



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** R-288-21, **Version:** 1

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The Clerk Reports

### **Declaring the intent to designate the building located at 328 N. Westwood Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, a historic landmark; and declaring an emergency.**

#### SUMMARY & BACKGROUND:

Architectural Significance of the Building for consideration to become a Designated Landmark.

**Building History:** The building at 328 N. Westwood Avenue was constructed in 1946 by the Swartzbaugh Manufacturing Company as office and warehouse space. Originally founded as the Toledo Cooker Company in 1897, the company started off manufacturing kitchen appliances, eventually building a factory on Bancroft Street by 1905. The name was changed to the Swartzbaugh Manufacturing Company in 1923 upon the death of founder Charles Swartzbaugh at which time his heirs decided they would expand into other small appliances. Around or after World War II, the company also started producing institutional food conveyor systems, utilized in hospitals and similar. Purportedly owing to labor disputes, in 1951 the company sold off its “Everhot” appliance division to McGraw Hill and moved its conveyor business to Murfreesboro, TN. They owned and utilized the building for only approximately 3 years before selling. The building then became home to Donofrio Industries and then subsequently to the creation and manufacture of the Craft Master Paint-by-Number products,

In 1945 the Palmer Paint Sales Company of Detroit conceptualized and became the first to mass-produce and market paint by number kits. The brainchild of Detroit artist Dan Robbins and Max Klein of Palmer Paint, the concept took off in the early 1950s. Klein had purchased the Palmer Show Card Paint Company, which originally sold tempura powders to sign painters, in 1945. He immediately started expanding the company’s wholesale product lines, and between 1945 and 1949 grew sales from \$125,000 per year to \$300,000. Robbins was originally hired on contract by Klein in 1949 to design packaging for small bottles of poster paints as he looked to expand into the retail market. (It was about this time that the company became Palmer Paint.) He was subsequently given a full-time job working on the development of new products, namely retail packaged art sets that included all materials necessary to complete the project. Originally this entailed creating new subject matter for children’s washable sets, but Robbins began to toy with the idea of an adult line, eventually conceptualizing paint-by-numbers and convincing Klein to put it into production. After attending a toy show in 1951 in New York and securing an order from Macy’s department store, Craft Master Paint-By-Numbers was poised to explode onto the mid-twentieth century hobby/leisure market.

Palmer Paint soon came to sell the Craft Master line to both department stores and discount stores, leading department stores to become disgruntled that they were being undercut by the discounters lesser price points. Not wanting to lose out on the discount market share, Max Klein launched an entirely separate company, Pann Products to produce a separately branded line of paint-by-numbers, Pann Paint-By-Numbers, for the discount stores, while Craft Master continued to be the purview of department stores.

This growth quickly outstripped Palmer Paint’s ability to mix and fill paint in-house. They turned to

Donofrio Industries of Toledo which had moved into the building on Westwood Avenue after Swartzbaugh Manufacturing left. Donofrio Industries specialized in the production of packaging for pharmaceuticals and were therefore equipped to provide and fill the paint containers for the paint-by-numbers sets. As part of their supplier arrangement with Palmer Paint, Donofrio invested a great deal in equipment for paint mixing, filling and also printing and assembly.

Soon Palmer Paint had a great deal of competition in the paint-by-numbers market. This competition ultimately led Palmer Paint, renamed Palmer Pann in 1955, to the verge of bankruptcy. In 1956, Max Klein sold his interest in the company to Donofrio Industries, who felt their investment in paint-by-numbers production equipment were too great to lose. Paint-by-numbers kit operations were moved from Detroit to the building on Westwood Avenue in Toledo. Several artists responsible for creating the paint-by-numbers designs made the move as well. Here the company was able to achieve efficiency and profitability with an integrated and streamlined design and production process. In 1963 Palmer Pann changed its name to Craft Master Corporation after the brand name they were manufacturing their Paint by Numbers kits under. Craft Master was purchased by General Mills in 1967, and subsequently changed hands several more times before becoming Craft House, marketing paint by numbers kits under the Paint By Numbers slogan. The company ceased production in Toledo in 2001, though it did maintain offices after.

The paint by numbers kit phenomenon which began in the early 1950s, lasted well through until nearly the end of the twentieth century, and the resulting works of which are now collected themselves, sits at the intersection of mass-production, art and popular culture. The kits offered consumers a productive outlet to fill increased leisure time of the post-War era. Though shunned by the critics of the day, the kits were enthusiastically embraced by hobbyists. The building on Westwood Avenue was home to the company that originally conceived of paint by numbers and came to be one of the most successful and prolific manufacturers of the kits.

Reason for Request: The applicant is seeking landmark designation in order to obtain State Historic Tax Credits for the purpose of rehabilitating the building and to preserve Toledo History. NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Toledo:

SECTION 1. That the City Council does hereby declare its intent to designate an historic building as a landmark situated at 328 N. Westwood Ave., and more fully described as follows:

3 4 SW 1/4 S 1/4 NW 1/4 EXC S 65 FT W 290 FT EXC PT IN RD WDNG

SECTION 2. That this matter be referred to the Toledo City Plan Commission and the Toledo City Historic District for its review, recommendation and appropriate hearing date.

SECTION 3. That this Resolution hereby is declared to be an emergency measure and shall be in force and effect from and after its adoption. The reason for the emergency lies in the fact that same is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and property, and for the further reason that this Resolution must be immediately effective so that the historic property will be eligible for the federal and/or state historic tax credit as soon as feasibility possible.

Vote on emergency clause: yeas \_\_\_\_\_, nays \_\_\_\_\_.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_, as an emergency measure: yeas \_\_\_\_\_, nays \_\_\_\_\_.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Council

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council

\_\_\_\_\_.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council