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Retailing, Quicken style, turns Detroit storefronts into stores

By [Daniel Duggan](#)



Want to buy a watch? Just point your phone at one adorning the Joe Louis fist at 1528 Woodward Ave.

With the recent acquisition of two Detroit buildings along Woodward Avenue south of **Grand Circus Park**, **Quicken Loans Inc.** founder Dan Gilbert will be bringing "virtual retail" to Detroit.

Quicken has covered the exterior windows of the buildings with images of merchandise. To purchase the merchandise, people can just scan the image with their smartphones.

"Instead of actual merchandise, virtual retail features product images with a QR (quick response) code that shoppers can scan using their smartphones to either buy the item or obtain additional product information," Quicken said in a press release.

The images will be in the storefront windows at 1520 and 1528 Woodward, buildings recently purchased by Gilbert through his real estate company, **Bedrock Management**.

Working on the project is Detroit-based **Resultco**, owned by Jeff Freedman, as well as Gilbert-owned **Fathead LLC**.

The storefront at 1528 Woodward features an image of Detroit's Joe Louis fist sculpture "wearing" 47 watches from Detroit-based **Watchwear.com**.



The store window at 1520 Woodward uses a vintage Chevy to sell watches.

Store windows at 1520 Woodward also have supersized images of custom watches flanked by images of a vintage Chevrolet and a new Ford Mustang.

The images, which are Fatheads, were created by Resultco.

"The ultimate goal for virtual retail is to show the need for 'in-person' or tangible retail shops, while enhancing vacant buildings and helping prospective tenants visualize Detroit's endless creative and entrepreneurial opportunities," Quicken said in the statement.

Other retailers slated to be featured for virtual retail include **Expedia.com**, **Match.com**, **Shoebuy.com**, **Clothesbuy.com** and **Bagbuy.com**.

The windows of the Gilbert-owned **First National Building** are scheduled to feature virtual retail next, followed by the **Dime Building** and possibly others.