

**STAFF REPORT: 3/8/2023 REGULAR MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: #23-8201**

**VIOLATION NUMBER: #400**

**ADDRESS: 761 WHITMORE**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: PALMER PARK APT. BUILDINGS**

**APPLICANT: KEVIN BRANDON**

**PROPERTY OWNER: ROBERT CRISTOPH RCI – 17664 MANDERSON LLC**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 2/13/2023**

**DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 2/1/21, 11/5/21, 1/24/23, 2/20/23**

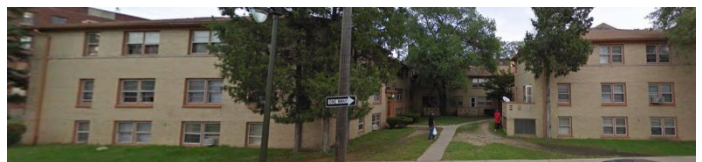
**SCOPE: INSTALL VINYL WINDOWS, (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Built in 1948, the property at 761 Whitmore, The Rosemor Apartments, is a two and one-half story garden court apartment building designed by Wiedmaier & Gay architects. On the corner of Whitmore Road and Third Street, this Modernist thirty-unit apartment building faces Third Street with the courtyard facing west leading to the main entrances. A secondary entrance opens onto Whitmore, on the north side of the building. All entrances have wood panel detailing and side lites with transoms. The original wood doors had 3x6 divided light glazing with wood panel at the base. These doors, panels and side lites have been removed and replaced with temporary security doors by the owner without approval. At the February 8, 2023 Regular Meeting, the Commission approved the installation of 18 proposed doors, which can be seen viewed on the HDC website. All windows have been replaced by the owner without approval: most were 2/2 double hung wood windows, which have been replaced with 2/2 vinyl windows with muntins between the glass. The original wood trim and mullions have been replaced with vinyl. The building is clad in buff brick under a hip roof. Walkways lead to the sidewalks to the north and west sides of the building. A parking area is located along the south side of the building, and the east side has a pass-through sidewalk between this site and the neighboring building to the east but is currently enclosed in temporary fencing during construction. The landscape is primarily open lawn and concrete walkways with an occasional evergreen foundation planting.



*Site Photo 1, by Staff February 20, 2023: (West) Front elevation and courtyard on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, showing vinyl window installation.*



*Site Photo 2, by Google Street Sept 2009: (West) Front elevation on Third Street, showing original windows.*

This property has the following Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) and violations on the Detroit Property Information System (DPI):

- September 2019 COA: Rebuild brick wall at north elevation, east courtyard to match existing, remove and replace existing roof (fire damage), install gutters and downspouts
- February 2021 Violation: Unapproved replacement/removal of doors/windows. Windows damaged from fire not properly rebuilt to 2019 COA.
- February 2023 COA: Install 14 doors and 4 doorways, painted rustic red
- February 2023 Denial: Replacement of original wood windows and wood brick moulds with vinyl windows and aluminum brick moulds.



Site Photo 3, by Staff February 20, 2023: (North) side elevation on Whitmore, showing vinyl window installation.

Aerial 1 of Parcel # 02002581-2, by Detroit Parcel Viewer.



Site photo 4, by Google Street, September 2009: Whitmore (North) elevation, showing 2/2 horizontal muntin, double hung wood windows.

## **PROPOSAL**

The proposed work consists of the replacement of all windows, which is work completed without Historic District Commission approval. A prior application was heard at the February 8, 2023 HDC meeting and was issued a denial by the Commission for the replacement of the original wood windows and wood brick moulds with vinyl windows and aluminum brick moulds. This application proposes to repair most of the original wood brick moulds by removing the aluminum moulds, retaining the vinyl windows but adding simulated divided light muntins to the exterior that approximates the historic muntins, and removing paint on some brick around some windows.

## **WINDOWS**

The replacement windows are double hung vinyl units with between the glass muntins. See attached window

schedule and plan with window locations and installation photos.

Product Data- See drawings for additional information:

- Windows: Manchester Series by Quaker, double hung, vinyl composite with a 2/2 horizontal muntin bar between the glass. Color: Earthtone

### MUNTINS

This proposal includes an application of 7/8" wide external muntins with 3M adhesive tape to the exterior glass panes supplied by the current window manufacturer to match the 2/2 horizontal muntin bar pattern. The current internal glass muntin is 5/8" wide and will be obscured by the external muntin. The color will match the window manufacturer's color, Earthtone. This would be applied to all upper and lower windowpanes as shown in the attached plan.

### BRICK MOULDS AND STOOL

Each brake metal will be removed around each brick mould that has it. Scrape existing paint, repair and repaint wood. Each window will be inspected and if required readjusted within the opening. Any pieces that need to be replaced, replacement pieces will be milled. A flat stock filler of 1"x1/2" wood will need to be installed between the backside of the brick mould and the window frame. This will be painted to match as well. The windows will be recaulked with a matching color.

### WINDOWS AT REBUILT AREAS (DAMAGED BY FIRE)

There are 19 windows that were installed in the rebuilt areas of the building that do not have brick moulds. A wood flat stock filler of 3"x1/2" will be installed between the back side of the brick and the window frame. This will be painted to match as well. The windows will be re-caulked with a matching color.

### PAINT

All existing brick rowlock and stone sills that were painted will be stripped of paint to restore their original color.



1/A200 west elevation

Figure 1, by applicant, showing proposed window designs, with applied muntins. See also drawing A200

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

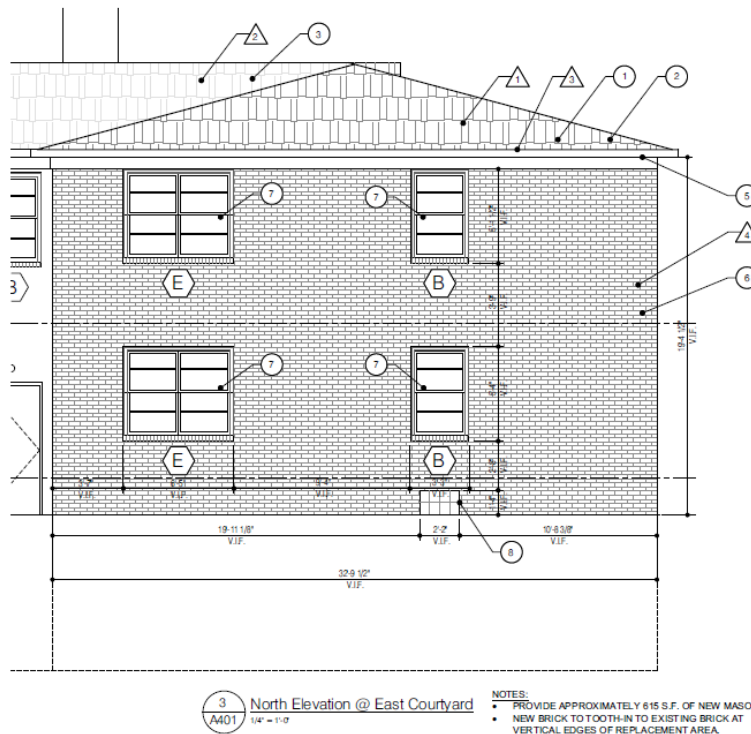
- The Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Historic District was established in 2012.
- Staff requested the applicant to provide documentation of the original condition of the windows. The applicant stated that both were removed before he was involved with this project. He stated that the contractor believed the entries were beyond repair with rotted wood. The applicant confirmed that no documentation of the original condition of the windows exists. The applicant also confirmed that some original brick moulds were covered with aluminum brick moulds, other brick moulds were lost after fire damage to the building and the entire window openings (19) were rebuilt without wood brick moulds. (See detail photos 1- 2)
- Staff observed from Google Street View, that in September 2009, a vast majority of the original windows appeared to be in place. The building was vacated since at least July 2011 with the windows and doors boarded up. (See site photos 4) The Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) shows a Vacant Property Registration issued in March 2012.
- The original wood windows were double hung with a horizontal muntin in both the upper and lower sash, creating a 2 over 2 configuration. Staff has the opinion that the original wood windows with true-divided light and original wood brick moulds are distinctive, character-defining features.
- Staff issued a COA in 2019, which states that the brick wall at the North Elevation at the East Courtyard to match existing and the associated signed BSEED permit BLD2019-06541 which states that: “Exterior Openings: Areas in which window and door openings are to be framed shall match the size and location of the original openings that they are replacing...” and associated approved drawings A401, A402, A403 show notes that state “New masonry wall brick to match existing, window penetrations to have rowlock sill to match existing. New wall to have soldier course, match existing. Tooth in brick where new masonry meets existing masonry.” Despite the drawings, and COA issued, staff observed that the construction of these 19 window openings that were damaged by fire, they were not constructed to their approved original size. Therefore, staff observes, the windows may match in dimensions to the other windows, but the window openings, do not and lack the space to accommodate the brick moulds. This work adds to the violation status of the property. (See figures 2-3).



Detail photo 1, by applicant: Third street (west) front elevation, showing where original brick mould was replaced with aluminum brick mould and horizontal muntin between the glass



Detail photo 2, by applicant: Showing exposed brick mould after brake metal was removed. Application proposes to repair wood, scrape and repaint wood, and caulk where needed.



DEMOLITION	
▲	REMOVE ANY REMAINING STRUCTURE, SUBSTRATE, ROOFING SHINGLES, GUTTERS ECT.
▲	REMOVE EXISTING ROOFING SHINGLES TYP.
▲	REMOVE EXISTING GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS
▲	REMOVE FIRE DAMAGED MASONRY WALL INCLUDING WOOD STUDS AND SHEATHING
▲	REMOVE FIRE DAMAGED MASONRY AND SHEATHING. WOOD STUDS TO REMAIN.

ELEVATION KEYNOTES	
1	NEW STRUCTURE TO MATCH EXISTING ROOF SLOPE AND CONSTRUCTION
2	NEW ROOFING SUBSTRATE AND SHINGLES.
3	NEW ROOFING SHINGLES
4	TEMPORARILY BOARD UP UNSECURED BUILDING ENTRANCE
5	NEW GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS
6	NEW MASONRY WALL. BRICK TO MATCH EXISTING. WINDOW PENETRATIONS TO HAVE ROWLOCK SILL TO MATCH EXISTING. NEW WALL TO HAVE SOLIDER COURSE. MATCH EXISTING. TOOTH IN BRICK WHERE NEW MASONRY MEETS EXISTING MASONRY
7	WINDOWS ARE FOR REFERENCE ONLY. WINDOW OPENINGS TO BE BOARDED UP. WINDOW REPLACEMENT IS PART OF A FUTURE PACKAGE
8	NEW GLASS BLOCK WINDOW

MATERIALS	
BRICK:	TAYLOR CLAY PRODUCTS, PEARL GRAY, SMOOTH, GRAY MORTAR
ROOF SHINGLES:	GAF, TIMBERLINE UHD, PATRIOT RED
GUTTERS:	ALUM. KATY F PROFILE

Figure 2, by BSEED e-Plans BLD2019-06541: East Courtyard (East) north elevation, showing where brick wall was rebuilt and some of the window openings, along with the elevation key notes that state brick to match existing penetrations.

- According to the applicant's provided window schedule, all windows are vinyl, Manchester Series by Quaker, color earthtone. All windows are double-hung. All windows have no true divided lights, but instead have a single horizontal muntin between the glass in both the upper and lower sash.
- Staff requested the applicant to provide more information regarding the manufacturing and warranty details regarding the application of the muntins. To date of this report, staff has not received this information. Each pane of glass is proposed to have an adhesive tape used to apply the muntin on the exterior pane to cover the interior between the glass muntin and attempt to



Figure 3, by BSEED e-Plans BLD2019-06541: East Courtyard (East) north elevation, showing fire damaged window openings prior to work on brick wall, window openings, and roof.

replicate the impression of the historic divided light of the original windows. It is staff's opinion that the application of adhesive muntins is not an appropriate treatment, based on concerns around durability and appearance.

- Staff observed that the means of the paint removal was not provided and recommends that any cleaning of masonry shall be done by the gentlest means possible so as not to harm the masonry.

## ISSUES

- All window replacement work in this application was completed or started without Historic District Commission (HDC) approval.
- Staff did not receive complete photo documentation of the original conditions of the original windows before they were removed and discarded.
- Vinyl is not a historically appropriate material for the Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Historic District or this particular property.
- Staff identifies that both the removal of wood windows, the resizing and removal of the brick mould of the 19 fire damaged windows, and the installation of vinyl windows are inappropriate as they introduce a material and design that greatly diminishes the historic character of the property (Standards 2 and 3), destroyed distinctive features of the building (Standard 5), and does not match the old character-defining feature of the original windows (removed without permit) in design, texture, and other visual properties (Standard 6).
- The application of vinyl muntins on glass with adhesive tape is not appropriate.
- Staff has no issue with the proposed restoration of the wood brick moulds that remain.
- Staff would request that the applicant's process for paint removal from the brick follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards guidelines for paint removal on masonry. [rehabilitation-guidelines-1997.pdf \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/rehabilitation-guidelines-1997.pdf)

## RECOMMENDATION

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

#### Recommendation #1: Installation of vinyl windows (work completed without approval)

Staff finds that the replacement of the original wood windows and wood brick moulds with vinyl windows and aluminum brick moulds does not meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for the following reasons:

- The windows that were removed without approval were a distinctive historic feature that characterized the property. The windows dated to the building's original construction and included divided lite, 2/2 double-hung wood units.
- The application does not include documentation that the windows removed without approval were deteriorated beyond repair to an extent that merited their replacement.
- Vinyl material is not an appropriate material for the Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Historic District or this particular property.
- The introduction of between the glass muntins and the application of adhesive muntins, which replaced the true divided light of the original wood windows, are not an adequate match for the original true divided lite of the original windows.
- The lost brick moulds of the recreated 19 window openings were not completed by the approved 2019 COA and permitted drawings and destroyed the original dimensions and craftsmanship of the original wood brick moulds.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposed window replacement, as it does not the district's Elements of Design nor meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards:

*2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic*

*materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*

*5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

*6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

Recommendation 2: Restoration of remaining brick moulds and removal of painted brick

It is staff's opinion the proposed restoration of the remaining brick moulds and removal of the painted brick as proposed is appropriate. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

*Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following conditions:*

- The cleaning/removal of paint from any painted masonry surface of the painted masonry shall be done using the gentlest means possible and shall follow Secretary of the Interior Standards guidelines. The applicant shall provide HDC staff with the final specifications/proposal for the areas to be cleaned of paint for review and approval prior to the issuance of the permit.