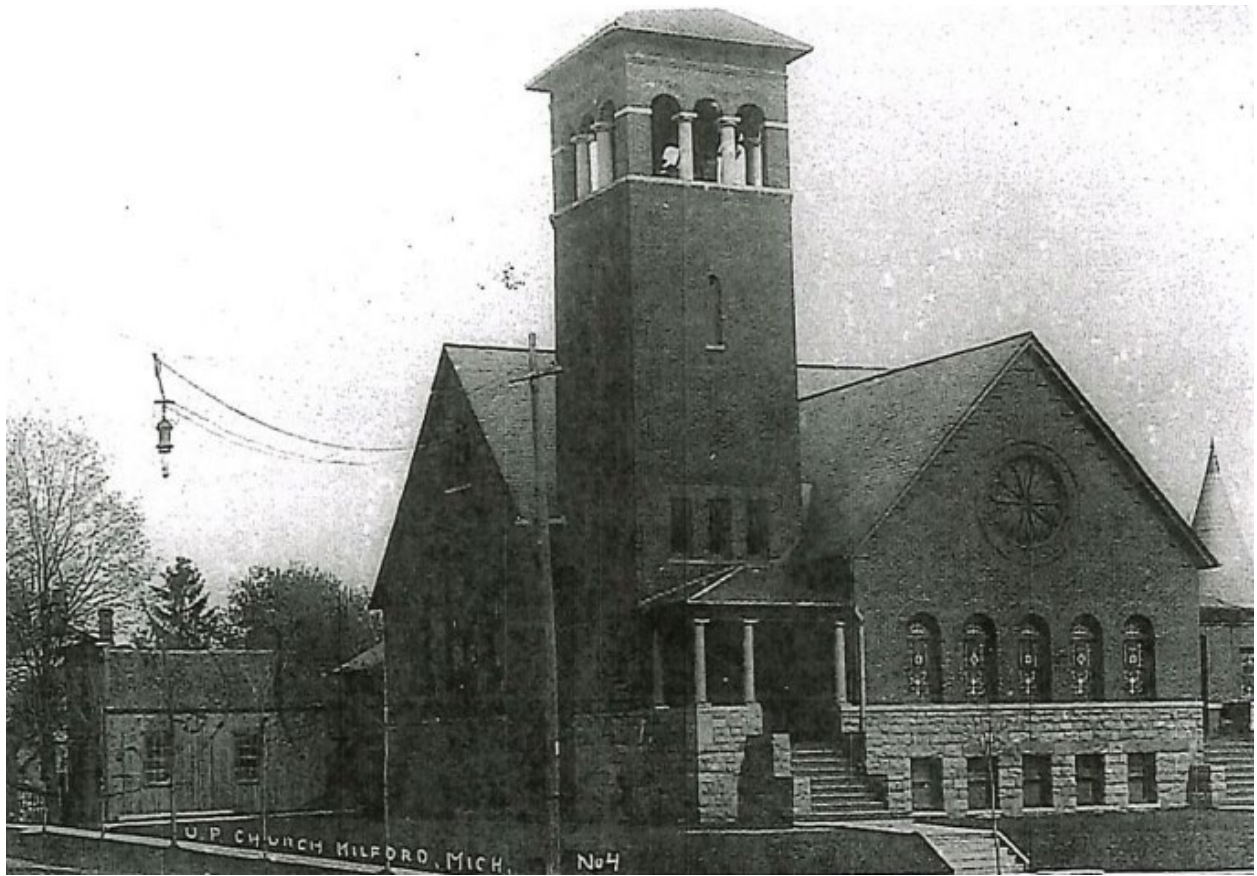
Proposed Marker Location: Corner of N. Main Street and E. Liberty Street



Proposed location of marker at corner of North Main Street and East Liberty Street.



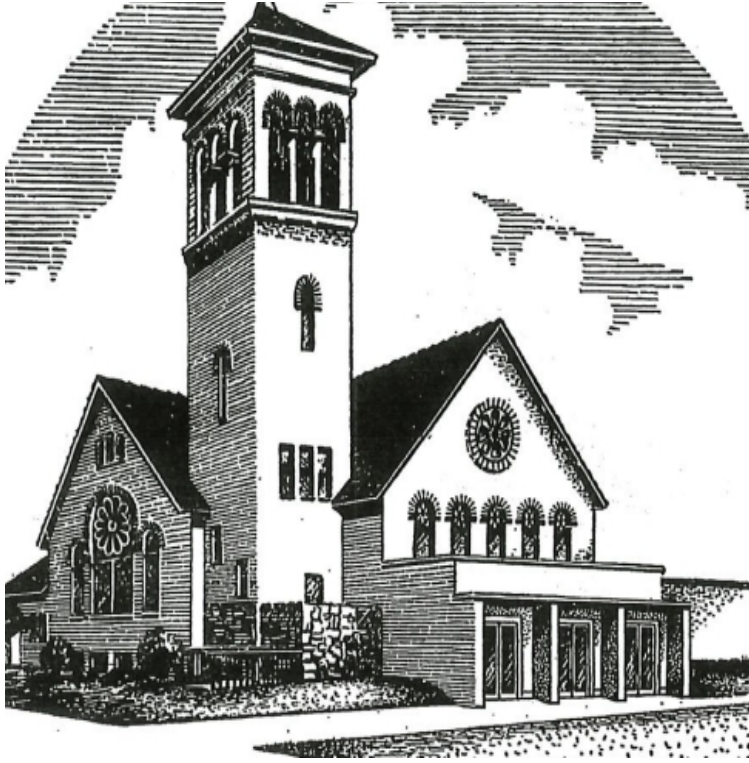
Corner of N. Main Street and E. Liberty Street looking towards the proposed marker placement.



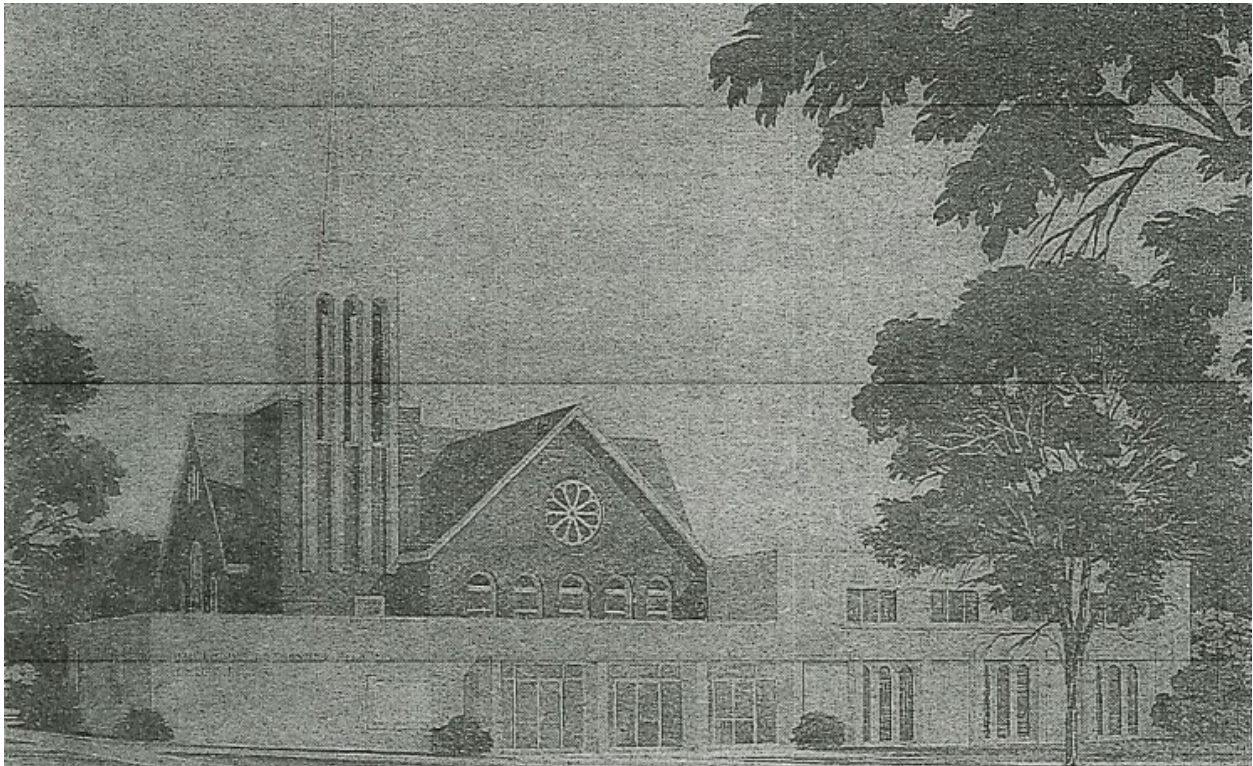
Northwest corner of the original building at N. Main Street and E. Liberty Street shortly after its completion in 1900. The original entrance is believed to be near the bell tower.



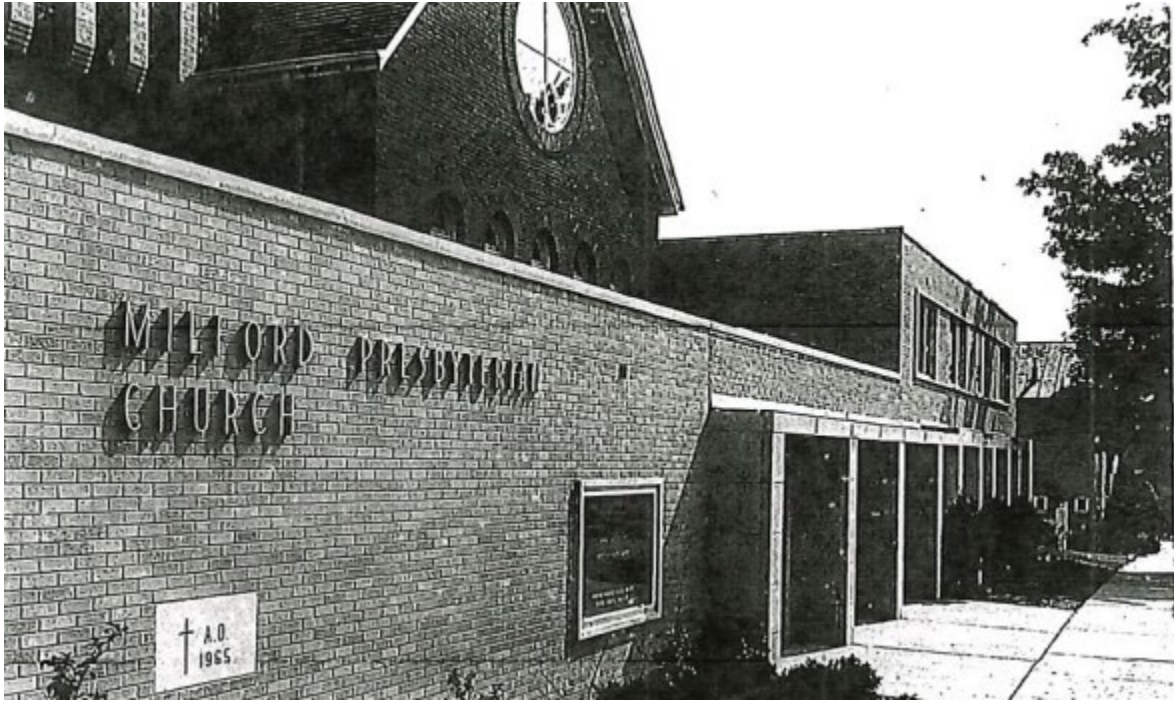
Southwest corner of the original building where the 1960s additions stand.



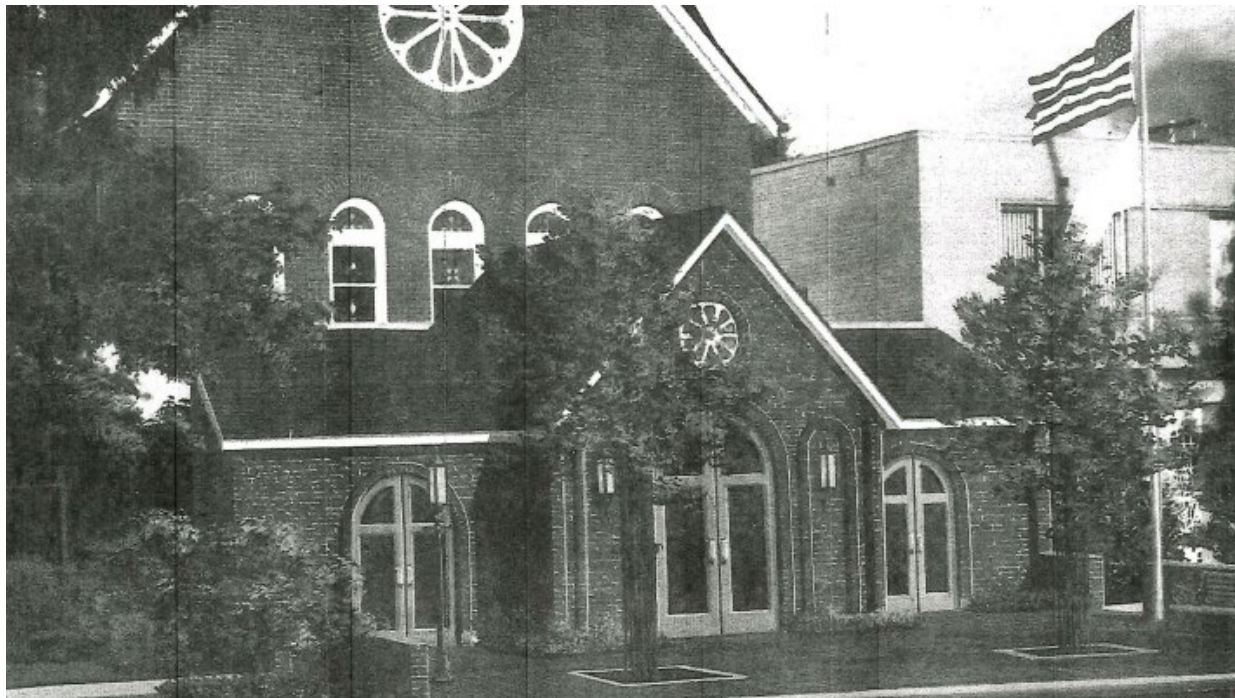
Sketch of phase I or the 1957-1962 remodel. The main entrance has been moved to the west and follows a Mid Century Modern design.



Phase I sketch from the Milford Times in 1957 including the remodel of the bell tower and the addition of Sunday School facilities and a Chapel in the Mid-Century Modern style. It was completed in 1962.



This shows the completed Phase I entrance on E. Liberty Street as well as the Phase II addition of the second floor completed in 1965.



Architectural rendering of the 1984 entrance remodel. Designed by the firm Total Concepts Corporation the new entrance replaced the Mid-Century Modern entrance with one that more closely resembles the original church building. This structure remains as the main entrance.



Current exterior of the church, including the original sanctuary (brick facade, left) with the 1962 and 1965 addition visible on the right.



Current exterior photo from January 2024.

Early Detroit Bicyclists

Applicant: Todd Scott | todd@detroitgreenways.org

Location Address: 38 West Jefferson Detroit, Wayne County 48226 (Hart Plaza)

Historic Resource(s): Historic Event

Requested Marker Type: Small one post marker with different text on each side.

Criteria:

Historical marker significant as the site of the first recorded use of a bicycle in Detroit.

Historical Summary:

On December 18, 1868, Ben Fletcher of the Michigan News Company rode his velocipede on Jefferson Avenue. Fletcher's velocipede, manufactured by the Hanlon Bros. company of France, "weighed about 100 pounds" and cost "\$180 in gold." The *Detroit Free Press* claimed Fletcher as the "First Detroit Velocipedist" in 1868. "Before long velocipedes will be as plenty as carriages in the streets," continued the *Free Press*.

Organizations of bicycle users formed to advocate for their rights to roadways. This included the League of American Wheelmen, formed in Rhode Island in 1880. Horatio S. Earle (1855-1935) was a member of the Michigan LAW division and advocated for the rights of bicyclists. Edward N. Hines (1870-1938), president of the Michigan division of the LAW, formed a Good Roads organization in Michigan in 1890. LAW petitioned the state legislature to amend the constitution to make counties the units to build and maintain highways. The County Road Law passed in 1893. Hines appointed Earle as the chairman of the Good Roads committee in 1898.

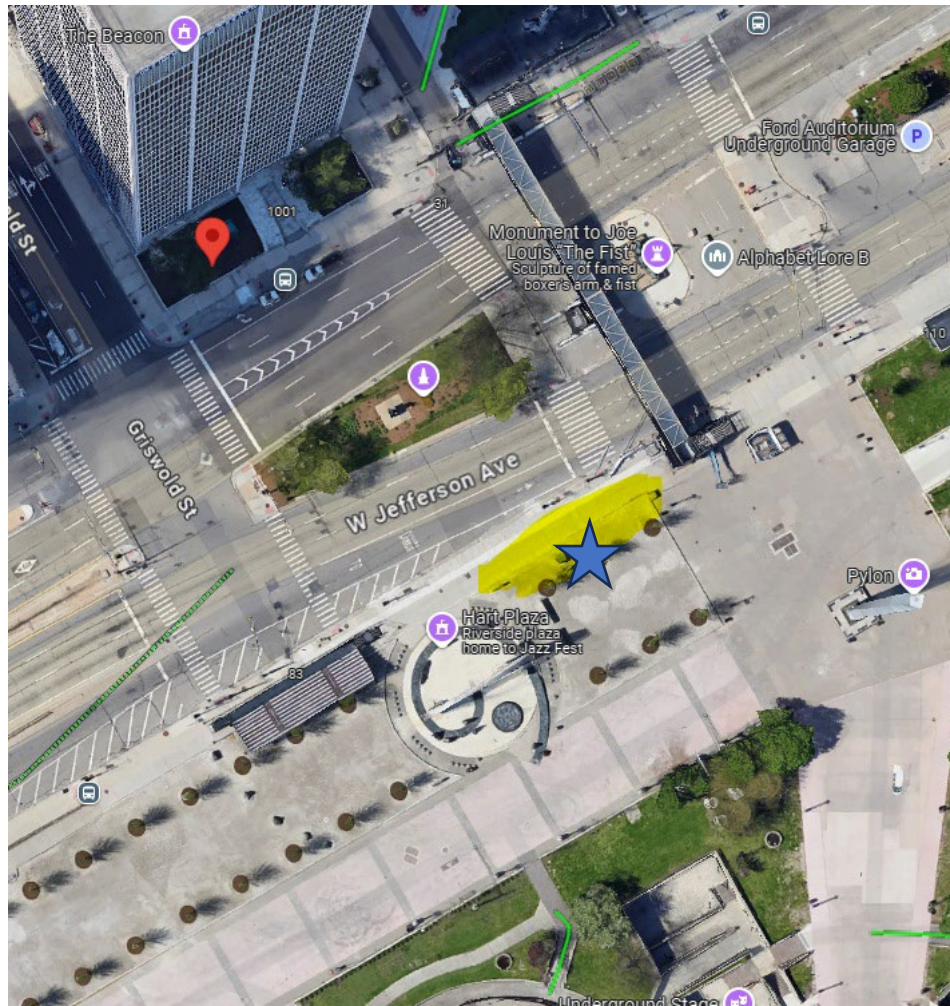
The advent of the automobile shifted the focus of the "good roads" movement away from bicycles. Hines was appointed to the Wayne County Road Commission along with Cassius R. Benton and Henry Ford in 1906. As bicycle advocates, Hines and Earle led the creation of concrete roads as well as highway systems in Michigan.

Historic Integrity:

Structures within the event's period of significance no longer exist. This marker is about the history of roadways in Michigan, as well as Horatio Earle and Edward Hines.

Recommendation: Approval

Proposed Marker Location: Hart Plaza near Griswold Street (former site of Michigan News Company Building).



Marker location on Jefferson Avenue in Hart Plaza.



The Hanlon Bros. Velocipede.



Horatio Earle (left) and Edward Hines (right).

St. Hedwig Cemetery (Updated)

Applicant: David Zelinski, Andrew Oswald

Location Address: 23755 Military Rd. Dearborn Heights, Wayne Co.

Historic Resources: Historic Site and Cemetery

Requested Marker Type: Large marker with different text on each side.

Historical Summary:

The necessity of cemeteries in the Metro Detroit area coincided with the area's explosion in population at the dawn of the 20th century. Members of the Conventual Franciscans of Saint Bonaventure Province in Chicago recognized this need and purchased property west of Detroit in Dearborn Township around 1922. The Franciscans purchased some 80 acres of land owned by two farmers, W.H. Maxwell and William Morhouse. These two properties spanned from Warren Avenue to Ford Road at what became the northern border of Dearborn in 1925. The northern end of the property at Warren Avenue became the earliest iteration of Saint Hedwig Cemetery being consecrated on Memorial Day— May 30, 1924. The Conventual Franciscans of Saint Bonaventure Province have retained ownership of the cemetery for the past one hundred years. A group of friars serving as caretakers lived in a nearby house until the 1940s when a friary was completed on the grounds. Friars have lived in the friary continuously since. A special burial section near Warren Avenue is reserved for Franciscan priests and sisters.

While St. Hedwig originally served the area's growing Polish Catholic population; it was named after Saint Hedwig of Andechs (c.1174-1243), from Bavaria. The cemetery expanded into the rest of the previously purchased acreage throughout the 1960s. The cemetery's roads were paved by 1968.

A large mausoleum was constructed in the center of the cemetery over Bills Drain, a tributary of the Rouge River, likely the namesake of William Morhouse. The first portion of the mausoleum, completed in 1968, was constructed using materials shipped from Louisiana by the Acme Marble & Granite Company. Additional wings of the mausoleum were added in 1978. St. Hedwig Cemetery was an early adopter of columbariums, structures for the interment of cremated remains, as cremation became increasingly accepted within the Catholic Church.

Military Road, created to connect the Dearborn Arsenal with Ann Arbor Trail and the settlement of Coonville (where Ann Arbor Trail crosses Outer Drive), crossed through the northern end of the cemetery. Increased issues with drag racing and vandalism following the paving of the road in 1970 prompted the cemetery to propose the closure of the road to the city of Dearborn Heights in 1973. Nearby homeowners, concerned that the closure would slow emergency vehicle service to the area, filed suit against the city on August 2, 1974. An out-of-court settlement was reached in 1975 and the cemetery assumed ownership of the section of Military Road that crossed the property.

St. Hedwig Cemetery has held annual Memorial Day Masses since the 1960s, drawing large crowds, local politicians, and religious figures. It holds yearly canned food drives to collect for the

homeless and needy. The cemetery has also participated in Wreaths Across America for more than ten years. In 2002, the Shrine of Christianity was added to the Ford Road entrance. It features more than 8,000 above ground niches for cremation interment. The veteran's memorial installed in front of the main office was dedicated in 2004.

Historic Integrity:

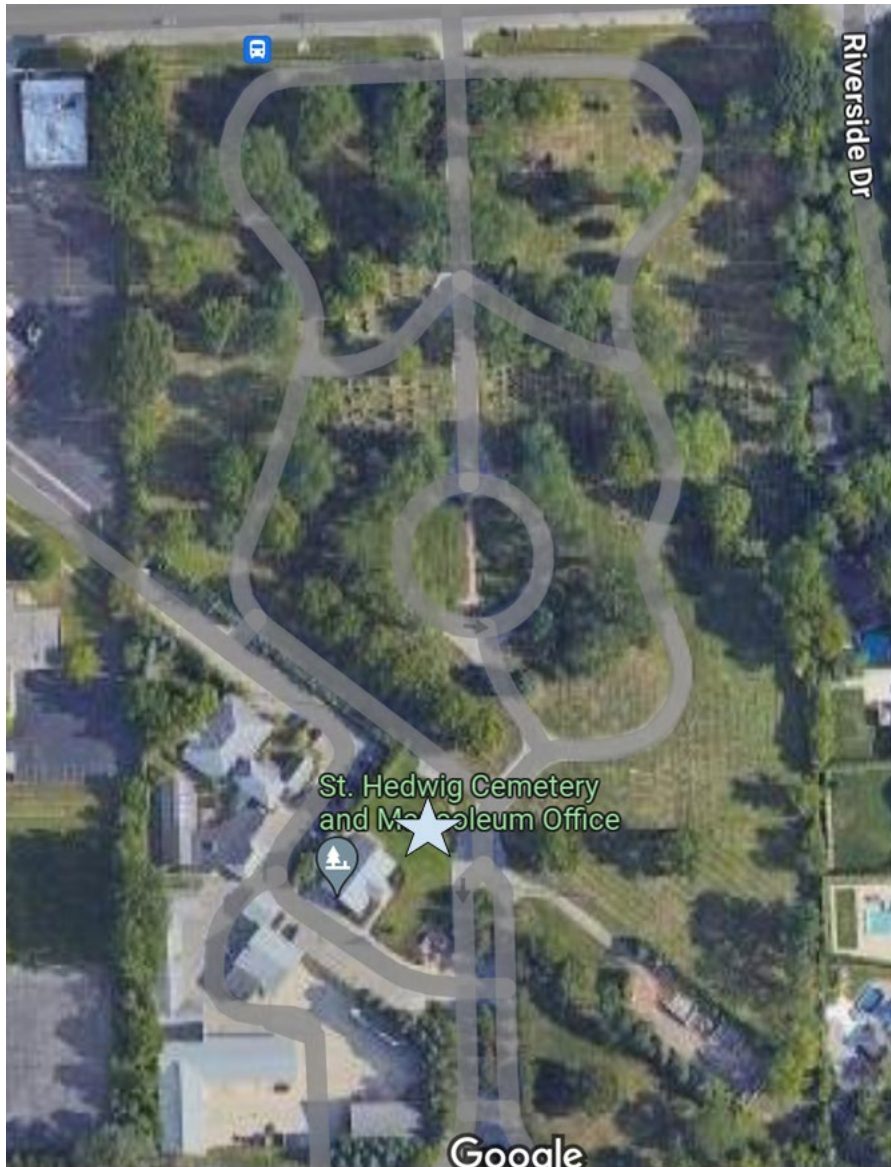
The cemetery grounds are well kept by a full-time staff. The entirety of the cemetery, excluding the oldest portion off of Warren, is a memorial park with ground-level grave markers. The "old side" retains many decorative headstones and monuments dating to the cemetery's founding.



The Ford Road entrance



The central portion of the mausoleum



The proposed marker location in front of the office building

Recommendation: Approval

Proposed Marker Location: In front of the office building