

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100004383

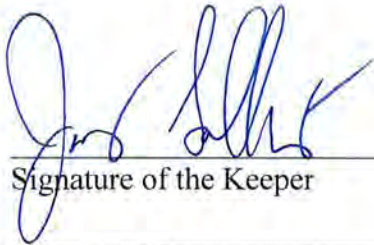
Date Listed: 9/16/2019

Property Name: Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

County: Wayne

State: MI

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

9.16.2019  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Area of Significance

RELIGION is hereby deleted as an area of significance.

There is no justification for Religious significance provided. The information in the narrative does support the complex's importance in supporting the congregation's ethnic heritage, of which Catholicism is an important aspect. But the nomination does not support specific religious significance, only religious use.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

### DISTRIBUTION:

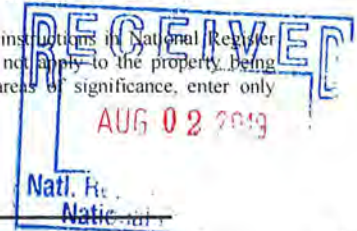
**National Register property file**  
**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

1083

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Other names/site number: Saint John Paul II Parish

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 5830 Simon K

City or town: Detroit State: MI County: Wayne

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

		<u>7/19/19</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>MI SHPO</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

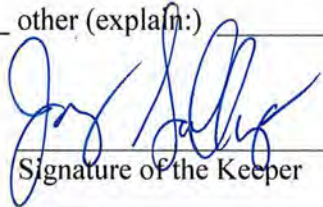
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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

9-16-2019  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility  
RELIGION/church school  
RELIGION/church-related residence  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility  
RELIGION/church-related residence  
VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Italian Renaissance

Modern

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Limestone, Asphalt

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Church of the Transfiguration Historic District encompasses a one-and-half-block area in a residential neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan. There are six buildings in the complex, the church, shrine, school, and convent are all in the Italian Renaissance or Romanesque Revival styles, the rectory and activities buildings are in Modern styles. All of the buildings have high integrity in that they are all in their original locations and retain their original materials and workmanship. A commonality in building materials, site fencing and vegetation give the complex a cohesive, religious campus feeling.

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#### Narrative Description

##### Setting

The Church of the Transfiguration Historic District encompasses a one-and-half-block area located in northeast Detroit, approximately five miles northeast of downtown, near the intersection of McNichols and Mound Roads. The complex is just northeast of the City of Hamtramck which is wholly inside the City of Detroit. The site is flat and contains a church,

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school, activities building, grotto with shrine, convent, and rectory. The complex has an urban neighborhood setting although a large cemetery to the north, a wide boulevard to the east, and housing demolitions to the south and west, have created a less dense setting. The complex is bounded on all sides by city streets (Luce, Mound, Rupert, and Syracuse), and there is a city street (Simon K) that runs east-west through the center of the complex. All of the streets are paved in asphalt and have concrete sidewalks and grassy tree lawns with mature trees.

The complex consists of six buildings and a grotto, all contributing to the district and constructed between 1926 and 1961. The buildings face city streets and have minimal lawn areas in the front and rear. Mature trees are scattered throughout the site.

Starting at the northwest corner of the site, the school building runs north-south along Syracuse between Luce and Simon K (historically Norris Street). Moving east along Luce, the activities building is oriented east-west. A metal fence with brick piers and base runs along the edge of the sidewalk from Syracuse to the east corner of the activities building. A chain link fence surrounds a parking lot to the east of the activities building. On the north side of Simon K, the grotto containing the shrine is just east of the school. The convent which runs east-west is located to the east of the shrine/grotto. The church building runs north-south along Syracuse between Simon K and Rupert, and faces north on to Simon K. The rectory runs east-west and faces Simon K to the east of the church.

### **Church of the Transfiguration**

Note that interior descriptions are provided for the buildings that were made accessible by the current owner. The other two buildings are private residences and the interiors were not accessible.

#### **Church**

1949-50, Narcyz Kostrzanowski architect

The Church of the Transfiguration (today, Saint John Paul II Parish) is located at the southeast corner of Simon K and Syracuse Streets and faces north toward Simon K. It has a cruciform plan with the apse at the south end of the building. There is a five-story bell tower at the northwest corner of the building. The Italian Renaissance style building has multi-tonal brick walls with limestone trim and a red clay tile roof. The façade consists of a three-story gable front with a five-story bell tower to the west side. The central entrance has three limestone steps leading up to a two-story tall limestone and mosaic tile clad entrance portico. The portico has a gable front with a red clay tile roof. Pairs of slender Corinthian columns support a Romanesque arch lined with rope molding. The wall spandrel around the arch and the outside walls of the portico are covered with mosaic tiles. A cross is depicted in the center of the gable, and the background tiles are gold with multi-colored tiles depicting floral designs and birds. The arched opening of the portico continues back to a pair of massive wood panel doors and arched transom in the building wall. The interior walls of the portico are clad in limestone and there are two sets of engaged Corinthian columns supporting engaged arches.

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Centered in the gable end of the building, above the portico, is a large rose window with limestone trim and tracery. On both sides of the center bay there are tall stone-clad niches centered vertically between the rose window and portico roof. The west niche contains a statue of Moses and the statue in the east niche depicts Elijah. The top of the gable wall is lined with a row of blind arches executed in brick with limestone corbels at the springers. A metal cross is perched on top of the gable peak.

The bell tower has a pair of arched windows trimmed in limestone and separated by a Corinthian column centered at the first floor. The second and third floors have a single narrow window opening centered on the wall. At the fourth floor there is an arched opening containing a pair of arched windows separated by a limestone Corinthian column. The spandrel is limestone. A row of blind arches executed in brick runs across the wall above the fourth-floor window. The fifth floor has three arched top openings separated by limestone Corinthian columns and limestone trim. The openings contain louvers. A row of blind arches executed in brick with limestone corbels at the springers runs across the top of the wall below a limestone entablature that supports a pyramidal roof clad in red clay tile. A metal cross is mounted to the peak of the roof.

The church's west elevation has the bell tower at the north end, the side gable wall of the nave, the gable end wall of the transept, and the angled side walls of the apse at the south end. A one-story hip roof ell is located between the apse and the transept. The west wall of the bell tower is identical to the north façade. The west wall of the nave is five bays wide, each bay is slightly recessed, the bays are separated by brick piers, and have limestone corbels at the top of the recesses. A limestone band runs the width of each bay at the window sill line. Each bay has a pair of tall narrow arched stained-glass windows. The gable end of the transept is three bays wide, the bays are separated by brick piers and each has a limestone band at the window sill height. The center bay contains three arched stained-glass windows. There is a round window above with limestone trim and tracery. The outside bays each have one arched stained-glass window. Like the façade, a row of blind arches executed in brick with limestone corbels at the springers runs across the top of the wall. The one-story ell at the rear of the building has a door and two window openings. The side of the three-story tall apse is visible behind the ell.

The south wall of the church is close to the Rupert Street sidewalk, separated by a shallow lawn. The multi-sided apse is three-stories tall, it extends from the gable wall of the church and has a multi-sided hip roof. The apse walls are void of openings, each side has a recessed brick panel and limestone corbels at the top of the panels. There is a one-story ell with a single window opening in the center of each wall attached to the back of the apse. To the west of the apse is a one-story ell that contains four window openings. A second one-story ell is located on the east side of the apse, it has no window openings.

The east wall of the church matches the west wall except at the north end where the bell tower is on the west side, that bay contains an arched window at the first and second floors.

The interior of the church has a rectangular vestibule at the north end that has marble wainscoting and plaster walls above with decorative painting. Wood panel doors with stained glass lights enter the sanctuary. The main sanctuary has a central and two side aisles. The

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central aisle ceiling is comprised of three Romanesque vaults and is painted a light blue with gold stars. The ribs between the vaults are decoratively painted. Each vault is supported by two Romanesque arches marking the side aisles. The spandrels are painted with various biblical scenes over a background of gold leaf. The ceilings in the side aisles have a dark blue background with gold and light blue medallions. The back walls of the side aisles are clad with a tan marble wainscoting below square multi-tone gold tile. Sculptures for stations of the cross are mounted to the walls in regular intervals. The marble wainscoting wraps around the side aisle columns and along the rear wall of the nave. A wood railing fronts the balcony which contains a pipe organ.

The end walls of the transept have marble wainscoting below square gold tile clad walls. The south transept and apse walls are clad in white marble. The mosaic created by the Vatican Mosaic Studio sits in the center of the marble altar screen. Two angel sculptures frame the mosaic. The marble altar table has a gold tile mosaic depicting the last supper. The domed ceiling of the apse is decoratively painted with a cross on a dark blue field surrounded by a gold border and paintings of angels faces.

### **School**

1926, Garstecki & Waier, architects; 1956 entrances, Erroll R. Clark architect

The two-story tall school building has a rectangular footprint, a flat roof, and the nearly one-block wide façade faces west on to Syracuse Street between Simon K and Luce Avenue. On the west the two entrance porches abut the sidewalk with a shallow grassy lawn between the building wall and the sidewalk. At the north and south ends of the building there are small grassy yards that are enclosed by a wrought iron fence with brick piers. In the north yard there is a metal flagpole on a carved granite base erected in 1947 just off the northwest corner of the building. The multi-tone red brick building has a raised brick basement with a stone beltcourse at the first-floor window sill line. The west façade has three sections. The two end sections are identical with the outside bays being void of openings but having a two-story tall brick panel bordered in soldier brick and a diamond brick pattern field with lighter colored brick. A soldier course of brick runs across the wall at the base of the parapet. A smaller brick panel with the same diamond pattern infill is centered in the parapet wall. Moving inward from both ends, the next bays project slightly and each contains an entrance. The basement level of these entrance bays is clad in limestone. A one-story tall limestone porch added at the both the north and south end in 1956. These porches extend from the main wall and frames the door. There are glass block windows in the side walls of the porch. The entrance of the porches has chamfered corners and a shallow Tudor arch at the top of the opening. On the main wall of the building the spandrel panel between the first and second floor has light colored square brick framed by dark red soldier bricks. The second floor has a large arched opening framed in limestone and infilled with glass block. A metal balconette runs across the bottom of the opening. The parapet has a small gable topped with a limestone cross at the peak.

The center section of the façade is nine bays wide. Each bay has a tall window opening at the first and second floors separated by a spandrel panel with light colored square brick framed with a soldier course of brick. The corners of the panels have a decorative diamond brick. The



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window openings each contain two side-by-side awning windows at the bottom and glass block above. A steep false hip roof clad in red and orange clay tile extends above this section of the building.

The north and south ends of the building are identical and are six bays wide. Like the west façade the raised brick-clad basement has a limestone beltcourse at the first-floor window sill line. Each bay contains a window opening at the first and second floor with two awning windows at the bottom and glass block above. The spandrel panel between the floors has light colored square brick surrounded by a soldier course of brick. A soldier course runs across the wall at the base of the brick parapet wall which is capped with metal coping.

The east or rear wall of the building projects on the two ends creating a recessed center section. The center section has window openings at the first and second floors and spandrel panels between the floors that match the other elevations. The south end section of the building has one bay of window openings at the first and second floors, the remainder of the section has no openings. The north end section has one bay of windows at the first and second floors and then two small window openings at the second floor, one of which has been bricked in.

The interior of the building has stairs and a short corridor at both ends of the building at the first floor. In the center section of the building there is a long room in the east half and smaller rooms in the west half. At the second floor there is an H-shaped corridor, short east-west running corridors at the ends of the building which also contains the stairs, and a central north-south running corridor. Classrooms are located on both sides of the north-south corridor. In general, the end corridors and stairs have terrazzo floors. The classrooms and second floor corridor have vinyl or carpeted floors, plaster walls, and acoustical tile ceilings. Some walls have been covered with paneling, and on the second floor some ceilings are tin.

### **Shrine and Grotto**

1939, Narcyz Kostrzanowski, architect

The shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa faces south on to Simon K with a concrete plaza between the street and shrine. A wrought iron fence with brick pillars and a brick base runs at the back of the sidewalk across the front of the plaza. Two round stone urn fountains with angel sculptures are in front of the shrine off to each side. The stone urns sit in a round base that is recessed into the ground. The shrine and plaza are surrounded by a stone grotto. The stones are randomly placed to create a hillside effect. Artificial stones have been added over the years. Mature evergreen trees are interspersed around the grotto. The shrine is a one-and-a-half story tall brick chapel with limestone trim and decoration. The building has a gable front with a shaped parapet obscuring the gable roof behind. A tall multi-tiered tower with narrow arched openings and steeped roof flanks both sides of the front façade. The central entrance is comprised of a recessed arched door. The deep opening is clad in limestone. A round window framed in limestone is centered above the door. A limestone statue of The Blessed Mother sits on the peak of the roof. The side walls of the chapel have three arched openings. The rear wall is built into the grotto walls.

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The interior of the shrine is a single small room with a decorative terrazzo floor. The end wall opposite the doors has a raised tile altar. A tile mosaic depicting Our Lady of Czestochowa is built into the wall above the altar. The rest of the room has flat plaster walls and an arched ceiling with deep cornice for the crown molding. Both side walls have three arch topped stained-glass windows.

### **Convent**

1929, architect unknown

The wide façade of the rectangular shaped, two-story tall convent faces south on to Simon K and is located to the east of the shrine/grotto. The wrought iron fence with brick piers and a brick base continues along the north side of the sidewalk in front of the convent which is set back from the sidewalk and has a shallow grassy lawn. The two-story brick building with a hip roof is eight bays wide and has a raised basement. The brick porch is off center and has an arched opening within a gable front supported by stone Corinthian columns. A stone cross is mounted to the peak of the porch roof. The bays on either side of the porch have eight-over-one windows at the first and second floor, and rectangular window openings at the basement level. Three shed roof dormers project from the roof. A two-story tall multi-sided bay projects from the east end of the building.

### **Rectory**

1952, Walter J. Rozycki, architect

The two-story tall brick rectory faces north on Simon K and has an inverted U-shaped footprint and a hip roof clad in asphalt shingles. It is set back from the sidewalk creating a flat grassy front lawn. A marble statue of Our Lady Help of Christians sits just off the northwest corner of the building. The wide façade has a raised brick basement with a limestone beltcourse. A one-story tall block projects from the front of the building. The block has a shed roof clad in red clay tile and ties to the gable front porch with brick columns and gable roof. Limestone steps lead up to the porch and there is a limestone cross imbedded in the gable. Four window openings with metal windows are spread across the one-story block and there are two window openings on the main wall. At the second-floor window openings are spread across the width of the wall. The tops of the windows abut the deep soffit of the hip roof. The west elevation has a one-story tall gable roof porch projecting from the center. There are three casement windows at the first floor and three casement windows at the second floor. The side of the rear ell has a group of four single pane windows at the second floor. The east elevation has a group of casement windows at the first floor, as well as a one-story building attaching the rectory to a one-story tall three-car garage with brick walls and a hip roof. A massive brick chimney with a limestone cap runs up the center of the rectory elevation. The second floor of the rectory has five casement windows in the main section, and a group of four single-sash windows in the rear ell.

### **Activities Building**

1961, Walter J. Rozycki, architect

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The modern style brick clad activities building has a rectangular footprint, the wide façade faces north on Luce Street. It is located just to the east of the school. The wrought iron fence with brick piers extends at the edge of the sidewalk in front of the building. The building has a one-story block on the north side and a two-story block on the south side. The entrance is through two pairs of double doors in the center of the one-story block. A folded plate roof projects over the entrance. There are narrow openings spaced regularly along the front wall of the one-story section. The top of the two-story section has an aluminum and glass curtain wall with windows in the bottom half of the opening and panels above. At the east end of the building there are two sets of entrance doors with projecting metal canopies over each.

The interior consists of two main rooms, the large two-story tall gymnasium and one-story tall dining room. The gymnasium has a vinyl tile floor, painted concrete block walls with a row of windows at the top of the wall. The ceiling has exposed steel beams with acoustic material above. There is a stage at one end of the gymnasium. The dining room has a vinyl tile floor with plaster walls and ceiling. The west wall of the room is aluminum and glass window system with metal panels below.

### **Brick posts and fencing**

unknown

A wrought iron fence with a brick base and supported by brick piers with concrete caps runs just behind the sidewalk from both ends of the school building. On the south side, along Simon K, the fence and wall run to just east of the convent building. On the north side, along Luce, the fence and wall extend to the east edge of the activities building where it intersects a chain link fence that encloses the parking lot.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Religion

Social History

Ethnic Heritage/European

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1926-1961

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1926

1949-50

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Kostrzanowski, Narcyz, architect

Arthur O. Misch Company, builders

Garstecki & Waier, architects

Rozycki, Walter J., architect

Clark, Erroll R., architect

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

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The Church of the Transfiguration Historic District is significant under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. The complex reflects the movement and expansion of Detroit's Polish immigrants and established residents alike in the city of Detroit between World War I and World War II to the newly developing areas of the city, located to the north and east of the original Polish neighborhoods. The parish complex is also significant under Criterion A for its close connection to the Orchard Lake Schools, a Michigan seminary created specifically to train priests for Polish parishes across the United States. The Transfiguration parish complex is also significant under Criterion C as an intact collection of buildings designed by Polish and architects of Polish-descent whose work for the city's eastern European ethnic communities has remained poorly documented. The church and shrine are important works of Polish-born architect Narcyz Kostrzanowski. The school was an example of several Catholic school buildings designed by Detroit-based architects of Polish descent, Garstecki & Waier. The activities building and rectory were designed by Walter Rozycki, a Detroit architect of Polish descent. In addition to the architects, the church contains mosaics that were created in Rome at the Vatican Mosaic Studio. Having a separate building for the shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa, is unusual in Detroit parishes. Our Lady of Czestochowa holds special significance to the Polish congregation. The period of significance for the parish is 1926 to 1961, the construction date of the earliest extant structure in the complex until 1961, when the final building in the parish was constructed as well as the beginning of the decline of membership in the parish. The Church of the Transfiguration Historic District meets National Register Criteria Consideration A because the parish complex derives its primary National Register significance from its historical ethnic and social history associations, particularly as it relates to Detroit Polonia, and from its architectural significance.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Introduction**

By virtue of its now more than three centuries of occasionally tumultuous history, its location within the Great Lakes, and its industrial might, the city of Detroit has been a city of immigrants since the time of its founding in 1701, a date that precedes Pittsburgh by fifty-three years, Cleveland by ninety-five, and Chicago by 129. Immigrants from Northern and Western Europe, primarily from Ireland and Germany, arrived in the United States between 1815 and 1865. Then, some twenty million people from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe immigrated to American between 1880 and 1920. Detroit's numerous industrial jobs attracted a large number of those immigrants that arrived in the United States after 1880. Outside of New York and Chicago, more immigrants settled in Detroit between 1900 and 1920 than in any other U.S. city. "By 1880 nearly 40 percent of the city's population was foreign-born, and the majority of the more than 40 nationalities represented were clustered in sub-communities and ethnic enclaves" (Mead & Hunt 2013, 33). In 1940, the city counted over 320,000 foreign-born persons. Of this total, 16.3 percent were from Poland.

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## **Detroit's Polonia**

Although Poles had emigrated to the United States as early as 1609, significant Polish immigration did not occur in earnest until the 1880s, and then took place in roughly three phases: between 1880 and 1924, post-World War II, and during the 1980s and 1990s. The first phase, beginning in 1880, brought the vast majority of Poles to America, with most settling in the Midwest, Great Lakes, and Northeast regions (Radzilowski 2009). Though the “great majority of Polish Americans is and always has been Roman Catholic,” non-Catholic Poles were also present, particularly Polish Jews, Polish Lutherans, and others. Non-Catholic Poles, however, “never made up more than five percent of the total” (Radzilowski 2009).

For Poles who settled in Detroit, Christensen found that:

A few Poles settled in Detroit in the 1850s, and a larger migration to the city began in the later 1860s and 70s. The early migration to Detroit was largely from the Prussian-controlled areas of Kashubia (Pomerania) and Poznania in the northwest part of Poland, but later nineteenth and early twentieth-century migration came from the large eastern area controlled by Russia and from Galicia, the southern area controlled by Austria-Hungary, as well. Poland as a nation had disappeared from the map as a result of the partitions of 1772-1795 that divided all its territory between Russia, Prussia, and Austria-Hungary. Uprisings against the Russian and Prussian occupiers in 1830-31, 1846, 1848, and 1863 were brutally crushed, and both Prussia and Russia adopted social, political, and economic policies intended to obliterate Polish institutions and culture and the power of the Catholic Church, which in the nineteenth century "became the main institution which preserved and defended Polish culture, language and identity against foreign oppression" (Ascherson, p. 8). The Poles who settled in Detroit beginning in the 1850s and in growing numbers throughout the rest of the century and into the next were part of a much broader Polish migration to western Europe and especially the industrial cities of the United States.

Detroit's early Polish community was located on the city's east side. By 1870, when the Poles first sought a Catholic church of their own, the community numbered close to 300 families located mostly in the German area centered along Gratiot Avenue east toward Mt. Elliott Avenue. When St. Albertus, the city's first Polish Catholic church, was built in 1871-72 at the corner of Canfield and St. Aubin, well north of Gratiot, it stood near the northeast corner of the community. Within ten years the Polish neighborhood became concentrated more and more in the church's immediate neighborhood and to the west, extending by the end of the century generally from St. Antoine eastward to Mt. Elliott and from Mack north to Warren and beyond. Hastings Street, along the area's west edge, was an early commercial center for the community, and Canfield Avenue with its three monumental Polish Catholic churches, St. Albertus, Sweetest Heart of Mary, and

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St. Josaphat, became its heart by the beginning of the twentieth century. As the Polish community expanded northward, Chene Street and, by the 1910s, Joseph Campau in Hamtramck, became the neighborhood's commercial centers.

Initially, “immigrant workers resided in the vicinity of where work was obtained. Due to language barriers and the tendency to settle near each other, various ethnic enclaves formed around the major industrial areas, each with its own churches, schools, shops, and social halls” (Mead & Hunt 2013, 33). Eventually these enclaves gave way to the pressures of wages, jobs, and upward mobility and other social forces. A “big disbursement of the original enclaves of Polish settlements in Detroit came between World Wars I and II. The settlements began to break up and move to the east and north after World War I when high wages and the habit of thrift made it possible for many to move to more desirable areas” (Wytwral 1992, 11).

The *Detroit Free Press* reported in 1906 that Poles made up one-sixth of the city’s population. Of these, thirty thousand were said to be German-Poles, twenty thousand Austrian-Poles, and ten thousand Russian-Poles (*Detroit Free Press* 1906).

Though many of the later immigrants arrived in cities in which “primary architectural characteristics had already been determined by earlier arriving groups,” ethnic groups like Poles were able to establish their physical presence in a city by altering existing structures or building their own (Radzilowski 1997). Radzilowski points out that religious buildings were the most obvious and impactful sign of the Polish presence in a city (Radzilowski 1997), and that the “one constant was the early foundation of a Catholic parish (Radzilowski 2009). Indeed, the Polish neighborhoods of Detroit and Hamtramck (an independent city within Detroit) had some thirty Roman Catholic Church parishes with twenty-four parochial schools, that included four high schools. These parish buildings were often constructed through “massive sacrifice” of their parishioners, especially the earliest churches and parishes (Radzilowski 1997). The parish, then, became a “Poland in miniature,” for the Polish immigrant, “a replica of his village, his church in Poland” and “the center of all social and cultural activities” (Wytwral 1961, 159). Through the decades the parish remained “the center of the community” to the extent that “virtually all other institutions in Polish immigrant communities were either founded in or closely associated with parishes (Radzilowski 2009).

During the first wave of Polish immigration, many Poles not only faced a transition from a rural, farming life to one in a multicultural, industrial urban environment, but also found their habits, attitudes, and values challenged in an entirely new environment (Polish Activities League 1967, 13). As the number of Poles increased both in Detroit and nationally, so too did the number of local Polish associations and organizations and chapters of national organizations. Polish newspapers were also established. By 1908 Detroit supported two Polish papers, the *Dziennik Polski* (*Polish Daily*) and the *Polonia*, a weekly publication.

By the 1920s Detroit’s Polish community consisted of “more than 200,000” people (not including eighty thousand Poles in Hamtramck and the Downriver communities) (*Detroit Free Press* 1921), and reportedly had the “third largest Polish population of world cities.” Significant Polish enclaves were present on both the east and the west sides of the city, and within



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Hamtramck. In each of these areas, Poles constructed large and elaborate churches with supporting parish buildings. In addition, Poles established businesses and built buildings and constructed social halls like the East Side Dom Polksi hall at 2278 East Forest Avenue in 1913 and West Side Dom Polski hall at 3426 Junction Avenue in 1916.

Yet, for all this progress, there were few secular, non-Polish institutions that existed in which Poles were welcome and which were able to meet their daily needs. Even within the Catholic church itself, Polish Catholics sometimes found themselves in conflict with their Irish and German counterparts to the degree that “Polish-American parish communities focused themselves inward to such an extent that they often resembled a completely separate world,” a situation that only intensified with second generation Poles (Radzilowski 2009). Even into the 1920s, Detroit’s Polish community was “partly Polish and partly American,” with American structures, social values, and environmental conditions overlaid on Polish tradition (Polish Activities League 1967, 13). It was in this milieu that many Detroit Poles found stability, solace, and tradition through the church.

The Great Depression briefly caused a decline in Detroit’s population as people left to find work elsewhere. In Hamtramck, arguably a bellwether of all things Polish in the Detroit area, more than six thousand Poles left the small city between 1930 and 1940. Many of these people left for Michigan’s Polish farming communities in the “Thumb” counties a good distance north of Detroit (Wood 1955, 19). Hamtramck’s Polish population declined by some four thousand individuals between 1940 and 1950 (Ibid, 20). While no similar data was available for the city of Detroit, the same trends are expected given the similar social and economic forces at play. The population trend was reversed with the onset of World War II, when Detroit’s industrial facilities served as the Arsenal of Democracy creating jobs for those not serving in the military.

By the 1950s, however, Polish life in Detroit, much like the city itself, was in the midst of change. Young people returning from World War II were less likely to embrace the culture of their parents and grandparents. New housing outside of the city enticed veterans and their new families. “The breakdown of solid Polish American neighborhoods already [was] in progress,” and the Pole was seen as losing their Polish identity (*Detroit Free Press* 1957). The city’s Polish newspapers, at one time numerous, had been reduced to just one, *Dziennik Polski* (*Polish Daily News*), and as late as 1955 that paper published a significant portion of its news in English. The seven daily Polish-language radio programs broadcast over four of the city’s radio stations had been reduced to just one, WJLB (though this station provided several hours of Polish programs every day). The city’s seven Polish theaters had also declined in number. By 1960, in a city with between 200,000 and 350,000 first, second, or third generation Poles, the Polish (read Catholic) school had “all but disappeared” (Wytrwal 1961, 287).

Yet, Detroit Polonia had not fully vanished. The Polish parish, in some cases, remained strong within the city, and “through the close relationship of family and church, [Polish Americans] have perpetuated the cultural and religious heritage of their homeland” (*Detroit Free Press* 1957).

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The 1949-1950 construction of the Transfiguration parish church represents the continued presence of Detroit's Polish and Polish American communities, their strong connection to their faith, and their movement north and east, first to the outer reaches of the city proper, then to the suburbs beyond.

### **The Archdiocese of Detroit and Polish Catholics**

The history of the Archdiocese of Detroit begins with the first Catholics who came to Detroit in 1701 with the city's founder, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. Those early Catholics established St. Anne's Parish, which is generally recognized as the oldest congregation in Detroit and Michigan. The original priests were sent as missionaries and served the local Catholic population as well as worked toward converting the Native American population to Christianity.

In 1833 Pope Gregory XVI created the Diocese of Detroit that covered the entire Michigan Territory, which at that time also included Wisconsin and a portion of Minnesota. There were approximately fifteen thousand Catholics in the geographic area that would later become the State of Michigan (Tentler 1990, 13). A second parish, for English-speaking (mainly Irish) Catholics, Most Holy Trinity, was established in Detroit in 1835. Although not an official parish, the Chapel of the Assumption, erected by German Catholics east of the city, was also established in the 1830s.

In 1841 the diocese's second bishop, Belgium-native Father Peter Paul Lefevere, was appointed. At this time there were but eighteen priests, thirty churches and some 24,000 Catholics in the entire state of Michigan (Archdiocese 1962, 17). In 1867 Bishop Lefevere worked to have a Michigan state law passed that recognized the bishop as the sole owner of church properties in the diocese. The law was controversial as many congregations felt that they should retain control of their property. The diocese's third bishop, German-native Casper Henry Borgess, was appointed in 1869 and came from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. These thirty years were a time of significant growth for the Catholic Church in Michigan. It was under Bishop Borgess that the organized diocese parochial school system had its beginnings. In 1873 Borgess required every parish to establish a primary school and Sisters from eight different orders came to Michigan to teach in the schools. Detroit College (University of Detroit Mercy, today) was established in 1877.

In the 1888 Bishop John Samuel Foley replaced Bishop Borgess. The next thirty years were "a period of great growth" for the Catholic church in Detroit (Broderick 1976, 31). Under Foley's leadership thirty-five new parishes were established around the city – more than half with "a strong ethnic connection (Ibid., 31). In addition to parish elementary schools, a number of secondary schools were also founded in these years. In Radzilowski's estimation, these schools, for Poles, "did more to create a sustainable Polish-American identity than any other factor outside of the parish itself" (Radzilowski 2009). Indeed, the parish schools, especially elementary schools, "created a bond between the old and new generation" by transmitting Polish history, cultural traditions, language, and "the exalted courage of the Poles." (Wytrwal 1961, 161-162).

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Growth of the number and size of Catholic parishes in the diocese between the last two decades of the nineteenth century and 1930 in many ways paralleled that of Detroit. The 1920s especially marked a high point of growth for the Catholic Church in the Detroit area, southern Michigan, and the nation in general. Numbered among Detroit's incredible population growth in the 1920s were many Catholics, and by 1929 as many as forty percent of Detroit's inhabitants were "at least nominal members of the church" (Tentler 1990, 298). Interestingly, this high percentage of Catholics in Detroit "exceeded by far the average figures for the Midwest or the country at large," both of which were closer to seventeen percent (Zunz 1982, 107). This extraordinary growth and high percentage of Catholics "necessitated an extensive building program during the 1920s" (Archdiocese 1962, 17).

As foreign immigrants and people from rural areas in both the North and South migrated to Detroit and southern Michigan's other cities, drawn by the well-paying industrial jobs offered by the rapidly growing auto industry, new parishes, with their churches, schools, and other parish buildings, were constructed in both new and older residential neighborhoods alike. Between 1919 and 1929, 222 parish buildings were constructed in the Diocese of Detroit, including eighty-six churches and seventy-seven schools (Tentler 1990, 306).

Yet, from the time they arrived, Polish immigrants realized that that church that existed in their new home "was not theirs." It had been "built by other worshippers, the priests, the saints, the names, the very language were unfamiliar" (Wytrwal 1961, 158-159). Leaders of the Polish community recognized that "a Polish parish, with Polish priests, would assure the permanence" of Detroit's Polonia by encouraging interest and participation in secular activities, in addition to providing a familiar, cohesive religious community (Wytrwal 1961, 159).

The first Polish Catholic congregation established in Detroit was St. Albertus in 1872, located on St. Aubin Street, north of the earliest Polish neighborhoods in the city. In years between the founding of St. Albertus and the turn of the century, five additional Polish parishes were established. St. Casimir was founded on the west side of Detroit in 1882. Then, in 1888, Sweetest Heart of Mary was founded by members of St. Albertus who were upset about a priest's removal by the Diocese. In 1898 two additional Polish congregations were established, St. Josephat and St. Stanislaus. St. Albertus, Sweetest Heart of Mary, and St. Josephat are all located on Canfield Avenue within one mile. While all three of the congregations were Polish, their congregants came from different areas of Poland; Prussian Poland, Austrian Poland, and Russian Poland, respectively. (City of Detroit, *St. Stanislaus and St. Josephat Local Historic District Reports*).

As parishes became crowded, they were further subdivided, and additional Polish parishes were created. In 1907 the northern portion of the St. Stanislaus parish organized St. Florian parish in Hamtramck, while the eastern portion organized St. Hyacinth. In 1917 the northeastern portion of St. Florian parish spun-off Our Lady Queen of Apostles (Hamtramck). In 1920 St. Florian was again subdivided to create St. Ladislaus to the east, also in Hamtramck.

Over the next decade additional Polish parishes were created in and near the city. By 1930 Detroit had some thirty fully or predominantly Polish parishes, with several additional Polish

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parishes in Hamtramck, Dearborn, and Wyandotte. Transfiguration parish was one of seven Polish parishes established in the northeast area of the city (north of Hamtramck), six of which were established between 1923 and 1929. The parish illustrates the movement of Poles within the city, and the religious, social, and geographical changes experienced by Polish immigrants and Polish-Americans in Detroit. The physical development of the parish also expresses the desire and need for additional buildings as the population of the neighboring community grew, and as the parish developed.

Polish clergy and congregants alike believed that ethnic parishes helped immigrants maintain their Catholic faith and promoted retention of identity, culture, and heritage. Along with Polish-language Mass, parochial schools were at least partly taught in Polish. “The Polish schools nearly always had the largest classes, for Poles, despite their poverty, used the Catholic Schools more heavily than any other group” (Tentler 1990, 238). “In 1907, it has been estimated, teaching Sisters made up fully two-thirds of the professional workers in Detroit’s Polish community. And as that community grew richer, the Sisters were able to raise their own educational standards. The first high school in a Detroit Polish parish was begun in 1915; in 1917 the Felicians sent the first of many contingents to take degrees at the Teachers’ College of the Catholic University” (Tentler 1990, 231).

Bishop Michael Gallagher led the Diocese between 1918 and 1937. His leadership included establishing parishes in advance of population growth. Bishop Gallagher “worked closely with former mayor William Thompson to acquire property in those areas of Detroit that were just beginning to be settled” (Tentler 1990, 306). He assigned young priests with only four or five years of experience as assistants for the “difficult but prestigious work of establishing new parishes in and around Detroit” (Tentler 1990, 386). The Transfiguration Parish anniversary booklets describe the founding of their parish as initiated by local Polish families, and it appears that their request fit with Bishop Gallagher’s practice of establishing new parishes in newly developing areas of the city. In early 1925 Father Kilar was assigned to start St. Bartholomew parish located near Eight Mile Road and Conant, about two miles northeast of the neighborhood surrounding the Transfiguration parish complex. However, it appears that development had not reached quite that far, only ten families lived in the area, and in September 1925 the Transfiguration parish families convinced Bishop Gallagher to allow Father Kilar to lead their new parish instead.

With the new parishes came parish schools, taught by Sisters of different orders. In general, Catholic parish schools saw increased enrollment between 1918 and 1958. During this time a larger proportion of Catholic children than ever were enrolled in parochial schools (Tentler 1990, 419). This is in part due to reforms implemented by the Diocese. “By the mid-1930s, the Diocese of Detroit had begun to implement a uniform curriculum in its schools, and to monitor the quality of instruction in its classrooms in a systematic way. These reforms appear to have accomplished a genuine improvement in the quality of Catholic education locally...” (Tentler 1990, 443).

In 1937 the Diocese of Detroit was elevated to an Archdiocese and the Province of Detroit was created, and the Most Reverend Edward Mooney became Archbishop of the Archdiocese of

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Detroit (Michigan Historical Records Survey Project 1941, 13-14). In the post-World War II era through the 1960s the Catholic Church in the Detroit area (and throughout Michigan) continued to flourish. Between 1945 and 1960 the number of Catholics in the Archdiocese of Detroit increased from 800,000 to 1.3 million (Tentler 1990, 358). At the same time, Catholics became “an integral part of Detroit’s political establishment after 1930 and they dominated the city’s political life in the 1950s and 1960s” (Tentler 1990, 298).

However, the growth of Catholic parishes in this second growth surge was located more in the suburbs of Detroit rather than in the city itself. The population of Detroit reached its peak in 1953 and soon after began to decline. This was quickly reflected in the city’s Catholic churches although a few ethnic parishes in Detroit, including some Polish parishes, continued to flourish into the 1950s.

Another crisis, this one of purely local dimensions, was also developing in the 1950s. It was no longer just the parishes in Detroit’s core that were in financial trouble, but parishes in a wide swath of the city’s midsection from which whites were moving at an ever-increasing pace. This was especially true of Detroit’s heavily Catholic east side which was losing its industrial base by the 1950s (Tentler 1990, 359).

At the same time, the use of Polish language instruction and Polish-language Masses began to decline. By 1961, Wyrtrwal found that:

the Polish [language] school, has all but disappeared... where there are four or more Masses on Sunday, two of these are as a rule English Masses... the younger clergy... are increasingly less proficient in the use of Polish,” (Wyrtrwal 1961, 288-289).

The Church of the Transfiguration Historic District is an example of the Polish parish that defied the overall trend of decline and continued to thrive into the 1950s. This is exemplified by the peak school enrollment in 1952, the construction of the rectory in 1952, and the construction of the activities building in 1961. This strong support was likely because of the strong Polish ties to the parish and neighborhood.

By the 1970s both Detroit’s Catholic parishes and the Catholic church in general were losing members. Fewer people were entering the ministry as priests and nuns. Parochial schools were losing students as well as the clergy to teach them. “More than 80 percent of the parishes in the Archdiocese had schools in 1965, a decade later, fewer than half of them did” (Tentler 1990, 524).

“Thus it was that scores of churches in Detroit, built for large congregations, were home by the late 1980s to no more than a few hundred Catholics – and sometimes to many fewer” (Tentler 1990, 520). This decline led to the Archdiocese closing and merging parishes and selling off buildings starting in the late 1980s.

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## **Transfiguration Parish Complex**

This area of Detroit was originally part of Hamtramck Township and was annexed to the City of Detroit in 1916. As the neighborhood rapidly developed in the late teens and early 1920s a large number of Polish immigrant families moved into the area, which extended north from the Polish enclave of Hamtramck (located directly to the south) to about McNichols Road to the north. The opening of the Dodge Main Plant in Hamtramck in 1914, the Ford plant in Highland Park to the west, and, nearby, the Packard Plant, centered on the intersection of East Grand Boulevard and Concord Avenue, created an incredible demand for workers and housing in this area of Detroit. Although other ethnicities lived in the larger neighborhood, the area bounded by Mt. Elliott, Conant, Charles and East McNichols contained about two hundred Polish families (*Transfiguration Parish, Detroit, 50th Anniversary, 1975, 16*).

Although there were Catholic churches in the neighborhood, the services were conducted in English, and many of the families desired priests who could speak Polish. A group petitioned the Diocese of Detroit to create a Polish speaking parish in the area. Permission was granted, and the parish was founded on September 23, 1925, with Father Simon Kilar appointed as founding pastor. The congregation worshiped in a house basement until it completed the first church, a frame structure, by late October 1925. The building was constructed by parishioners and Father Kilar and was completed in just five weeks. The new building was used for church on Sundays and parish school during the week (*Transfiguration Parish, Detroit, 50th Anniversary, 1975, 16*).

On July 25, 1926, the cornerstone for the first brick building was laid. The building was to function as a school, church and convent for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth who operated the parish school. The building was completed in three months. It was designed by the firm of Garstecki & Waier of Detroit. The sisters lived in the second floor of the building and the first floor was used for the school and for church. Seven hundred and six students were enrolled in grades one through eight at the school the first year.

In 1927 the parish constructed a rectory at the northwest corner of Syracuse and Luce Streets. The building appears to be extant but has been greatly altered and has not been a part of the parish property since at least 1952 when the present rectory was constructed.

In 1929 the convent for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth was completed to the east of the school building. The sisters were headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and operated one other school in the Archdiocese, St. Barbara in Dearborn, Michigan. The convent housed twenty sisters and had its own chapel. That same year the first class of eighth graders graduated with sixteen students.

The parish continued to grow through the 1930s and served as a primary gathering space for community events for the congregants. The school provided education for parish children for grades one through nine. In addition to classes the school had sport teams, a school band, boy scout and girl scout troops. The parish activities included a bowling league, dances, parties, festivals, and picnics.

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In the 1975 Fifty Year Jubilee booklet there is an excerpt from the April 1934 parish bulletin for a Spring Frolic sponsored by the Transfiguration Choir featuring Lefty Louis and his 8 Aristocrats. The advertisement joked that if an attendee fainted that Dr. Knoblock, the Wayne County Coroner (and Transfiguration parishioner) would be in attendance to revive them. The booklet also contains a copy of an advertisement for a Masque Ball also sponsored by the Transfiguration Choir in October 1938. The ball was held in the Aztec Tower of the Guardian building in downtown Detroit and featured Phil Olsen and his Orchestra.

In 1943 the parish participated in the *Detroit Free Press* initiative soliciting donations to provide playing cards to soldiers serving in World War II. As part of that initiative a Transfiguration parish member, Lieutenant Tutag, spoke to the school students. Lt. Tutag was part of a group of Marines from Detroit and Hamtramck who relayed their commands in Polish in order to thwart the Japanese soldiers who had been educated in the United States and could understand English in the Battle of Guadalcanal.

In 1939 the grotto containing a shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa or Black Madonna was constructed. The original icon of the Virgin Mary is housed in the Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa, Poland. It was brought to Poland in the 1300s and in 1652 King John II Casimir Vasa declared the Black Madonna as the Queen and Protector of Poland. This Polish tradition was brought to America and each church had a Marian altar and image of the Black Madonna. Father Kilar is credited with creating a separate shrine and grotto for the Transfiguration parish. The shrine was dedicated on October 1, 1939, with the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit officiating. It was designed by Narcyz Kostrzanowski and the construction was overseen by Father Kilar. According to parish histories the structure was constructed by one of the other parish priests along with a small group of men and boys of the parish.

The 1940 United States Census for Syracuse Street near the church shows a large number of Polish families still living in the neighborhood. By 1946 the school building, which also served as the church, was overcrowded and Father Kilar led the parish in efforts to design and construct a separate church building. The site of the new church, the corner of Simon K (Norris Street at the time) and Syracuse was decided by a vote of the parishioners, however it is not known whether the Archdiocese owned the property or if it was purchased for the building.

The church was designed by Narcyz Kostrzanowski and constructed by Arthur O. Misch Company under the direction of Father Kilar, who acted as general contractor. The cornerstone was laid on October 31, 1948, and was blessed by Monsignor Pokrywka. It was completed and the altar consecrated on February 26, 1950, by Bishop Stephen Woznicki. Cardinal Edward Mooney presided over the dedication of the church on March 5, 1950.

The church contains a white marble altar constructed in Italy that features a mosaic reproduction of Raphael's "Transfiguration Scene" created by the Vatican Mosaic Studio (Studio del Mosaico Vaticano) and blessed by Pope Pius XII. The mosaic construction was supervised by Msgr. Marian Strojny, the rector of the Papal Institute of Polish Affairs. According to *The Polish American Parish* the mosaic was executed by Michal Poszyn. The Vatican Factory of Mosaics had its beginning as early as 1578 in order to decorate St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. In

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1727 Pope Benedict XIII officially established the Vatican Mosaic Studio. In addition to decorating St. Peter's, the studio has produced papal gifts presented to heads of state and taken private commissions from around the world. The studio still exists today and is charged with restoring the mosaics in St. Peters, in addition to still producing papal gifts and private commissions.

In 1952 the Transfiguration School had its highest enrollment at nine-hundred students. That same year a new rectory on south side of Simon K (Norris Street, at that time) was constructed. It was designed by Walter J. Rozycki. Soon after, in 1956, the projecting stone entrances, designed by Detroit architect Erroll R. Clark, were added to the school building.

The activities building, also designed by Walter J. Rozycki, was constructed in 1961. This was the last structure built by the parish and is still used frequently.

### **Subsequent History**

By 1965 the school enrollment dropped to six hundred students. In July 1971 only seven hundred families were donating to the parish out of thirteen hundred families registered as members. The weekly collections averaged about \$1,600 but costs to run the parish, not including the costs to run the school were at least \$2,000 per week. The previous fiscal year the parish had a deficit of \$41,000. The school operations cost \$55,000 per year. In April 1975 the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth commemorated their 100th Anniversary with a mass said at Transfiguration.

The number of Catholic parishes and population have been declining in Detroit from the 1960s and 1970s through the present time. The parish school closed in 2005 but the building was leased to a charter school until about 2014. In 2006 the Archdiocese closed Our Lady Help of Christians and merged the parish with Transfiguration. In 2012 the Archdiocese merged St. Ladislaus in Hamtramck and St. Louis the King with Transfiguration/Our Lady Help of Christians and renamed the parish to Blessed John Paul II. When Pope John Paul II was canonized in 2014 the parish name was changed to Saint John Paul II. That same year St. Ladislaus parish was transferred to the St. Florian parish in Hamtramck. All of the merged congregations were traditionally Polish and masses in Polish are still said several times a week.

### **Father Simon Kilar and the Orchard Lake Schools**

Father Simon Kilar (1895-1987), the founding pastor of Transfiguration, was a driving force in the parish. He was born in Poland, and his family immigrated to the United States when he was five years old. He attended Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit and S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan. He was ordained in 1920. Before being appointed to Transfiguration in 1925 he served as an assistant pastor at several Detroit and Hamtramck Polish parishes. He served as pastor at Transfiguration from its founding in 1925 until his retirement in 1970, and then served the parish as pastor emeritus until his death at age 91. Simon K street was renamed in his honor about 1955.



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Father Kilar continued his strong connection to the Orchard Lake Schools throughout his life. In 1965 Father Kilar was awarded the eighteenth Fidelitas Medal from Orchard Lake. The medal is awarded annually by the S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, St. Mary's College, and St. Mary's Preparatory Academy to an American Catholic of Polish origin for "Fidelity in serving God and country through the realization of the religious and cultural ideals of our forefathers." The award was given to Father Kilar for his initiative in constructing the shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa, raising funds for the chapel at Orchard Lake Schools (Wytrwal 1992, 191).

Likely due to the work and influence of Father Kilar, the Transfiguration Parish had strong ties to the Orchard Lake Schools. Some parish children were sent to Orchard Lake to continue their education, and as of 1975 three parishioners had entered the priesthood. The 1975 Transfiguration Fiftieth Anniversary booklet contains a congratulatory letter from the Orchard Lake Schools that states how the two organizations have grown increasingly close. The Transfiguration parish hosted Chapter 20 of the Orchard Lake Ladies Auxiliary.

The S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary was established in Detroit by Father Josef Dabrowski (1842-1903) with permission from Pope Leo the XIII to establish a seminary to train priests for Polish parishes in the United States in 1879. The building was constructed on Detroit's east side in 1885 at St. Albertus (seminary building now demolished) and the first class of students enrolled in 1886. In 1909 the seminary moved to the former Michigan Military Academy in Orchard Lake, Michigan. In 1927 and 1928 the seminary was restructured into three separate schools on the campus, the S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, St. Mary's College, and St. Mary's Preparatory Academy.

The Orchard Lake schools were instrumental in keeping the Polish traditions, language, and Catholic faith intact in the Detroit Polish community. As Poland was taken over by Prussia, Austria and Russia and the Polish Catholic institutions were obliterated in those countries, there was a lack of priests available to come to the United States. The seminary was able to train priests for posts in Polish congregations who demanded priests who could speak Polish for mass and conversation. By 1960 the schools were considered the "principal institutions for classical Polish education in the United States" (*Detroit Free Press* 1958). Over ten thousand alumni were preaching and teaching in nine hundred Polish-language parishes across the country (*Detroit Free Press* 1960).

### **Architecture and Architects**

By the early twentieth century substantial number of "ethnic" architects in Detroit who generally had small firms and practiced outside of the architectural mainstream designing primarily for clients within their own ethnic groups. The mainstream architects with larger firms tended to list their projects in the weekly issue of *Michigan Contractor and Builder* while the smaller ethnic offices did not. These architects had substantial practices designing a broad range of buildings during Detroit's growth years before and after World War I and included neighborhood commercial, apartment, industrial and institutional buildings. Two examples include Isadore M. Lewis, a Jewish architect with primarily Jewish clients and Richard Raseman, who had primarily German clients.

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Some of the Polish architects who fit into this pattern of designing for their fellow countrymen include Joseph Kastler, Joseph Gwizdowski, and the designers of Transfiguration buildings, Garsztecki & Waier and Narcyz Kostrzanowski. Walter Garsztecki and another Polish architect, Julius Jablonski, had offices on Chene and Medbury, respectively, in the heart of the Polish immigrant community.

Joseph G. Kastler (Jozef G. Kosicki) appears to be the earliest of the small group of Polish architects working in Detroit. Kastler practiced with W. E. N. Hunter after arriving in Detroit in the 1880s. His designs for Polish clients included St. Josephat church and rectory in 1899 and 1901, a Polish Catholic church in Wyandotte in 1899, the Sacred Heart of Mary parish school in 1902, the original St. Hedwig's church in 1903-1904 (demolished), the St. Francis of Assisi Church in 1904, the east side Dom Polski hall in 1913, and several residences for Poles and non-Poles (Christensen 2006; *Detroit Free Press*).

Joseph Gwizdowski (1880-1940) was born and educated in Poland and arrived in Detroit in 1914. He practiced in Detroit until his death in 1940. His early designs include the West Side Dom Polski Hall (1915), a bank building on Joseph Campau (1915), Hamtramck Municipal Hospital (now Hamtramck City Hall) (1927); and the St. Cunegunda Parish school.

### **Garsztecki & Waier**

Garsztecki & Waier designed the Transfiguration School in 1926, the oldest extant building of the parish complex. Walter F. Garsztecki was born in Detroit on May 23, 1890. He received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Michigan in 1912. He was a draftsman with Albert Kahn from 1914 to 1916. From 1916 to 1917 he was an assistant engineer with Detroit Steel Products Company before working in Ford Motor Company's architectural department from 1917 to 1918. He started his own firm in 1919 with Narcyz Kostrzanowski as his superintendent. In 1924 he partnered with V. F. Waier and the firm was renamed Garsztecki & Waier.

V. F. Waier was an engineer and remained with Garsztecki until 1928. According to a State of Michigan filing, "Waier versus State Board of Registration," Waier was a registered engineer and earlier worked for Truscon Steel Company. In 1909 he opened an office at Chene and Ferry Streets in Detroit. He was responsible for the Easttown Theater Building (1924), Corpus Christi school (1925), Waggoner Apartments (1927), and St. Hedwig School (1928), all of which were while partnered with Garsztecki.

In addition to designing the school at Transfiguration in 1926 the firm is credited with St. Casimir parish school in 1927.

After 1928 Garsztecki practiced on his own until 1933. In 1934 he worked for the Federal Housing Administration in Detroit until 1937. From there he ran the State of Michigan Building Division until 1939. He worked for the State of Michigan Federal Public Works Administration between 1940 and 1942, and the United States Home Owners Loan Corporation in 1943 and

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

Name of Property

1944. From 1945 to 1947 he worked for U.S. Reconstruction Finance Corporation Defense Plant Engineering before ending up at the City of Detroit Board of Education from 1949 to 1950. He was a volunteer on the Detroit City Planning Commission from 1941 to 1942. By 1956 he had relocated to Arizona before retiring in 1960.

### **Narczyz Kostrzanowski**

Narczyz Kostrzanowski (1882-1951) designed the shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa (1939) and the church (1949). He immigrated to the United States from Chelm, Russia, Poland, an area in the eastern part of Poland near the Ukraine that awarded to Imperial Russia by the 1815 Congress of Vienna. In 1915 the area became part of the Second Polish Republic. Narczyz arrived in New York in September 1910 and came to Michigan in early 1911.

He quickly began working with a group of Polish architects practicing in Detroit in the early twentieth century. In the 1912 and 1913 *Polk City Directory* Narczyz is listed as a draftsman with the Kastler and Hunt. It appears he worked there until 1919 when he became a superintendent with architect W. F. Garsztecki. An announcement in the July 5, 1919 issue of *The American Contractor* states that Garsztecki opened a new office in the Michigan State Bank building at the corner of Chene and East Forest with Kostrzanowski as the superintendent of the firm. By 1921 Kostrzanowski had his own firm. He is credited with designing the high school at St. Stanislaus parish in 1928. That same year he was recommended as the architect to design a new church building for the St. Andrews parish on the west side, but the project never went forward due to budget constraints.

Kostrzanowski designed the Transfiguration grotto in 1939 and the church in 1949. The church was likely one of the last of his designs as he passed away in January 1951.

### **Walter J. Rozycki**

Walter J. Rozycki, designed the Transfiguration rectory (1952) and activities building (1961), and was born in Detroit on December 23, 1909. He attended St. Mary's Academy in Orchard Lake which had strong ties to the Detroit Polish community. He later served as president of the national alumni association as well as vice president of the board of trustees. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Science degree in Architectural Engineering in 1933. From 1940 until 1943 he worked as a project engineer for the Federal Public Housing Engineer, before serving as an architect with the United States Navy during World War II, from 1943 to 1945. Upon returning to Michigan he started his own firm in 1945. In 1948 he designed the rectory and church for Church of the Divine Province, a Lithuanian parish in Detroit. In 1956 he designed the Alumni Memorial Library at St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake. *The Polish-American Parish* states that his design for the Shrine Chapel of Our Lady of Orchard Lake (1962), part of the Orchard Lake Schools, and St. Andrews church (1956) in Detroit "have steeply pitched copper roofs that form their own steeples. St. Andrews is a beautiful example of modern ecclesiastical architecture that combines durability, beauty, simplicity, and economy without losing religious symbolism or atmosphere." In the 1962 *American Architects Directory* he listed his principal works as St. Andrews Church in Detroit (1958); the Trenton Library

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

Name of Property

(1959); Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods (1959); the Hamtramck Incinerator Plant (1960); and the Ecorse Housing Project (1961). He is listed as a member of the Detroit Planning Commission from 1938 to 1942. In 1966 he was commissioned by the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce of Detroit to design a cultural center; the location of the center had not been determined at the time. By the time of the 1970 *American Architects Directory* his home address was listed on Grosse Ile with an office on East Forest in Detroit. Several of his projects won awards, including one from the Michigan Society of Architects for his residence and a distinctive design award for St. Andrews in the Competition for Better Catholic Institutional Design, National Catholic Education Association.

### **Erroll R. Clark**

Erroll Clark designed the stone entrance porches that were added to the Transfiguration school building in 1956. According to the 1956 *American Architects Directory* he was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on December 21, 1914. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture in 1936, working some summers as a draftsman for Albert Kahn, Inc. He graduated from the University of Detroit in 1946. He worked for Giffels & Vallet from 1937-1939. During World War II he served as an aeronautical engineer. He started his own firm in 1945. Some of his designs include Mt. Olivet Methodist Church, Dearborn (1952); Mains Insurance Company, Dearborn (1952); Ross Operating Valve Company, Detroit (1953); Lile-Neumann Agency, Royal Oak (1954); and First Methodist Church of St. Clair Shores (1955).

### **Conclusion**

The early geographical heart of the east Polish community was for many years centered on St. Aubin Street, to the southwest of Hamtramck, and about four miles southwest of Transfiguration Parish. As the number of Poles increased, they settled on the west side of the city and moved northward to Hamtramck and beyond. Much of the physical evidence of the early Polish community was destroyed in the early 1980s with the creation of the General Motors Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly plant. The earliest buildings of Transfiguration Parish represent Detroit's Polish community at its numerical and geographical peak, while the later embodies the development of Detroit Polonia through the middle of the twentieth century. The Transfiguration complex also illustrates a diversity of architectural solutions to the problems of providing religious, education, and social facilities for Polish Catholics in Detroit, as interpreted through several architects active in Detroit during the first half of the twentieth century.

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Church of the Transfiguration Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan  
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Wytrwal, Joseph A. *The Polish Experience in Detroit*. Detroit: Endurance Press, 1992.

Zunz, Olivier. *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 3.78

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.245563 Longitude: -83.024068
2. Latitude: 42.245575 Longitude: -83.023480

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

3. Latitude: 42.245319 Longitude: -83.023490

4. Latitude: 42.245048 Longitude: -83.024056

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

In the City of Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Syracuse Street and Luce Avenue; then eastward on the centerline of Luce Avenue to its intersection with Mound Road; then southward on the west ROW line of Mound Road to its intersection with Simon K Street; then westward on the centerline of Simon K Street to its intersection with the north-south alley between Syracuse Street and Mound Street; then southward in the centerline of the alley to its intersection with the centerline of the vacated alley between Simon K and Rupert; then westward along said centerline of the vacated alley to the east lot line of Lot 19 of Re-Subdivision of Lots 117 to 146, both inclusive, of A Meyer's & Son Subdivision No. 1, part of Section 17, Town 1 South, Range 12 East, recorded in Liber 58 of Plats, Page 56, Wayne County Records; then southward along said lot line to the centerline of Rupert Street; then westward along the centerline of Rupert Street to its intersection with Syracuse Street; then northward on the centerline of Syracuse Street to its intersection with Luce Avenue, the point of the beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the land historically owned by the Archdiocese of Detroit and associated with the Transfiguration Parish.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**



Church of the Transfiguration Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

name/title: Kristine M. Kidorf / Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator  
organization: Kidorf Preservation Consulting / Michigan State Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 451 E. Ferry Street / 735 E. Michigan Avenue  
city or town: Detroit / Lansing state: MI zip code: 48202/48909  
e-mail kristine@kidorfpreservationconsulting.com  
telephone: 313-300-9376 / 517-373-1979  
date: February 2019

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: MI

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State

Photographer: Kristine M. Kidorf

Date Photographed: December 11, 2017; July 30, 2018; and March 7, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17. Looking southeast on Syracuse at church.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0001

2 of 17. Looking southeast on Syracuse at school and church.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0002

3 of 17. Looking northeast on Syracuse at school.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0003

4 of 17. Looking northeast at sculpture, grotto and shrine.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0004

5 of 17. Looking northwest at shrine and grotto.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0005

6 of 17. Looking south at rectory and Our Lady Help of Christians statue.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0006

7 of 17. Looking northeast at former convent.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0007

8 of 17. Looking northwest at former convent.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0008

9 of 17. Looking west on Simon K at convent, rectory, and church.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0009

10 of 17. Looking east on Luce at school and activities building.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0010

11 of 17. Looking southwest at activities building.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0011

12 of 17. Looking south at church.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0012

13 of 17. Looking south at detail of church entrance.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0013

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Name of Property

Wayne County, Michigan

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14 of 17. Looking south in church sanctuary.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0014

15 of 17. Looking south at detail church altar including Vatican mosaic.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0015

16 of 17. Looking north in church sanctuary.

MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0016

17 of 17. Looking north inside shrine.

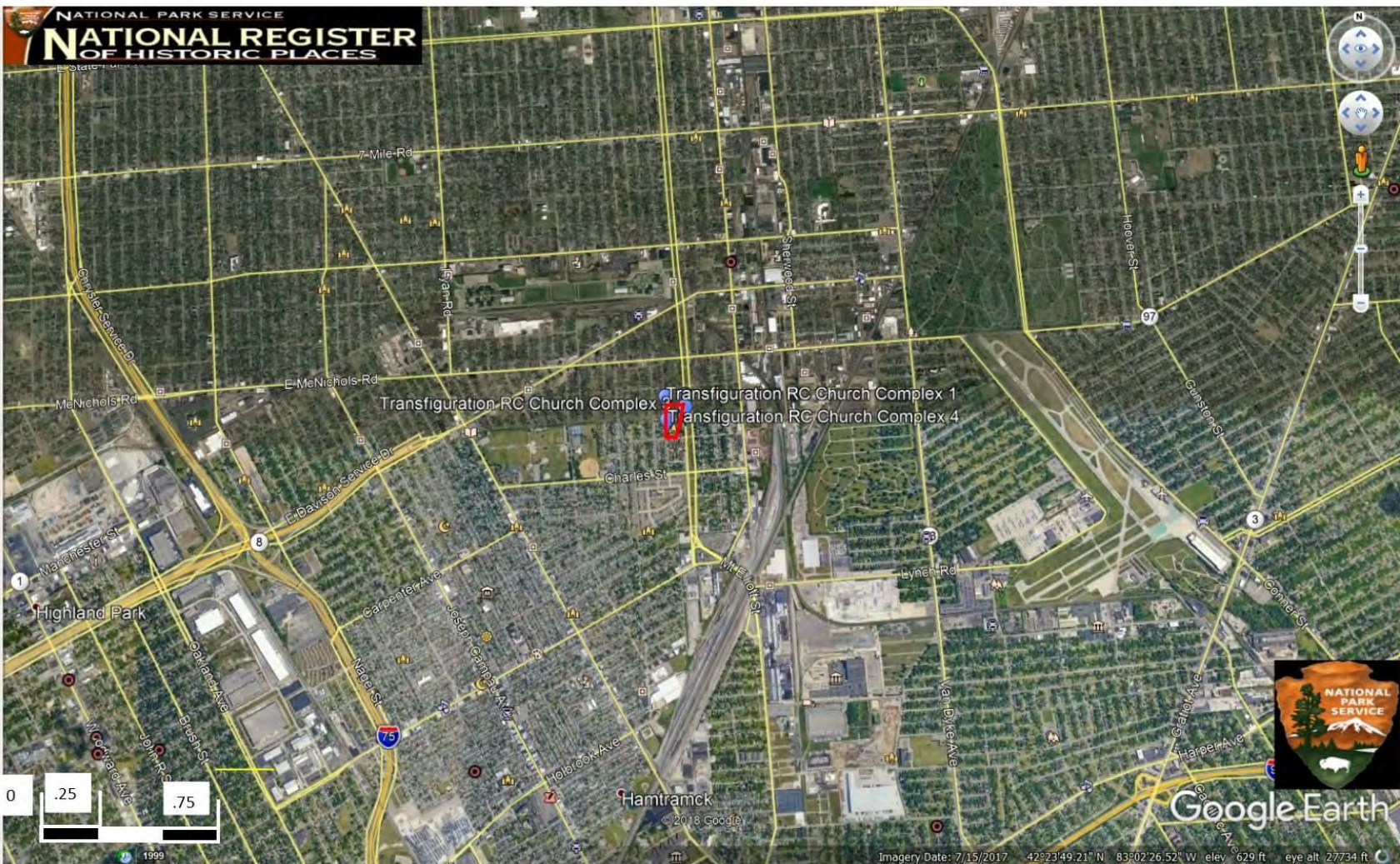
MI\_Wayne County\_Church of the Transfiguration\_0017

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Wayne County, Michigan  
 County and State



- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.245563 | Longitude: - 83.024068 |
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| 3. Latitude: 42.245319 | Longitude: - 83.023490 |
| 4. Latitude: 42.245048 | Longitude: - 83.024056 |

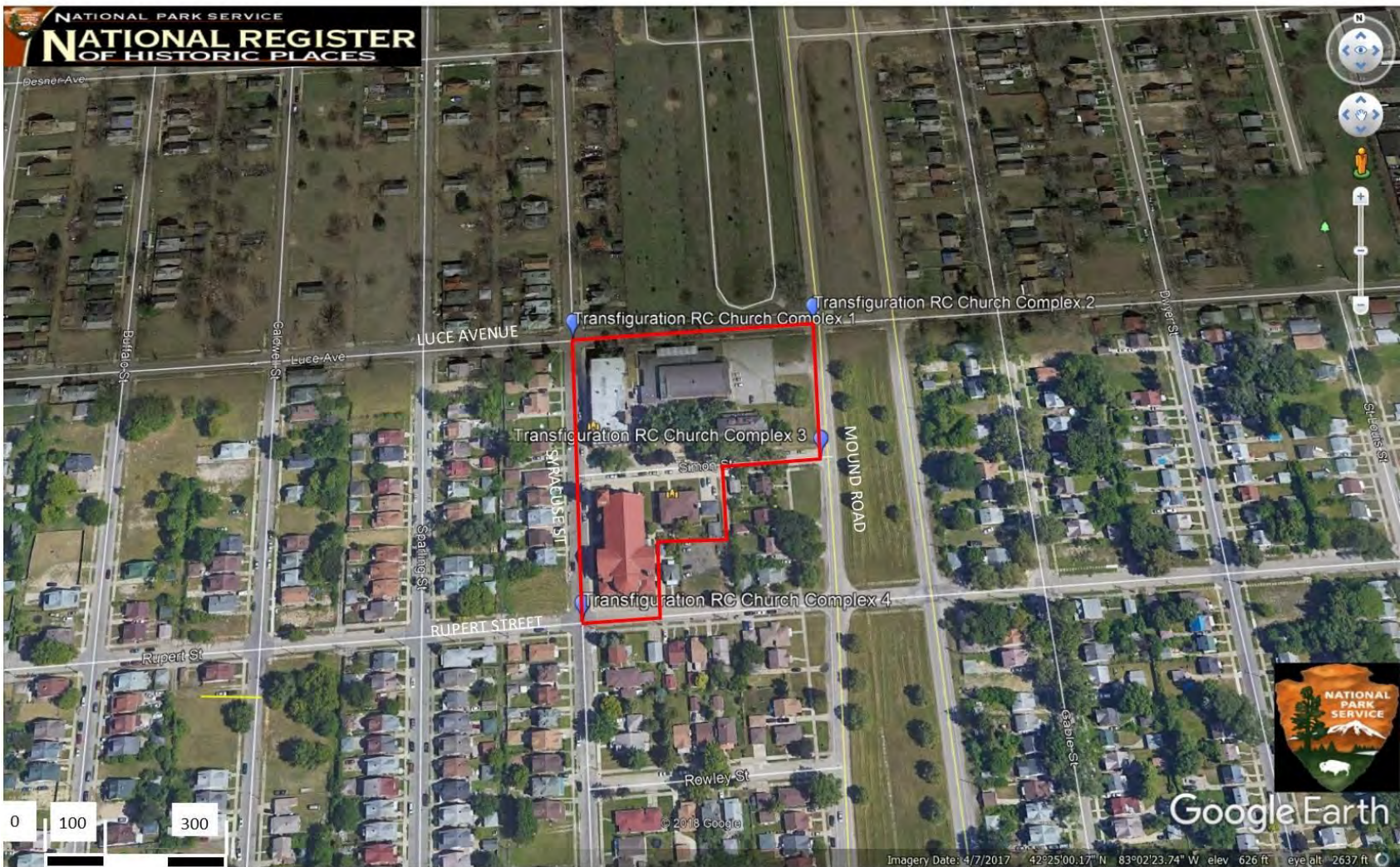
TRANSFIGURATION R.C. CHURCH PARISH COMPLEX  
 DETROIT, WAYNE COUNTY, MI



CONTEXT MAP

Church of the Transfiguration Historic District

Wayne County, Michigan  
 County and State



SCALE IN FEET

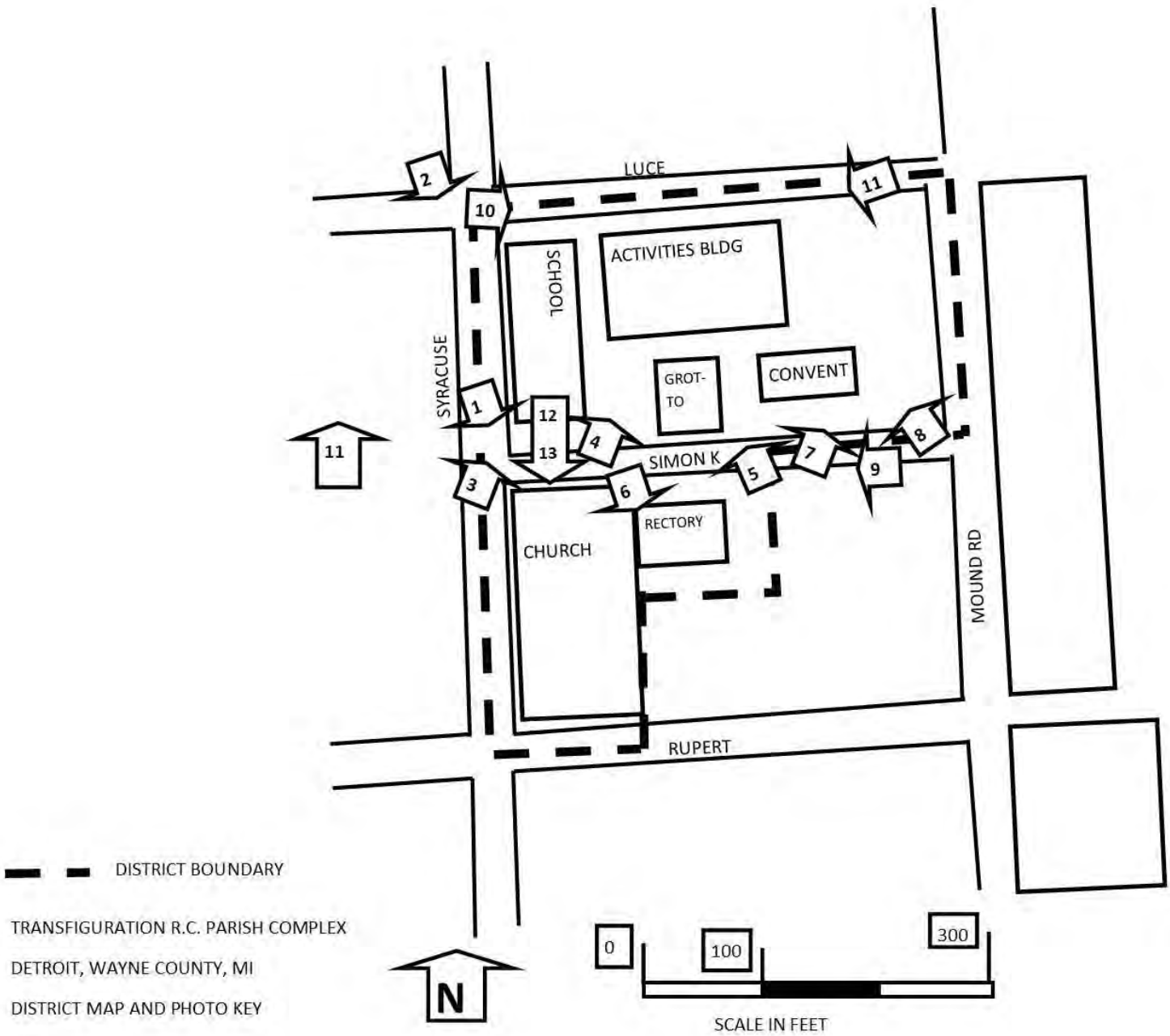
TRANSFIGURATION R.C. CHURCH PARISH COMPLEX  
 DETROIT, WAYNE COUNTY, MI  
 LARGE SCALE MAP



- |                        |                        |
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| 1. Latitude: 42.245563 | Longitude: - 83.024068 |
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Church of the Transfiguration Historic District  
Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

Wayne County, Michigan  
County and State \_\_\_\_\_





Simon K













5810

Handicapped  
Parking Only









NO STANDING





WELCOME













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/2/2019      Date of Pending List: 8/28/2019      Date of 16th Day: 9/12/2019      Date of 45th Day: 9/16/2019      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG  |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      9/16/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





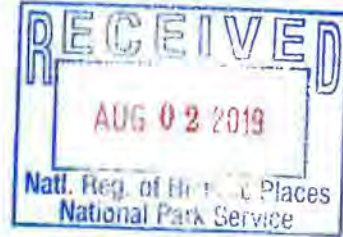
STATE OF MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

GARY HEIDEL  
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



July 16, 2019

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Church of the Transfiguration Historic District, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a  X  New Submission   Resubmission   Additional Documentation   Removal.

- 1  Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Disc 1)
- 2  Locational maps (Disc 1)
- 1  Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s) (Disc 1)
- 3  Pieces of correspondence (Disc 1)
- 17  Digital photographs (Disc 2)
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed.
- X  This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67 (April 18, 2019).
- The enclosed owner objections constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other:

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 373-1979 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Martha MacFarlane-Faes  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

**Certified Local Government  
National Register Nomination Review Report**

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office  
Michigan State Housing Development Authority

**Complete and return to:** National Register Coordinator, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office,  
Michigan State Housing Development Authority, 735 East Michigan Avenue, PO Box 30044, Lansing,  
Michigan 48909

**Name of Property:** Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church Parish Complex  
**Address:** 5830 Simon K, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan  
**Owner:** Archdiocese of Detroit  
**Date Complete Nomination Approved by the SHPO:** March 26, 2019

\*\*\*\*\*

The Certified Local Government (CLG) agrees with the SHPO to expedite the review period for this nomination.

YES  (date of agreement) 4/2/2019 NO   
*James Lopez-Dunn* 4/11/19  
Signature of CLG Commission Chairperson Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Elected Chief Official Date

\*\*\*\*\*

Date(s) of commission meeting(s) when the nomination was reviewed: April 11, 2019

Date of written notice to property owner of commission meeting: April 3, 2019

The CLG provided the following opportunities for public participation in the review of this nomination:

Were any written comments received by the CLG? YES  NO

Was the nomination form distributed to CLG commission members? YES  NO

Was a site visit made to the property by CLG commission members? YES  NO   
If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the CLG seek assistance of the SHPO in evaluating the eligibility of this property for the National Register? YES  NO

VERIFICATION of Professional Qualifications of Commission in accordance with 36 CFR 61, Appendix 1, of Michigan's Certified Local Government Program.

List those commission members who meet the 36 CFR 61 qualifications required to review this type of resource.

Commission Member	Professional Qualifications
1. <u>Melanie Bazil</u>	<u>historian</u>
2. <u>Keith Dye</u>	<u>historian</u>
3. <u>Carolyn Carter</u>	<u>historian</u>
4. <u>Lous Fisher</u>	<u>architect</u>
5. <u>Naomi Beasley-Porter</u>	<u>architect</u>
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____

Was an outside consultant used? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If yes, provide the name and list the 36 CFR 61 qualifications the person meets:

The CLG Commission finds that the property meets the following National Register criteria of significance: yes, A/C local level

The CLG Commission finds that the property meets the National Register standards of integrity. YES  NO \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation of CLG Commission:  
APPROVAL   
DENIAL \_\_\_\_\_ (specify reasons on a separate sheet of paper)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Chief Elected Official Date

Date of transmittal of this report to the SHPO \_\_\_\_\_

Date of receipt of this report by the SHPO \_\_\_\_\_

**City of Detroit**  
**CITY COUNCIL**

**HISTORIC DESIGNATION ADVISORY BOARD**

218 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone: 313.224.3487 Fax: 313.224.4336

Email: [historic@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historic@detroitmi.gov)

4/11/2019 CLG Reports – HDAB Staff Comments

**I. Transfiguration RC Church Parish Complex NR nomination: Kristine Kidorf, presenter**

Staff forwarded the nomination to colleagues who are historian, knowledgeable about the Polish community in Detroit. Comments received were sent to Ms. Kidorf, who made appropriate changes and had some questions on others (as per correspondence handed out to Board0. Staff developed responses to her questions that should result in further changes to the report:

1. P. 15. Statement from Mead-Hunt 2013 study: In general, we question the accuracy of any study on ethnic historic that does not include local input, as biases may surface. We know that some sources are more credible than others.
2. P. 20. I suggest that Ms. Kidorf has further discussion with Ms. Savage regarding other churches mentioned as to customs.



September 18, 2018

Brian Conway  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
SHPO – MSHDA  
735 Michigan Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: National Register listing of the Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church Complex, Simon K Street, Detroit, Wayne County

Dear Mr. Conway,

As the owner of the Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church Complex we are in support of the complex being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Archdiocese of Detroit is also aware of and supports the submission of Parts 1 and 2 of the federal historic tax credit applications being submitted by Cinnaire Solutions.

Sincerely,

Archdiocese of Detroit

**UNLEASH THE GOSPEL**

12 State Street, Detroit, Michigan 48226-1823 | 313-237-5800 | aod.org