



On the Go in Green

Kemphorn Motors arrives in Summit County with new Jaguar Land Rover Akron showroom

Story & Photos by Mark Watt

Sleek, modern and functional – those were the goals as Kemphorn Motors began planning its new Jaguar Land Rover Akron dealership in summer 2018. This February, those aims were realized as the company opened its doors at its newly constructed, \$5-million-plus showroom at 944 E. Turkeyfoot Lake Rd. in Green.

Built by Craven Construction, of Akron, in partnership with Columbus-based Archall Architects, the 26,000-square-foot building provides Kemphorn Motors with a contemporary, purpose-built showroom and service center on a prominent intersection, just off of Rte. 77.

“The [building] is spectacular and has exceeded our expectations since opening,” says Eric Kemphorn, president. “The corner-lot location [at Fortuna Drive and East Turkeyfoot Lake Road/OH-619] is great. We’re adjacent to the Green Auto Mile, which is a destination of choice for car dealers because that’s where the action is, and the building itself has a fabulous design, which makes life so much easier from a workflow standpoint.”

Driving decisions

Founded in 1932, Kemphorn Motors is a recognized brand in Canton with sev-

eral dealerships, including Volkswagen, Mazda, Volvo and Mercedes-Benz. The new venture in Green has enabled the company to relocate its Jaguar dealer-

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Kemphorn Motors

ship after 30 years at 1449 Cleveland Ave. NW in Canton, while launching a new partnership with Land Rover, Kemphorn explains.

“We’ve been pursuing a dealership in the area for a while, and Jaguar Land Rover were very much in our corner to make the move from Canton to this location,” he says. “At the same time, this has allowed our Mercedes dealership to expand into the previous Jaguar showroom back in Canton.”

Typical for modern auto dealerships, the new facility is designed to meet very specific architectural standards provided by the vehicle manufacturer. The building is essentially constructed in two halves, with a front-of-house showroom and a back-of-house service area, notes Dave Kaldy, president of Archall Architects. The showroom is constructed with conventional steel framing, metal studs and an exterior system of glass and ACM metal panels, while the service area is constructed primarily of CMU block.



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CUSTOMER COMFORT The front-of-house portion of the facility includes spacious showrooms, several glass-walled offices, a series of open workstations and comfortable seating for guests.

“Jaguar Land Rover has very strict prototypical requirements, so in large part the layout and the design is driven by those requirements,” Kaldy says. “The typical prototype is an all-metal building, but this facility is a little different because there were also some requirements from the City of Green. Because of that, the building incorporates a good deal of exposed masonry with an accent split-face block and a four-inch-tall CMU around the exterior.”

Site challenges

Craig Cureton, project manager with Craven Construction, says groundbreaking for the project occurred in October 2019. The 3.68-acre site, once home to an elementary school, had been abated, demoed and vacated, but still presented some challenges because it slopes upward considerably from north to south.

“We had to step the building up and essentially develop a long ramp to connect it all together, because of the grade changes along the perimeter,” he explains. “The result, though, is

that the building has a very strong presence. When you’re approaching it along East Turkeyfoot Lake Road, it stands like a tower on this corner. It’s almost like a beacon.”

Minimalist + modern

Walk inside the facility and one will notice a high level of finish and attention to detail, Kaldy notes. “Everything is very clean and streamlined, with a very minimalist design,” he says. “Although it looks simple, it’s much harder to pull

off than traditional design. There’s a lot that has to go into that style of design and construction.”

Interestingly, the entire footprint of the building is designed around the size of floor tiles used throughout.

“The intent is that the floor tiles aren’t cut anywhere,” Kaldy explains. “There are full tiles everywhere, which is a pretty challenging thing to accomplish. There are two tile types, one that is a light porcelain color and another that has a wood-style finish, and each is a little

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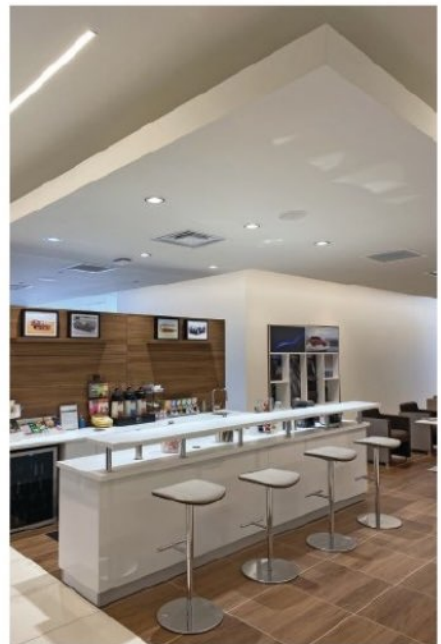
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ON THE GRID The entire building footprint is designed around the size of floor tiles used throughout, from a café (above) and customer waiting areas to exterior walls.

under two-feet square. They're arranged in a grid pattern that lays out the placement of all exterior walls and columns."

The front-of-house portion of the facility includes spacious showrooms for both

"The design is intended to match how the dealership does business, so that everything is transparent. There aren't closed offices tucked in the back. Instead, it's all very open."

Dave Kaldy
Archall Architects

Jaguar and Land Rover vehicle brands, several glass-walled offices, a series of open workstations and comfortable seating for customers. All interior glass is butt-glazed with no visible mullions, which provides a streamlined look, Kaldy says.

"The design is intended to match how the dealership does business, so that everything is transparent," he explains. "There aren't closed offices tucked in the back. Instead, it's all very open."

The facility's customer lounge incorporates a café and an adjacent fitting area where guests can browse through



GOOD FIT A sleek fitting area, incorporating a variety of built-in shadowboxes and accessory displays, provides a space where guests can browse through leather color samples and other high-end interior finishes for automobiles.

leather color samples and other custom high-end interior finishes for automobiles. The space incorporates a variety of built-in shadowboxes and accessory displays. Continuing the streamlined look, doors to restrooms and office support spaces nearby are designed with no jambs visible around the perimeter.

“The tolerances here are at a different level than you see with other buildings,” Cureton says. “It’s almost like building a car with the degree of intricate details throughout. From the light fixtures in the ceilings to the glass doors on the offices, there’s a tolerance of maybe a quarter-inch. There’s very

little wiggle room. That led to a very high-end, nice-looking building.”

Kyle Craven, chief operating officer with Craven Construction, concurs.

“Our metal stud and drywall contractor, Expert Construction, really handled the framing and drywall scope exceptionally well,” he says. “The complex



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SLEEK + STREAMLINED From the show room (top) and customer service areas (middle) to the service shop (bottom), the building incorporates contemporary, minimalist architectural details with clean, straight lines throughout.



architectural details such as the specialty ceilings in the showroom and reveals throughout the building had the potential to pose a real challenge, but they handled all these tasks easily and kept the job running smoothly.”

Top-tier service area

The rear portion of the building houses a service shop with 13 dedicated automobile bays.

“There’s a high level of finish in the service area, compared to most other automotive dealers,” Kaldy says. “There’s a high-end, built-up epoxy flooring system that’s used throughout for ease of maintenance. It makes it all look clean and organized throughout. The toolboxes are high-grade as well. They’re very clinical, and look like something you’d see at NASA or in a hospital surgery room.”

While HVAC in the showroom is provided by a series of package rooftop units, the service shop is furnished with radiant tube heating, with a pair of large helicopter fans helping to spread and stratify the air. A car wash in the rear of the service area completes the facility.



Crossing the finish line

Kemphorn says the combined team of Craven Construction and Archall were successful in delivering a high-quality product. “Archall actually put up a Jaguar Land Rover dealership in Columbus several years ago and we watched that process come together,” he says. “We wanted to work with a firm that had ‘been there, done that,’ so we felt very comfortable working with them. Craven Construction and their team of subs helped make the project as painless as they could.”

Looking back, Kaldy says the feeling of teamwork between owner, builder, architect and subs was strong indeed, and helped lead to positive results.

“The end result is a beautiful building that hopefully will help to build Kemphorn Motors’ business,” he says. “We do our part so they can be successful at what they do.” **P**