

Alton James
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Vice Chair/Secretary

City of Detroit

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
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Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Angy Webb
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July 11, 2019

HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

RE: Request of the Iconic-55, LLC for PCA (Public Center Adjacent District) Special District Review of proposed exterior changes to 511 Woodward Avenue (RECOMMEND APPROVAL)

REQUEST

The City Planning Commission (CPC) has received a request from Iconic-511, LLC (The Elia Group) to approve exterior changes to 511 Woodward Avenue.

The subject property is zoned PCA, a classification which calls for City Council approval of any exterior changes following the review and recommendation of the City Planning Commission and the Planning and Development Department (Sections 61-2-181 and 61-11-81) of the Zoning Ordinance. The subject site also requires review by the Historic District Commission.

BACKGROUND

The subject site is located on the west side of Woodward Avenue between West Congress Avenue on the north and West Larned Avenue on the south. The block measures approximately 271 feet along Woodward Avenue with a depth of 30 feet.

The site was developed in 1972 with the Detroit Federal Savings and Loan Assoc. Building – a 4-story glass and steel bank building. The existing building measures approximately 250 along Woodward Avenue with a depth of 30 feet, totaling 7,530 square feet. The current exterior of the building includes gold mirrored glass, a main entrance at the center of the building facing Woodward Avenue with a brick façade above, and a box on the roof screening mechanical/electrical/plumbing equipment. The front of the site along Woodward Avenue is developed with raised planters with steps leading to the front of the building. The site was most recently owned by Wayne County and has been vacant for 12 years.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

CPC staff and the Planning & Development Department (P&DD) met with the developer on April 3, 2019 to discuss the proposed project. The Elia Group is proposing to purchase the building and redevelop it as a commercial space with several tenants. Please see the attached plans for reference. Proposed exterior changes include:

- Replacing the building façade on the north, east, and south sides of the building with clear glass;

- Adding a decorative metallic façade screen to the front of the building and wrapping around the top of the north facade;
- Adding horizontal exterior lighting; and
- Updating the existing front plaza with outdoor seating, ADA ramp access, and landscaping.

ANALYSIS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

The zoning classification and land uses surrounding the subject area are as follows:

North: PCA; developed the Chase Tower/The Qube (across West Congress)
 East: PCA; developed with One Detroit Center (across Woodward)
 South: PCA; developed with One Woodward Building (across West Larned)
 West: PCA; developed with the Guardian Building (across the alley)

Review

Section of 61-11-97 of the Zoning Ordinance lists the PCA District Review Criteria. The relevant PCA review criteria provisions are as follows, with analysis in italics:

- (2) Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development. *The decorative metallic façade would change the form of the building and its appearance along Woodward Avenue;*
- (3) The proposed development should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function and should not adversely affect the value of adjacent properties. *The subject 4-story building is dwarfed by the adjacent 40-story Guardian Building – which backs up to 511 Woodward. One could argue that the proposed clear windows and decorative metallic façade would complement the One Woodward Building (built in 1962) to the south and the Chase Tower/The Qube (built in 1958) to the north;*
- (6) Adequate public and private open space should be provided for light and air, landscaping, and, where appropriate, for passive and active recreation. *The project is proposing to update the large existing plaza in front of the building along Woodward Avenue with outdoor seating, new landscaping, etc.;*
- (9) Appropriate buffering and screening of service, loading, refuse collection, mechanical and electrical equipment and parking areas should be provided. *The existing mechanical screen would remain on the top of the building, but the proposed façade screen would hide part of the existing mechanical screen;*
- (10) Careful consideration should be given to orientation for solar access to both the proposed project and surrounding development. *511 Woodward is quite smaller than the 4 adjacent office towers.*
- (11) Signage and graphics should be tastefully designed to be visually appealing and in character with surrounding development; they should provide needed information, direction and orientation in a clear and concise manner. *The proposed signage plan is not completed, but the proposed plans indicate the sign location and state that total building signage is 500 square feet.*

- (12) Security considerations, especially avoidance of visually isolated public spaces, should be a major element of the design program. *The CPC understands final plans for the public space at the front of the building have not yet been completed, but the preliminary design is to remove the existing planters which would help open up the space.*
- (13) Barrier-free access and public safety features should be carefully planned. *The plans show adding an ADA access ramp to the plaza and main entrance.*
- (14) Preservation/restoration of buildings having architectural or historic value should be considered a primary objective. *On June 26, 2019, the building changes were submitted to the Historic District Commission (HDC). P&DD staff indicate the HDC approved the proposal with the condition that petitioner submit additional detailed drawings of the proposed screen wall.*
- (15) Urban design elements of form and character should be carefully considered; such elements include, but are not limited to: richness/ interest of public areas through the provision of storefronts, window displays, landscaping, and artwork; color, texture and quality of structural materials; enclosure of public spaces; variations in scale; squares, plazas and/or "vest pocket parks" where appropriate; continuity of experience, visual activity and interest; articulation and highlighting of important visual features; preservation/enhancement of important views and vistas. *The proposed design opens up the north and south corners of the building; the first floor would be open and visible to the street; the site is proposing an outdoor seating area.*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The CPC maintains that 511 Woodward Avenue is an important location downtown along Woodward Avenue, and that the current vacant building with early 1970's architecture (gold mirrored glass) does not add to the aesthetic appeal of the area. The Elia Group is proposing a bold change to the façade of the building. P&DD has submitted a letter in support of the proposed façade change which is attached for reference. The HDC has voted to approve the proposed changes as well.

On May 16, 2019, the City Planning Commission voted to recommend APPROVAL of the proposed exterior changes with the following condition:

That final site plans, elevations, landscape, lighting, and signage plans be submitted for City Planning Commission staff approval prior to making applications for applicable permits.

A resolution for approval is attached for Your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alton James, CHAIRPERSON



Marcell R. Todd, Jr., Director
Christopher J. Gulock, AICP, Staff

Attachments: Resolution, P&DD support letter, and proposed drawings

cc: Maurice Cox, Director, P&DD
Karen Gage, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD

By Council Member _____:

WHEREAS, Iconic-511, LLC proposes to make exterior alterations to the building at 511 Woodward Avenue including a new façade and decorative metallic façade screen; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is located within a PCA (Public Center Adjacent) zoning district and is subject to special district review; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Development Department has provided their comments as to the appropriateness of the proposed alterations; and

WHEREAS, on Thursday, May 16, 2019, the City Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the proposed alterations in accordance with the PCA District review criteria as listed in Section 61-11-97 of Chapter 61 of the Detroit City Code, 'Zoning'; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council hereby approves the proposed alterations to 511 Woodward Avenue as depicted in the drawings dated 2/05/2019 prepared by the lead firm of Yamasaki, with the following condition:

1. That final site plans, elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage plans be submitted to the staff of the City Planning Commission for review and approval prior to application being made for applicable permits.



May 14, 2019

Detroit City Planning Commission
208 CAYMC
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Public Center Adjacent (PCA) Review of exterior changes at 511 Woodward Avenue.
(RECOMMEND APPROVAL)

The following is the Planning and Development Department's (PDD) review of the proposed façade changes of the building located at 511 Woodward Avenue. This review is carried out per Sec. 61-11-96 for the review of developments located in the Public Center Adjacent (PCA) zoning district.

Following is our response to the applicable criteria from Sec. 61-11-97, with our response in italics.

- (3) The proposed development should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function and should not adversely affect the value of adjacent properties; *The new façade, with its clear glass and linear elements, appears to acknowledge the design of the Yamasaki-designed building to the south and "The Cube" to the north.*
- (15) Urban design elements of form and character should be carefully considered; such elements include, but are not limited to: richness/ interest of public areas through the provision of storefronts, window displays, landscaping, and artwork; color, texture and quality of structural materials; enclosure of public spaces; variations in scale; squares, plazas and/or "vest pocket parks" where appropriate; continuity of experience, visual activity and interest; articulation and highlighting of important visual features; preservation/enhancement of important views and vistas; *The new façade is a substantial improvement over the current reflective gold facade. It adds a variety of structural materials and will allow passers-by to see the interior activity in the building.*
- (16) Special attention should be given to amenity and comfort considerations such as provision for outdoor seating, restrooms for public use, bicycle storage, convenience of access points and protection from harsh weather through such features as enclosed walkways and arcaded pedestrian areas; *The plans state that there will be changes to the plaza, with new plantings and seating area, these improvements are not shown but shall be reviewed via the encroachment permit.*

Because of the conformance to the above standards for development in the PCA district, the PDD is pleased to support the proposed façade changes adjacent to 511 Woodward.

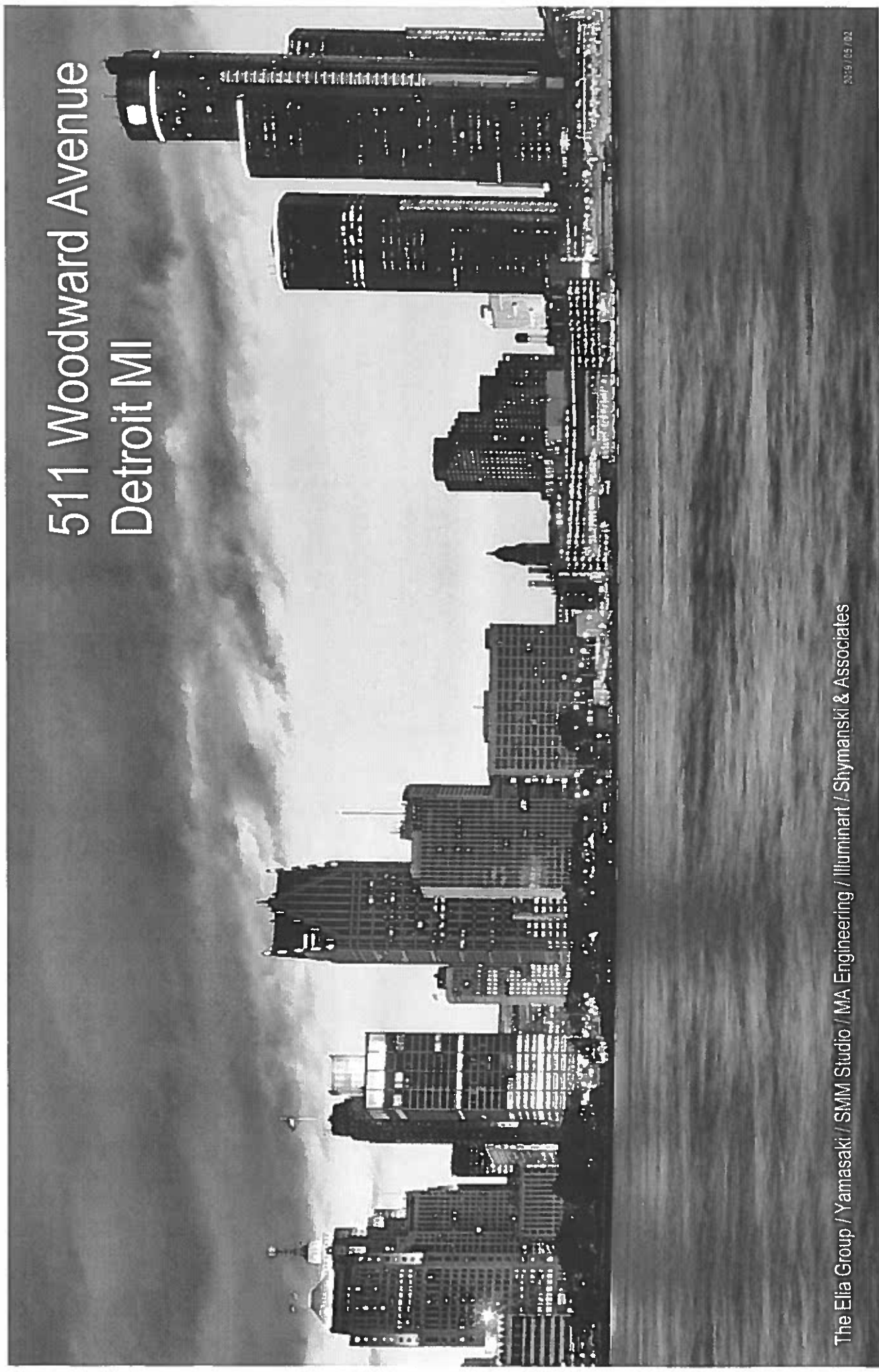
Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen M. Gage". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Karen Gage, Director
Office of Zoning Innovation

CC: Gregory F. Moots, Lead Planner
Maurice Cox

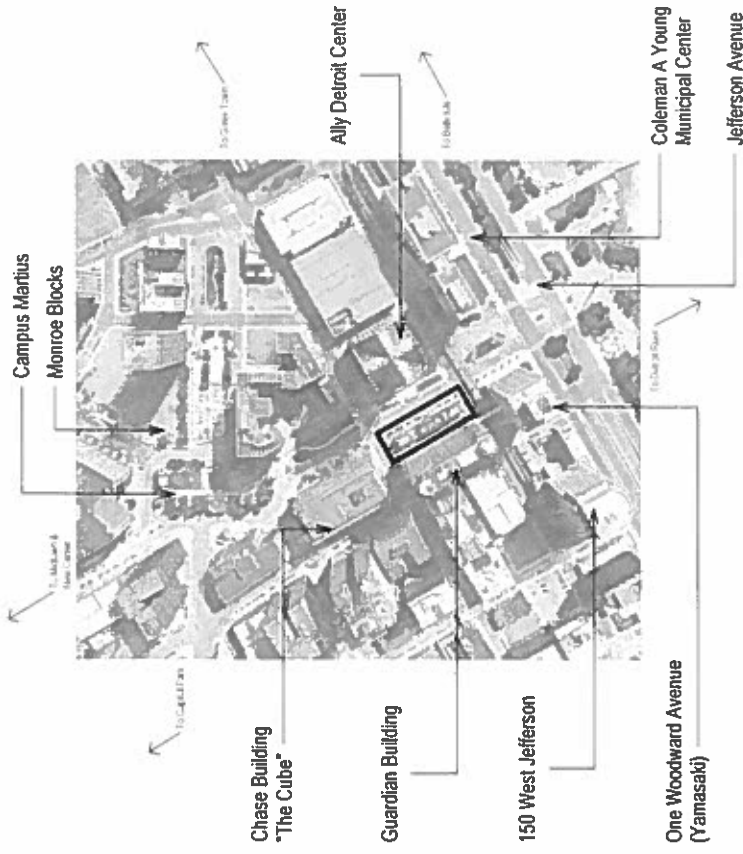
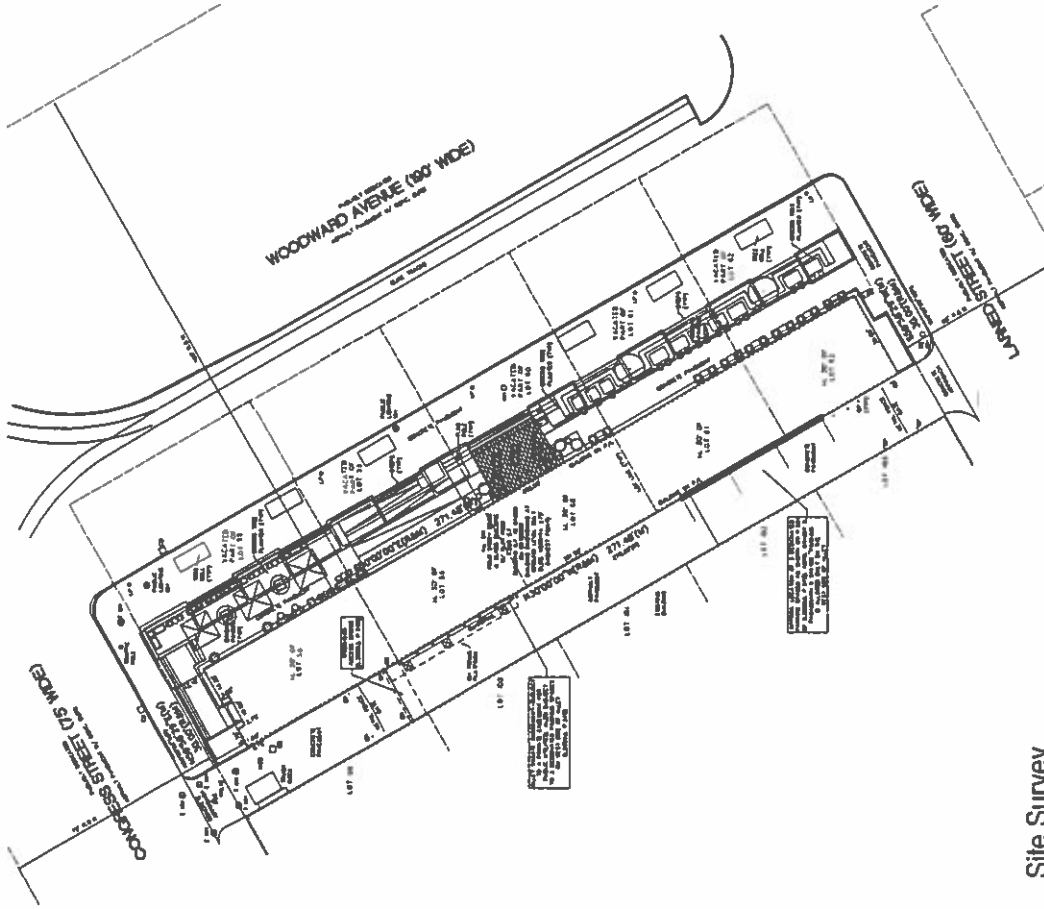
511 Woodward Avenue Detroit MI



The Elia Group / Yamasaki / SMM Studio / MA Engineering / Illuminat / Shymanski & Associates

3/19 / 05 / 02

Site Location & Survey



511 Woodward Ave Detroit MI







THE ELIA GROUP
 174 S OGDEN ROAD, SUITE A, GERRITSEN MI 48033

Rendering



511 Woodward Ave Detroit MI

YAMASAKI
SIMM
ILLUMIN RT
Shymanski & Associates LLC
MAGNIFICENT

THE
ELIA
GROUP
121 S Old Woodward Ave Suite A, Grosse Pointe MI 48230

Rendering

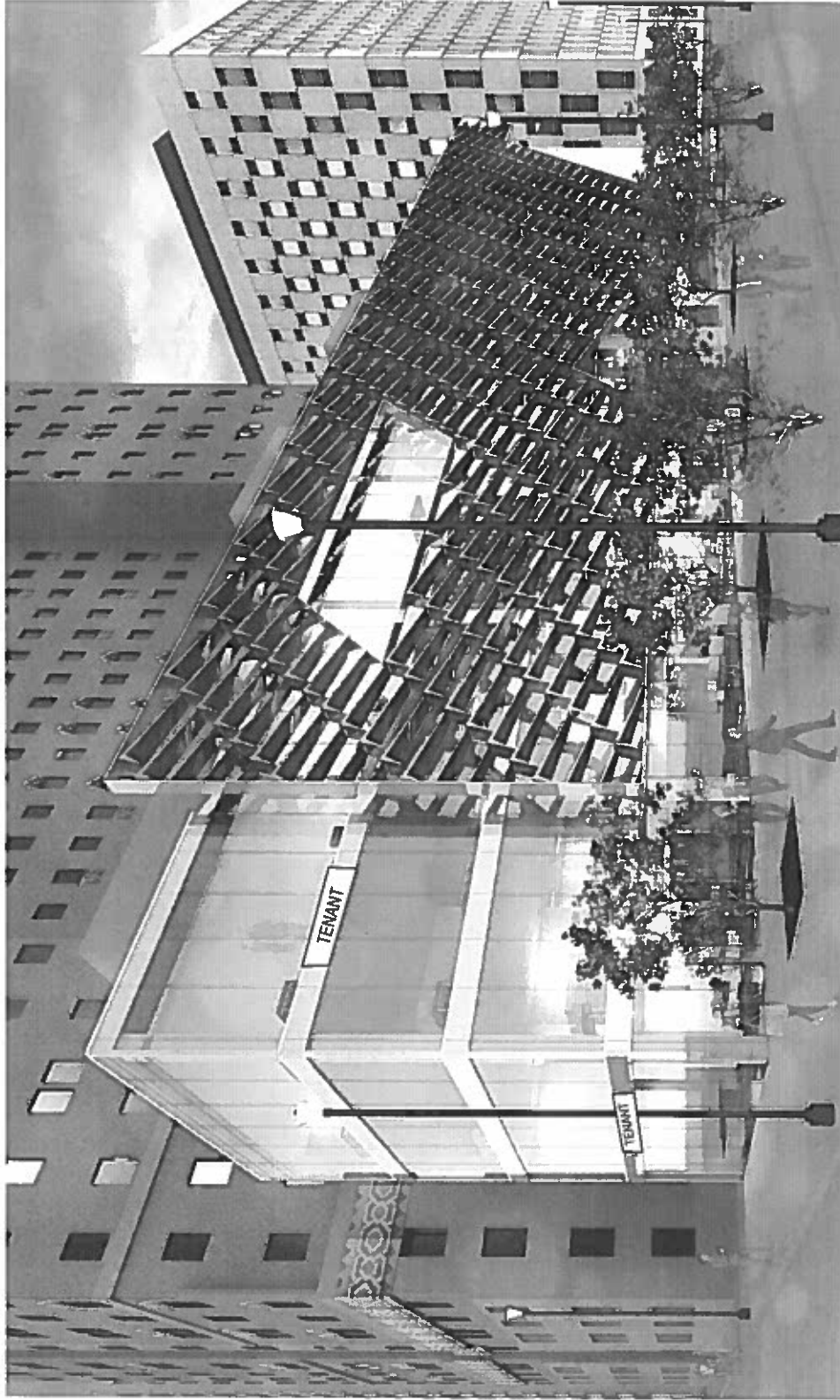


511 Woodward Ave Detroit MI

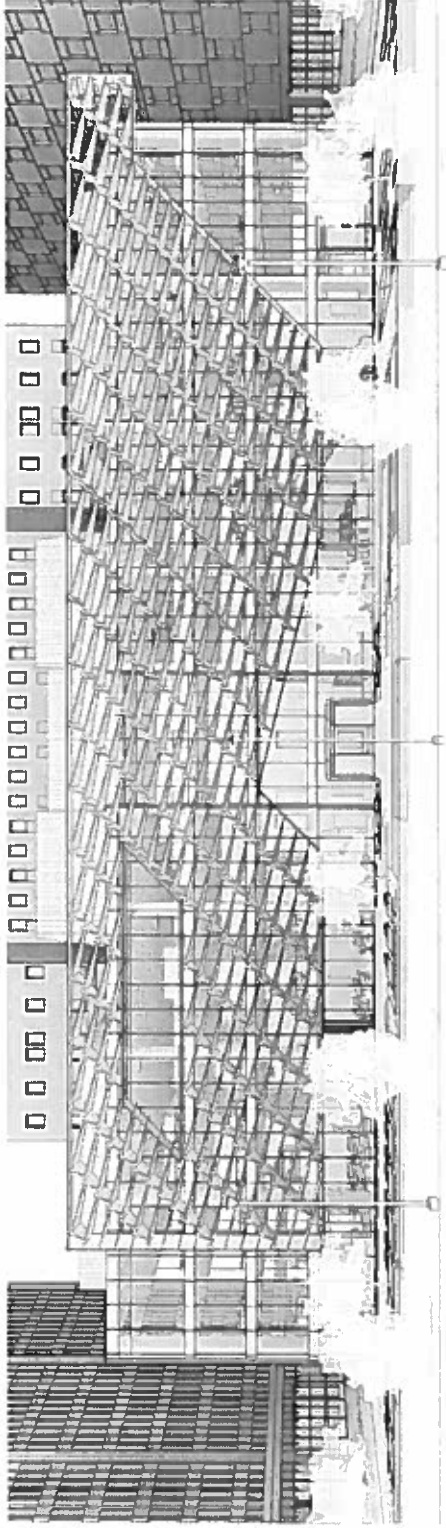
W&A ARCHITECTS
Shymanski & Associates LLC
ILLUMIN RT
SMM YAMASAKI®

THE
ELIA
GROUP
1215 Orchard Ave Suite A Farmington IL 60920

Rendering



Rendering & Line Drawing

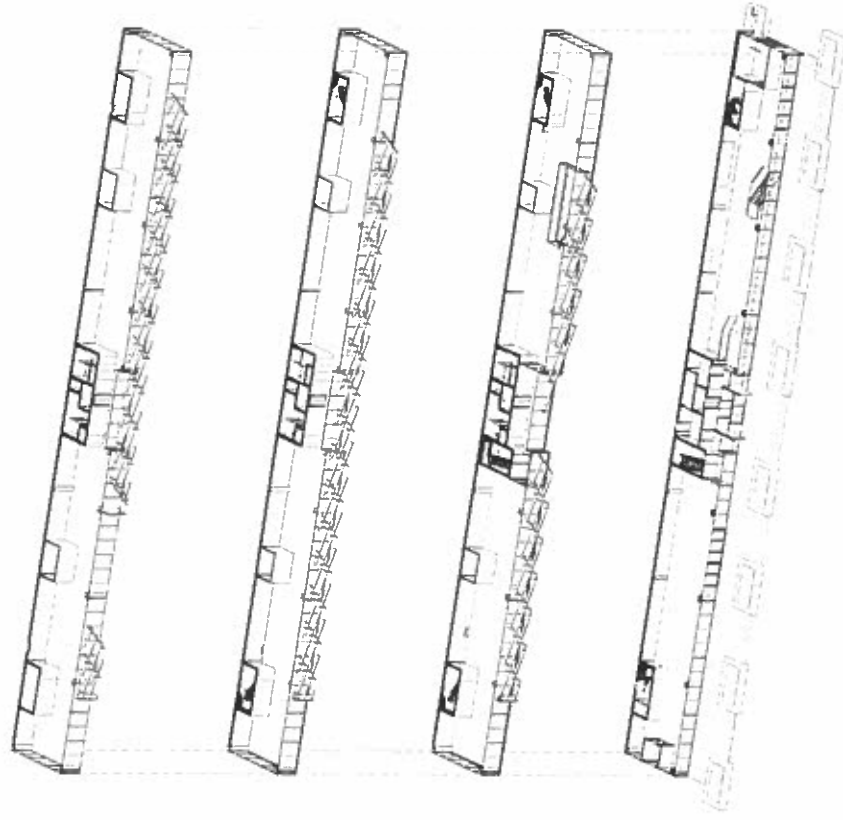
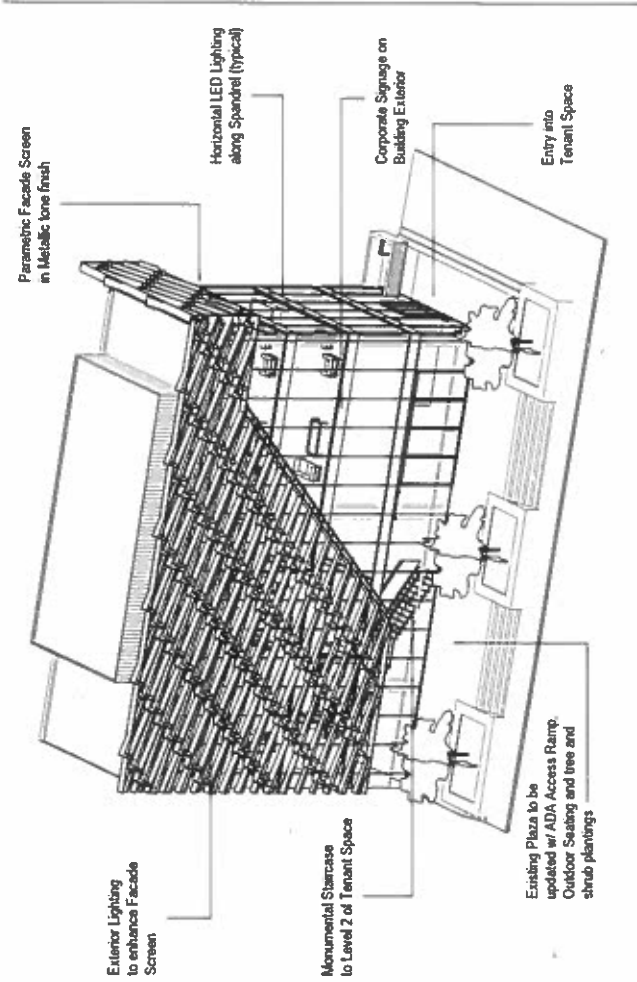


511 Woodward Ave Detroit MI

YAMASAKI®
SMM
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Shyamshi & Associates LLC
M&P CONSULTING

THE
ELIA
GROUP
1215 Old Woodward Ave, Suite 410, Birmingham, MI 48202

Axonometrics



Axonometric
 Scale: 1" = 20'-0"
 North

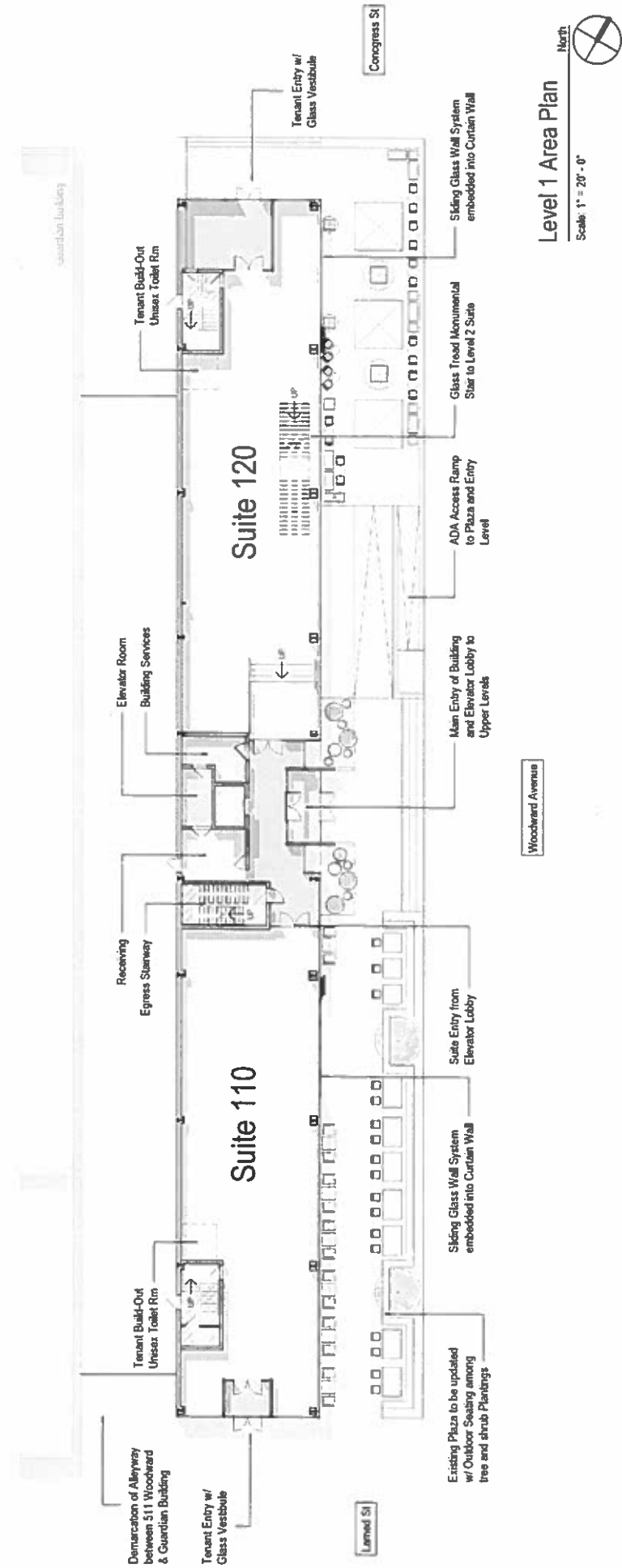
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 Scale: 1" = 20'-0"
 North

511 Woodward Ave Detroit MI






Plan



511 Woodward Ave Detroit MI



Shymanski & Associates LLC

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