

ORDINANCE NO. 01-11

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CHAPTER 25

ARTICLE II

To establish the Cass-Davenport Historic District and to define the elements of design for the district.

AN ORDINANCE to amend Chapter 25, Article II, of the 1984 Detroit City Code by adding Section 25-2-179 to establish the Cass-Davenport 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 is amended by adding Section 25-2-179 to read as follows: **Sec. 25-2-179. Cass-Davenport Historic District.**

(A) A historic district to be known as the Cass-Davenport 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 Cass-Davenport Historic District are as shown on the map on file in the office of the City Clerk, and are as follows:

Beginning at a point, that point being the intersection of the centerline of Davenport Avenue and the centerline of the north-south alley located east of and parallel to Cass Avenue; thence south along the centerline of the alley to its intersection with the centerline of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard; thence west along the centerline of Cass Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Cass Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Cass Avenue to its intersection with the south line of Lot 2, Block 89, of the Subdivision of Part of Cass Farm, Liber 1, Pages 175-77 Plats, Wayne County Records, extended east and west; thence west along the south line of Lot 2, as extended, to its intersection with the alley west of and parallel to Cass Avenue; thence north along the centerline of the alley to its intersection with the north line of Lot 3, Block 89, of the Subdivision of Part of Cass Farm, Liber 1 Pages 175-77 Plats, Wayne County Records, extended east and west; thence east along said line to its intersection with the centerline of Cass Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Cass Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Davenport Avenue; thence east along the centerline of Davenport Avenue to the point of beginning.

(Legal Description: Lots 2, 3, and 4, Stimmons Subdn of Park Lot No. 67, City of Detroit, as recorded in Liber 1, Page 241 of Plats, Wayne County Records; also, Lots 2 and 3, Block 89, of the Subdivision of Part of Cass Farm, as recorded in Liber 1, Pages 175-77 of Plats, Wayne County Records. Commonly known as 3515 Cass Avenue, 3523 (or 3525) Cass Avenue, 3550-3556 Cass Avenue, 3566 Cass Avenue, and 149 Davenport Avenue.)

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

(1) *Height.* The four apartment buildings comprising the Cass-Davenport Historic District range from three (3) to six (6) stories tall on high basements.

(2) *Proportion of Building's Front Façade.* Three of the front façades in the Cass-Davenport Historic District are approximately as wide as tall; the building on the west side of Cass Avenue (3525 Cass Avenue) is wider than tall. Three-sided outer bays of the front façade of 149 Davenport Avenue rise through all three stories of the building. The two side elevations visible along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard are substantially wider than tall; a light court and set back on the south side of 3550 Cass Avenue cause a break in its long, flat wall surface.

(3) *Proportion of Openings Within the Façade.* The buildings within the Cass-Davenport Historic District are each composed of approximately twenty-five per cent (25%) to thirty-five per cent (35%) openings in their front façades. Double-hung windows are the predominant window type in the district, of which most are two times taller than wide, but when grouped in pairs, result in square openings. Upper sashes and transoms, where they exist, are typically subdivided into smaller panes. The windows on the façade of 149 Davenport Avenue consist of a large bottom sash and a fixed, subdivided, horizontally-oriented sash above. On the second through fourth story of the projecting central bay of 3525 Cass Avenue, where six individual window units are grouped together, horizontal rows of windows result, 3525 Cass Avenue exhibits the greatest variety in proportions of windows, including the two-faceted oriel windows on the second floor. Its first floor openings have been altered with more modern replacements. The sixth story window openings in the façade of 3550 Cass Avenue appear elongated because of their arched transoms. The window units on that façade have been

removed from their openings, and its first floor has been boarded, covering the original openings. Main entrance openings of the buildings in the district are centered on the first floors of the principal façades and vary in form, from the rectangular entrance opening of 149 Davenport Avenue to the segmental-arched opening of 3566 and 3525 Cass Avenue. Wide rectangular doorways open onto the porches of the multistory portico on the central bay of 3566 Cass Avenue. The original storefront openings of the two southernmost buildings have been covered up and the original arrangements altered.

(4) *Rhythm of Solids to Voids in Front Façades.* All of the façades are symmetrically arranged with regular rhythms of fenestration and are divided into bays vertically and by floors horizontally. The main entrance of each building is centered on the principal façade. The original storefronts flanking the entrances of 3525 Cass Avenue and 3550 Cass Avenue have been altered or boarded over, but secondary entrances have replaced the originals in the same locations. 149 Davenport Avenue and 3566 Cass Avenue have regularly arranged windows in their high basements. Consistent rows of window openings are broken where the central stairwell landings are fenestrated at the half-story, as at 149 Davenport Avenue and 3550 Cass Avenue. 3525 Cass Avenue features the most varied rhythm of solids to voids; its small, two-faceted, secondary story oriel windows that jut out from the wall surface and different treatments of the bays create a more lively rhythm of solids to voids compared to the other buildings in the district.

(5) *Rhythm of Spacing of Buildings on Streets.* Rhythm of spacing on streets is generally determined by setbacks from the side lot lines. While the clustering of buildings on the east side of Cass Avenue have narrow open spaces between them, there are too few buildings to discern a rhythm. The building at 3525 Cass Avenue abuts its neighboring building to the north.

(6) *Rhythm of Entrance and/or Porch Projections.* Primary entrances are prominently centered on their front façades, and are composed of ornamented, wide openings. All are at grade or a single step above, with the exception of 3556 Cass Avenue, which has six steps leading to its three-story, projecting, monumental porch with balconies between the chamfered, square brick columns of its upper stories. 149 Davenport Avenue features a porch recessed into the central bay with a single

door and window to its side. In general, no rhythm of entrance or porch projections is created amongst the four buildings; each building is distinct.

(7) *Relationship of Materials.* The building materials are generally composed of brick with cast stone or limestone trim. Common brick appears on side elevations that were not intended to be visible. Window frames and sashes are wooden; the building at 3525 Cass Avenue features a small wooden oriel window on the second floor of each outer bay and the building at 3566 Cass Avenue has wooden porch brackets. Wrought or cast iron balcony railings and/or tin or galvanized metal cornices exist, as does a metal fire escape on the north side of the building at 149 Davenport Avenue. The original materials of the first floors of 3525 Cass Avenue and 3550 Cass Avenue have been altered or covered.

(8) *Relationship of Textures.* The major textural effect is that of brick with mortar joints juxtaposed with cast stone trim and detail. Raised brick is used for framing windows and wall panels, and at 3566 Cass Avenue, to imply a rusticated high basement and first story and decorative frieze beneath the cornice. Repetitive ornamental detail in brick, stone, or metal, primarily on belt courses and cornices, contribute significantly to textural interest. Subdivided window sashes also contribute to textural interest.

(9) *Relationship of Colors.* The natural brick colors of red, orange, and light brown are contrasted with beige or light gray trim, elements and details. Window surrounds and sashes are shades of green or white. Recent vinyl awnings on 3525 Cass Avenue are green. Balcony railings are painted green or black, and fencing is black. The original colors of any building, as determined by professional analysis, are always acceptable for that building and may provide guidance for similar buildings.

(10) *Relationship of Architectural Details.* The styles of the buildings comprising the Cass-Davenport Historic District are twentieth century revival styles, including Tudor Revival (3525 Cass Avenue), with panels of characteristic Gothic tracery; Renaissance Revival (3550 Cass Avenue), with arcing at its cornice and festoon-filled panels; Classical Revival (3566 Cass Avenue), with its modillion cornice and cartouches at its upper corners; and Beaux Arts (149 Davenport Avenue), with egg-and-dart moldings and decorative console brackets. Their architectural elements and

details relate to their styles. Entrance bays, window frame, and cornices are areas of the façades where architectural detail is concentrated. The façades of the two oldest apartment buildings, 149 Davenport Avenue and 3566 Cass Avenue, have greater three-dimensional qualities as compared to the two later and larger apartment buildings that have flatter applied detail, although all four buildings contribute to the architectural richness of the district.

(11) *Relationship of Roof Shapes.* All of the buildings have flat roofs that cannot be seen from the ground. A tower with a pyramidal roof above the flat roof of 3550 Cass Avenue can be seen from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

(12) *Walls of Continuity.* Walls of continuity exist on the Davenport Avenue and east side of Cass Avenue façades due to the proximity of the buildings. 3525 Cass Avenue, by facing similarly massive apartment buildings, contributes to a sense of enclosure.

(13) *Relationship of Significant Landscape Features and Surface Treatments.* A chain link fence with barbed wire currently encloses the front yard of 149 Davenport Avenue; modern black wrought iron-style fencing exists between the buildings and encloses the parking lot south of 3525 Cass Avenue on the west side of the street. A curb separates the sidewalk from the slightly raised and planted front yard of the building at 3566 Cass Avenue and 149 Davenport Avenue. A narrow concrete walkway from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to Davenport Avenue and a tall, black wrought iron-like fence separates the east side of the district from the vacant lot further east, which is planted with grass and trees. Curbs are concrete throughout the district, with the exception of the brownstone curbs on Davenport Avenue. Modern steel light posts are placed regularly on the sidewalk.

(14) *Relationship of Open Space to Structures.* Open space is sparse in the district, as the buildings either sit on or are close to the wide public sidewalk that extends to the street curb. Three of the buildings have shallow, planted front yards between the public side walk and their front façades; the building at 3550 Cass Avenue sits directly on the front lot line but has a strip of grass along its Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard elevation. The three buildings clustered between Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Davenport Avenue east of Cass Avenue are separated from each other by narrow slices of open space that are con-

nected at the building line with high black wrought iron-like fences. The two side elevations along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard indicate the past existence of close or abutting buildings. Immediately outside of the boundaries of the district are vacant parcels of land; to the south of 5325 Cass Avenue is a paved parking lot surrounded by a black wrought iron-like fence, and a fenced, paved parking lot exists north of the district across Davenport Avenue.

(15) *Scale of Façade and Façade Elements.* The four façades range from small in scale to large for apartment buildings from the first quarter of the twentieth century. Elements within the façades, such as a monumental porch, large arched doorways, or heavy cornices, are medium to large in scale.

(16) *Directional Expression of Front Elevations.* Each of the front elevations of the apartment buildings comprising the Cass-Davenport Historic District is neutral in directional expression. Where buildings are clustered together on the east side of Cass Avenue and the south side of Davenport Avenue, the streetscape flows horizontally.

(17) *Rhythm of Building Setbacks.* An irregular rhythm of setbacks is created by the inconsistent placement of buildings from their front lot lines.

(18) *Relationship of Lot Coverages.* Lot coverage by the buildings is high; the building at 3525 Cass Avenue occupies approximately eighty (80) per cent of its lot; the cluster of buildings at the southeast corner of Cass Avenue and Davenport Avenue occupy approximately sixty-five percent (65%) of their combined lots.

(19) *Degree of Complexity within the Façades.* The front façades are simple in their massing and regular in their fenestration, but the variety of window shapes, materials, architectural elements and details of individual buildings increase the complexity and interest in the district overall.

(20) *Orientation, Vistas, Overviews.* The Cass-Davenport Historic District is oriented toward Cass Avenue, the north-south street running in front of three of the buildings. The small cluster of buildings forms the entrance into the Midtown section of the Cass Corridor from its south, or Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. The general overview is of a medium-density, mixed use neighborhood with scattered apartment buildings. Originally extending eastward to Woodward Avenue, Davenport Avenue is now accessed only from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Cass

Avenue due to the realignment of the historic street pattern, resulting in the triangular shape of the block.

(21) *Symmetric or Asymmetric Appearance.* The appearances of all of the front façades in the district are symmetrical.

(22) *General Environmental Character.* The Cass-Davenport Historic District consists of a small cluster of four architecturally, multi-unit residential buildings located north of the intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Cass Avenue. The immediate neighborhood has been scarred by building vacancies and cleared lots, significantly altering its historic setting, but is now emerging as a mixed-use district.

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 4-116 of the 1997 Detroit City Charter; otherwise, it shall become effective in accordance with Section 4-115 of the 1997 Detroit City Charter.

Proposed Cass-Davenport Historic District Proposed district boundaries are indicated by bold black lines.

(J.C.C. pg.) November 23., 2010
 Passed: January 25, 2011
 Approved: February 3, 2011
 Published: February 7, 2011
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JANICE M. WINFREY
 City Clerk

