

November 20, 2020

City of Detroit
Ms. Jennifer Ross
Historic District Commission
2 Woodward Ave., Suite 800
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: 427 Henry—The Henry

Dear Ms. Ross,

Kraemer Design Group, LLC (KDG) is writing on behalf of Cass Village Apartments, LLC to the Historic District Commission regarding the building located at 427 Henry (also known as The Henry/Henry Apartments/Henry Flats). The building is currently vacant, and this project will rehabilitate the building for new residential occupancy. The exterior rehabilitation plan for 427 Henry includes brick and stone repairs, metal repairs, repairs to the entrance and new exterior doors, installation of new windows, new cornice, façade lighting, signage, new roofing, repairs to the rooftop penthouse, and rooftop equipment placement. The following is a detailed description of each exterior feature proposed to be rehabilitated.

The building at 427 Henry Street is the oldest building in the district with the earliest estimates putting the build date at 1900 (based upon building permits). At three stories tall and faced in light brown and red brick, this building was known, alternately, as "The Henry" and "Henry Apartments" and "Henry Flats." The building at 427 Henry faces north onto Henry Street and consists of two bays flanking a narrower central bay. The central bay contains the main entrance at the first floor, which is flanked by two small window openings on each side and two larger window openings beyond that. The door surround consists of two Tuscan columns which support a denticulated, classical entablature. "THE HENRY" is incised onto the frieze in simple block lettering. The main entrance and the window openings on the first floor have been in-filled with CMU blocks.

On the north facade, the two end bays have projecting wood bay windows on the second floor and rectangular window openings at the third floor. One single hung window is found in the central bay on the second floor and a similar single hung window also found in the central bay at the third floor. The building has no cornice but bears a lighter colored parge coating where a cornice likely used to be located. The first floor of the building on all facades has been painted brown. The window openings in the end bays of the second and third floor have been boarded over. The other three facades are largely devoid of ornamentation although arch-headed windows are found on all facades while the west façade features a three story bay window structure with two bay windows at the second and third floor near the center-point of the façade (first floor bay structure is missing.) There is also a full height bay window structure on the east facade near the rear of the building. The west facade faces an alley which separates 427 Henry from it's neighbor Bretton Hall while a narrow concrete walkway is found in between 427 Henry and 2467 Cass.

Overall Site Plan

The district will be rehabilitated as a whole to create a unified, cohesive design. The local district comprises nearly the entire city block at the southwest corner of Cass Avenue and Henry Street with the western-most parking lot and the areas directly south of all buildings not included in the district. That being said, although the areas south of the buildings are not included in the district, because work is being proposed in two such areas—on the grassy area south of 2447 Cass and on an area directly south of 439 Henry—both areas will be discussed. The district consists of seven buildings situated along Cass Avenue and Henry Street.

The streetscape on Henry Street will be re-designed to eliminate most of the curb cuts as access to the parking lot between 489 Henry and 459 Henry will be accessed from the alley not from Henry Street. Further, that parking lot will be re-designed with a wide landscape buffer to shield the occupants of 489 Henry and 459 Henry from noise and headlight glare. A tot lot will be added to the area directly adjacent to the parking lot and 459 Henry. The sidewalk along the southern side of Henry Street will be retained, a wide greenbelt will be planted, and a decorative hardscape and patterned concrete will be used directly in front of 447 Henry for the anticipated retail/dining tenant. A forecourt will be created in front of each residential building by construction of a 12" concrete planter curb with ornamental plantings found within the forecourt. For the buildings along Cass Avenue – 2447 and 2467 Cass - an 18" aluminum



garden fence will be placed in front of each building as well. The landscaping in front of each building will have a slightly different arrangement of landscaping and trees to provide greenery and visual interest to the buildings.

There is currently an alley running north to south between 439 and 427 Henry. This alley will be recreated into additional outdoor gathering spaces as well as parking for residents. The northern end of the alley will become a seating area with a granite chip surface—it will be surrounded by plantings and accessed through an aluminum fence and gate set back from Henry Street. The southern end of where alley currently runs will become a surface parking lot with 15 parking spaces. The drive aisle will be accessed from the W. Fisher Service Drive. New concrete paving will be installed along the parking lot and provide access to 2447 Cass, 2467 Cass, 427 Henry, and 439 Henry. The concrete paving will also extend in between 427 Henry and 2467 Cass. This area will have lawn furniture and will also be accessible via an aluminum fence and gate facing Henry Street. The alley that runs east to west, just south of the 439 Henry, 447 Henry, 459 Henry, and 489 Henry will be re-paved with asphalt and will remain accessible to vehicular traffic and barrier-free access to 439 Henry. A consolidated site refuse enclosure will be located along this alley and will be screened from the W. Fisher Service Drive with both plantings and a masonry screen wall. Along the service drive a staggered 6' tall ornamental aluminum fence will be built just south of 2447 Cass Avenue and the open green space south of 427 Henry to provide privacy from the I-75 service drive. In between 2467 and 2447 Cass, a public/private gathering space will be created with ornamental plantings and lawn furniture located closer to Cass Avenue, while a larger outdoor park for residents will be nestled further into the site, between the buildings, and will be accessed by an aluminum fence and gate off Cass Avenue.

Brick and stone

The building is clad in light brown brick on the primary façade (north) and red brick on the three secondary façades. The brick is in fair condition in most areas with staining, missing mortar, puncture holes, and some missing units found throughout. At the base of the building on all four sides the brick has been painted brown. Stone is found at the entry surround, at most windowsills, and a stone water table that runs on the primary façade only, just below the first-floor windows. The stone windowsills have been painted. The stone appears to be in fair condition overall with some cracking and staining visible.

All brick and stone are to be inspected for damage. Brick and stone will be repointed, and loose or displaced units will be reset. Re-pointed mortar will match the color, texture, compressive strength, joint width and joint profile of the existing historic mortar. Damaged brick and stone will be repaired as necessary and loose or displaced units to be reset. If any units are too badly deteriorated to repair, they will be replaced—any salvaged brick will be reused where replacements are needed before new units are used. If new units are necessary, they will be selected to match the existing in size, profile, color, and finish. The brown paint will be removed from any painted masonry and then all masonry will be cleaned with a light duty detergent and low-pressure water rinse prior to masonry work to allow matching of the existing mortar color.

Balconies

Historically there was a fire escape/balcony located on the south side of the building as holes are visible at regular intervals on this façade where the balcony structure was anchored to the building. The rear fire escape/balcony structure is no longer extant. To provide a private outdoor space for each unit, this balcony structure will be rebuilt in each end bay—it will be made of a steel framing with a composite decking surface with individual balconies for each unit. Please see attached drawings for more detail.

Entrance Doors and ADA Lift

The main entrance is currently closed in with CMU units with a rudimentary plywood door set into the CMU. These CMU units and the plywood door will be removed, and a new glazed panel door will be installed in the stone surround. The door will be compatible with the historic nature of the building without appearing falsely historic. A defined entrance area will be created in front of the door with a new concrete porch, and a raised concrete curb to enclose ornamental trees and plants. Doors on the back of the building will be installed in the existing door frames for access to each balcony. These doors will be compatible with the historic character of the building and will have glazed panels.

An ADA lift will be installed at grade in between the balconies on the south façade to provide access to the first-floor porches. Please see the attached drawings for further details.



Cornice

Historically there was a cornice on the building, but it is no longer extant. No photos have been found of this cornice so the cornice design will be based upon the existing cornices on 439 Henry and 489 Henry. The new cornice will be made of GFRP or fiberglass, will be supported by paired brackets, and will be painted green or have integral green color. Please see drawings for additional details.

Windows

Most windows in the building are missing although a few historic windows are partially intact, are in poor condition, and are used as the basis of design for the new windows. The existing windows include: an anachronistic one-over-one wood window that is in very poor condition on the north facade, a modern vinyl window in poor condition also on the north facade, a triple bay window on the second floor of the north façade with central eight-over-one double hung and two side six-over-one double hung wood windows flanking it, two fixed wood windows with diagonal wood muntins on either side of the main entrance on the north façade, and a bay window in poor condition on the second floor of the west façade with center six-over-one double hung wood window and flanking six-over-one windows of similar construction.

On the north façade, two new aluminum clad one-over-one window will replace the two one-over-one windows in the center bay. Further, the north façade will receive six-over-one windows at the first floor and third floor in the two end bays. The two bay windows on the primary façade are framed and clad in wood with a hipped metal roof covering. The wood is in poor condition so these bay windows will be reclad with new wood with the existing sightlines and applied wood trim maintained or rebuilt if too deteriorated. The bay windows on the north façade will receive six-over-one and eight-over-one aluminum clad wood windows. Finally, on the primary façade, there are currently two fixed wood windows with diagonal wood muntins found on either side of the main entrance, behind the CMU infill. These two windows will be replaced to match existing profiles and sight lines.

There is also a bay window structure on the west façade that runs from the first floor to the third floor. This bay window is also framed and clad in wood with a hipped metal roof covering and is in poor condition (first floor structure is missing.) This bay window structure will also be reclad with new wood (and first floor reconstructed) with the existing sightlines and applied wood trim maintained or rebuilt if too deteriorated. The bay windows on the west façade will receive six-over-one aluminum clad wood windows.

For the rest of the building on the secondary facades on floors 1-3 it is proposed that historic replica, aluminum clad one-over-one wood windows will be used. The basement windows will be fixed pane aluminum clad wood units with no dividing mullion.

Façade Lighting

Exterior building lighting will be provided and designed to highlight building features. Lighting locations may include up lights on east façade and wall mounted fixtures flanking the entrance. Final lighting cut sheets are not yet available and will be provided to staff for review once ready.

Signage

Currently there is no signage on the building beyond the stone-inscribed "HENRY" over the main entry door. It is proposed that future signage may be reinstated on the building at the entrance. Once this location is approved, final signage drawings (including size, color and design) will be submitted for staff approval before installation.

Roof, Rooftop Mechanicals, and Skylights

The building currently has a flat membrane roof in poor condition; it will be removed and replaced with a new EPDM roof. Small condensers will be added to the center of the roof with metal panel mechanical screens added to obscure the condensers. This location was selected so that the units will only be minimally visible from the street—please see attached sightline study. The metal screens will be painted gray.

There are two skylights (both in the center of the roof) both in poor condition. The skylights will be removed as the metal is too severely corroded to repair. New skylights will be fitted in place of the two deteriorated units.



The items listed above provide a synopsis of the proposed scope of work for the rehabilitation of the building. Further detail is provided in the attached drawings, renderings, reports, and photos. Please contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Kraemer Design Group, LLC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Rebain".

Brian Rebain, RA, NCARB
Principal

