



SR-1 – OBJECTIVE STAFF REPORT (02-27-2026)

This report, prepared by staff, summarizes the proposed scope of work, the existing conditions at the property, and any factual background information. No PDD/HDC staff analysis/opinion is included.

ADDRESS: 465 W MILWAUKEE (AKA 460 W BALTIMORE)

MEETING DATE: 03-11-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00731

HISTORIC DISTRICT: GENERAL MOTORS RESEARCH LABORATORY/ARGONAUT
BUILDING HISTORIC DISTRICT

APPLICANT: JOSHUA BROWN

OWNER: TEF-SIX LLC

ARCHITECT/CONSULTANT: RAM CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 01-21-2026

DATE(S) OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 02/25/26

SCOPE PHRASE FOR AGENDA: REMOVE FIRE ESCAPES

PUBLIC HEARING PER 21-2-77: NO

SUMMARY OF SCOPE OF WORK:

Based on staff review of the submitted documents, the following work is proposed:

- **Remove fire escapes**
 - Install roof protection over any entrance area
 - Disassemble the fire escapes
- **Repair surfaces**
 - Cut the existing connections flush with the brick façade and apply DTM (rust protection coating) over the exposed steel surface
 - Replace bricks as necessary due to damage and tuckpoint once the fire escapes have been removed. Use a blend of type N or type S mortar to get the color match needed.
 - Remove all loose paint from the steel doors and coat the surface of the doors using DTM
 - Paint doors using Sherman-Williams A-100 E Flat paint rated for steel door applications

The scope of work is limited to the removal of the non-functional/ non-accessible fire escapes and repair of affected areas. No new openings, enclosure changes, or door-to-window conversions are included.

The following equipment will be used:

- swing stage
- a 120' articulating lift
- a hoist and dumpster for the steel

MISSING INFORMATION, CLARIFICATION, OR OTHER ITEMS RELATING TO A COMPLETE SCOPE OF WORK:

- Replacement brick samples photographed against the historic bricks will be needed to gauge color match.

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Architectural Description: The Historic Designation Advisory Board’s Designation Report for this building describes the building in the following terms, but note that the Detroit Parcel Viewer lists the buildings together as 465 W Milwaukee, (Unit 6):
“The General Motors Research Laboratory is an eleven-story commercial building clad in brick and limestone, designed by Albert Kahn. It was built in two stages, Building A in 1928 at 421 Second Avenue, and Building B in 1936 at 485 W. Milwaukee. The two parts form an L-shape that, along with a 1963 parking structure, take up an entire city block. Building A has eight structural bays on both the Milwaukee and Second Avenue facades. Building B has seven bays on Milwaukee, and is four bays deep...Both parts of the building are of the same red-brown brick with limestone, brick, and cast iron ornament. Gray granite clads the north and west sides up to the middle of the first floor level. This is topped with alternating bands of brick and limestone up to the middle of the third floor. The banding is repeated at the eleventh floor and parapet.”
- No unapproved work is known.



- *Staff photo, corner of Baltimore and Second (southwest corner of building), 2/25/26*



Detroit Parcel Viewer Image

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- HDC records concerning previous activity at the property, including inquiries, applications, approvals, and violations:
 - 2008: Building rehab, including paint mechanicals red-brown, update toilet rooms, replace windows on east and south, install new entrances, and partial demo of part of above-ground parking garage, roof exhausts, and later additions on south.
 - In 2008, the rehab proposal “preserved some sections of the fire escapes for historic appearances.” This mention was in the “Proposal” section of the staff report. The fire escapes are not mentioned in the COA itself.
 - In 2008, non-contributing ducts and conduit were removed with a COA.
 - 2009: New signage was approved.
- Other factual background/additional information
 - ULE2002-00092 Elevator Permit
 - SLU2005-00092 Void
 - BLD2025-01267 Shinola Stair
 - 460 W Baltimore had several permits for HVAC and boiler work as well.
 - No historic BSEED permits for 460 W Baltimore or 465 W Milwaukee were found.

DISTRICT INFORMATION/SIGNIFICANCE:

- Period of Significance: 1928-1956 (Designation Report, HDAB)
- Link to District Elements of Design: [Sec. 21-2-196. - General Motors Research Laboratory/Argonaut Building Historic District](#)
- Date/period of construction: 1928 and 1936.
- Contributing status of resource: Contributing (single-resource district)
- Albert Kahn designed both the 1928 structure and the 1936 addition.

REPORT PREPARED BY: et