

## ORDINANCE NO. 2019-29

## CHAPTER 25

## ARTICLE II

**AN ORDINANCE to amend Chapter 25, Article II of the 1984 Detroit City Code by adding Section 25-2-209 to establish the St. Brigid Roman Catholic/High Praise Cathedral of Faith Historic District and to define the elements of design for the district.**

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

**Section 1.** Chapter 25, Article II, of the 1984 Detroit City Code be amended by adding Section 25-2-209 to read as follows:

**Sec. 25-2-209.** St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church/High Praise Cathedral of Faith Historic District.

(a) A historic district to be known as the St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church/High Praise Cathedral of Faith 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 St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church/High Praise Cathedral of Faith 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 Schoolcraft with the centerline of Wisconsin, on the north, the centerline of Schoolcraft: on the east, the centerline of Wisconsin: on the south, the south line of the parcel described by the legal description provided below: and on the west, the centerline of the vacated alley adjacent to the west line of Lots 23. 24 and 25. John M. Welch Jrs. Wyoming Schoolcraft Sub L46 P98 Plats, W.C.R. extended north and south.

**Legal Description:**

S SCHOOLCRAFT 231 THRU 236. N 15 FT 237 238 VAC ALLEYS ADJ B E TAYLORS DETROIT CITY SUB NO. 1 L39 P96 PLATS, W.C.R. 16/272 LOTS 68 THRU 73 AND VAC ALLEY ADJ JOHN M WELCH JRS WYOMING-SCHOOLCRAFT SUB L46 P98 PLATS, W.C.R. 16/338 216 IRREG 57.158 SF: W INDIANA 49 THRU 44 AND VAC ALLEY ADJ JOHN M WELCH JRS WYOMING SCHOOLCRAFT SUB L46 P98 PLATS, W.C.R. 16/338 N 14 FT 194 195 AND VAC ALLEY ADJ B E TAYLORS DETROIT CITY SUB NO 1 L39 P96 PLATS, W.C.R. 16/272 163.05 IRREG: W KENTUCKY 25 THRU 23 JOHN M WELCH JRS WYOMING SCHOOLCRAFT SUB L46 P98 PLATS, W.C.R. 16/338 130.34 IRREG. Commonly known as

8735 Schoolcraft 8809 Schoolcraft and 13641 Kentucky.

(d) The defined elements of design, as provided for in Section 25-2-2 of this code, are as follows:

(1) *Height.* The school building (13661 Wisconsin Street, rectory (addressed with 8909 Schoolcraft Street), and activities building (13641 Kentucky) are two (2) stories in height. The religious building (8909 Schoolcraft Street) is a single tall story built up to the height of thirty-five (35) feet at the lantern dome.

(2) *Proportion of building's front façades.* The front (norths) façades of all four (4) buildings are wider than tall, although massing of individual sections of buildings may appear neutral or taller than wide. The front façades of the school, rectory, and activities building are arranged by bays, whereas the religious building is arranged by functionally massed sections, such as chapels, narthex and domed sanctuary.

(3) *Proportion of openings within the façades.* Window and door openings within the district are diverse in their variety of shapes and sizes, signifying the function and design of the individual buildings. The religious building features a range of arched openings that are taller than wide, but where grouped together, may appear wider than tall. Its three prominent, evenly spaced entrance openings each contain a set of double doors with tympanum above. A rose window is centered above in the front gable. Each face of the octagonal lantern crowning the dome has a pair of arched windows separated by columns. The three-sided corner sections between the arms of the Greek cross are fenestrated with paired arched windows on the first level and, at second story level on the northwest corner of the building, sets of four narrow arched window openings separated by columns. The southernmost face of this corner section has a flat-arched double-door entrance opening taller than wide. Transom arms feature three large round-arched window openings, the central one being the larger. By contrast, the rectory features a trabeated system of fenestration with openings taller than wide, its front façade consisting of divided casement windows and a single door width entrance, east of which is an opening wider than tall containing a three-part divided picture window. The front (north) flat-arched, double-door entrances of the school building are taller than wide, as are window openings throughout the building.

Above the entrances of the wings are, at second story level, a pair of small, arched windows, each taller than wide, separated by columns. Classroom windows are replacements of the original deeply set pairs of divided double-hung sash windows, openings emphatically taller than wide, including tall, adjoining door openings on its front façade and narrow, vertically rectangular slot window openings on its front and side elevations.

(4) *Rhythm of solids to voids in the front façades.* A regular rhythm of solids to voids exists on all primary façades. Generally, openings are placed one over the other by floor and are evenly spaced and symmetrically arranged in rows, resulting in strong, rhythmic patterns. The school building, with rows of identical subdivided windows, often in groups, and the activity building, in which the middle of the three rows of slot windows shifts between the four above and below, exhibit strong, consistent overall patterns. Arcaded rhythms of solids to voids are pronounced on the religious building while the rectory has regularly arranged, flat-arch openings with interruptions for single doorways and a shallow bay window on the east elevation.

(5) *Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets.* The buildings in the two and one-half block district are situated near the public rights-of-way on corner lots, resulting in the side streets providing pattern breaks. The rectory is the exception, sharing its lot with the religious building connected to its west side.

(6) *Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections.* No overall rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections exists due to the individual treatment of each of the four (4) buildings in the district. The three symmetrically positioned entrances to the school, one in each wing and one in the recessed central section, and the entrance to the activities building are at grade, with a single concrete platform. The main (north) entrances of the religious building and rectory are accessed up shallow steps. Buildings positioned on corner parcels have secondary entrances on the adjacent north-south streets.

(7) *Relationship of materials.* Brick is the major material of the buildings, often contrasting with masonry trim. Details in brick, glazed and unglazed terra cotta, and stone adorn all but the activities building, which is absent of applied detail. Door and window frames are wood or metal: the activities building features aluminum doors; lanterns to the sides of doorways are usually bronze. The rectory

and religious building feature figurative carvings and panels of stone, and have clay tile roofs with copper gutters and downspouts.

(8) *Relationship of textures.* The major textural relationship is that of brick with mortar joints juxtaposed with masonry and terra cotta trim and detail focused on door and window surrounds and cornices. The English bond brick of the school building is embellished with decorative patterned brickwork in spandrels and arches. Repetitive details, such as dentils or arcading beneath cornices or window and door surrounds, contribute to textural interest as do the clay pantile roofs of the rectory and religious building. The activities building features smooth finishes, such as aluminum and painted surfaces. In general, the district is rich in textural relationships.

(9) *Relationship of colors.* The brickwork on buildings is red in color, and contrasts with the beige trim and terra cotta detail, where it exists. The tympanums of the religious building feature sky blue backgrounds and flesh and white colors. Window frames and sashes are painted either white or brown; woodwork and doorways are dark brown. Red tile roofs cover the rectory and religious building; copper is weathered green.

(10) *Relationship of architectural details.* Architectural detail generally relates to style and function of the buildings in the district: areas around entrances, window openings and cornices are typically embellished with appropriate detail. The front façade of the school building features entrances composed of a single wooden door set into a limestone architrave, over which is a lintel carved with a Celtic knot pattern and supported by pilasters having carved capitals. Decorative limestone pilasters with brick blind arches, dentil cornices, herringbone and basket weave patterns, and soldier course banding are ornamental features of the school building. The north façades of the wings have shallow raised pediments over their central bays, originally with a cross centered within. Late twentieth century rear additions to the school do not relate to the original building in architectural style. Ornamentation was applied sparingly in the design of the rectory: its doorway is surrounded by a masonry, flat arch molded architrave surmounted by an entablature with a centered crest containing an Irish cross, lit by a brass lantern above. Carved, figural blocks are set in brick and a masonry belt course divides the first and

second stories. The façades of the, religious building are rich with Catholic and Irish iconography and symbols executed in terra cotta. The three, double-door arched entrance openings, separated by large rectangular marble panels, are the focal point of the front façade, and feature details in terra cotta. The wood paneled doors are set within compound terra cotta arches, representational polychromatic tympanums rest above the doors, and metal lanterns flank each opening. Representational figures and symbols are located on projecting plaques, arches and capitals. A rose window centered in the gable is flanked by two large partly engaged statues of saints Peter and Paul. A decorative arcaded cornice defines the slope of the gable roof and a Celtic cross crowns the apex of the gable. The carved detail continues to the Kentucky Avenue (west) entrance and the east and west walls. At the four upper corners of the building are eight relief plaques used as relief ornaments for the masonry walls. Quite in contrast, the modern style activities building has no extraneous detail, the window slits allowing a pattern of light into the large, multi-purpose interior space. Characteristic of the modern style, the elements themselves, such as the slot window openings, curved porch roof supported by narrow vertical members, create the detail.

(11) *Relationship of roof shapes.* The roofs of the school and activities buildings are flat and are not seen from the street: the porch canopy of the activities building is curved. The rectory has a hip roof. The religious building features gable roofs over its narthex and transepts, flat roofs over the corner chapels, partial hips over intermediate sections, and an octagonal lantern dome over the sanctuary.

(12) *Walls of continuity.* A wall of continuity is created by the four related buildings alone Schoolcraft Street within the district due to their substantial scale and positioning on their lots.

(13) *Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatments.* Shrubs and trees are intentionally planted around the perimeters of the school, activities building, rectory and religious building. The religious building and connecting rectory share an entire block, with the front (north) of the church situated close to the public right-of-way and the rectory to its east set back substantially, creating a grass turf front yard. Long, straight-line and diagonal concrete walkways lead to the front

entrance of the rectory from the public sidewalks on Schoolcraft and Indiana streets. A broad concrete area extending the width of the steps leads to the tripartite entrance of the religious building. A cabinet sign identifying the religious building sits on northeast corner of Schoolcraft at Wisconsin. The school building, also occupying an entire block, has a straight-line concrete walkway dividing the grass-turf lawn from the public sidewalk leading to each of its Schoolcraft entrances. A back-lit cabinet sign sits perpendicular to the building on its front lawn. A landscaping element at the southwest corner of Schoolcraft and Indiana is framed by stacked masonry pavers. Situated to the sides of the front entrance of the activity building are low walled, rectangular concrete planters.

(14) *Relationship of open space to structures.* Shallow front and side yards planted with grass turf characterize the district, with the exception of the rectory, which has a deep front yard. The rear (south) of buildings generally extend the depth of the property, with the school building addition extending considerably further south of the vacated alley, enclosing an exterior courtyard. The rear (south) of the rectory has a large attached garage accessed off of the side street, its wide driveway paved in concrete. Outside of the district to the east, between Wisconsin and Ohio streets on the former convent site, is a paved parking lot. The traditional alley south of the buildings was vacated and the surfaces are either expanded over with a building, paved in concrete, or planted with vegetation.

(15) *Scale of façades and façade elements.* The façades of the four buildings in the district are appropriately large in scale, with elements and detail ranging from small to large. The rectory is large in scale for a neighborhood residential building but is dwarfed by its relationship to the larger and prominent religious building attached at its west side.

(16) *Directional expression of front elevations.* The front elevations of the two wings of the school building are each vertically expressed, although as joined together with the central entrance section, is neutral. The rectory and activity building are horizontal in directional expression. The built-up massing of the religious building, culminating with the lantern, has the appearance of verticality.

(17) *Rhythm of building setbacks.* No rhythm of setbacks exists within the two and one-half block Schoolcraft streetscape. The school building, religious

building, and activities building are situated close to the public right-of-way; the rectory is set back significantly, giving prominence to the religious structure to its west.

(18) *Relationship of lot coverages.* The footprints of three (3) of the buildings occupy most of their lots, with a small amount of open space around their front and side perimeters, with the exception being the rectory, which has an ample front yard. The original footprint of the school building between Wisconsin and Indiana streets is H-shaped, with a front (north) and rear (south) courtyard, but a large addition extended its parcel southward, sealing off the rear courtyard from the south and providing parking off of Wisconsin Street. The school buildings, with additions, occupy approximately eighty to ninety percent (80%-90%) of its parcel. The religious structure and attached rectory with its additions, between Indiana and Kentucky streets, occupies approximately sixty percent (60%) of its block, with the religious structure occupying most of the parcel. The activities building, which occupies the east half of the block between Kentucky and Wyoming, occupies approximately sixty-five to seventy-five percent (65%-75%) of its parcel.

(19) *Degree of complexity within the façades.* Each of the four (4) buildings within the district have separately designed façades. The school building, which has an identical wing joined in the middle by a set-back entrance section, is nonetheless straightforward in its massing, fenestration and detail and, therefore, displays a low degree of complexity. The front façade of the rectory displays a higher degree of complexity with the western portion slightly set back, windows of different sizes, and ornamental and figurative detail. The religious structure is most complex, with its built-up massing and elaborately ornamented architecture. True to its minimalist modern style, the activities building is the least complex with regular arrangements of windows and lack of applied detail.

(20) *Orientation, vistas, overviews.* The buildings in the district are oriented

north toward Schoolcraft Street, the major east-west thoroughfare in the vicinity. North across Schoolcraft Street are residential lots with houses fronting the north-south streets, their long side elevations facing the original religious complex. Scattered commercial and religious buildings occupy lots on Schoolcraft Street immediately beyond the historic district. Interstate 96, the Jeffries Freeway, runs in an east-west direction one long block south of the historic district, dividing the preexisting residential tracts.

(21) *Symmetric or asymmetric appearance.* The general appearance of the façades is symmetrical, with the exception of the rectory, which is asymmetrical.

(22) *General environmental character.* The four (4) buildings comprising the St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church/High Praise Cathedral of Faith Historic District built between 1924 and 1960 (absent of a later convent, since razed), are well-maintained and continue to provide a substantial institutional presence in the area. The elaborate architecture of the religious building, in particular, causes it to stand out from its environment, which is densely populated by small-medium scale, single-family houses built between the late 1920s and 1950s.

**Section 2.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances, or 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.

(J.C.C. Page ) July 16, 2019  
Passed: September 24, 2019  
Approved: September 25, 2019  
Published: October 4, 2019  
Effective: October 4, 2019

JANICE M. WINFREY  
City Clerk