

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 420 West Liberty Street, Application Number HDC19-092

**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District

**REPORT DATE:** July 11, 2019

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday July 8, 2019

	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	St. Paul Lutheran Church	Same
<b>Address:</b>	420 West Liberty Street Ann Arbor, MI 48103	
<b>Phone:</b>	(734) 474-2378	

**BACKGROUND:** This Neo-Gothic brick and stone church was dedicated in 1929 and features stained glass and large arch-topped windows in the sanctuary, a corner tower with a crenellated parapet, and a slate roof. The roof was replaced in 2015, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church received a Special Merit Award for the work from the HDC.

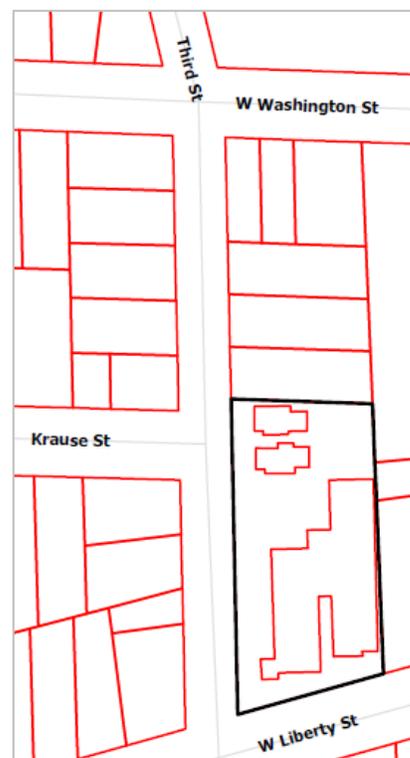
**LOCATION:** The site is located on the northeast corner of West Liberty and Third Street.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks after-the-fact HDC approval to install nine air conditioning condensers with vertical line sets covered by gutters.

#### **APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:**

##### **Ann Arbor City Code Chapter 103 § 8:421(3)**

When work has been done upon a resource without a permit, and the commission finds that the work does not qualify for a certificate of appropriateness, the commission may require an owner to restore the resource to the condition the resource was in before the inappropriate work or to modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness. If the owner does not comply with the restoration or modification requirement within a reasonable time, the commission may request for the city to seek an order from the circuit court to require the owner to restore the resource to its former condition or to modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness. If the owner does not comply or cannot comply with the order of the court, the commission may request for the city to enter the property and conduct work necessary to restore the



resource to its former condition or modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness in accordance with the court's order. The costs of the work shall be charged to the owner, and may be levied by the city as a special assessment against the property. When acting pursuant to an order of the circuit court, the city may enter a property for purposes of this section.

### **From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

- (2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- (9) 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.
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

### **From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply)**

#### **Mechanical Systems**

*Recommended:* Installing a completely new mechanical system if required for the new use so that it causes the least alteration possible to the building's floor plan, the exterior elevations, and the least damage to the historic building material.

Installing air conditioning units if required by the new use in such a manner that historic features are not damaged or obscured and excessive moisture is not generated that will accelerate deterioration of historic materials.

Installing heating/air conditioning units in the window frames in such a manner that the sash and frames are protected. Window installations should be considered only when all other viable heating/cooling systems would result in significant damage to historic materials.

### **From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines:**

#### **Mechanical Equipment**

*Appropriate:* Installing new air conditioning units and related mechanical equipment in such a manner that historic materials and features are not damaged or obscured.

Using screening such as vegetation and fencing around mechanical equipment.

### **STAFF FINDINGS**

1. To cool the church sanctuary, nine air conditioning condensers were installed in December of 2018: five along the Third Street (west) elevation and four along the east elevation of the historic building. Each sits on a small concrete pad, and has a line set that stretches up the wall approximately 10'-12'. The line sets are in the corners formed

between substantial brick pilasters and the outer wall. Other methods of cooling were considered and rejected, and are explained in a letter attached to the application.

2. The proposal includes substantially increasing the landscape screening between the units and the street. The church has historically had shrubbery between the sidewalk and church, as shown in the 1937 photo below.
3. The work was done without HDC approval or building permits. If the HDC does not approve the application, they must order the work reversed. Two motions are suggested at the end of the report that the HDC may use – the first to approve the units and landscaping, and the second to order the AC units to be removed should the first motion fail.
4. Despite their location in the front of the building, staff recommends approval of the air conditioning condensers and landscaping. The applicant describes other options and why they didn't work, and both the contractor and church representatives have discussed these with staff. This work is reversible, should a better option become available in the future, and damage to the interior of the church is avoided.

**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion below is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and report back at the meeting.)

*Motion to approve:*

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 420 West Liberty Street, a contributing structure in the Old West Side Historic District, to install nine air conditioning condensers with line sets in gutters, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, materials, and relationship to the building and the surrounding area and meets *The City of Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for mechanical equipment, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 9 and 10, and the guidelines for mechanical systems.

*If the motion fails:*

I move that the Commission finds that the mechanical work done without permits does not qualify for a certificate of appropriateness, and that the property owner is ordered to remove the condensers and line sets and restore the building and site to its former condition within 60 days.

## MOTION WORKSHEET

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 420 West Liberty Street in the Old West Side Historic District

\_\_\_\_\_ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

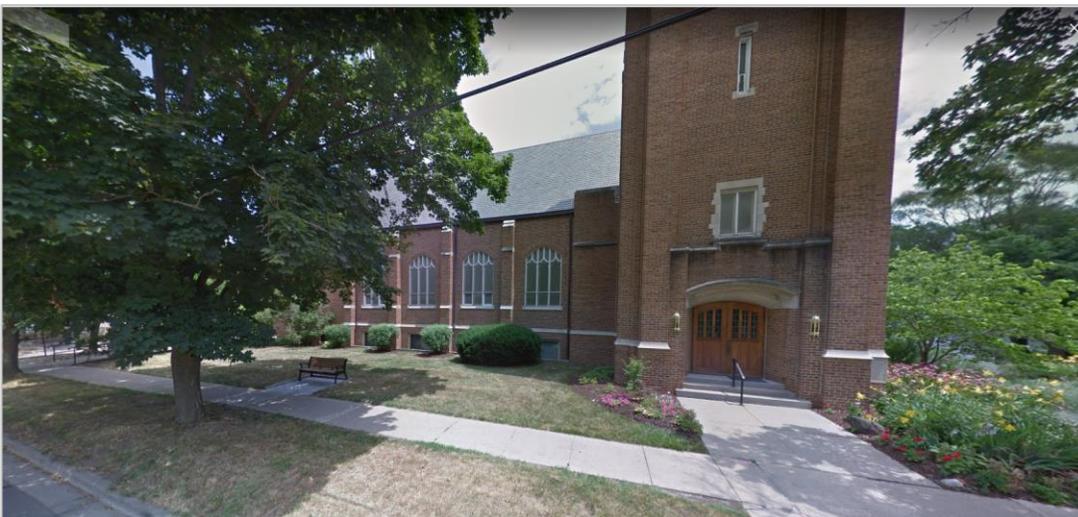
The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

**ATTACHMENTS:** application, drawings, photos

Safety patrollers in front of St Paul Lutheran Church, April 1937 (courtesy AADL Old News)



430 West Liberty, July 2019 (courtesy google streetview)





# HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

City Hall: 301 E. Huron St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6120

Mailing: P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8647

Phone: 734.794.6265 ext. 42608

[jtthacher@a2gov.org](mailto:jtthacher@a2gov.org)

Fax: 734.994.8460

**APPLICATION MUST BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY**

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Permit Number	HDC# <b>19-092</b>
	BLDG#
DATE STAMP	
<b>CITY OF ANN ARBOR RECEIVED MAY 30 2019 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</b>	

### PROPERTY LOCATION/OWNER INFORMATION

NAME OF PROPERTY OWNER <b>ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b>		HISTORIC DISTRICT	
PROPERTY ADDRESS <b>420 WEST LIBERTY</b>		CITY <b>ANN ARBOR</b>	
ZIPCODE <b>48103</b>	DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER <b>(734) 474-2378</b>	EMAIL ADDRESS <b>gvisel@aol.com</b>	
PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)		CITY	STATE, ZIP

### PROPERTY OWNER'S SIGNATURE

<b>SIGN HERE</b> <i>Gerald C Visel</i>	<b>PRINT NAME</b> <b>Gerald C Visel</b>	<b>DATE</b> <b>5-30-19</b>
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### APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME OF APPLICANT (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)			
ADDRESS OF APPLICANT			CITY
STATE	ZIPCODE	PHONE / CELL # ( )	FAX No ( )
EMAIL ADDRESS			

### APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE (if different from Property Owner)

<b>SIGN HERE</b> X	<b>PRINT NAME</b> X	<b>DATE</b>
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### BUILDING USE - CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

<input type="checkbox"/> SINGLE FAMILY	<input type="checkbox"/> DUPLEX	<input type="checkbox"/> RENTAL	<input type="checkbox"/> MULTIPLE FAMILY	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> INSTITUTIONAL
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### PROPOSED WORK

Describe in detail each proposed exterior alteration, improvement and/or repair (use additional paper, if necessary).

*See Attached*

### DESCRIBE CONDITIONS THAT JUSTIFY THE PROPOSED CHANGES:


For Further Assistance With Required Attachments, please visit [www.a2gov.org/hdc](http://www.a2gov.org/hdc)



# HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION

FEE CHART	
DESCRIPTION	
STAFF REVIEW FEES	
Application for Staff Approval	\$35.00
Work started without approvals	Additional \$50.00
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION FEES	
All other proposed work not listed below	\$100.00
Work started without approvals	Additional \$250.00
RESIDENTIAL – Single and 2-story Structure	
Addition: single story	\$300.00
Addition: taller than single story	\$550.00
New Structure - Accessory	\$100.00
New Structure – Principal	\$850.00
Replacement of single and 2-family window(s)	\$100 + \$25/window
COMMERCIAL – includes multi-family (3 or more unit) structures	
Additions	\$700.00
Replacement of multi-family and commercial window (s)	\$100 + \$50/window
Replacement of commercial storefront	\$250.00
DEMOLITION and RELOCATION	
Demolition of a contributing structure	\$1000.0
Demolition of a non-contributing structure	\$250.00
Relocation of a contributing structure	\$750.00
Relocation of a non-contributing structure	\$250.00

**FOR COMMISSION REVIEWS:**

- Application withdrawals made before public notice is published will qualify for a 50% refund of the application fee.
- Application withdrawals made after public notice is sent but before the public hearing will qualify for a 25% refund of the application fee.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS**

All HDC applications must be signed by the property owner and the applicant, if different, with the exception of staff approvals, which may be signed by only the applicant.

All completed HDC applications and their attachments may be submitted to Planning and Development Services by mail, in person (paper or digital), faxed, or via email to [building@a2gov.org](mailto:building@a2gov.org).

We accept CASH, CHECK, and all major credit cards. Checks should be made payable to "City of Ann Arbor"

HDC applications that are incomplete or not submitted with the required documentation or payment will not be processed or approved.

**APPLICATION EXPIRATION**

HDC applications expire three (3) years after the date of approval.

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date of Hearing:		
Action	<input type="checkbox"/> HDC COA	<input type="checkbox"/> HDC Denial
	<input type="checkbox"/> HDC NTP	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff COA
Staff Signature		
Comments		
Fee:	\$ <u>100.00</u>	
Payment Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Check: # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Card	

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
420 West Liberty  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

May 30, 2019

RE: HDC# 18-279

To: Ms. Jill Thatcher

Thank you for further reviewing our application for electrical and mechanical permits to add air conditioning to the nave of our church. We have had recorded temperatures of over 90 degrees in the nave on summer days which has made holding church services very problematic for our parishioners. To put this into perspective, our nave is approximately 32 feet wide and 82 feet long and has ceilings that are 20 feet tall on an average, so a lot of volume to try to cool.

We first looked at the option of doing two large AC systems, one on each side of the building, but soon realized that cooling would require two long duct systems and, if the cooling unit were placed in the center of the building, having duct work runs of 40 feet in either direction would not cool the nave properly when the air flow reached the end of the duct work. We would thus have temperature differences depending on where one was sitting. And we had the additional problem of trying to "hang" the duct system from the high ceiling.

We also looked at various other options as to possible locations of the condensers. Installing the units behind the building was not going to work as we have our handicap ramp and handicap parking located behind the building. Also looked at was putting the units on the flat roof of the rear addition, but again, getting line sets to the units was not going to work as we had no access to get to the nave other than by installing the line sets on the outside of the building which was a worse option. And to further compound the problem, the existing limestone band on the exterior of the building is at the floor height of the nave and keeping the line sets low on the interior would not have worked because the line sets would have intruded into the already tight existing walkway between the pews and the exterior walls. The exterior walls are 17 inches of solid masonry, so there was no way of installing the line sets in an inside "cavity" of the exterior walls.

The only other option was to use a series of mini splits on both sides of the building which would enable us to cool the nave much more uniformly and would be much less obtrusive. As installed, the line sets are covered with downspout material to match the existing downspouts and they blend in with the façade. And with the yews planted, the condenser units and lower portions of the line sets will not be at all visible from the street.

Attached please find color photographs of the existing conditions and our proposed way of screening the AC units. Spacing of the 14 new yews on the west side of the church will be every three feet and 3 foot tall yews would be planted. As the yews grow, the yews will be kept trimmed to a 40 inch height and will block from view the 32 inch tall AC units. The new yews will be planted 12 feet out from the building to match the existing yew located on the west side of the church. And at a three-foot spacing, the yews will be touching each other and thus give a continuous hedge appearance from the street. On

the south side of the church, we will add 4 three foot tall yews to match the existing yew to screen the 12 foot courtyard space which thus blocking from view the four AC units from the street.

Also attached is a site plan showing the building footprint and the locations of the existing yews and the proposed new yews to be planted.

Thank you for your consideration and hopefully we were able to address all of your concerns and questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerald Visel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "V" and "S".

Gerald Visel  
Treasurer  
St. Paul Lutheran Church



LOOKING NORTH EAST





LOOKING NORTH  
FROM LIBERTY





LOOKING  
SOUTH EAST



NEW CONC. RAMPS DOWN  
SEE SH-1

X  
O - EX  
0  
0 4N  
0 TO  
0

CONTRACT LIMITS

AC AC AC AC

CRY RM 102  
TOIL 103

NARTHEX 01

NAVE 04

CHANCEL 05

CHOR 06

CORR 117

MEN 118

NARTHEX 119

WOMEN 116

ORGAN EQUIP SPACE

SACRISTY 114

CORR 108

TOIL 113

JAN 112

WORK. SAC. 109

CLD. 111

CLD. 110

STAIR B 104

GR 105

STAIR HALL 107

12'

AC AC AC AC AC

EXISTING VIEW

PLANT 14 NEW VIEWS TO MATCH EXISTING

STAIR A

X