

Janice M. Winfrey  
City Clerk

**City of Detroit**  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

Andre P. Gilbert II  
Deputy City Clerk

**DEPARTMENT PETITION REFERENCE COMMUNICATION**

*To: The Department or Commission Listed Below*

*From: Janice M Winfrey, Detroit City Clerk*

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The following petition is herewith referred to you for report and recommendation to the City Council.

In accordance with that body's directive, kindly return the same with your report in duplicate within four (4) weeks.

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Petition No.	2025-016 (District) (Amended)
Name of Petitioner	The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC.
Description of Petition	Petition request for a Commercial Facilities Exemption District at 60 W. Canfield. (This petition is being amended to update the name of the petitioner from "The Whitney" to "The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC.")
Type of Petition	<b>Tax Abatement for a Commercial Facilities Exemption District</b>
Submission Date	02/12/2025
Concerned Departments	Finance Department, Planning and Development Department, Housing and Revitalization Department, Legislative Policy Division, City Planning Commission
Petitioner Contact	The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC. Arthur "Bud" Liebler P: (313) 832-5700 <a href="mailto:pat@lieblergroup.com">pat@lieblergroup.com</a>

December 5, 2024

Detroit City Council  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave., Suite 1340  
Detroit, MI 48226

**RE: Request for the Establishment of a Commercial Facilities Exemption District at 60 W. Canfield**

Honorable City Council:

Please accept this letter as a request to establish a Commercial Facilities Exemption Development District for the property located at 60 W. Canfield and described in Attachment A.

We are requesting a PA 255 allocation for the project that will convert a blighted and structurally derelict building at this address into an inviting, fun, inclusive casual restaurant venue. For background, we have owned the historic Whitney restaurant since 2007. We purchased the restaurant primarily out of our desire to preserve the historic Woodward Avenue mansion for generations to come. As part of that acquisition, we also acquired 60 W. Canfield, which was at that time, and remains, a 75-100 year old building in a state of severe disrepair. Our plans to renovate have been continually sidetracked by other pressing investment requirements at The Whitney as well as external issues including Woodward reconstruction and the pandemic. We are now pleased to prioritize this investment which will convert a piece of Detroit's past into its future.

More specifically, we intend to completely rehabilitate the 2,750 sq. ft. structure, preserving and enhancing its architecturally interesting façade and select interior elements (barrel ceiling, wood trusses), while also transforming the interior into an open-kitchen concept casual restaurant specializing in select seafood cuisine and related services. The renovation will be comprehensive, from the ground up and include every and all aspects of the building including new infrastructure, utilities, décor, kitchen equipment, restrooms, storage and parking. As established restaurant operators, we are aware of the necessary city, state and federal certifications, approvals and licenses required to bring this project to fruition and keep it in compliance.

This project will not be possible and will not be undertaken without the receipt of the exemption certificate. The reasons for this are clear – the cost of reconstruction will exceed the marketing value of the structure. Restaurants are inherently risky and our investment will be substantial. However, if completed, the building will vastly improve the property and, in fact, benefit the entire neighborhood considerably.

Working with CIBC Bank, we have secured a line of credit not to exceed \$1.6 million to implement our vision. Once completed, the restaurant would employ between 20 – 30 full-time employees working in a state-of-the-art restaurant environment and its related outdoor seating area.

We therefore request that the exemption to be for the maximum allowable timeframe of 12 years.

As owners and operators of the adjacent Whitney, we believe we have demonstrated our good faith and willingness to preserve, protect and promote Detroit's assets while creating warm, memorable reasons for residents and tourists to visit. The same will be true of the new building with its lighted masonry façade featuring large "showroom" type windows. The building sits on Canfield St., directly on the Midtown Greenway which serves as an important pedestrian connector between the DMC, the Shinola block and the West Canfield historic community. This building will enliven Canfield further and encourage foot

traffic, QLine ridership and vehicle visits with ample parking onsite and within close proximity. The building sits on the perimeter of the Wayne State University Campus boarder.

As a casual seafood environment, the restaurant will feature soups and salads, seafood (boils, lobster rolls, fried fish and similar), and desserts and drinks while keeping costs in-line with expenses. We envision this to be a canned beer type of joint, modeled after an east coast crab shack as opposed to a high-end, white tablecloth type of expensive seafood restaurant. As such, we hope to attract WSU students and faculty, nearby residents, DMC employees, and others who live, work and play in Midtown. We also hope to create what will become a destination restaurant that is a sought out experience for those from other SE Michigan communities and tourists.

As operators of The Whitney properties since 2007, our leadership team has heavily invested in Detroit long before its current boom cycle began. We experienced some incredibly tough going in the early years, but have shown our willingness to roll up our sleeves and do the work it takes to survive and thrive. Virtually every dollar that comes into The Whitney is reinvested into the building and operations. We are not developers who have penciled out specific formulas and are seeking to eek out a profit in any imaginable way. We do see this project as having long term viability and profitability. Yet, we are also “in it” for the long run, doing what we can to make the corner of Woodward and Canfield as attractive, inviting and inclusive as possible.

We are working with Midtown Inc., for a potential façade grant. Like us, Midtown sees this project as potentially important for the betterment of the community. All taxes have been paid and kept current.

This project has been a long time in the making. It has been our dream. We hope you agree with us that it will benefit the community and that it's worthy of the PA 255 exemption required to get it off the ground and opened. Please contact me, Patrick Liebler ([pat@lieblergroup.com](mailto:pat@lieblergroup.com), O 313.832.5700 or M 248.229.4418) with any questions or follow up needs.

Sincerely,

Arthur “Bud” Liebler  
The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC.  
Owner

Patrick Liebler  
The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC.  
Executive Director

An aerial photograph of a city street intersection. A large, semi-transparent architectural rendering of a modern building is overlaid on the scene. The building has a tall, rectangular tower section and a wider base. The surrounding area includes existing buildings, parking lots, and streets. The text '60 W. CANFIELD' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

# 60 W. CANFIELD

SCHEMATIC DESIGN | 08.30.2024

MCINTOSH  
PORIS  
ARCHITECTS



# CONTEXT

MCINTOSH  
POBUS  
ARCHITECTS



## CONTEXT



PROJECT: 60 W CANFIELD  
DATE: 8/30/2024  
CLIENT: THE WHITNEY

**ZONING DISTRICT:** SD-2 SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, MIXED USE  
**OVERLAY/HISTORIC DISTRICTS:** MAIN STREET OVERLAY

**BY-RIGHT:**

## CONDITIONAL

**Customer service center without drive-up or drive-through facilities; parking lots or parking areas; commercial**

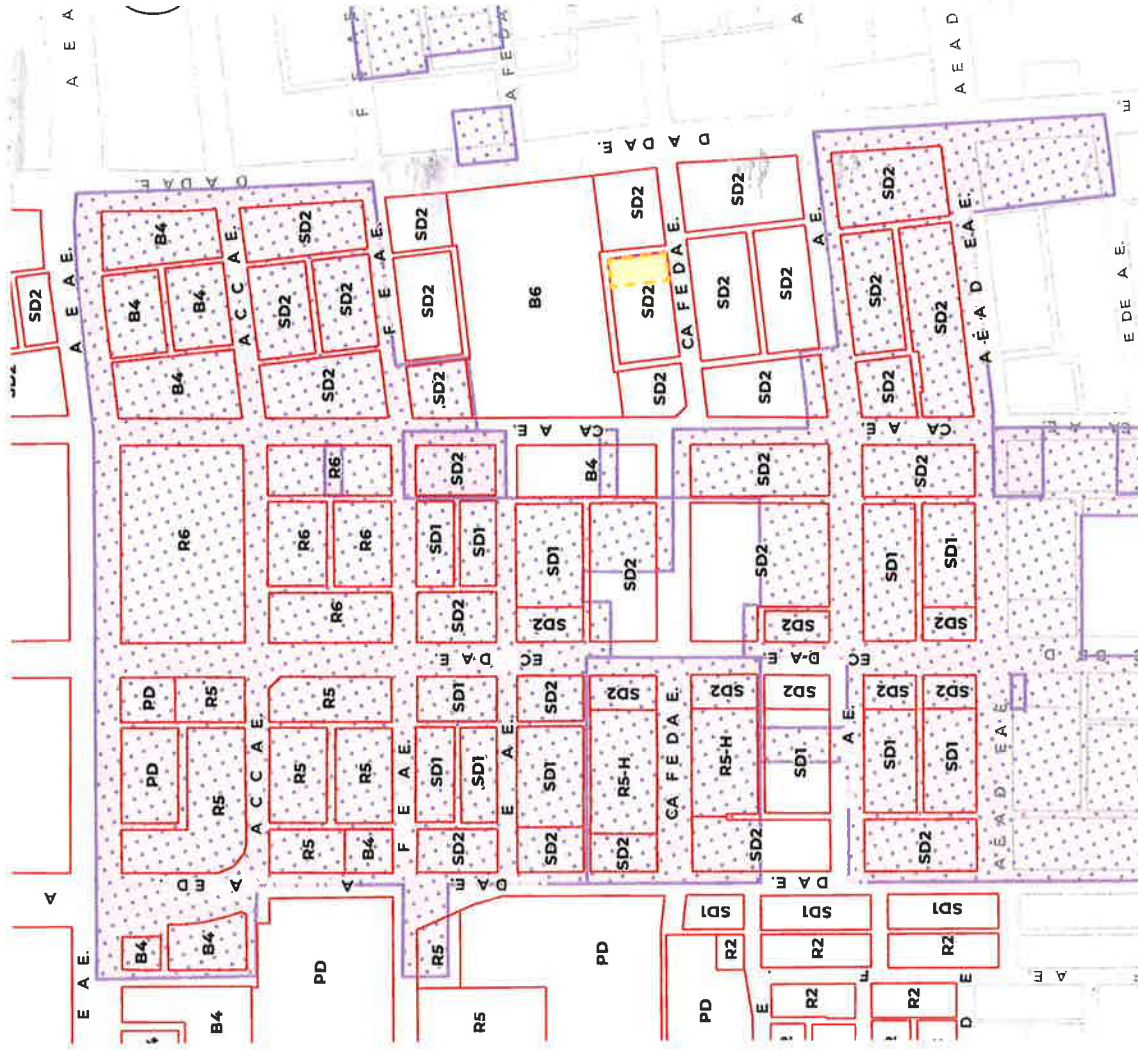
## PARKING

.75 of minimum required; 3 for first 500 SF of building and designated outdoor seating area + 1 per 100 SF of building and outdoor seating area in excess of the first 500 SF.

45'-0" for non-mixed use

Sec. 50-14-153(c) Zone SF-2  
Off-Street Parking Requirement  
Waiver granted for buildings  
under 3,000 SF.  
Sec. 50-14-8 Accessory parking

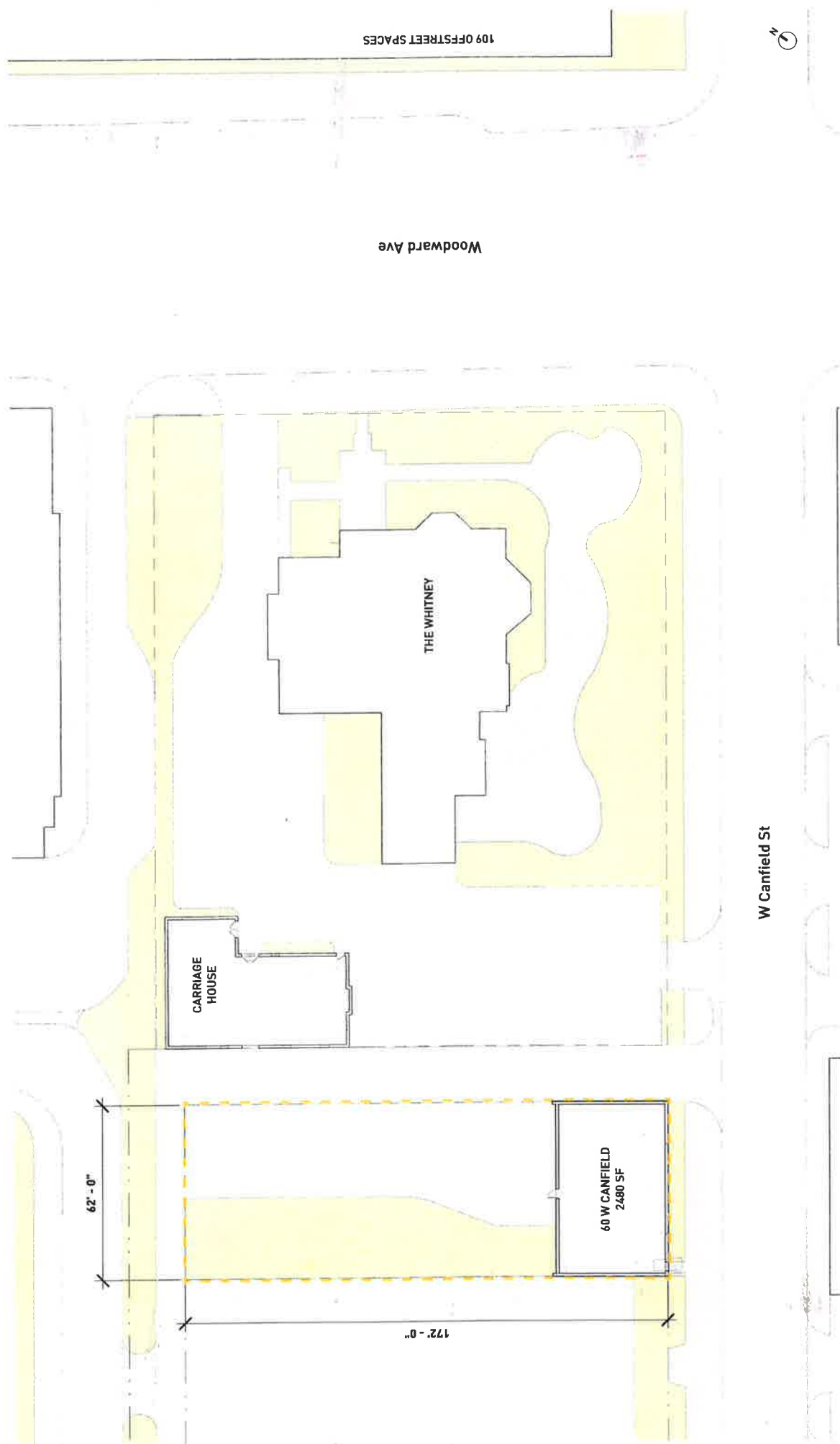
**All new construction subject to  
Site Plan Review; Liquor License  
(sale of beer or alcoholic liquor  
for consumption on the premises)**



**MCINTOSH  
PORIS  
ARCHITECTS**

MCINTOSH PORIS ARCHITECTS 2024

## ZONING ANALYSIS



**SITE CONTEXT**  
SCALE 1/32" = 1'-0"

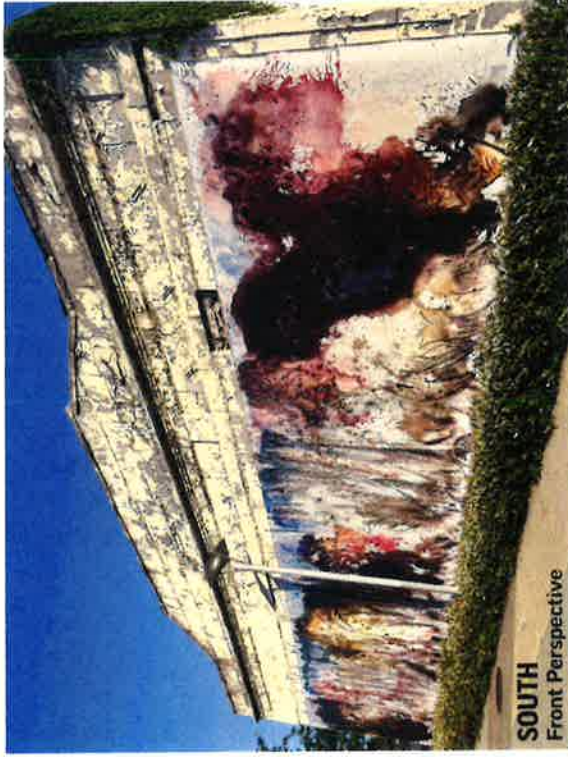




**SOUTHEAST**  
Corner Perspective



**SOUTHWEST**  
Corner Perspective



**SOUTH**  
Front Perspective



**WEST**  
Front Perspective



**EAST**  
Front Perspective



**NORTHEAST**  
Corner Perspective





Back Entrance



South Glazing



Front Entrance



Existing Roof Structure



East Structure & Glazing



South Interior Facade

## EXISTING INTERIOR CONDITIONS





# DESIGN CONCEPT

ARCHITECTS  
PUNJAB  
ARCHITECTS



# PRELIMINARY DESIGN

## EXISTING BUILDING

2,380 SF

## ADDITION

530 SF

Restrooms + Storage @ N.W. Corner

GROSS SF = 2,910 SF

## SITE

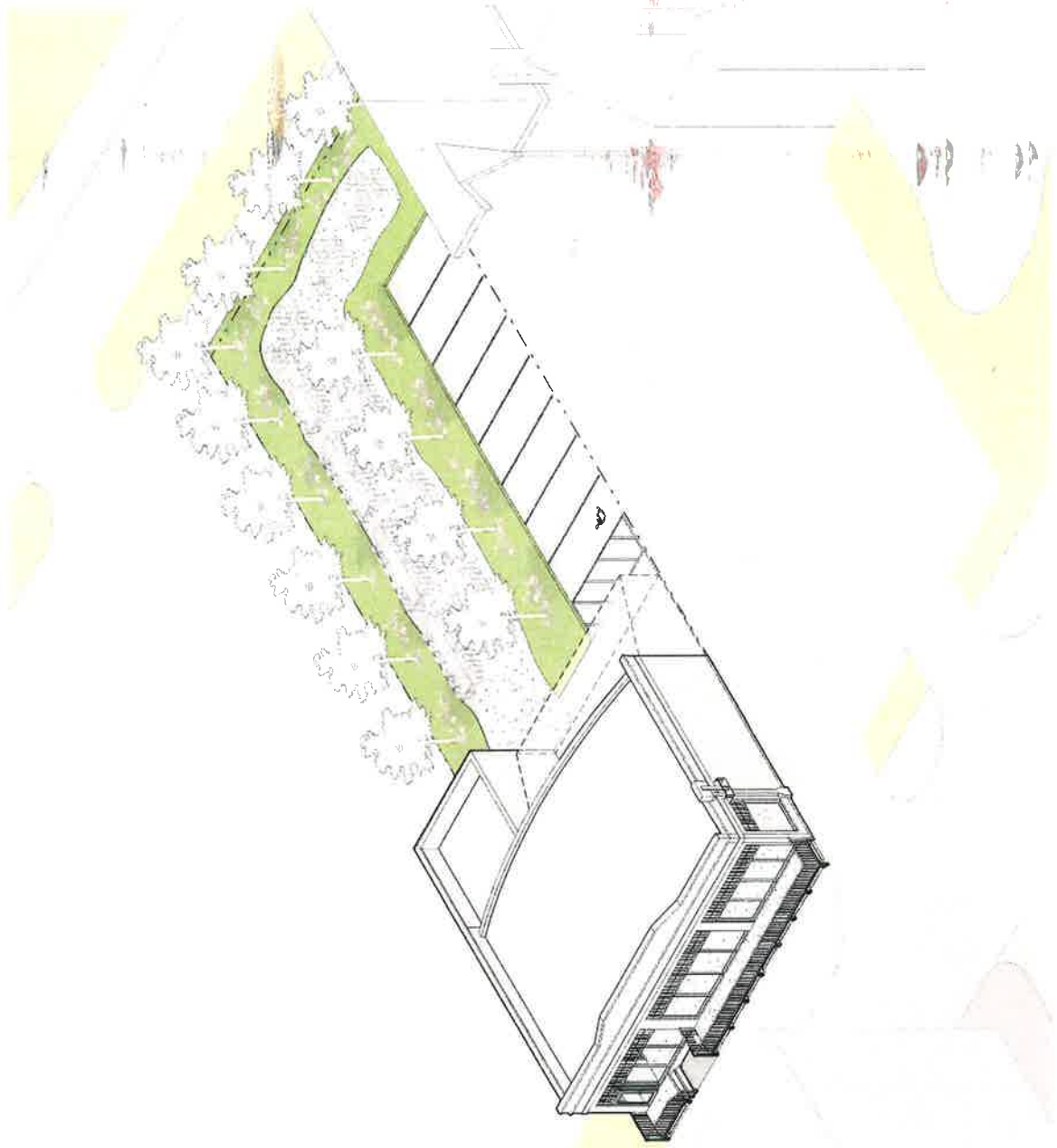
- Patio on Canfield
- Elevated Entry on Canfield
- Awning Enclosure @ N.E. Corner
- Outdoor Grill Area + Seating
- 8 Off-Street Parking Spaces

## OCCUPANCY

- Main Dining @ 1,300 SF ... 87 seats
- Bar + Kitchen Counter ... 13 seats
- Patio on Canfield ... 10 seats
- Outdoor Grill + Awning ... 100 seats

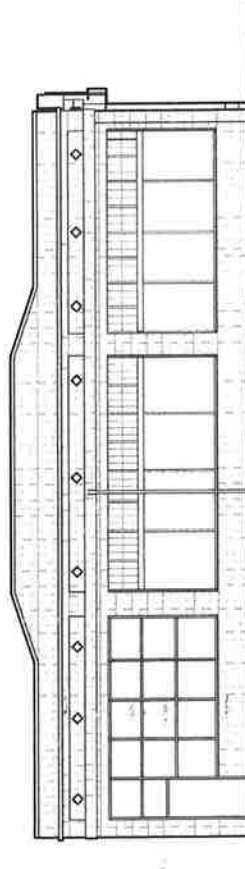
TOTAL OCC

210 OCC





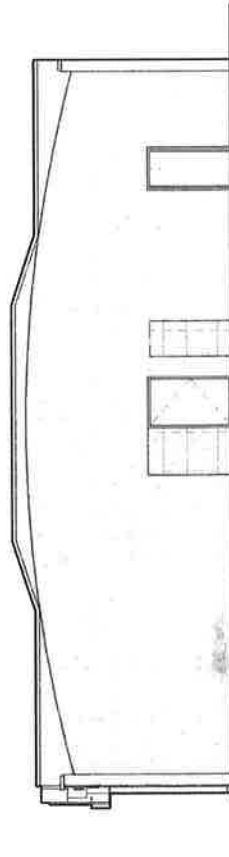
60 W. CANFIELD | 08.30.24



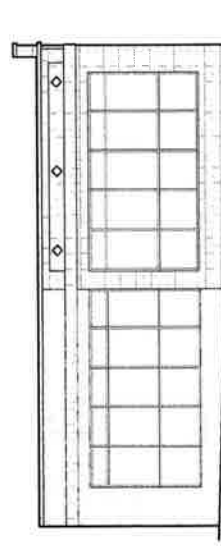
SOUTH ELEVATION



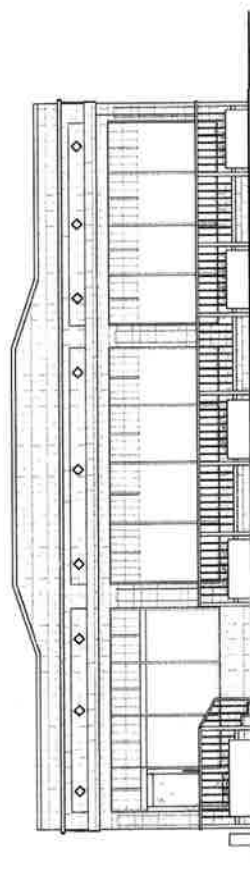
EAST ELEVATION



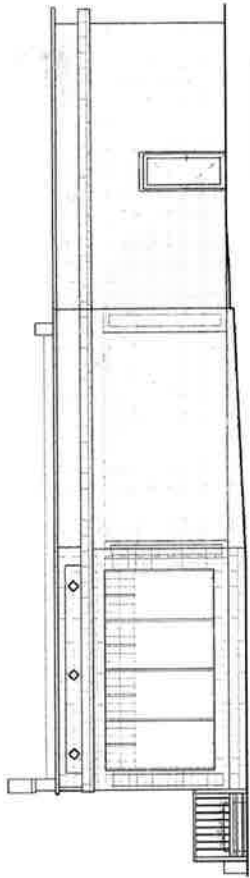
NORTH ELEVATION



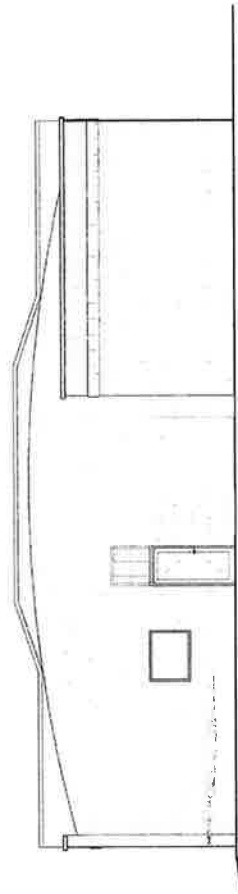
WEST ELEVATION



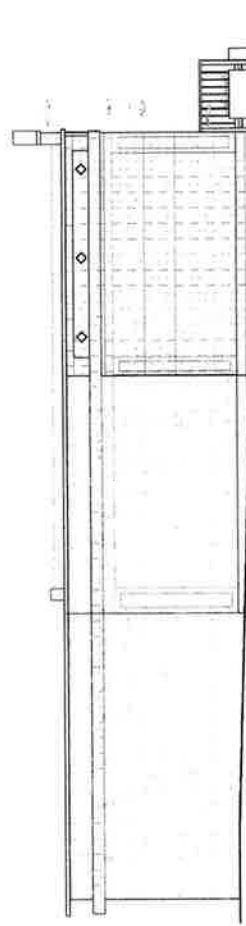
**SOUTH ELEVATION**



**EAST ELEVATION**



**NORTH ELEVATION**



**WEST ELEVATION**



CITY OF DETROIT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR

COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER  
2 WOODWARD AVE., SUITE 824  
DETROIT, MI 48226  
PHONE: 313•224•3011  
FAX: 313•224•9400

February 6, 2025

Alexa Bush, Director  
Planning & Development Department  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave, Suite 808  
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Commercial Redevelopment District  
Owner: The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC  
Address: 60 W Canfield  
Parcel Number: 02000905.

Dear Ms. Bush:

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Assessor, has reviewed the proposed Commercial Redevelopment District for the properties located at **60 W Canfield** in the **Midtown area** of the City of Detroit.

The rationale for creating Commercial Redevelopment Districts under PA 255 of 1978, as amended, is based on the anticipation of increased market value upon completion of new construction and/or significant restoration of commercial and former industrial property where the primary purpose and use of which is the operation of a commercial business enterprise and shall include office, engineering, research and development, warehousing parts distribution, retail sales, hotel or motel development, and other commercial facilities. Commercial business enterprises also include a business that owns or operates a transit-oriented development or a transit-oriented facility. Normal repair and maintenance are not assessed and do not necessarily generate additional market value.

The district as proposed by **The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC** consists of a one-story Warehouse-Storage building built in 1922 with a total gross building area of 2688, situated on 0.245 acres of land. The owner's plans to restore the vacant commercial building involves extensive renovations by preserving and enhancing the facade and interior the exterior facade, enhancing the interior elements such as barrel ceiling, wood trusses, new infrastructure, utilities, décor, kitchen equipment, restrooms, storage and parking. Once the restoration and rehabilitation are complete, the owner plans to open the property as a restaurant specializing in seafood cuisine and related services. The cost of the complete restoration project (not including the price of the kitchen equipment) is estimated to be \$1.6 million.

This area meets the criteria set forth under PA 255 of 1978, as amended. It applies to functionally obsolete properties requiring restoration meaning changes to obsolete commercial property other than replacement as may be required to restore the property, together with all appurtenances, to an economically efficient condition.





CITY OF DETROIT  
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Commercial Redevelopment District  
The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC  
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A review of the project details and applicable statutes indicate that the proposed Commercial Redevelopment District located at **60 W Canfield** is eligible as it pertains to the Commercial Redevelopment Act under P.A. 255 of 1978, as amended.

Sincerely,

Charles Ericson, MMAO  
Assessor, Board of Assessors



CITY OF DETROIT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR

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Commercial Redevelopment District  
The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC  
Page 3

Parcel Number	Property Address	Property Owner	Legal Description
02000905	60 W Canfield	The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC	N CANFIELD 5 W 19.14 FT 4 RE-SUB PT IRA DAVIS SUB L9 P28 PLATS, W C R 2/88 62.14 X 172





**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339  
[www.detroitmi.gov](http://www.detroitmi.gov)

TO: AliReda Jaefar, City Clerk's Office  
FROM: Greg Moots, Planning and Development  
RE: **REVISED** Master Plan Interpretation for **Commercial Facilities Exemption district**  
(PA 255) at 60 W Canfield St. (Associated with Petition # 2025-016)  
DATE: February 12, 2025

In order to ensure that the issuance of a **Commercial Facilities Exemption district** pursuant to State of Michigan, Public Act 255 of 1978 (Section 207.656) is consistent with the City's Master Plan of Policies and will have the reasonable likelihood to increase commercial activity through replacement, restoration, or new construction; create, retain or prevent a loss of employment; revitalize an urban area; or increase the number of residents in a community, the Planning and Development Department's Planning Division submits the following interpretation.

Petitioner:

The New Whitney Real Estate, LLC

Project Description:

The developer proposes to completely rehabilitate the 2,750 sq. ft. structure as well as select interior elements (barrel ceiling, wood trusses), while also transforming the interior into an open-kitchen concept casual restaurant. The renovation will be comprehensive, from the ground up and include all aspects of the building including new infrastructure, utilities, decor, kitchen equipment, restrooms, storage and parking. Total investment is proposed to \$1.6 million.

Project Location

60 W Canfield.

Interpretation:

The Master Plan Future General Land Use designation is **Mixed Residential/Commercial**. These areas "... consist primarily of high density housing developed compatibly with commercial and/or institutional uses. This classification is well suited to areas proximal to existing centers of major commercial activity, major thoroughfares, transportation nodes, or gateways into the city."

**The development generally conforms to the Future General Land Use designation for the area.**

CC: Alexa Bush, Director  
Karen Gage, Director of Design + Development Innovation  
Justus Cook, HRD