

September 1, 2021

HDC Chairmen and HDC Members of the Commission  
Attn: Ms. Jennifer Ross  
Architectural Historian  
City of Detroit Historic District Commission  
Coleman A. Yong Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave. – Suite 808  
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Proposed AC Hotel

Dear Ms. Ross:

Stantec is writing on behalf of The Roxbury Group in regards to the AC Hotel located at the Southeastern corner of Woodward Avenue and Eliot Street (3400 Block of Woodward) in the Brush Park Historic District. This project was previously submitted as the West Elm Hotel to the Historic District Commission on April 10, 2019. At that meeting, the Commission unanimously issued a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The AC Hotel intends to begin construction Fall 2021, with construction completed by 1/1/2023, and opening the hotel Q1 2023. The parcel is currently an asphalt parking lot with an easement on the southern side of the property. This easement allows the Bonstelle Theatre (currently owned by Wayne State University) to be egress and accessibility compliant. Work on the parcel will include replacing the current exterior fire escape stair and accessible ramp in an enclosed 2-story atrium called the Conservatory. The Conservatory will include an interior accessible lift to the lobby of the theater and a fire escape from the upper balcony of the theater. The Conservatory will abut the northern brick façade of the Bonstelle which will be cleaned and repaired as part of the work. The Conservatory will serve as dining and lounge space for the hotel, and as a central gathering space for people attending events in the Bonstelle Theater. The hotel will have 153 rooms with dining and lounge spaces on the first floor and meeting and exercise spaces on the second floor. Parking will be achieved in the short-term by utilizing the adjacent lots to the east. Long term parking will be accomplished by using a parking garage included as part of proposed future SOMA development.

#### Elements of Design

Height: The height of the project is twelve (11) stories with a two (2) story conservatory. There is precedent for buildings of similar scale and use on Woodward in the district (see the former Detroit Hotel).

Change from previous submission: 1 story and 9' shorter than previous submittal.

Proportion of building's front façade: The West Elm Hotel is proportionally tall along Woodward Avenue (138'-8" in height versus 60'-0" in width) and proportionally square along Elliot Street (141'-8" in height versus 153'-11" in width).

Change from previous submission: none

Proportion of openings within the façade: Areas of void in the project constitute approximately thirty-seven (37) percent of the total façade area. Proportions of the openings are generally taller than wide (Typical window dimensions 3'-4" x 6'-8" and 6'-0" x 6'-8")

Change from previous submission: width of smaller windows increased by 8"

Rhythm of solids to voids in front facade: The openings in the façade occur at regular intervals with continuous vertical alignment of brick columns.

Change from previous submission: none

Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets: The parcel is 100' wide along Woodward Avenue and the hotel is placed on the corner to allow visual distance from the Bonstelle Theatre.

Change from previous submission: none

Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections: Not Applicable, parcel is located on Woodward and is of a commercial nature.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of Materials: The building is 2-stories of limestone with 10-stories of brick above. These materials relate to Bonstelle Theater, whose original temple-front façade is limestone; later when the building was converted from a synagogue to a theatre, a common brick fly tower was added to the eastern end of the theater.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of texture: The texture of the brick façade is sympathetic to the Bonstelle Theatre.

Change from previous submission: The addition of metal panel infills. Previous submission had metal panel infill at the top story.

Relationship of colors: The relationship of colors, red brick and limestone with dark bronze accents, is informed by the adjacent Bonstelle Theatre.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of architectural detail: The building has less elaborate details than the Victorian period.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of roof shapes: The pitch of the Conservatory is similar to that of the roof at the pediment of the Bonstelle Theatre.

Change from previous submission: none

Walls of continuity: The building is placed at the sidewalk along Woodward Avenue and Elliot Street.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatments: No new landscaping is being proposed on the exterior, however the Conservatory will have small and medium scale landscaping features.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of open space to structures. The development aims to "complete" the block by placing the building close to the sidewalk on Woodward Ave.

Change from previous submission: none

Scale of facades and facade elements: The scale of the façade is large at the 2 story limestone base and smaller at the upper 10 stories where the façade is brick.

Change from previous submission: none

Directional expression of front facades. The façade is vertically expressed in both the brick and limestone portions of the building.

Change from previous submission: none

Rhythm of building setbacks: There is no significant setback from Woodward Avenue or Elliot Street.

Change from previous submission: none

Relationship of lot coverage: The Building is a commercial/hospitality use and occupies a larger percentage of the lot.

Change from previous submission: none

Degree of complexity with the facades. The façade complexity is simpler in nature.

Change from previous submission: none

Orientation, vistas, overviews: The building is oriented orthogonally to the street grid of the district.

Change from previous submission: none

Symmetric or asymmetric appearance. The building has a symmetric and rhythmic appearance, both throughout the hotel tower and in the Conservatory.

Change from previous submission: none

General environmental character: The character of the building is of a simple massing, using timeless materials (brick, limestone and glass), in an effort to be respectful of the historic context of the site (adjacent to the Bonstelle Theatre).

Change from previous submission: none