



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

SR-2 – ADVISORY STAFF REPORT (06-05-2026)

This advisory report, prepared by staff, represents the opinion and advice of professional staff, and does not represent nor direct the separate review and decision of the Historic District Commission. This report serves as an addendum to SR-1, an objective staff summary of the proposal and property.

ADDRESS: 100 TEMPLE

MEETING DATE: 06-10-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00172

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY: E. THACKERY

STAFF OBJECTIONS TO APPROVAL:

This first section describes itemized conclusions/concerns, which, in staff’s professional opinion, would prevent the issue of an unconditional Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). “None” means staff has no objections and believes a COA is warranted, with no conditions. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

1. If the bay windows must be dismantled because of deterioration of the floor structure that supports the bay windows, the reconstruction of these character-defining features should happen immediately after the structural issues are addressed. It is staff’s opinion that removing a character-defining feature—especially a large, highly visible, significant feature—without a plan to replace it very soon after its removal could endanger the feature over the long term.
2. The masonry units to replace missing or damaged units have not yet been identified because paint tests must be done first to determine the actual color of the masonry.
3. The solution for the painted masonry has not yet been determined. Proposed is to test chemical paint strippers and evaluate the results from the tests to determine whether the paint should continue being stripped or whether the masonry should be repainted instead.
4. The height of the existing and proposed rooftop penthouse units has been estimated in the application materials but exact measurements have not been determined. The masonry materials for the proposed rooftop penthouses for the elevator and rooftop access have not been finalized.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This second section expands on the reasoning and analysis leading to staff’s conclusions given in the first section above. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

- **FIRE ESCAPE REMOVAL.** The district’s period of significance ends in the late 1920s. A 1920s photo from the applicant’s materials shows no fire escapes present (at least on the Park and Temple sides of the building) at that time. A building permit was issued in September 1940 to “change fire escape ladder to counter balanced stairs as per plan.” The plan is no

longer available to staff to understand where on the building counterbalanced stairs were added. The applicant's historic photo from c. 1976 shows counterbalanced fire escapes on the Park Avenue end of the building, and staff finds it reasonable that these counterbalanced stairs are the same stairs permitted in 1940. The counterbalanced stairs from the 1970s match today's in size, scale, attachments, and the counterweight looks the same. The current "X" pattern in the railings may not be present in the 1970s photo, but the rest of the characteristics of the fire escapes appear to be the same from the 1970s, and presumably, 1940. The application did not provide any historic photos of the west end of the building (near the alley), and staff found none; as a result, staff has not determined when the west end fire escapes were added to the building. The existing fire escapes are similar in design to the east end counterbalanced stairs, but the balconies are smaller and, as a result, the stairs are steeper. The design and counterweight, however, looks similar to the fire escapes on the east end (Park Avenue) escapes. In any case, because the building permit card indicates that there was a fire escape ladder until 1940, after the district's period of significance, staff finds that these existing fire escapes are not historic, character-defining features of the building. As such, staff has no objections to their removal.



1920s photo from applicant's materials. The long, south side along Temple is shown, along with the short, east end along Park. Fire escapes were added to the Park Avenue façade by the 1970s. A building permit to add a counterbalanced fire escape system to the building was issued in 1940.



Alhambra Apartments, circa 1976

Counterbalanced stair fire escapes are pictured on the Park Avenue end (the east end) of the building, c. 1976. This counterbalanced system is presumably the same counterbalanced system permitted in 1940, and it looks very much like the counterbalanced stair system present in 2026. (Photo from applicant's materials.)



The counterbalanced fire escape stairs on the Park Avenue (east) end of the building. The “Xs” on the balcony railings are not visible in the 1970s photo, but the size of the balconies, the placement of the attachments, the angle of the stairs, the counterweight, and the railing on the lowest section of stair that would pivot to the sidewalk all match the 1970s photo. (Staff photo, April 2026)



West end of the building. Staff is not certain whether these counterbalanced stair fire escapes were also installed in 1940, but the design of the balconies, railings, and counterweight are all similar to the fire escapes on the east end. The west end's stacked bay windows are also visible in this photo. (Staff photo, April 2026)

- **DOCUMENT, REMOVE, AND REBUILD BAY WINDOWS ON THE NORTH AND WEST SIDES OF THE BUILDING.** The north and west sides of the building are the secondary sides and are mainly utilitarian but both have multi-story stacked bay windows that are historic and character defining. These windows are proposed to be fully documented for rebuilding and then removed so that structural issues can be addressed. The application states that the windows will be removed and “Temporary painted plywood sheathing will be provided at the bay windows until a tenant has been identified for the building and a full renovation occurs, at which time the bays can be fit with windows, cladding, and trim to match the originals.” The applicant clarified in a conversation with staff June 3, 2026 that the new framing would be erected in the bay window shape, and this bay window structure would be roofed, sheathed, and made watertight and boarded, but the windows, siding, and trim would be added later at an undetermined date, as part of larger rehabilitation efforts.
- If the windows must be dismantled because of deterioration of the floor structure that supports the bay windows, it is staff’s opinion that the rebuilding of these character-defining features should happen immediately after the structural issues are addressed. It is staff’s opinion that removing a character-defining feature—especially a large, highly visible, significant feature—without a plan to replace it very soon after its removal could complicate the ultimate restoration of the feature, should the building be sold or the rehabilitation

indefinitely postponed.



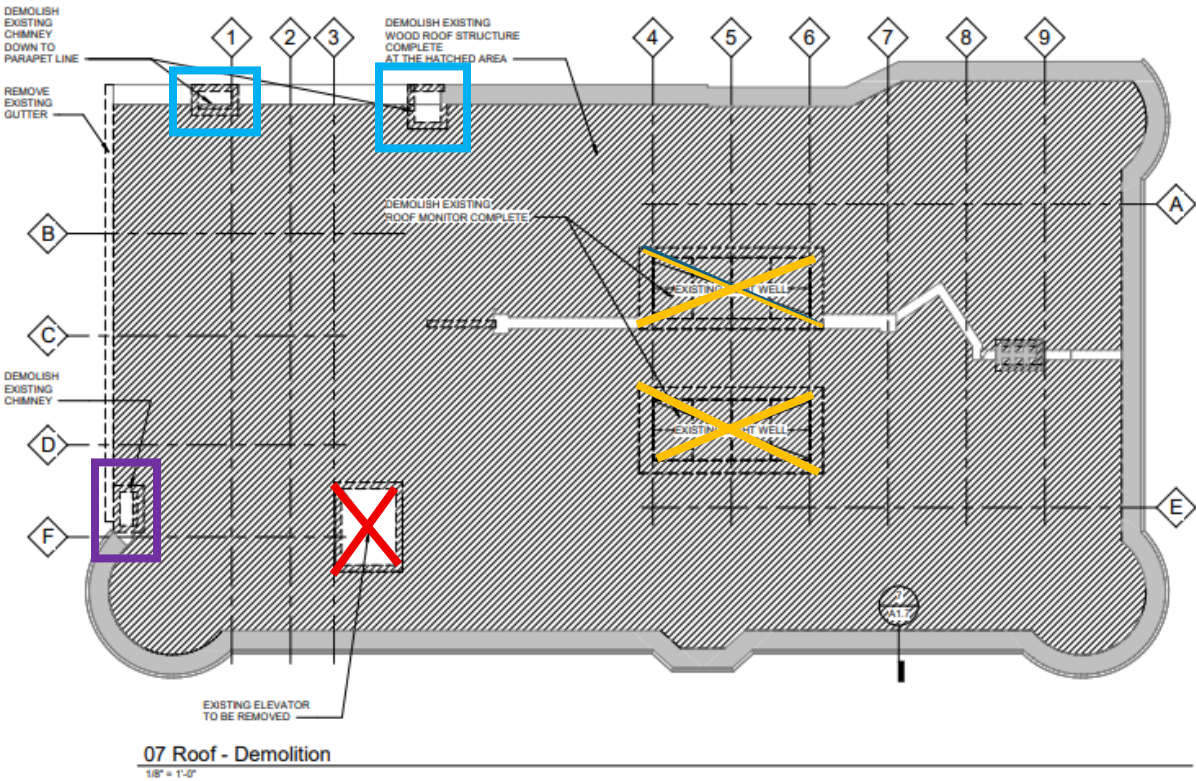
The north side (top) and west end of 100 Temple. The multi-story bay windows, covered in painted plywood, are visible on both and are proposed to be removed, reframed, and boarded and then finished at a later time. (Staff photo, April 2026)

- **MODIFY PARK AVENUE ENTRANCE.** This scope item has been removed by the applicant from the current scope of work.
- **MASONRY REPAIRS/ REPOINTING.** The application and drawings describe replacing missing masonry, repairing/ replacing cracked masonry units, tuckpointing/repointing joints, and removing and patching former sconce locations along the ground floor of the south side. The application materials describe that the repairs and pointing will be completed in accordance with the National Park Service’s *Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*. If staff is afforded the opportunity to review and approve brick and mortar matches, staff finds that this proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.
- **REBUILD SOUTH ELEVATION PARAPET, REPAIR EAST PARAPET, AND INSTALL CORNICE.**
 - The south side’s parapet has partially collapsed and is proposed to be rebuilt. Both parapets on the south and east were parged and the parging is failing. The parging will be removed from the parapets and the parapets will be repointed, repaired, and reconstructed as required. After reconstruction, a new fiberglass cornice will be installed to replicate the historic cornice, which was removed before the 1970s. The application materials state that all masonry repairs and pointing will be completed in accordance with the National Park Service (NPS) *Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*. If staff is afforded the opportunity to review and approve brick and mortar matches, staff finds that this proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.
 - Regarding the restoration of the missing cornice, the Secretary of the Interior’s *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* recommend replacement of a missing feature, such as a cornice, and the recommendation is that the missing feature should be reproduced in kind, but if it is economically or technically infeasible to reproduce the feature in kind, a compatible substitute material can be considered. The *Guidelines* recommend that the missing feature must be well documented and that the substitute material for the replacement feature conveys the same visual appearance as the original feature would have. Staff is not certain whether the historic cornice was wood or metal or exactly when it was removed but Google Street View shows that the cornice had been removed before the historic district was designated in 2016. (HDC staff does not have access to Cass Park district’s designation slides.) Consequently, staff finds that a compatible substitute material could be considered to replicate a missing architectural detail. Fiberglass is commonly used in historic preservation projects to replicate exterior ornamentation, like cornices, and is a compatible material with the historic building in terms of color, texture, and reflectivity. It is staff’s opinion that the proposed replication of the cornice in fiberglass meets the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.
- **CLEAN AND, IF NECESSARY, REPAINT MASONRY.** Proposed is to test chemical strippers and evaluate whether the masonry should continue to be stripped or if it should instead be repainted. The application describes that techniques used for cleaning and, if necessary, repainting will conform to NPS *Preservation Brief 1: Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings* and the City of Detroit Historic District Commission Masonry Cleaning Guidelines. The City’s Guidelines require that the chemical agent be specified, pressure and/ or method for applying the cleaner will be

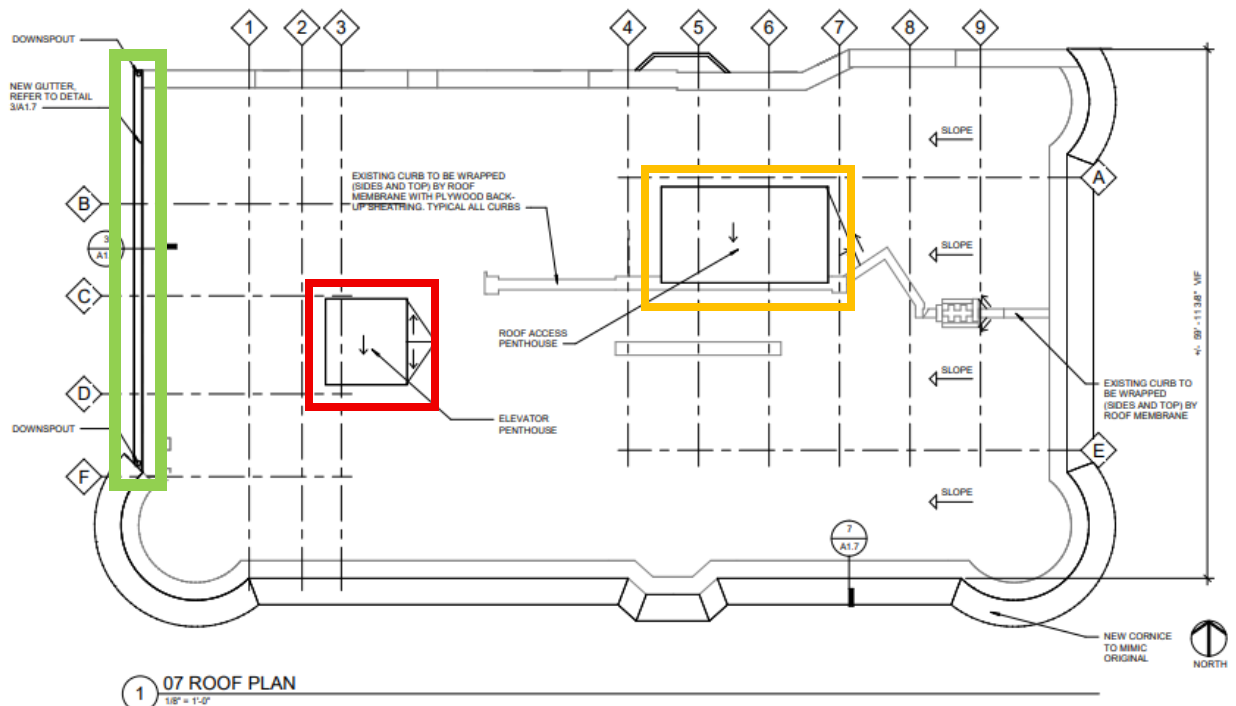
specified, the rinse and its pressure will be specified, a description (and photos) of existing conditions and location of cleaning will be submitted, and a test patch and staff review will be needed. As a result, staff will need to review the test results and, if repainting becomes the preferred method of finishing the masonry work, staff will need to review and approve paint colors.

- **REBOARD WINDOWS.** All windows and balcony recesses are proposed to be boarded. The Secretary of the Interior’s *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* recommend boarding windows of commercial storefronts to protect the building and its interior features from weather or vandalism. Staff to the Historic District Commission can approve window boarding for the protection of persons or property for up to 180 days.
- **REMOVE ROOFTOP MONITORS OVER LIGHTWELLS, LIGHTWELLS, ELEVATOR PENTHOUSE, AND REDUCE TWO CHIMNEYS AND REMOVE ONE CHIMNEY. REROOF. INSTALL GUTTER AND DOWNSPOUTS.**
 - The rooftop monitors/skylights are not visible from the public right-of-way and staff does not find them to be character-defining features. As such, staff does not object to their removal.
 - The three chimneys in this scope of work are visible from the two secondary sides of the building (north and west). The chimney to be removed is tucked next to the turreted southwest corner. The two chimneys to be reduced to the height of the parapet are only visible from the north and the chimney nearest the northwest corner has corbeling on it that makes the chimney appear to staff to have been shorter originally; the corbeling appears to have been at the top of the chimney when the chimney was shorter. Staff finds that none of the three chimneys are character-defining features of the building because they are only visible from secondary sides of the building and because they are modest in size and scale and are utilitarian. They lack decorative features that would correlate to an architectural style, for example. Because these chimneys are not significant, character-defining features, staff does not object to their removal or reduction in height.
 - The roof is not visible from most vantage points and is not a character-defining feature. The District’s Elements of Design state that “Roofs within the district are generally flat and not visible...” Staff finds the proposed replacement roof compatible.
 - The existing gutter is a square/box gutter, and there are two downspouts on the west end of the building. The downspouts are metal, fluted downspouts. They are historic features, but are on what was historically the rear of the building, facing the alley. Staff finds them to be historic, but not character defining. (If the downspouts were on a primary façade, staff would find them character defining.) Staff finds that the proposed box gutter is a compatible replacement, as are the proposed smooth, square downspouts.
- **CONSTRUCT NEW ELEVATOR PENTHOUSE AND A NEW ROOF ACCESS PENTHOUSE.**
 - The existing elevator penthouse is quite close to the edge of the roof on the building’s south side. It is proposed to be removed, and the new proposed elevator penthouse would be set further back from the south side, more centered on the roof. The drawing included in the application materials showing the materials to be demolished on the north elevation (page 14 of the application materials PDF, sheet labeled AD3.0) shows “Top of the Penthouse” at 73’ 8”, but the existing elevator penthouse is shown to be slightly taller than that in the drawing. The applicant clarified by

phone June 3, 2026 that some of the building's roof is missing and access to the building is limited. Consequently, regarding the roof and penthouse heights, estimates were made from a lift several stories in the air and modeling for the drawings was based on those estimates. The applicant stated that the goal is that the new rooftop penthouses for roof access and the elevator will not be taller than the existing penthouse. The drawing on page 18 of the applicant's PDF, or sheet A3.1.1, shows the two new rooftop penthouses for the elevator and rooftop access as one masonry course plus coping taller than the 73' 8" estimate for the top of the existing penthouse. As drawn, staff would find the design of the two rooftop penthouses compatible with the building. Without accurate dimensions for the existing and the proposed penthouses, however, and without specified masonry materials for the penthouses, staff is unable to make a recommendation regarding the proposed penthouses.



Roof plan showing demolition plans, from applicant materials. Three chimneys are shown; two are to be reduced to the parapet line (outlined in blue) and one is to be demolished (outlined in purple). The existing elevator and penthouse is to be demolished (marked with a red X), as are the existing rooftop monitors and lightwells (marked with gold Xs). The entire wood roof structure is to be demolished and all the wood floors from floors 1 through 6 are to be demolished.



1 07 ROOF PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

The new roof plan from applicant materials. The proposed elevator and elevator penthouse are outlined in red and the proposed stair shaft and rooftop access penthouse is outlined in gold. The new roof will be a membrane roof and the gutter and downspouts are proposed for replacement (shown in green).



The two chimneys visible here on the north side of the building are proposed to be reduced in height to be even with the parapet height. These chimneys are not visible from the primary facades of the building, and, based on the corbeling of the chimney on the right, it appears that that chimney was originally shorter with corbeling near its original top. During the period of significance, some of this side as well as some of the building's west end would have been obscured by neighboring 2.5-story houses along Temple and Park (see the 1920s photo from the applicant's materials and included on page 2 of this report), but architectural elements above the third story would likely have been visible into the 1920s. (Staff photo, April 2026)



The building's west end shows a chimney near the southwest, turreted corner (staff circled it in red). This chimney is proposed to be demolished. It is not visible from the two primary facades of the building, and it is not clear to staff that this chimney was original to the building. Also on this end of the building is the gutter and portions of two downspouts; the gutter and downspouts are proposed to be replaced. (Staff photo, April 2026)



Existing gutter and downspout on the west end of the building. The gutter looks like a simple box gutter but the downspout is round, fluted metal. This end of the building is secondary and probably would not have been seen well historically because of neighboring buildings, but currently the building stands quite alone and can be viewed from all sides. (Detail, staff photo, 2026)



Proposed gutter and downspouts in Dark Bronze. (From application materials)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This third and final section takes staff's itemized "objections" identified in the first section, and presents them in the form of "conditions" in support of a proposed approval recommendation or "reasons" in support of a proposed denial recommendation, in the form required by Section 21-2-78 of the City Code. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

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

Recommendation 1 of 1, Certificate of Appropriateness

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Cass Park Local Historic District's Elements of Design, with the condition that:

1. If the bay windows on the north and west sides must be dismantled because of deterioration of the floor structure that supports the bay windows, these bay windows must be reconstructed as per the measured drawings and photodocumentation immediately after the building's structural issues are addressed.
2. A photo of the masonry units to be used to replace missing or damaged units next to existing masonry, and the proposed mortar to be used in the repointing, will be provided to HDC staff for review and approval once test patches of paint have been removed and the actual color of the masonry has been determined.
3. With the building's project team, HDC staff will review the results of the test patches of the chemical paint strippers to determine whether the building should be chemically stripped or if it should be repainted. Staff can docket these test results and determination for Commission review and approval if necessary. If the building is to be repainted, staff must review and approve proposed paint colors.
4. As per the plans and elevations included in the application, the rooftop penthouses for the new proposed elevator and rooftop access are compatible with the historic building in concept. However, more detailed drawings of the existing penthouse and the proposed penthouses, as well as the specifications for the masonry materials to be used to construct the penthouses, must be submitted for Commission review before construction begins.