



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

SR-2 – ADVISORY STAFF REPORT (04-03-2026)

This advisory report, prepared by staff, represents the opinion and advice of professional staff, and does not represent nor direct the separate review and decision of the Historic District Commission. This report serves as an addendum to SR-1, an objective staff summary of the proposal and property.

ADDRESS: 4612 WOODWARD AVENUE

MEETING DATE: 04-08-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00100

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY: B.SALIE

STAFF OBJECTIONS TO APPROVAL:

This first section describes itemized conclusions/concerns, which, in staff's professional opinion, would prevent the issue of an unconditional Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). "None" means staff has no objections and believes a COA is warranted, with no conditions. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

1. Both the installation of the black vinyl screens inside the storefront windows and the installation of the 'AutoZone' advertisements to the outside of the windows will alter the storefronts and their features. This will consequently diminish the historic character of the building.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This second section expands on the reasoning and analysis leading to staff's conclusions given in the first section above. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

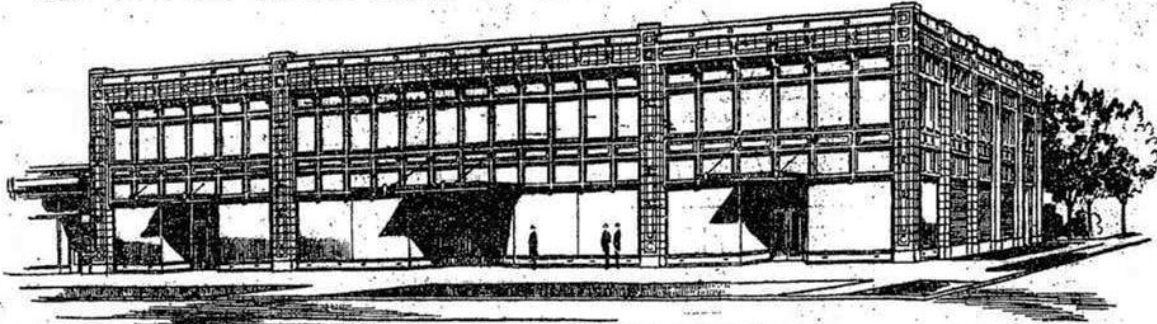
Garfield Building
4612 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, Michigan
If this photograph is used for publication purposes credit
must be given to:
Albert Kahn Associates
Architects and Engineers
Detroit, Michigan
PHOTO. NO. 38

*Right photo: taken by
Staff on 04/01/2026*



*Left photo: Historic Photo, not dated.
Taken from National Register of Historic
Places Registration Form.*

6-STORY BUILDING FOR E. S. GEORGE TO BE ERECTED AT WOODWARD AND GARFIELD AVENUES BEFORE JULY 1



HOME FOR AUTO ACCESSORY MANUFACTURERS' BRANCHES.

Edwin S. George is to have a two-story store building, on the northeast corner of Woodward and Garfield avenues, fronting 141 feet on Woodward and 92 feet on Garfield. The plans were made in the office of Albert Kahn, architect, and Ernest Wilby, associate. The structure is to be completed by July 1.

The building will be eight feet from sidewalk, and will be fitted up with six stories, specially planned as branches for automobile accessories and tire manufacturers. The entire south corner of the store, having an area of 38 by 92 feet, has been leased to the S. B. Goodrich company, of Akron, O., manufacturers of rubber goods and tires.

and under the direction of the local manager for the company, H. J. Moorehead, will be fitted up with elaborate offices and show rooms. The two north stores already have been spoken for. The two center stores, 32 by 92 feet, are not yet leased.

The exterior of the building will be of glazed white terra cotta, iron

and plate glass. The interior will have hardwood trim and floors.

Heat will be furnished by owner from apparatus installed in basement. The story heights will be 10 feet in basement, 16 feet for ground floor and 12 feet for second floor. The second floor with outside entrance will be subdivided to suit tenants.

FIVE-STORY BLOCK WILL BE BUILT ON WOODWARD AT GARFIELD AVENUE



4612	3-4
Woodward	LOT NO.
1017 A 7-1-14	DATE
USE	Store Building
CONS.	Brick
REMARKS	Build a 3rd, 4th and 5th story brick and steel store addition.

BUILDING FOR EDWIN S. GEORGE.

Three stories are to be added to the height of the two story brick building which was erected by Edwin S. George on the northeast corner of Woodward and Garfield avenues about two years ago. Albert Kahn, architect, and Ernest Wilby, associate, who designed the first building, have completed plans for the addition and will start at once. The present building will be reinforced to provide a new entrance to the upper floors, access to which will be given by two elevators. The building will be of reinforced concrete frame construction, with front of white glazed terra cotta and plate glass. It has 120 feet frontage on Woodward and depth of 100 feet on Garfield, and when completed will be the largest block in the business section around Woodward avenue at Forest and Warren avenues. The first floor will be occupied by stores and the upper floors will be finished as shops and offices.

Images provided by Historical Detroit Area Architecture, Facebook Group
 TOP: An article/rendering from the Detroit Free Press (published in 1909), featuring the original two-story construction, BOTTOM: An article & rendering from the Detroit Free Press (published in 1914) featuring the three-story addition. Building Permit for addition issued July 1st, 1914.

- Building Permit cards that may be pertinent to this area of work mention alterations to the exterior and front entrance. It is unclear where this may reference.

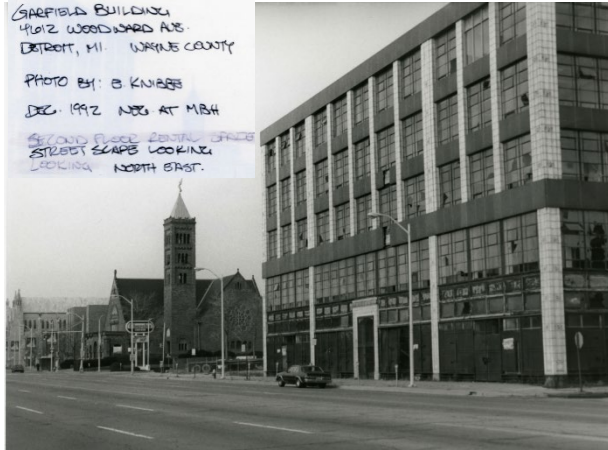
October 2, 1947: Repair fire damage and restore to original condition.

July 18, 1963: Alter exterior of building per plan.

March 1, 1972: Alter front and rear entrances

4612 Woodward 3 & 4 5894 O.K. 10-2-47 Date Use commercial bldg. Cons. brick Remarks \$500 repair fire damage and restore to original condition.	4612 Woodward 3,4 41927 OK 7/18/63 Date Use Reinf. Concrete Office Bldg. Cons. Remarks \$12,000.00 O.K. Alter exterior of bldg per plan.	4612 Woodward 3 & 4 69011 OK 3-1-72 Date Use Mas. & Conc. Ofcs. Retail Stores Cons. 2000. Remarks O.K. Alter frt and rear entrances.
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SARFIELD BUILDING
41012 WOODWARD AVE.
DETROIT, MI. WAYNE COUNTY
PHOTO BY: B. KNIGGS
DEC. 1992 NEG AT MBH
\$7,000 REPAIR STOREFRONT
STREET SCAPE LOOKING
LOOKING NORTH EAST.



Photos taken December 1992, show negligence to the building's storefront, windows, and other architectural details.



Photos taken by staff on 03/23/2026 & 04/01/2026.



Photo taken by staff on 04/01/2026.

- The [HDAB report](#) outlines the timeline of the first-floor space:
 - *The majority of its first tenants were involved in the automobile industry as parts suppliers and manufacturers. B.F. Goodrich & Company, rubber goods; C.F. Splitdorf, magnetos, electric specialities and spark plugs; Harry H. Bailey & Company, auto parts; Wheeler & Schebler, carburetors; RIV Company, ball bearings; Prest-O-Lite Company, gas tanks; and the Hartford Machine Screw Company were among the early tenants occupying the storefronts.*
 - *In the late 1920's and early 1930's, vacancies occurred in the Garfield Building as the Depression set in. Although several manufacturer's agents and tool and parts businesses were listed as occupants in the city directories, other types of businesses began to occupy space.*
 - *The Garfield Building became home to Wayne County Community College in the 1970's; it had been largely vacant since that institution moved to its downtown location in the late 1970's until **1999, when it was converted into retail space on the first floor and 56 residential loft units on floors two through five.***
 - The building was designated as a historic district on December 7, 2000.
- Due to the storefronts' historic significance, the continued use as display windows, consistent with their historic purpose, would be the preferred and most compatible treatment. Staff further notes that retail use of the spaces by auto parts store, which was its use during the Period of Significance, is in perfect alignment with Standard 1, which states that “a property shall be used for its historic purpose.”

- Per the National Parks Service [Guidelines for Rehabilitating Existing Historic Storefronts](#):
 - *2. Preserve the storefront's character even though there is a new use on the interior. If less exposed window area is desirable, consider the use of interior blinds and insulating curtains rather than altering the existing historic fabric.*
 - *3. Avoid use of materials that were unavailable when the storefront was constructed; this includes vinyl and aluminum siding, anodized aluminum, mirrored or tinted glass, artificial stone, and brick veneer.*
- Per the Historic District Commission's [Signs & Awnings Guidelines](#)
 - *Signage must fit within the building design and its storefront and be historically compatible with the site and context; must be compatible with building; and must not obscure architectural elements.*
- Per the district's [Elements of Design #3, 6, 7, & 15](#):
 - *(3) Proportion of openings within the façades. Centered on the ground level of the front façade is a single tall, segmentally-arched entrance opening. Openings in the bays to either side of the entrance bay contain large, tall display windows flanking recessed, single entrances, surmounted by a row of transom windows. At second-story level, the outer bays are each composed of a large horizontal opening between columns containing a row of six windows with transoms; the wide central bay is filled with 12 such window arrangements. On the third through fifth floors, a regular arrangement of two double-hung sash windows occupying regularly-spaced square openings exists. The westernmost bay of the ground floor of the Garfield Avenue, or south, elevation contains glass similar to the storefronts of the front façade. In the four bays to the east in the same elevation, the areas below the transoms and between the columns are infilled with brick. Fenestration above the ground floor of this south elevation is similar to that of the front façade but is arranged in groupings of three between the vertical framing elements. Overall, openings in the front (Woodward Avenue) façade and south (Garfield Avenue) elevation amount to approximately 60 percent voids. The first floor of the second bay from the south of the rear, or east, elevation contains the entrance into the residential units; the remainder of the ground floor of the east elevation, originally containing service entrances, is filled with concrete block. The upper floors of the east elevation are composed of horizontal groupings of three double-hung sash windows within the concrete frame. The north elevation is largely unfenestrated, with only two of its five bays having windows above the first floor. Its westernmost bay at ground level contains a modern glass and metal entry into a retail space.*
 - *(6) Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections. The regular rhythm created by the four original recessed storefront entrances on the front façade has been maintained.*
 - *(7) Relationship of materials. White-glazed terra cotta clay structural framing elements contrast with large areas of window glass. Spandrel panels are metal, while aprons below the storefront windows are wood. Window and door frames are also wood. North and east (rear) elevations and the first floor of the south elevation are brick with exposed concrete columns and beams.*

- *(15)Scale of façades and façade elements. The Garfield Building is large in scale when compared to the surrounding area. Elements within the façade, such as the storefronts and window groupings, are also large in scale. Architectural detail, where it exists, is small in scale.*
- *Page 51 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties With Guidelines For Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*
 - ***Recommends:** Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. The storefront materials (including wood, masonry, metals, ceramic tile, clear glass, and pigmented structural glass) and the configuration of the storefront are significant, as are features, such as display windows, base panels, bulkheads, signs, doors, transoms, kick plates, corner posts, piers, entablatures.*
 - ***And does NOT recommend:** Altering storefronts and their features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.*
- Both the installation of the black vinyl screens inside the storefront windows and the installation of the ‘AutoZone’ advertisements to the outside of the windows will alter the storefronts and their features. This will consequently diminish the historic character of the building.
- Therefore, it is staff’s opinion that the black vinyl screens will not be an appropriate alteration to the storefronts. Advertising copy inside the display windows, and not adhered to the outside glass, would be compatible and appropriate for this occupancy and use.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This third and final section takes staff’s itemized “objections” identified in the first section, and presents them in the form of “conditions” in support of a proposed approval recommendation or “reasons” in support of a proposed denial recommendation, in the form required by Section 21-2-78 of the City Code. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

Section 21-2-78, Determinations of Historic District Commission

Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Garfield Building Historic District’s Elements of Design, specifically:

- Standards (1 & 2)
 - 1) *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
 - 2) *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*

- *And Elements of Design #3, 6, 7, & 15*

For the following reasons;

1. Both the installation of the black vinyl screens inside the storefront windows and the installation of the 'AutoZone' advertisements to the outside of the windows will alter the storefronts and their features. This will consequently diminish the historic character of the building.