

May 13, 2026

City of Detroit Historic District Commission Staff
City of Detroit
Historic District Commission
Suite 808
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Merchants Building – HDC Submission Amendment

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commission Staff:

Kraemer Design Group (KDG) is writing to submit information to the Detroit Historic District Commission (HDC), on behalf of Method Development, regarding an amendment to the previously approved application for the rehabilitation of the Merchants Building located at 206 E. Grand River Ave. This amendment pertains to the addition of a rooftop bar as well as the final design to the storefront and canopies at the ground floor level.

Storefront

At the time of the initial HDC application, no work was proposed on the storefront due to the lack of a tenant to inform the opening layout. Now that the ground floor has been planned, the storefront design could be done. Further survey and investigation of the storefront has been conducted by Kraemer Design Group and PCI Daly Construction since this application in an effort to document the existing dimensions, profiles and general layout of the storefront, transoms and sills. The storefront system is a mix of the original wood system with multiple newer, non-historic aluminum sections that have been added in overtime. Multiple areas of the transom have been removed or infilled to allow for tenant HVAC exhaust grilles. The remaining wood storefront is in poor condition.

The existing storefront will be removed in its entirety and replaced with a new storefront system to fit the new hotel and restaurant use while maintaining its historic character without appearing falsely historic. The new storefront system will be painted metal panels at grade for durability to match the size and profiles of the existing wood panels. The whole system will be finished black to match the windows above.

Canopies and Awnings

A new canopy will be installed at the original entrance on Grand River. The canopy will be of similar shape and size as the historic canopy. The canopy will be made of contemporary materials to complement the historic character of the building without drawing attention away from the existing historic material or appearing falsely historic. The canopy will be lit from below with recessed can lighting.

A new canopy will be added to the new main entrance on Broadway and will be of similar shape to the historic canopy on Grand River. This new canopy will be located below the transom band, be part of the storefront system, and be minimal in size, only projecting out three feet.

A new awning will be added back to the façade above the restaurant seating on Broadway. The awning will be made of contemporary materials to complement the historic character of the building, and it will be located below the transom band and span between the columns within the bay.

With the exception of the historic canopy on Grand River, more information will be submitted to HDC via an amendment at a later date once the hotel branding is determined. This will include any additional canopies and awnings to review prior to construction.

Rooftop Enclosure and Deck

A rooftop enclosure will be constructed to service the new exterior roof deck and provide access, additional seating, a full-service kitchen, and restrooms.

The enclosure will span between the two existing elevator penthouses and will have operable glazing on the north and west facades along with access to the new roof deck. The enclosure has been sized and located to maximize usable space for the tenant while not detracting from the view of the building from the street. The rooftop addition will be clad in new buff colored fiber cement cladding panels to match the adjacent historic property, allowing the addition to remain visually



unobtrusive within the overall streetscape. As indicated in the attached sightline study, the roof enclosure will be minimally visible when viewed from any of the public streets within a block of the building.

A new roof deck is proposed as an outdoor food and beverage gathering and event space for the hotel. The roof deck finish will be 2'x2' porcelain tile pavers on an adjustable pedestal system. The pedestals will be mounted to the steel structure. Structure for the roof deck will be located above the existing roof and will be visible from the new roof deck. New steel structure will be galvanized and painted grey so as to blend in with the new roofing materials. The roof deck will be held back one structural bay on each side from the parapet with moveable seating for the remainder of the area. As indicated in the attached sightline study, the roof deck will be minimally visible, one story in height, and fit within the existing context.

Signage

It is anticipated that a corner blade sign will be installed along with branding on the lower awnings. The blade sign will be similar in size and location to historic precedents and will be located no higher on the building than the second-floor water table. More information related to the hotel and restaurant signage will be submitted to HDC via an amendment for review prior to installation.

Conclusion

The items listed above provide a synopsis of the revised scope at the Merchants Building. We kindly request a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work proposed. Further detail is provided in the attached drawings which include a sight line study of the 9th floor addition.

Sincerely,

Kraemer Design Group, LLC



Blake Drouillard
Senior Project Architect

