

**ADDRESS: 232 W. GRAND RIVER AVENUE (1410 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD)**

**APPLICATION NO: HDC2024-00231**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: WASHINGTON BOULEVARD**

**APPLICANT/OWNER: JAMES VAN DYKE**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 1/28/2025**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 12/17/2024**

**SCOPE: INSTALL ENGRAVED STONE AT SOUTH FAÇADE STOREFRONT**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Erected in 1926, 232 W. Grand River Avenue is of five buildings in the Washington Boulevard Local Historic District designed by Louis Kamper. Also known as the “Industrial Bank Building,” this twenty-two-story brick and limestone building differs from Kamper’s earlier designs and is described by the Historic Designation Advisory Board’s (HDAB) Final Report which notes the following:

*This building differs from Kamper’s earlier commissions in that it is more in line with contemporary concepts of skyscraper design. It is ornamented with Art Deco-influenced Gothic motifs, but derives its visual impact chiefly from the vertical emphasis of the continuous piers between the windows. The building tapers at the top with the use of minor setbacks and is topped by an ornate parapet wall. The parapet is topped with terracotta decorative elements which are currently poor condition. This building has been rehabilitated for residential use. Non-historic exterior work, which was undertaken in the 1980s includes the replacement of all windows with the current aluminum-sash units and the replacement of storefront entrances. Also, window AC units were added, which required the then owner to cut into the brick and terracotta to allow for the addition of vent openings at each unit.*

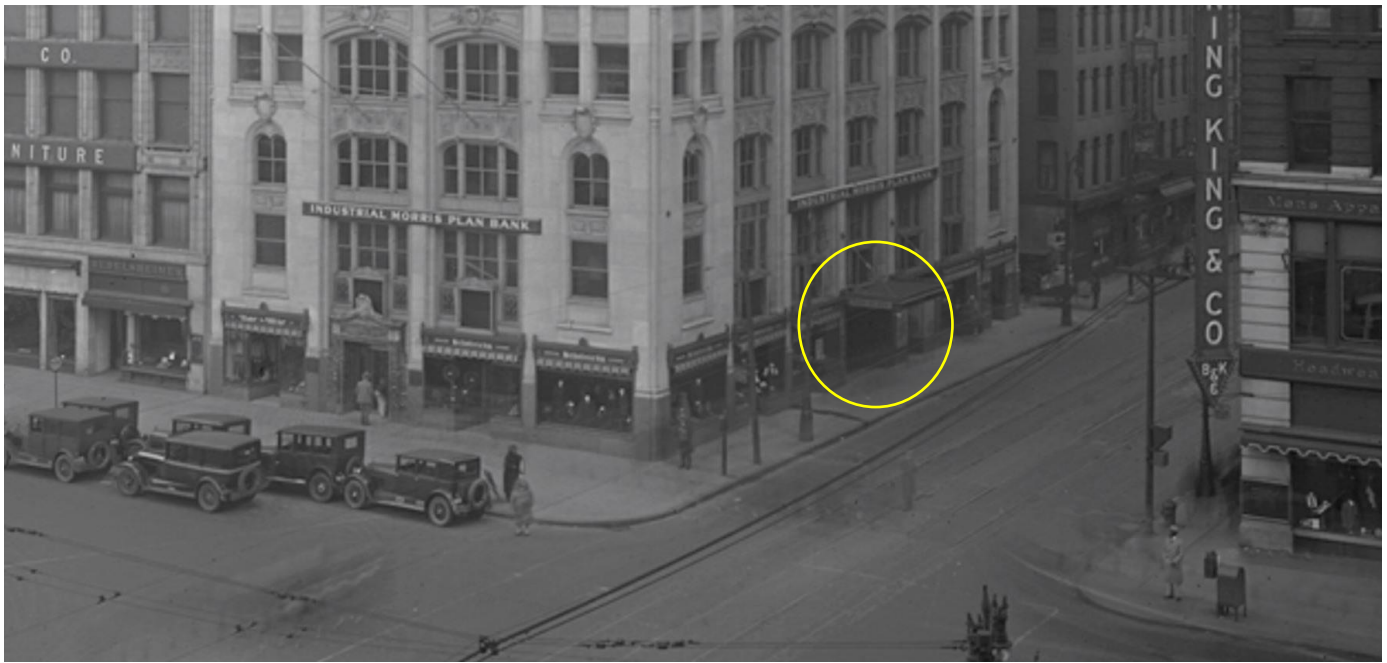
The building’s main entrance faces towards Grand River and displays a new limestone panel stone surround, glass transom and sidelights. This storefront was installed without Commission approval. An historic photo (see below) indicates this entrance was originally inset and the surround appeared to have been granite.



**232 W. Grand River. Primary entrance (outlined in orange). Photos by HDC staff, 1/28/2025**



232 W. Grand River. Primary entrance outlined in blue. Photos by HDC staff, 1/28/2025



232 W. Grand River. Circa 1930. Primary entrance circled in yellow. Note that the surround appears to be granite to match the surround of the building's other storefronts

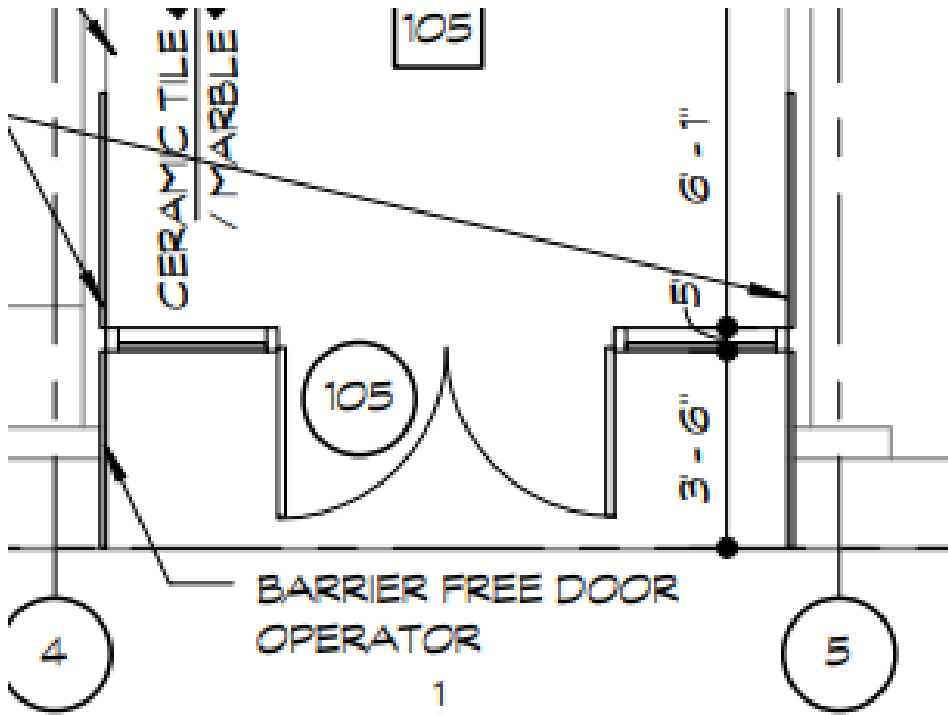
## PROPOSAL

Per the applicant, in 2018 the building's primary entrance was altered without Historic District Commission approval. Specifically, a new limestone panel surround was installed at the primary entry. The portion of the surround which was installed above the doorway was engraved with signage which reads "LOUIS KAMPER BUILDING." Also, a new set of paired aluminum doors with sidelights was installed at the same location as the then existing non-historic storefront/flush with the facade. Therefore, with the current submission, the applicant/building owner is seeking an "after the fact" COA for the unapproved work.

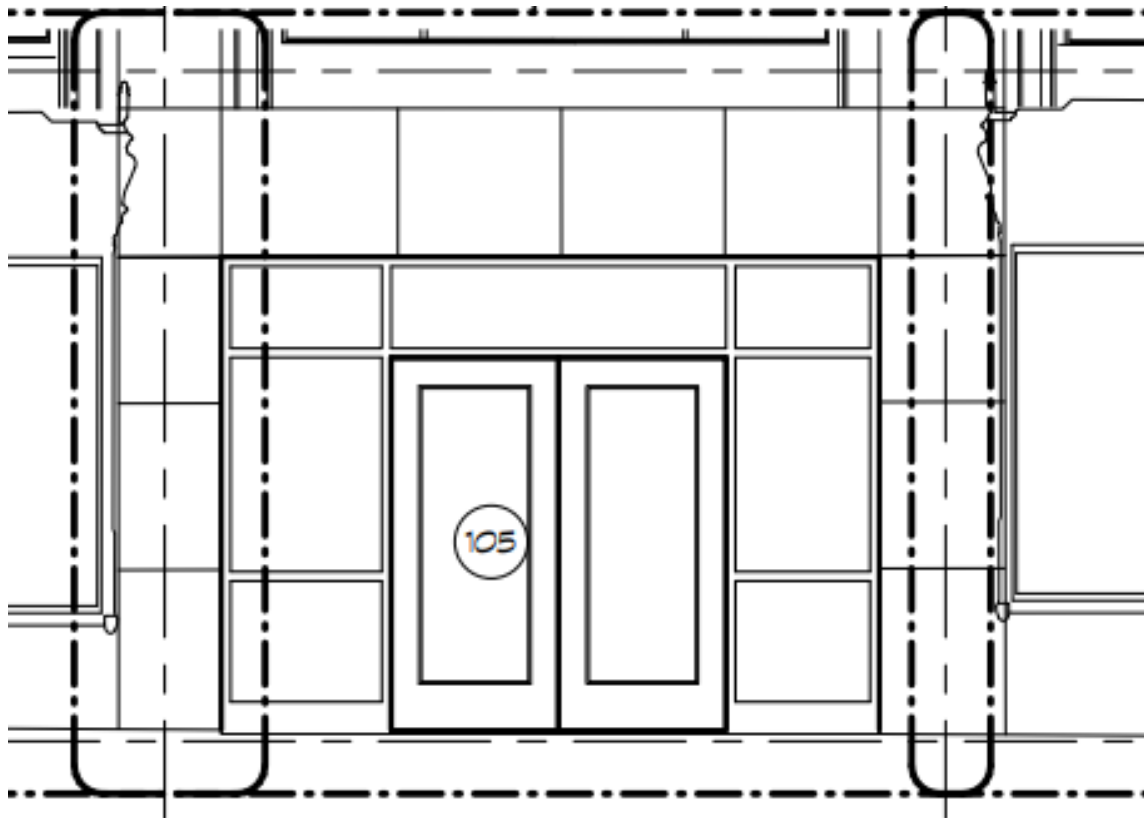
## RESEARCH/OBSERVATIONS

- In 2017, the HDC approved an application to rehabilitate the building's exterior to include the installation of new doors at the primary entrance and a repair of its surround. Note that the submission indicated that the surround was masonry. Specifically, the work item included the following per the below drawings and photo:
  - Remove the non-historic metal storefront and replace with a new aluminum storefront, which included a set of paired doors, a transom, and sidelites. The new storefront would be inset per the below plan.
  - Clean and seal the masonry door surround

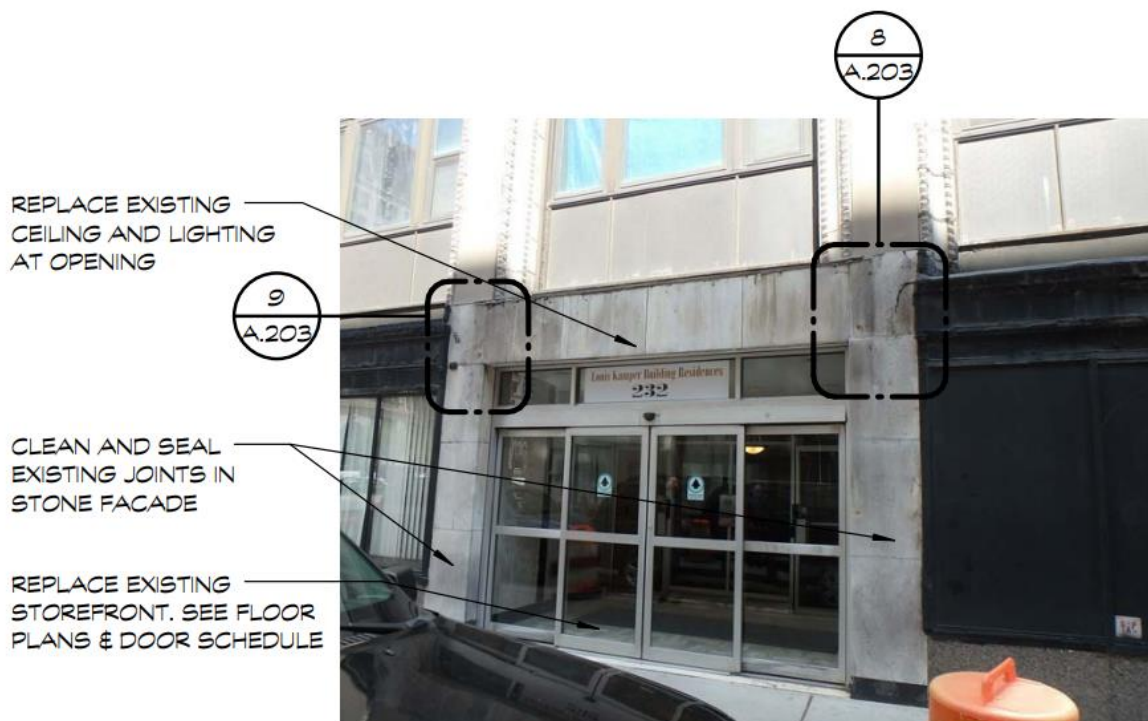
The 2017 proposal also generally noted that areas of deteriorated masonry would be repaired or replaced in kind where necessary. Also, note that the Commission did allow for the applicant to replace a prominent, large painted sign which was located at the uppermost story of the rear/north elevation and read "Park Place Apartments" with a new painted sign which read "Kamper Building"



Detail from floor plan of new inset aluminum storefront approved by the Commission in 2017 for installation at the primary/south facade entrance



Elevation of new inset aluminum storefront approved by the Commission in 2017 for installation at the primary/south facade entrance.



Scope approved by the Commission in 2017, showing appearance prior to unapproved work.

- The applicant has stated that prior to the current unapproved work, the surround “...was EIFS and the underlying structure, including the door opening lintel, was failing. It had been modified many times over the building’s history. It was determined that the best solution was to install a new limestone surround and lintel with the building name engraved to replace the EIFS.” He further noted that the new doorway was installed at its current location/flush with the façade in “...order to accommodate possible tenants and provide maximum available floor space the recessed storefronts were changed. New exterior doors were installed in line with the storefronts to increase security and protect the property from the elements.”
- The below pictures, submitted by the applicant, document the evolution of the doorway’s appearance from the period prior to the unapproved work until the current appearance.



Appearance in 2016, prior to unapproved work. Photo by applicant.



Appearance in 2016, prior to unapproved work. Photo by applicant.



Current appearance. Photo by applicant

- After a review of the 2017 application materials and the current submission, staff supports the project for the following reasons:
  - In 2017, the Commission approved the replacement of the non-historic storefront doors with new aluminum storefront doors. The current storefront doors match those which were approved in 2017 and the storefront’s current location (flush with the façade) presents an appearance which is compatible with the building’s historic appearance and its other storefronts.
  - A review of the above historic photo indicates that the 2016 storefront and surround did not date from the building’s original date of construction. Therefore, neither element was a distinctive character-defining feature of the building.
  - The 2017 drawings indicate that the doorway surround was “masonry.” The application notes that the masonry was clad with EIFS and was in poor condition. Also, the Commission’s 2017 approval did allow for the in-kind replacement of all deteriorated masonry where necessary. The new surround is limestone and generally appears to be compatible in appearance with the building’s historic character.
  - The Commission approved the addition of a new painted sign/rebranding of the structure as the “Kamper Building” at a prominent location/at the building’s rear roof. The new engraved sign at the primary entry door surround is consistent with the previously approved signage, will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property, is generally compatible with the building’s historic character, and if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the property would not be unimpaired.

**ISSUES**

- None

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

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

**Recommendation 1 of 1, Certificate of Appropriateness: Install a new door surround with engraved at the primary/south façade entrance and install a new storefront**

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Washington Boulevard Historic District’s Elements of Design