

**STAFF REPORT 06-08-2022 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: G. LANDSBERG**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-7852**

**ADDRESS: 7300 WOODWARD**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: JAM HANDY/NORTH END-EAST GRAND BOULEVARD**

**APPLICANT: PATRICK MEEHAN/7300 WOODWARD, LLC/THE PLATFORM**

**DESIGNER/CONTRACTOR:**

**OWNER OF RECORD: 7300 WOODWARD, LLC**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 06-01-2022**

**SCOPE: ALTER STOREFRONT, INSTALL MURALS/SIGNAGE, OTHER SITE MODIFICATIONS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Originally the Ford Motor Company Sales Building, the building at 7300 Woodward was erected in 1910 and designed by architect Albert Kahn. In 1965, the State of Michigan, its owner at the time, notoriously stripped the original terra cotta detailing off the facades and rebuilt them in a late modern commercial vernacular, which survives today. The remodeling was designed by Kahn's successor firm, Albert Kahn Associates. Kahn's original interior public areas continue to exist but are not under the Commission's jurisdiction.



*View of 7300 Woodward at East Grand Boulevard, looking north. Staff photo, June 1, 2022.*

The pebbled exterior is typical of many contemporary buildings and is not of a particularly notable design. Long strips of horizontal windows divide the façade into rigid ranks. The base is dark stone and appears to recess among the overall composition. Other mid-century period details, including stainless steel surrounds and other modern stonework, is extant. The sitework (at the East Ground Boulevard sidewalk) is a mix of older concrete benches with newer curbwork/trees. The building is noted as contributing in the Historic Designation Advisory Board (HDAB) district report. The remodeled exterior is now more than fifty years old and is protected by the Commission under the Standards and Guidelines.



SERVICE BUILDING, FORD MOTOR CO., DETROIT, MICH.  
MR. ALBERT KAHN, ARCHITECT, MR. ERNEST WILBY, ASSOCIATE

*The building before its 1960s remodeling. The current mid-century design has now achieved significance in its own right.*



*7300 Woodward outlined in yellow, per Detroit Parcel Viewer.*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Per the submitted drawings, documents, narrative, and scope of work, the applicant is proposing a series of minor exterior alterations.

The work proposed includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Addition of a decorative metal band on the south and west facades
- Addition of “Art Deco-inspired” murals on the north and east facades
- New entrances and signage on the south, east and west
- New streetscape along Grand Boulevard with planters, trees and wood benches

### Metal Band & A Clean Facade

Before



the Platform

After



### Mural On East Facade

Before



the Platform

After



*Excerpts from applicant's presentation highlighting some of the proposed alterations.*

## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The historic district was established in 2015. The current owner, The Platform, is reported to have acquired the building circa 2018.
- The owner and design team met on several occasions with HDC staff as the design was developed, prior to official submission. Staff's initial concern was preservation of the overall mid-century character; that being the horizontal banding of white pebbled panels and intervening window strips, while allowing less important areas of the building to be refreshed and improved. We believe the submitted design has accomplished this goal, and is respectful of the building and its historic context.

## **ISSUES**

- None. Staff recommends approval as appropriate.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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

The proposed work is compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features of its environment, does not destroy historic materials that characterize the property, and is compliant with the district's Elements of Design.

Staff therefore recommends that the proposal should qualify for a Certificate of Appropriateness, as it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Elements of Design for the Jam Handy/North End – East Grand Boulevard Historic District.