

STAFF REPORT: DECEMBER 14, 2022 MEETING

PREPARED BY: B. BUCKLEY

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-8161

ADDRESS: 1001 E. JEFFERSON AVENUE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: PALMS APARTMENTS HISTORIC DISTRICT

APPLICANT: THOMAS ROBERTS, AIA

PROPERTY OWNER: 81001 JEFERSON LLC

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: NOVEMBER 4, 2022

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: DECEMBER 2, 2022

SCOPE: REHABILITATE EXTERIOR, REPLACE WINDOWS AND DOORS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Palms Apartments Building is located at 1001 E. Jefferson Ave, at the northeast corner of E. Jefferson and Rivard Street. Designed by Mason and Kahn and constructed in 1901, the building was one of the first in the world to utilize reinforced concrete construction. The U-shaped building's masonry frame is faced with limestone on the façade and side elevations, and brick at the interior courtyard. The building features a neoclassical carved limestone entry, a prominent balustraded parapet, and stained-glass windows at the basement level and to the central stairway in the courtyard. The building has seen relatively few exterior alterations since its construction. The alterations include the installation of glass block windows at the basement level, new entries at the basement level office space, and asphalt shingle siding on the rear bays.



Figure 1. Current view of the Palms Apartments.



Figure 2. Ca. 1980 photo of the Palms Apartments. HDAB.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the exterior of the building. A full scope of work and drawing set is located on the HDC website. The scope of work includes the following:

- **Roof** – Minor repairs and improvements to existing penthouse and incinerator shaft not visible from the public right-of-way.
- **Fascia metal/cornice** – Existing materials to be scraped, primed, and repainted to match existing.
- **Masonry** – Tuckpoint and clean masonry as needed. Masonry will be cleaned using low pressure water wash and bristle brushes. Where replacement brick or stone is required, matching materials will be used.

- **Windows** – Replace existing double-hung wood windows throughout the building. The applicant proposes to replace the double-hung wood windows with aluminum sash, single-hung windows from the Quaker Commercial line. The new windows will have the same dimensions and will be a similar color to the existing units. Three small steel casement windows on the eastern elevation will be replaced with new aluminum casement windows with simulated divided lites that match the existing muntin pattern. 10 small wood casement windows on the rear (north) projecting bays will be replaced by fixed aluminum windows. Five glass block windows at the basement level on the eastern and southern elevations will be removed and replaced with single-hung aluminum units. 17 glass block windows at the basement level will be retained. Existing stained-glass windows at the basement level and in the courtyard will be retained and stabilized.
- **Doors** – The façade entry door will be retained and restored. Three existing wood doors in the courtyard, a service door at the north elevation, and the fire escape doors will be replaced with hollow metal doors and frames with new openings. The doors and frames will be painted the same colors as the proposed windows. The new hollow metal doors will have windows similar in size to the existing windows. A pair of storefront doors on the eastern elevation will be replaced with a single standard aluminum door.
- **Carpentry** – The projecting multi-story bays on the western and northern elevations will be structurally stabilized and wood trim elements repaired or replaced in kind to match existing.
- **Lighting** – Existing fixtures around the main and side entrances will remain. New wall sconces will be added at the exterior doors at the fire escape at each floor.
- **Painting** – Exterior woodwork will be painted to match existing. The steel fire escape and decorative façade security doors will be primed and painted black to match existing. Remaining mechanical louvers and grilles will be painted to match the window and exterior woodwork color. The multi-story wood bays will be painted to match their existing color after restoration.
- **Miscellaneous** – The existing canopies at the front and side entrances will be removed and the limestone patched with matching mortar. New bathroom exhausts will be added to the eastern and western walls of the interior courtyard and the northern (rear) elevation. They will be painted to match the existing brick or stone.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Palms Apartments Historic District was established in 1980.
- Glass block windows were added to the basement level in 2012. The former owner received a Notice To Proceed from the HDC for the glass block windows on the west elevation and a portion of the façade elevation. The glass block windows at the southeastern corner of the building, the window adjacent to the Rivard Street entrance, and two windows on the northern (rear) elevation replaced double-hung wood windows and were installed without permission. The current applicant proposes to replace the unapproved glass block windows at the southeast corner of the building with single-hung aluminum units.
- Photographs from the applicant and from the staff site visit indicate that numerous wood window sashes are decayed beyond repair. Staff was able to observe failing meeting rails, jambs, and sills from the public right-of-way. The applicant submitted quotes for both replacing the existing windows and rehabilitating the existing windows and adding interior storm windows. The applicant provided a quote from BlackBerry Systems for the restoration of the wood windows on the building for approximately 1.66 million dollars. This estimate did not include the replication of any windows deemed beyond repair. The cost estimate from Quaker Windows to furnish new aluminum single-hung windows was approximately 755,000 dollars.



Figure 3. Examples of existing conditions of the wood double-hung windows

- The dimensions and details of the replacement windows do not precisely match the existing windows. A comparison of selected sash dimensions is located below.

Feature	Existing	Proposed	Change
Single Windows @ Stone Façade			
Meeting Rail Height	1.75"	1.75"	None
Bottom Rail Height (Exposed)	4.25"	4.0"	6% decrease in bottom rail height.
Top Rail Height (Exposed)	1.375"	1.75"	27% increase in top rail height. The proposed windows are single hung, and do not have a traditional top rail. This figure represents the exposed portion of the top of the window frame.
Stile Width (Exposed)	1.375"	1.75"	27% increase in stile width.
Mulled Windows @ Brick			
Meeting Rail Height	1.75"	1.75"	None
Bottom Rail Height (Exposed)	4.25"	4.0"	6% decrease in bottom rail height.
Top Rail Height (Exposed)	1.375"	2.68"	95% increase in top rail height. The proposed windows are single hung, and do not have a traditional top rail. This figure represents the exposed portion of the top of the window frame.
Stile Width (Exposed)	1.375"	N/A	Width not listed.
Mullion Width (Exposed)	9.75"	7.375"	24 % decrease in mullion width
Steel Casement Windows			
Muntin Width	0.75"	0.8"	7% increase in muntin width.
Rails and Stiles (Exposed)	2.0"	1.625"	19% decrease in rail and style width

Figure 4. Sash comparison table.

- The storefront entry door, courtyard doors, and north elevation service door that are proposed for replacement with metal doors appear to be early or original units. The applicant noted the current pair of doors at the Rivard Street entrance do not meet modern egress code.



Figure 5. L-R: Storefront door, typical fire escape door, courtyard door.

ISSUES

- It is staff's opinion the scope of work for the roof, fascia, masonry, painting, and miscellaneous items adhere to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and will not have an adverse effect on character defining features of the building.
- The replacement of a portion of the glass block windows with single-hung aluminum windows will have a positive effect on the building's integrity.
- The double-hung wood windows proposed for replacement are early or original units. However, evidence suggests that a significant number of the windows have deteriorated to a state where repair is not feasible, and replacement is required. The quotes provided by the applicant further suggest that retaining and restoring the original windows is not reasonably financially feasible. It is staff's opinion that appropriate replacement windows should be considered, and the proposed single-hung aluminum window units are *not an inappropriate* solution. The new windows will have the same overall dimensions as the originals, and the meeting rails, muntins, and mullions will have the same configuration. The windows' material differences and relatively minor differences found in the details of the trim and brick molds should not have a substantial visual effect on the building.
- The wood panel doors proposed for replacement are early or original units. However, the doors in the courtyard area and fire escape are located on secondary elevations and generally not observable from the public right-of-way. The proposed replacement doors will be painted to match the new windows, and the fire escape doors will

feature windows in approximately the same location as originals. It is staff's opinion that the replacement of these doors with hollow core insulated metal doors is *not inappropriate*.

- An entry consisting of a pair of doors with a transom lite are located along Rivard Street. These early or original doors are visible from the public-right-of-way and were historically associated with the tea room (illuminated by the extant stained glass windows) in the basement level of the building. The applicant proposes to replace these doors with a single aluminum door. This entry is historically a publicly accessible area, and is a character defining feature of the building. Replacing these doors with the proposed modern metal door would have a detrimental effect on the integrity of building.

RECOMMENDATION

Certificate of Appropriateness

Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

It is staff's opinion the proposed project will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. Staff therefore recommends Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Palm Apartments Historic District's Elements of Design, with the condition that:

1. The double doors at the Rivard Street entrance be retained.
2. The HDC is supplied with detailed window drawings that provide a clear comparison between the existing windows and proposed windows as they will be installed in the existing openings. The drawings will provide details for comparison of the overall dimensional changes in the sash, as well as exterior trim and brick mold configurations. If the details do not illustrate an acceptable match that can be approved at the staff level, the windows will be returned to the Commission for review.