



# CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – PLANNING AND ZONING

### AGENDA

#### Historic District Commission Meeting

Date: Monday, June 9, 2025  
 Time: 4:00 P.M.  
 Where: City Hall, Room 301

1. Call to Order:

2. Attendance:

3. Additions or Deletions to Agenda:

4. Approval of minutes: May 12, 2025

5. Correspondence:

6. Old Business:

7. New Business

A. H12-25 (50 W Jackson St)

Petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 50 W Jackson St, filed by Cody Newman on behalf of Battle Creek Unlimited for the placement of two new wall signs on the building located at 50 W Jackson St., Parcel #8750-00-001-0.

8. Comments by the Public:

9. Comments from Commission members and Staff:

10. Adjournment:

*The City of Battle Creek will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered in the meeting upon notice to the City of Battle Creek. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aides or services should contact the City of Battle Creek by writing or calling the following: Office of the Planning & Zoning Division, 10 North Division – Suite 117, Battle Creek, MI 49016, (269)966-3348 (Voice), (269)966-3348 (TDD)*

# CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

10 North Division, Battle Creek, MI 49014

**Minutes for May 12, 2025**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** By Chairperson Simpson 4:03 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** Chairperson Simpson asked for a roll vote.

**Comm. Simpson**, present

**Comm. Drozdowski**, present

**Comm. Davis**, present

**Comm. Sallee**, absent

**Comm. Thornton**, present

**Comm. Steinbrunner**, present

**Comm. Case**, present

**Staff Present:** Darcy Schmitt, Planning Supervisor, Melody Carlsen, Administrative Assistant, Patrick Batterson, Assistant City Attorney.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Approval of the April 14, 2025 meeting minutes.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER DROZDOWSKI TO APPROVE THE APRIL 14, 2025 MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER THORNTON.**

**ROLLVOTE:** Commissioner Simpson asked everyone in favor to signify by saying “aye”.

**ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, MOTION APPROVED.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. H11-25 (16 Ann Ave)**

Petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 16 Ann Ave., filed by Clara Hernandez for the addition of an open porch on the back of the house. Parcel #3560-00-042-0.

**Staff Presentation:** Darcy Schmitt

**Applicant Presentation:** Clara Hernandez and Gilardo Hernandez were present to speak.

**Questions by Commissioners:**

**Commissioner Simpson** asked the applicant if she was aware that she lived in a historic district, asked if the front porch was painted and if the homeowners could paint the unfinished wood on the back porch to match.

**Commissioner Case** asked the applicant if they were finishing the underside of the porch.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER CASE TO APPROVE H11-25 WITH THE CONDITION THAT THE HOMEOWNER FINISH OFF THE UNDERSIDE OF THE PORCH AND PAINT THE TRIM AND POST. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DROZDOWSKI.**

**ROLL VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED. MOTION APPROVED.**

**B. Commemorative Street Designations**

Commemorative Designation for a portion of Wayne Road, United Way Road and Battle Creek Avenue.

**Staff Presentation:** Darcy Schmitt

**Questions by Commissioners:**

**Commissioner Simpson** inquired to a mistake on one of the applications and asked for clarification regarding an applicant name.

**Commissioner Thornton** expressed his concern regarding concerns about confusion when another name is added to a street.

**Commissioner Steinbrunner** asked if a commemorative designation stays with the street or if there was a time frame that the designation is assigned to the street.

**INFORMATION GATHERING ITEM, NO VOTE NEEDED.**

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF:**

**Darcy Schmitt** gave the board an update on the grant that was previously applied for.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairperson Simpson adjourned the meeting at 5:26 pm.

*Submitted by: Melody Carlsen, Planning and Zoning Administrative Assistant*



## Battle Creek Historic District Commission

### Staff Report

**50 W Jackson St.**

Meeting: June 9, 2025

**To:** Historic District Commission

**From:** Travis Sullivan, Planning and Zoning Administrator

**Date:** June 2, 2025

**Subject:** The petition, filed by Cody Newman of Driven Design Studio on behalf of Battle Creek Unlimited for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the placement of two new wall signs on the building located at 50 W Jackson St., Parcel #8750-00-001-0.

### Summary

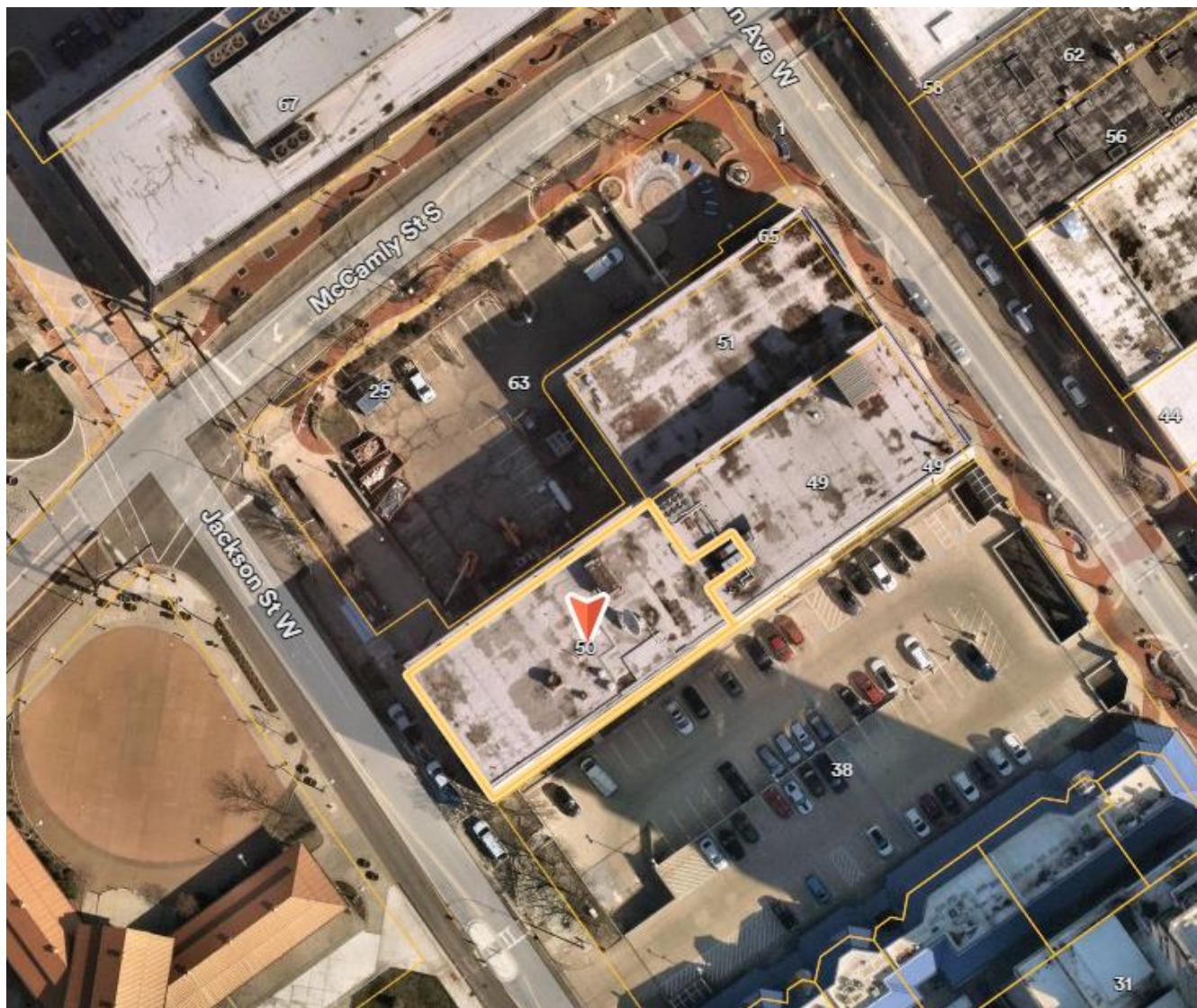
Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness at 50 W Jackson St. (Parcel #8750-00-001-0) for the placement of two new wall signs under the roofline at the southwest corner of the building. The proposed new signs consist of illuminated channel lettering, with each sign sized at approximately 98 square feet (4'-5" x 22'-3 5/8"). The proposed work meets the standards outlined in Section 1470.09 "Review of Applications," Section 1470.17 "Preservation of Historic Features" and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.

### Site & History

The subject building (50 W Jackson St.) is located in the Central Business Local Historic District along the northeast side of W Jackson St. between McCamly St. S to the north and Capital Ave. SW to the south. The Central Business Local Historic District consists of a mix of typical downtown commercial, religious and multiple-family residential uses, with architectural character typically reflective of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The subject site is not independently registered on the National Register of Historic Places, as verified by staff on June 2, 2025.

The subject site contains a 24,433 sq. ft., 3-story commercial structure, which will be occupied by Grand Valley State University as an office use. The property has been the subject of four previous Certificate of Appropriateness applications, with signage approved in 2005, 2009 and 2010, and the reconstruction of the building's façade and parking area in 2024.

Figure 1 below provides an aerial view, and Figures 2 and 3 provide street level views of the site.



**Figure 1:** Orange pin on aerial points to subject site (50 W Jackson St.). The thick yellow outline shows the boundary of the subject parcel. Photo courtesy of Nearmap.



**Figure 2:** Street view of the south-facing front of the subject property, September 2019. Photo courtesy of Google Street View. The façade of the building is currently under construction in accordance with the Certificate of Appropriateness that was issued in December 2024.



**Figure 3:** Photo of the northwest-facing side of the property, September 2019. Photo courtesy of Google Street View. The façade of the building is currently under construction in accordance with the Certificate of Appropriateness that was issued in December 2024.

### **Summary of Request**

The applicant has filed the subject HDC Certificate of Appropriateness application for the placement of two wall signs underneath the roofline of the building, with both proposed to be visible to traffic traveling along W Jackson St.

The signage is proposed to be sized 22'-3 5/8" x 4'-5" (both signs), with each sign proposed to be comprised of illuminated channel letters featuring 5" deep construction and painted with GripGard EFX semi-gloss enamel, projecting a blue "Grand Valley State University" insignia powered by low voltage white LED power supplies. During the nighttime hours, the signage will present as a white illumination of the insignia (see sign plans). The signs are proposed to be mounted flush to the façade of the building.

Both proposed signs meet all requirements of the sign ordinance (Chapter 1263). For more information and a detailed visual rendering of the proposed signage, please refer to the plan set included with the application and attached to this staff report.

It will be important for the Historic District Commission (HDC) to note that during the December 2024 evaluation of the currently underway renovation process, the building at 50 W Jackson St. was identified as having lost (or never contained) many of the features which characterize much of the Central Business Local Historic District, nor was the building constructed within the same general timeframe of the

majority of the district (the subject building was constructed in 1950, while the majority of contributing resources to the district were constructed in either the late 1800's or early 1900's). For these reasons, it may be reasonable, should the commission agree, that the subject building be viewed as a non-contributing resource to the district.

It is also worth noting that signage previously applied to the building in association with the former Robinson's department store likely shared many characteristics of the signage proposed by the applicant (illuminated channel lettering). Historical photos of the façade of the Robinson's department store which include the signage are attached to this staff report.

**Applicable HDC Guidelines and Analysis for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application of two "Grand Valley State University" illuminated channel letter signs on the building at the subject site, 50 W Jackson St.**

This property is reviewed in accordance with City of Battle Creek Building and Housing Code Chapter 1470 "Historic Preservation", as amended, the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act, as amended, and the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places as outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.

Specifically, the commission shall follow Section 1470.09 *Review of Applications*, as follows:

- (b) *The commission shall also consider all of the following:*
  - (1) *The historic or architectural value and significance of the resource and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area.*
  - (2) *The relationship of any architectural features of the resource to the rest of the resource and the surrounding area.*
  - (3) *The general compatibility of the design, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*
  - (4) *Other factors, such as aesthetic value that the Commission finds relevant.*
- (c) *The Historic District Commission shall review and act upon only exterior features of a resource and shall not review and act upon interior arrangements...*

**And**

**1470.17 PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC FEATURES.**

- (a) *Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a resource which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment, or to use the resource for its originally intended purpose.*

Staff finds that the proposed signage will not impact the use of the resource (office use), and will require minimal alteration of the building itself related to the mounting process.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (b) *The distinguishing original qualities or character of a resource and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features shall be avoided when possible.*

The proposed signage would not destroy any distinguishing original qualities or character of the resource and its environment. No distinctive architectural features would need to be removed or altered to allow for the placement of the proposed signage.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (c) *All resources shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historic basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.*

The applicant is not proposing any alterations that have no historic basis or which seek to create an earlier appearance.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (d) *Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a resource and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.*

None of the proposed work at the subject site is anticipated to represent a change in any characteristic of the resource which may have acquired significance in its own right.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (e) *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a resource shall be treated with sensitivity.*

No distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize the resource are anticipated to be impacted by the addition of the proposed signage.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (f) *Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material*

*should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other resources.*

The applicant is not proposing the repair or replacement of any deteriorated architectural features.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (g) *The surface cleaning of resources shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic materials shall not be undertaken.*

No surface cleaning of the resource on the subject site is being proposed.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (h) *Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.*

No digging or excavation is anticipated in association with this request.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (i) *Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing resources shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historic, architectural or cultural material and when such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.*

The proposed work is not anticipated to impact any historic, architectural or cultural material.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

- (j) *Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to resources shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the resource would not be impaired.*

Should the proposed signage need to be removed in future, it is not anticipated that such removal would result in the impairment of the essential form and integrity of the resource.

The commission may find this standard to be met.

## **Recommendation**

As has been discussed, the subject building located at 50 W Jackson St. was constructed in 1950, and may be in most respects viewed as a non-contributing resource to the Central Business Local Historic District. Additionally, the existence of the previous signage of a similar nature on the building during the era of Robinson's department store likely provides further justification for the style of signage chosen by the applicant.

**Therefore, planning staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application of two illuminated channel set wall signs to be placed on the subject building at 50 W Jackson St. as represented in the attached plan set as the request meets the standards outlined in Section 1470.09 "Review of Applications," Section 1470.17 "Preservation of Historic Features" and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, as outlined in the staff report.**

**Support Material**

Historic District Commission Application

Plan Set

Supplementary Historical Photos



# CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – PLANNING AND ZONING

## Historic District Commission

Application for (check all that apply):

Certificate of Appropriateness (for repairs or rehab projects)  
 Notice to Proceed (for demolition requests)

Petition No. H12-2025

Date Received: 5-23-2025

**APPLICANT\*\***

Name: Cody Newman

Address: 117 W. Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek, MI

Phone: 2697538040

Ex:

Email: cody@drivendesignstudio.com

OWNER (if different from applicant)

## Name: Battle Creek Unlimited

4950 W Dickman Rd. Suite 1, Battle Creek, MI

Address: 2699627526

N/A

\*\* If the applicant is not the property owner, a letter signed by the owner agreeing to the application to the Historic District Commission must be included with the application.

#### **SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS/EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS/EXISTING CONDITIONS** Address(es) of property for which the request is being sought: 50 W Jackson St

**Address(es) of property for which the re-**

Discuss the structure of the project and the approximate size of each.

**LIST EXISTING**

Please list all activities/proposed work for the property area and how the proposed work relates to the building as a whole: This is for the exterior sign only, it is a non contributing building in the downtown and the sign is not contributing either.

Indicate in which manner the proposed work will result in changes to the size and/or appearance of the features outlined in this application: \_\_\_\_\_

There will be two exterior signs on the building in the south corner. \_\_\_\_\_

Does the work proposed include maintenance/repair of existing features of the structure or will it create new features that do not currently exist?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the existing building materials of the following structural features and the proposed materials if that feature is included as part of the application. If the material and location is not listed below, please use the spaces left at the bottom of the list to indicate the feature and the proposed materials.

	Existing Materials	Proposed Materials (if applicable)
Roof	_____	_____
Windows	_____	_____
Siding	_____	_____
Foundation	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**For Notice to Proceed requests only:**

What options have you explored for the repair or relocation of the structure proposed for demolition?

**SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

As outlined in the attached information, each request requires supplementary items that thoroughly describe the existing structure and proposed project. These items are to be submitted with the completed application, including:

- (If the petitioner is not the owner) an affidavit authorizing an applicant to act on behalf of the owner
- Property Site Plan
  - Residential occupied properties: applicants shall submit a drawing of the property indicating existing and proposed property features, including but not limited to any structures, drives, fences, decks/patios, etc. The dimensions of all existing and proposed features shall be labeled, as well as property dimensions. Distances between existing and/or proposed buildings and property lines shall also be included on the drawing. Indicate the location of any proposed building additions subject to review by the HDC.

- Non-residential properties that propose any revisions from an approved site plan will require a new site plan submittal, per Chapter 1294 of the Zoning Ordinance. If the requested project will NOT result in changes to the property including buildings (new or additions), parking, landscaping, etc. the applicant shall submit a drawing as specified in 2a.
- Photographs of the property and structure, including all elevations of the building, historical photographs of the property and structure, and street photos of structures adjacent to the property.
- **For Certificate of Appropriateness applications only:**
  - Provide one set of drawings that explain exactly what is being proposed including details of the project, specifications, and product information as needed. All drawings should be to scale.
  - Provide specific information on all materials proposed for the project, including manufacturer names, illustrations, specifications, and samples. Material information should be submitted with this application and all samples should be brought to the meeting.,
- **For Notice to Proceed applications only:**
  - Labeled photographs of the interior and exterior of the structure proposed for demolition.
  - Estimates for the complete repair of the property and estimates for demolition of the property OR
  - Documentation that the demolition is needed in order to further a major improvement program that has community-wide benefit OR
  - Any other supporting documentation that demonstrates compliance with any of the above standards for issuance of a Notice to Proceed.

**Incomplete applications will not be forwarded to the Historic District Commission.**

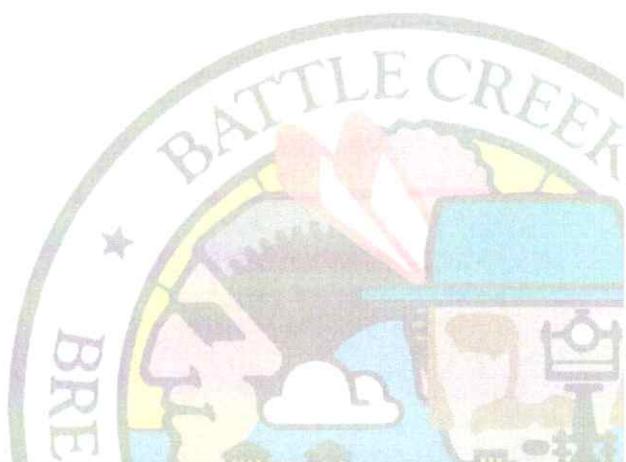
**APPLICANT SIGNATURE**

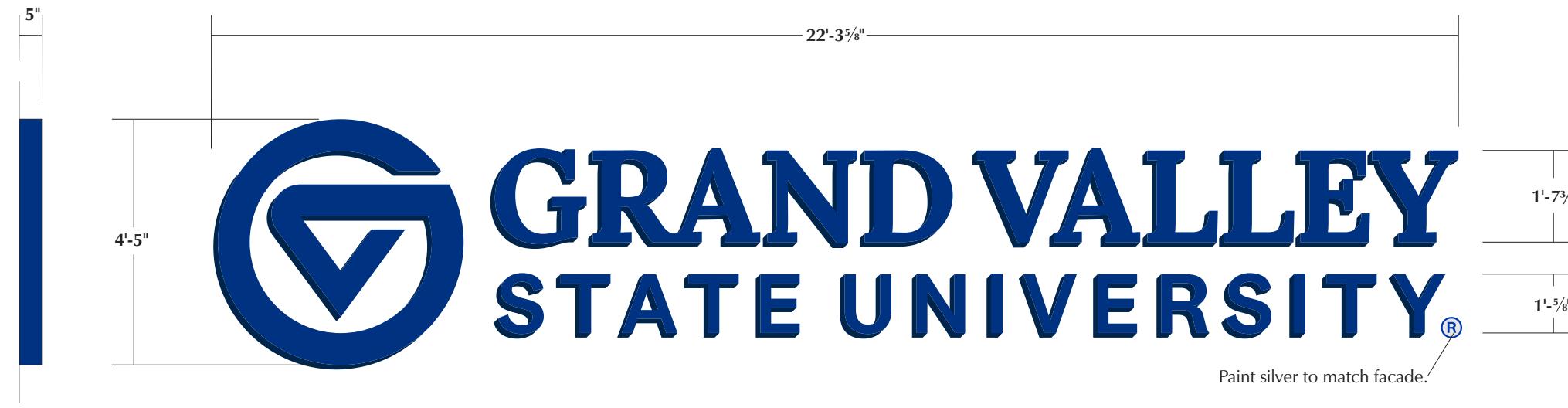
By signing this application, the applicant hereby declares that all answers given herein are true to the best of their knowledge, and confirms that all information required for Historic District Commission review has been submitted. Furthermore, the applicant confirms that they have thoroughly read the "Historic District Commission, Information and Procedures" and agrees to comply with all requirements and procedures outlined herein.

  
Name

5/23/2025

Date





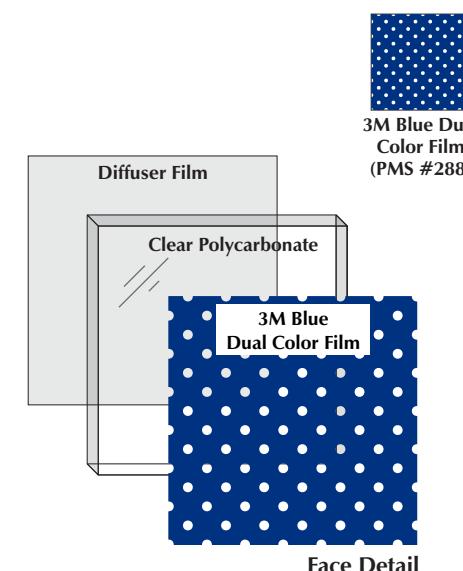
Sign #1 &amp; #2 — Illuminated Channel Letters



Existing Elevation



Proposed Elevation

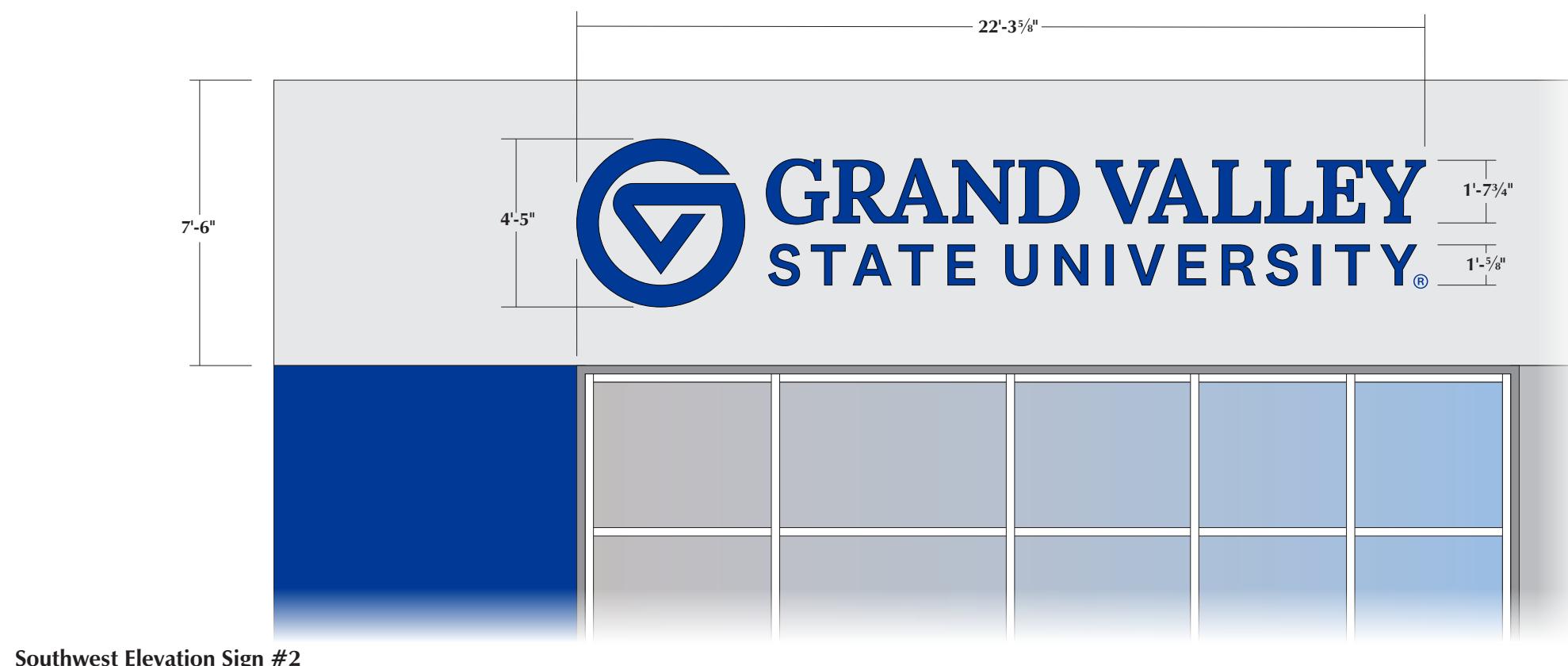


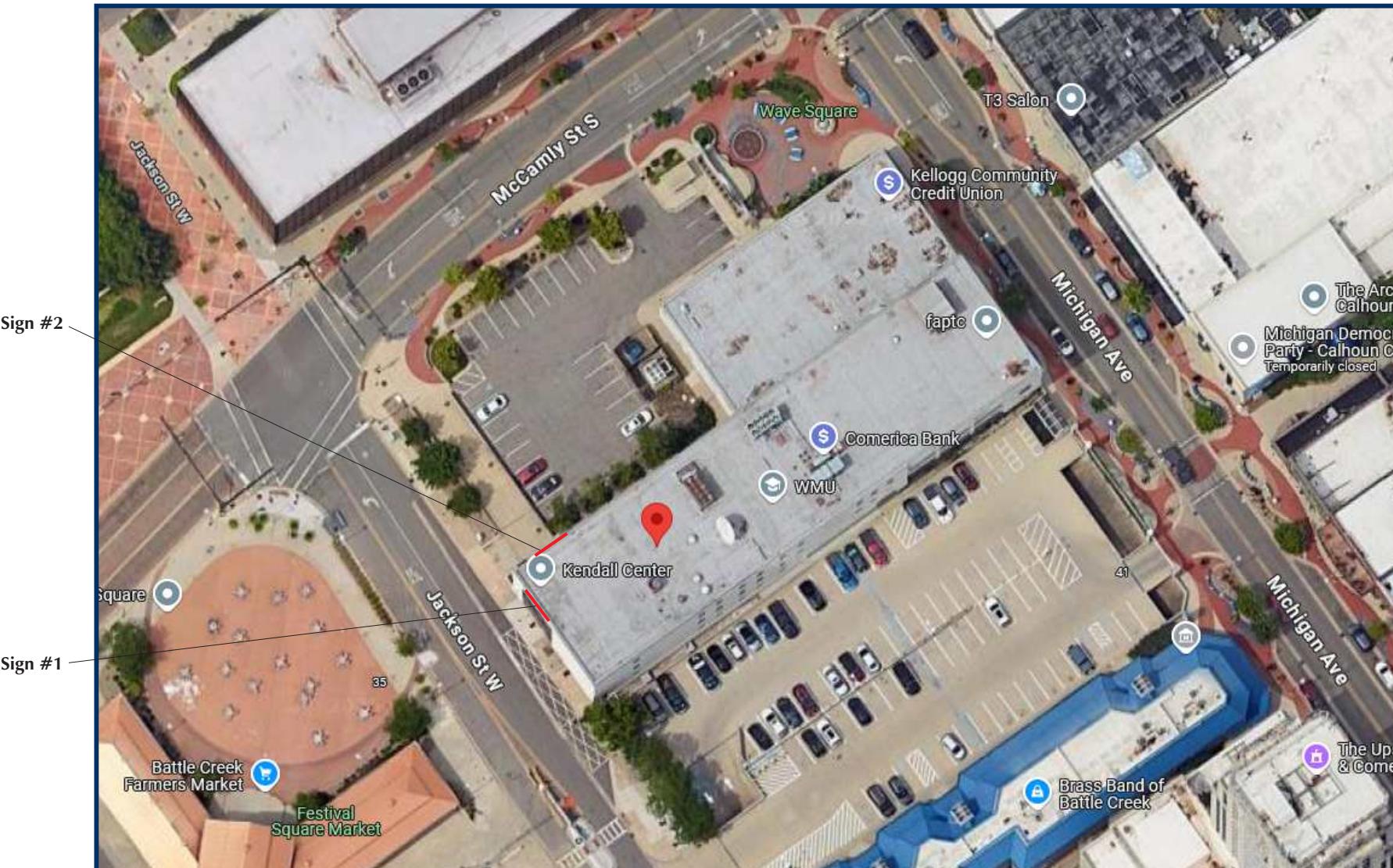
Night Time View

Square Footage	
Sign #1	4'-5" x 22'-3 5/8" = 98.50 Sq.Ft.
Sign #2	4'-5" x 22'-3 5/8" = 98.50 Sq.Ft.
TOTAL = 197.00 Sq.Ft.	



This sign is intended to be installed in accordance with the requirements of Article 600 of the National Electrical Code and/or other applicable local codes. This includes proper grounding and bonding of the sign.





Site Plan

Scale: None



Notes:

**QUOTATION & PURCHASE CONTRACT**

18 of 20

**COMPANY** **SignArt, Inc.**  
**5757 EAST CORK STREET**  
**KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49048**  
**Phone: 800.422.3030 Fax: 269.381.0999**

**PURCHASER** **SCHWEITZER CONSTRUCTION** **SC13** **LOCATION** **GVSU AT THE BATTLE CREEK INNOVATION HUB**  
**86 DIVISION ST S**  
**BATTLE CREEK, MI 49017** **50 JACKSTON ST W**  
**BATTLE CREEK, MI 49017**

**ATTENTION** **SCOTT COMERFORD** **(269)963-1579** **CONTACT**

SignArt, Inc., a Michigan Corporation, proposes to manufacture, and or deliver, and or install and maintain for the above-named customer, the items described below subject to the terms and conditions set forth on the last page hereof. Prices quoted are for items listed only and do not reflect any quotations or contractual arrangements for freight, installation, connection foundations or steel support structures unless specifically itemized.

Item	Qty	UM	Description of Work	Part #	Price	Extension
001	1.00	EA	SIGNS #1 & #2 - WALL SIGNS	GVSU CL01	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00
			Custom fabricated, internally illuminated (G2G white LED lighting system with remote mounted power supplies) UL approved and labeled, 4' 5"/1' 7 3/4"/1' 5/8" x 5" deep, channel logo/letters to read "GRAND VALLEY" "STATE UNIVERSITY". Channel letters to include 3mm ACM backs and .040 aluminum returns primed and painted semi-gloss GripGard EFX to match PMS #288 blue on exterior and pre-painted white on interior. Channel letter faces to be flat clear polycarbonate applied 3M #3630 Blue Dual Color film (PMS #288) pressure sensitive vinyl on first surface, diffuser film on second surface, with standard 1" blue trim cap. Channel letters set up for threaded rod/thru-bolt mounting. Registration symbol to be custom fabricated, .100 thick aluminum, primed and painted to match facade and applied 3M #3630-87 blue pressure sensitive vinyl. Furnish mounting pattern.			
			Estimated Tax SubTotal			\$1,020.00
002	1.00	EA	SIGNS #1 & #2 - INSTALLATION	SA INSTALL	\$5,600.00	\$5,600.00
			Install illuminated channel letters wall signs to northwest and southwest elevations, justified with adjacent windows, centered top to bottom, using threaded rod/thru-bolt mounting. Stub low voltage electrical whips through facade to NEC approved power supply enclosure with toggle disconnect. Connect to primary electrical if available at time of installation. Test light. Seal all penetrations using clear silicone. Clean work site thoroughly.			
003	1.00	EA	DESIGN/SPECIFICATION	DESIGN/SPECS	\$215.00	\$215.00
004	1.00	EA	PERMITS AND OTHER APPROVALS	PERMITS	\$785.00	\$785.00
			City of Battle Creek sign (\$445.00) and electrical (\$125.00) permits to be furnished at cost (\$570.00) plus \$215.00 acquisition fee.			
005	1.00	EA	NOTES			
			- 3M #3630-157 Sultan Blue (PMS #288) as best match to customer logo to be verified and confirmed with owner.			
			- LED lighting includes 10 year product and 5 year labor warranty.			
			- Duration of installation to include 3 days. Day 1 pattern work, drilling of mounting and electrical holes. Day 2 installation of logo/letters. Day 3 low voltage electrical wiring, test lighting, and connection to primary, if available. Day 4 follow up with general contractor for any punchlist items.			
			TOTAL EST TAX \$ 1020.00			

See attached SignArt, Inc. Warranty Statement and Additional Terms and Conditions, dated August, 2014

Accepted for Purchaser and Payment Personally Guaranteed by:

**X**

Signature

Print

Title

Date

**TOTAL AMOUNT:** **\$24,620.00**

**DEPOSIT:**

Accepted for SignArt, Inc. by:

Signature

Print

Title

Date

**BALANCE:**

**(to be paid upon completion)**

**SIGNART, INCORPORATED is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**

