

STAFF REPORT: NOVEMBER 12, 2025 MEETING

PREPARED BY: E. THACKERY

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00642

ADDRESS: 2725 W. BOSTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST CHICAGO-WEST BOSTON BOULEVARD APARTMENTS NON-CONTIGUOUS HISTORIC DISTRICT

APPLICANT: PAUL STODDARD, MHT CONSTRUCTION

PROPERTY OWNER: WEST BOSTON LDHA LP

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 10/20/25

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 10/26/25

SCOPE: MASONRY WORK AND BUILDING REHABILITATION, INCLUDING NEW ROOFS (NOT CLAY TILES), DOORS, AND LIGHTING.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

2725 West Boston Boulevard was originally known as the Andorra Apartments and was built in 1927. As the Historic Designation Advisory Board notes in the designation report, the building is a “small-scaled four-story light brick 37-unit apartment building that was designed in the Spanish Revival style...” Red brick was used on the sides and rear. The report notes, “Window openings, likely double-hung sash originally,” were “altered with inappropriate configurations” in the 1971 rehabilitation. (See the designation slide on the next page.) Double-hung vinyl windows have since been installed (c. 2006, according to the application materials) to try to return the building to closer to its original appearance. Replacements for the 2006 windows are expected to be proposed before the end of the year.

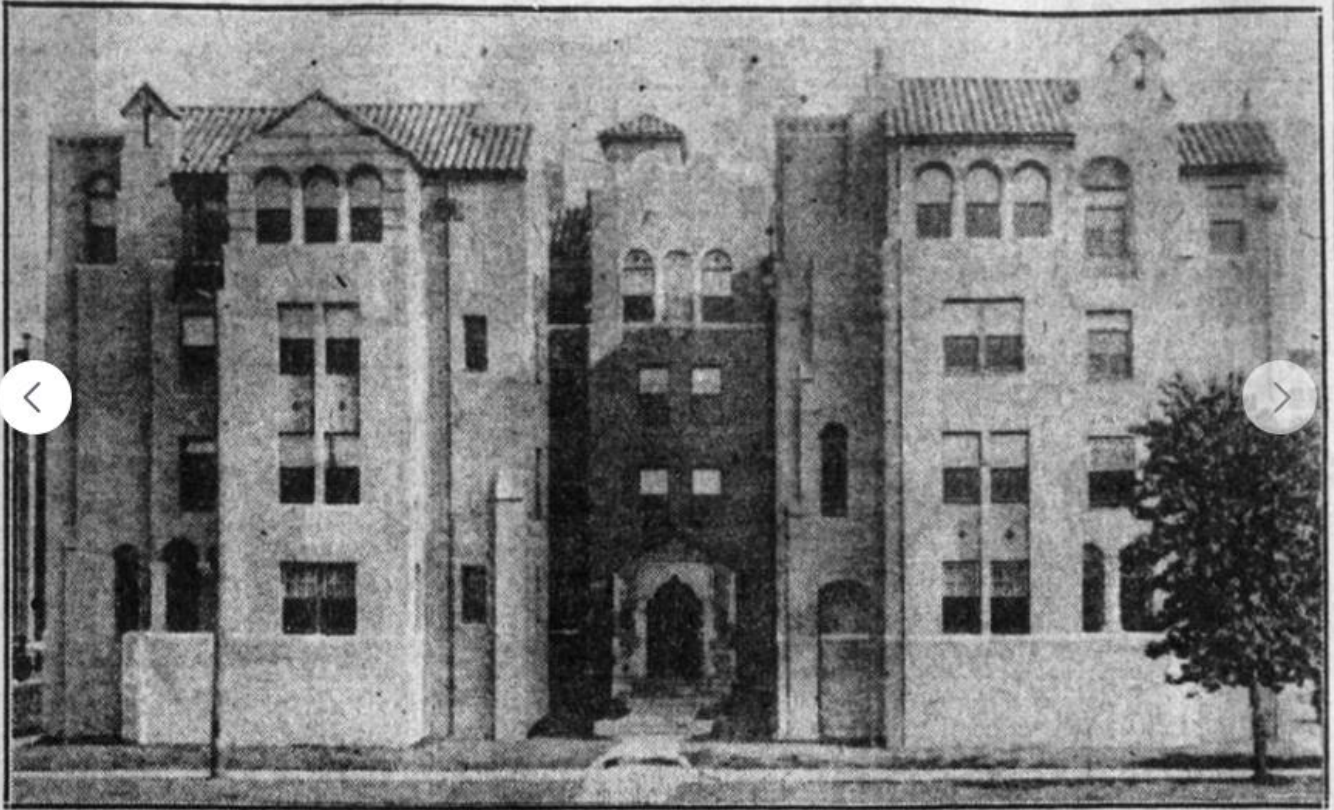


Andorra Apartments, 2725 W Boston, primary façade (north wall) of the building. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, HDAB designation slide, c. 2006. Pictured are some of the inappropriate changes the report referred to, including slider windows. These inappropriate windows shown have since been replaced with double-hung vinyl windows.

ANDORRA APARTMENTS OPENED



The Andorra apartments at 2725 Boston boulevard which are open for public inspection for the first time today, are shown above. The building contains 37 two and three-room apartments, furnished with iceless refrigeration, incinerators, and radio connections. The Andorra apartments are on Boston boulevard, between Linwood and Lawton avenues, one block from the Linwood car line and two blocks from the Dexter bus line. Harry Slatkin was the builder and J. I. Weinberg the architect.

A 1927 Detroit Free Press photograph and article, posted February 4, 2025 on the Historical Detroit Area Architecture Facebook group.



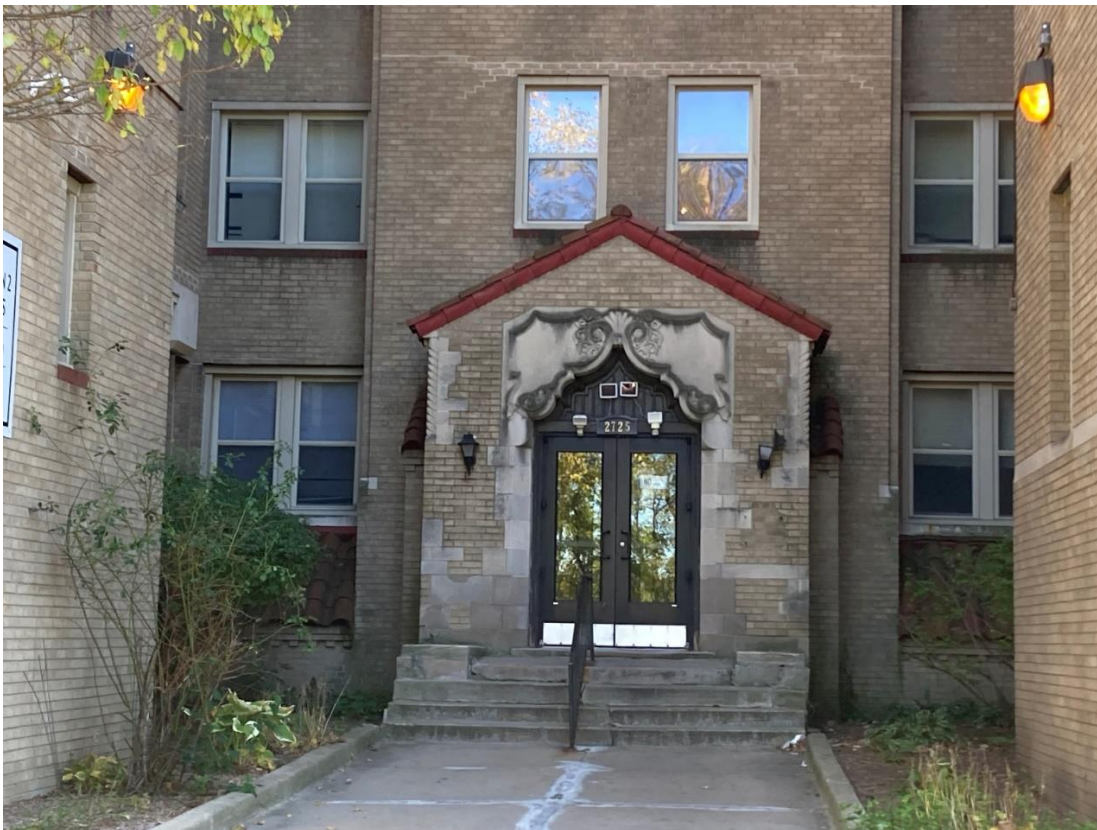
2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, detail of east tower of the building. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, detail of west tower of the building. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, main entrance and central courtyard. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, detail, main entrance. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, detail of pent roof covered in clay tile just east of the main entrance. Staff photo, October 2025.



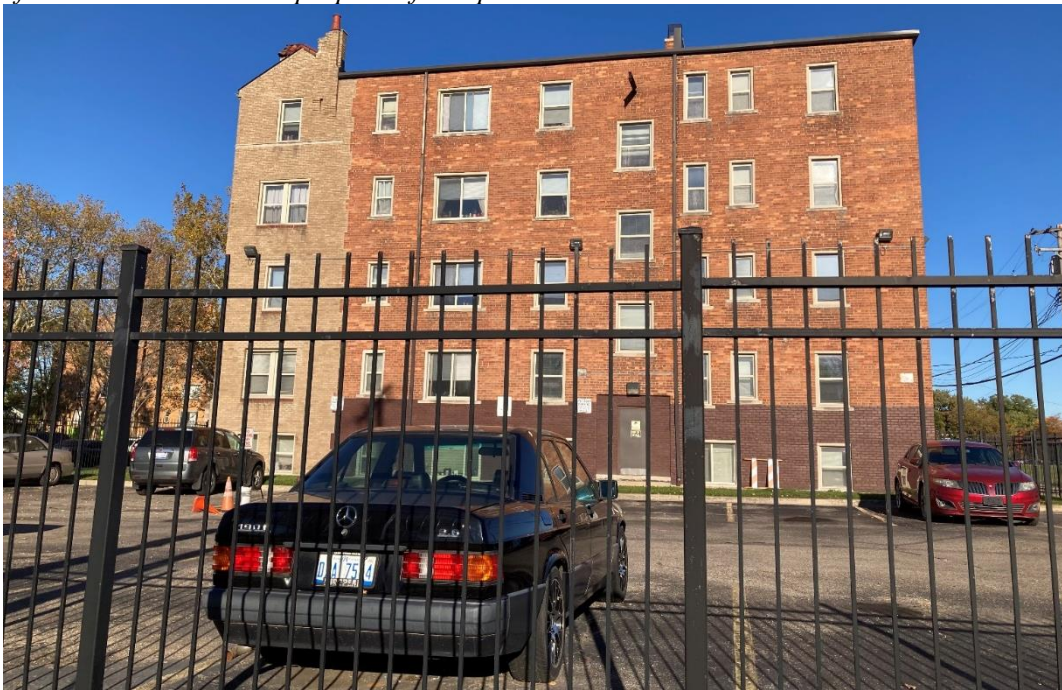
2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, detail of pent roof covered in clay tile just west of the main entrance. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north (primary) façade, detail of main entrance. Staff photo, October 2025. The building's main doors, shown here, are proposed for replacement.



2725 W Boston, west side and parking lot with metal fence. Staff photo, October 2025. The transition from buff brick to red brick is visible here. The door on the first floor at the northwest corner and the door near the center of the west side are both proposed for replacement.



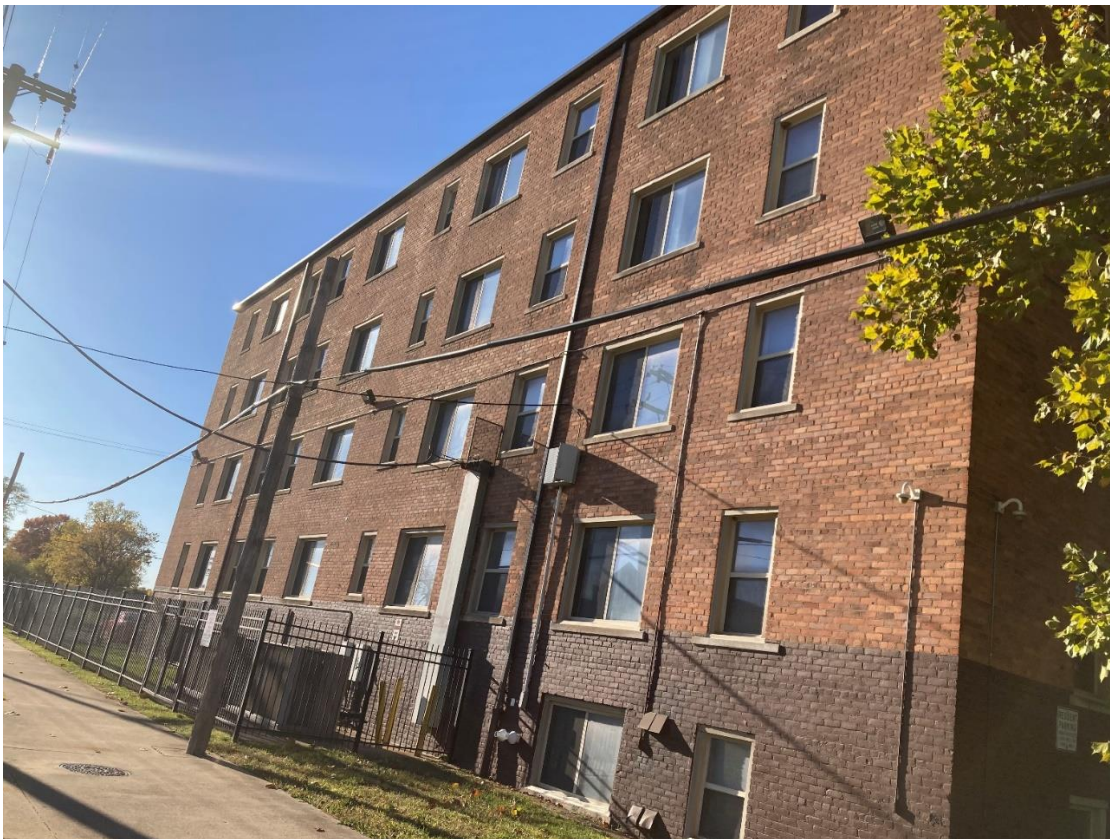
2725 W Boston, west side and parking lot with metal fence. The door near the center of this wall is proposed for replacement. Staff photo, October 2025. This parking lot is not included in the historic district, but resurfacing, restriping, and other site work is proposed for the parking lot as part of this larger project.



2725 W Boston, west side detail through metal fence. Staff photo, October 2025. The exterior door shown here is proposed for replacement.



2725 W Boston, south side (rear) with the west side also shown to the left. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, south side (rear) from southeast corner. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, southeast corner and east side of building with narrow walkway along building that is proposed for replacement as needed. A similar walkway exists on the west side of the building. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, east side of building, exterior door proposed for replacement. Staff photo, October 2025.



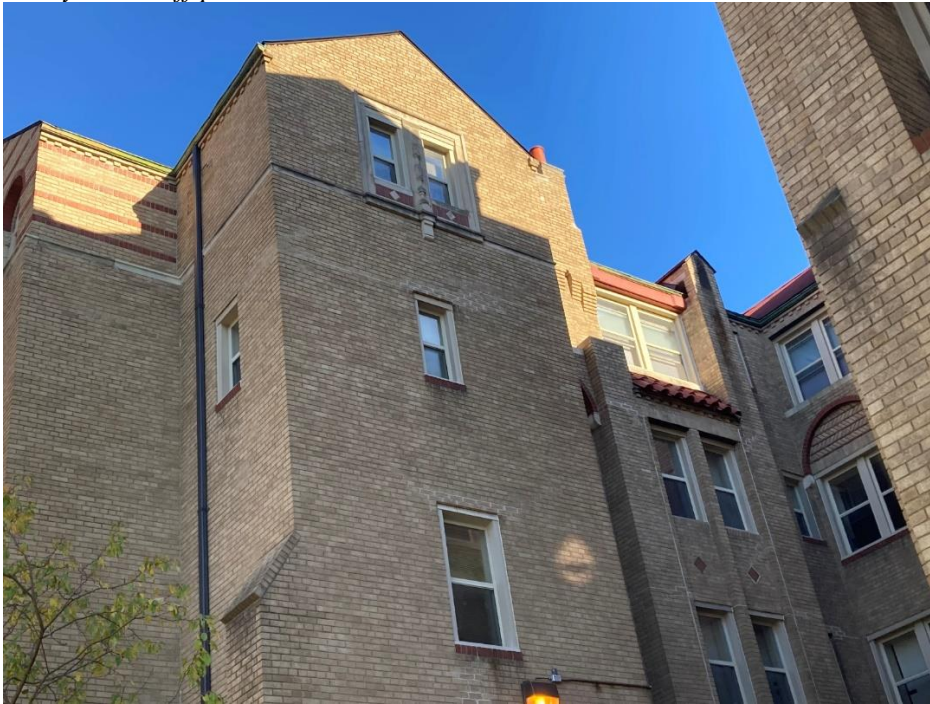
2725 W Boston, east side of building. Staff photo, October 2025.



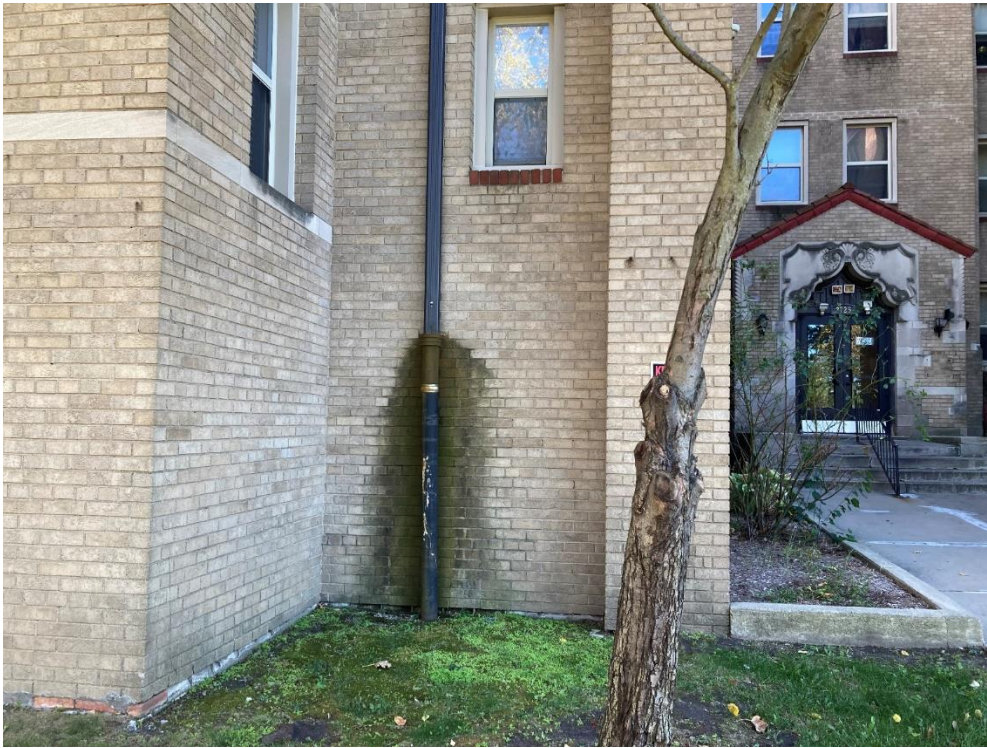
2725 W Boston, detail at northeast corner. The door shown is proposed for replacement with a door and storm door. Its corollary at the northwest corner is also proposed for replacement. Also shown are character-defining features including arches, a bracket, and a marble column. The brick staining here would likely be included in the proposed masonry cleaning. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, detail of east tower looking at west tower and parking lot. The courtyard and main entrance are to the left in the space between the two towers. Shown is one of the balconettes, or Juliet balconies, facing the courtyard. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, west side of east tower, from courtyard. Contrasting brick accents, dentil molding, tile insets, and clay tile roof are shown. Copper gutter appears pale green and has a dark downspout. All gutters and downspouts are proposed to be replaced.



2725 W Boston, detail of east tower at its base, near the central courtyard and main entrance. Water staining from the downspout is visible, and is likely one of the areas slated for masonry cleaning. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, central courtyard and main entrance. Some of the building's rich architectural features are visible, including the balconette or Juliet balcony centered on the fourth floor between stone columns, the herringbone masonry in the arch over the windows on the third floor, and the ornamented masonry Arabesque arch over the main entrance. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, detail at northwest corner. The door shown is proposed for replacement with a door and storm door. Its corollary at the northeast corner is also proposed for replacement. Also shown here are the arches over windows, defined by red bricks, and an ornate stone column. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, northwest corner. A downspout is shown and all of these are proposed for replacement. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north side of west tower and northwest corner. Copper gutters and a nonhistoric downspout are shown and all of these are proposed for replacement. Some of the building's rich architectural features are also shown, including the tripartite arched window with columns, patterned masonry inset above the window in the arch, dentil molding, and the clay tile and varied roofline. Staining behind the downspout here would likely be targeted in the proposed cleaning efforts. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, north wall of west tower, detail. Shown here is a detail of some dentil molding, copper gutter, the patterned masonry inset in the arched opening, the varied roofline, and some of the clay tile. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, west wall, detail of gutter and downspouts. All gutters and downspouts are proposed for replacement. Nonhistoric gutter and downspouts appear brown here. Staff photo, October 2025.



2725 W Boston, parking lot west of building, for information and context only. The lot is not included in the historic district, but is slated for resurfacing, restriping, and other site work. Staff photo, October 2025.

PROPOSAL

Building Exterior:

- Repair/replace shingle and flat roofs
- Replace roof access doors
- Replace all doors
- Sand and repaint Juliet balcony railings
- Replace existing damaged concrete with new concrete (sidewalk, front steps, low walls flanking main entrance on stoop, paths at sides of building)
- Brick tuckpointing and cleaning
- Replace wall sconces and exterior lights, and install security cameras
- Replace gutters and downspouts
- Replace deteriorated wood fascia boards in kind
- Clean soiled architectural details, including clay roof tiles and stone details

The application's scope of work originally included the replacement of all windows and site work in the parking lot. The proposed window replacement has been removed from this application and will be proposed in December 2025 instead. The site work is described here for informational purposes only, because the adjacent parking lot is not included in the historic district. The related site work will include: resurfacing the parking lot, repainting the parking spots, adding bumper blocks to the lot's east side, repainting fence and gates black, and trimming trees and shrubs.

The application also stated that included in the scope of work is to "replace wood trim," and to "renovate façade detail work." The application also mentions that new clay roof tiles will be installed and that masonry will be powerwashed. Staff clarified these items with the applicant, and asked about replacement door specs. These clarifications are included in the related scopes of work below.

Roof Scope of Work, including Gutters and Downspouts

Per the applicant, the roof work will consist of:

- cleaning (not replacing) the clay roof tiles,
- removing the two skylights,
- reroofing the flat or low-sloped areas of the roof with an EPDM roof product in white (see below), and
- installing new asphalt roof shingles where they exist on the sloped roofs, where clay tiles existed historically;
- replacing all gutters and downspouts, and
- replacing wood fascia boards beyond repair in kind, but color is unknown, since roof color is changing.



Applicant provided this picture showing the flat roof that is proposed to be white and the roof access doors outlined here in blue. Historic skylights are also visible.

Staff requested product specs for the new asphalt shingles; proposed are Certainteed Landmark shingles in Burnt Sienna:



The applicant provided the photo below of the existing asphalt roof and a fascia board to be replaced. This photo shows how well the asphalt roof matches the clay tiles and so the board is also painted to match both.



This applicant-provided photo shows how well the existing asphalt shingle matches the color of the clay tile roof and how the fascia board is painted to match both. The proposed roof won't match the clay so closely and is intended to look more like shingles and less like flat tiles. The paint color for the new fascia boards is unknown.

Gutters and downspouts are also to be replaced. Currently, on the building's north side, historic copper gutters remain in place, and downspouts are modern black aluminum. (The designation slide shows downspouts painted light tan to match the buff brick on the north side.) On the west, south, and east sides, gutters and downspouts are modern replacements in brown aluminum. All gutters and downspouts are proposed to be black aluminum. The applicant clarified in an October email that some wood fascia boards are deteriorated beyond repair and that "replacement boards will be the same color as the existing."



Proposed new gutters in black with matching black corrugated downspouts (3" x 4"). The downspouts are to be installed in existing locations. Image from applicant's materials.

Surface Cleaning and Masonry Scope:

Per the applicant, the masonry scope of work consists of:

- testing the cleaning products and methods with 3-foot-square test patches;
- cleaning the masonry where it is soiled or stained (only areas that need to be cleaned will be washed, and never exceeding 300-400 psi when pressure washing);
- cleaning sensitive areas of historic architectural detailing using low-pressure water (100 psi or less); and
- inspecting each wall for deteriorated masonry joints and repointing them with matching mortar in color and strength, mostly around openings and windowsills.

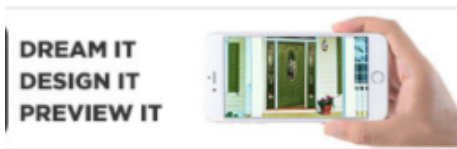
Doors

Per the applicant, the scope of work for the **doors** is as follows:

- replace main entrance doors with similar storefront doors in black (see below);
- replace side doors and roof egress doors with a steel 6-panel-style door in a clay color called Clay Hearth (see below);
- replace steel doors with storm doors at the northeast and northwest corners of the building with similar doors as described in the application and screenshot further below.



Sample Tubelite storefront door provided by applicant. Similar doors in black are proposed for the main front doors, and hardware style and color were not specified.



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as close as possible to actual finish but should not be considered
re to see Paint and Stain Color Samples.

for more information regarding unit characteristics.

Proposed steel side and roof doors, in Clay Hearth. Hardware was not specified.

YOUR DOOR
6-Panel
Classic
Model: 21

Need help measuring your door?

CUSTOMIZE YOUR DOOR
Door Configuration: *
Single Door ?
Door Material: *
Steel Security Replacement ?
Door Size (WxH): *
36in x 79in - 21 ?
[Click here for Frame Warranty information.](#)
Frame Size: *
REPFPM ?
FINISH YOUR DOOR
Door Exterior Color:
Clay Hearth ?
Door Interior Color:
Brilliant White ?



atomy of a Replacement Door



Proposed white steel and black storm doors (below) at the northeast and northwest corners, first floor. Any window in these doors has not been clarified/confirmed. Images from applicant's materials.



Black storm door proposed to complement the white steel door above, for the northwest and northeast corners.

Lighting Scope

All security lights (wall packs) around the property are proposed to be replaced in kind and the existing, non-historic black wall sconces that flank the main entry are also to be replaced. Security cameras are also proposed but product specs/cut sheets were not provided.



Existing typical security lights.



Proposed replacements.

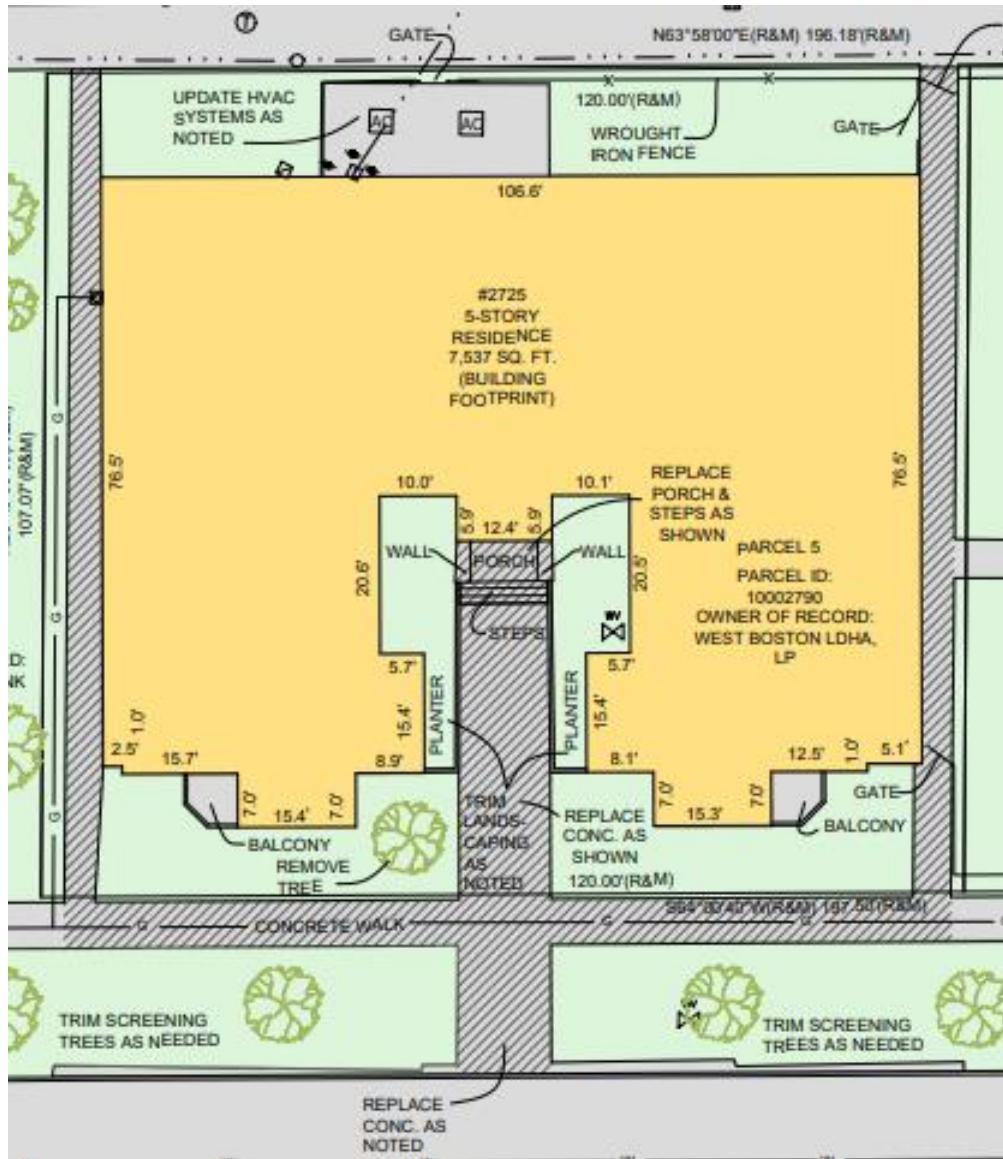


Existing non-historic wall sconces flanking the main entrance doors (left) and proposed LED replacements (right).



Concrete Work

- Replacing damaged concrete on walks, courtyard, front stoop, low wall on stoop, and front steps.



2725 W Boston, portion of site plan from applicant's materials. Gray striped sidewalk in front of building, walkways along both sides of building, the courtyard, and the steps, stoop, and low walls at the main entrance are proposed for damaged concrete to be replaced with new concrete.

STAFF ANALYSIS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RESEARCH

- The West Chicago-West Boston Boulevard Apartments Non-Contiguous Historic District was designated in 2006.
- A few items in the proposed scope are repairs that will not change the exterior of the resource other than to remove the effects of weathering. These include: masonry cleaning and repointing, replacing deteriorated wood trim in kind and painting it, repainting the Juliet balconies, carefully cleaning architectural details, including the clay tiles, and replacing damaged concrete with new concrete.
- The majority of the work, however, is replacing non-historic elements mostly in kind, including: replacing flat and asphalt roofs; replacing non-historic doors to the building's roof, sides, and front entry; and replacing non-historic light fixtures with similar. Historic copper gutters, however, are proposed for replacement with aluminum, while aluminum gutters and downspouts are proposed for replacement in kind. New are the proposed security cameras, although specs/cut sheets have not been provided.

Roofs

- Staff notes that the historic photo from the 1927 *Detroit Free Press* shows the pitched areas of the main roof covered in red clay tiles.
- Clay tiles remain on some scattered roofs on the building, but the prominent pitched areas on the main roof were covered in red asphalt shingles at some point before 2006. (Staff was not able to pinpoint the date of the main roof's asphalt installation, but by the 2006 district designation, red asphalt was in place on the prominent pitched portions of the main roof).
- In the current application, the remaining clay tiles are proposed to remain, which meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Staff notes that the current three-tab asphalt roofing that replaced the clay tiles on the pitched roof areas has a similar appearance to flat tiles, like slate, and the red color matches the clay tiles.
- In contrast, the proposed asphalt roof shingles are dimensional and so look more like wood shingles and the brownish color does not match the clay as well as the current shingles do.
- Staff believes retaining a reddish roof that recalls clay tile is important to the Spanish Revival style of this building.
- Additionally, the red color is a repeated element on the façade because of the other, clay-tiled pent roofs that are placed irregularly around the building's north (front) side; the reddish, flat, decorative tiles laid into the arched stucco transoms over some windows as single accent tiles; and because of the red brick arches above some of the windows also on the primary facade.
- The district's Elements of Design 7, 8, 9, and 10 convey the importance of this building's rich and varied character-defining architectural details, the importance of texture in the building's design, and the key relationship among the elements with the color red. For example, Element of Design 9 states, "The Andorra Apartments building features a light beige brick contracting (*sic*) with light stone trim. Red clay roof tiles, red brick used as sills and lintels, red decorative tiles, and black metal railings contribute to decorative coloristic effects."
- Regarding the flat roof and the existing, historic-age skylights, the applicant explained to staff that they leak and fog up. The skylights are not visible from the ground, and staff does not find them to be character defining.



The designation slide photo from c. 2006 shows the red asphalt roofing, echoed by the red diamond tiles in the arches and red clay tiles on the right and again below, over the front entrance.



The red on the sloped roof is repeated on the bricks that top the arches above some of the windows, in the red brick stripes on the east tower, on the clay roofs on the assorted pent roofs, and on the clay roof over the front entrance.

Gutters and Downspouts—Primary (North) Facade

- Based on the gutters that remain on the north/primary side of the building, it appears that copper was likely used for gutters and downspouts on this building historically, or at least on the primary facade. Copper gutters and downspouts would have been prominent initially, but they would have aged to a pale green over time (as they are now), quietly complementing the red roof tiles and other Spanish Revival features. Although copper gutters remain on the building's north side today, by 2006 when the district was designated, copper downspouts had been replaced with tan aluminum downspouts on this side.
- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation require that historic materials, like extant copper gutters, are repaired before being replaced. If the copper gutters are beyond repair, as per the Standards, they should be replaced in kind, and copper downspouts would best complement the copper gutters.
- If copper gutters and downspouts for the building's north side are not feasible and a substitute material is required, aluminum gutters and downspouts in brown or a shade of green would meet Standard 6 better than the proposed black, because brown or green would be closer to the historic material's visual qualities.

Gutters and Downspouts—West, South, and East Sides

- Neither historic gutters nor downspouts are present on the building's West, South, and East sides, which are clad in red brick.
- For these sides, a compatible gutter and downspout would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Standard 9. Aluminum gutters in brown or green as mentioned above would meet this compatibility standard on these sides as well.

Surface Cleaning and Masonry Scope:

Per the applicant, the masonry scope of work consists of:

- testing the cleaning products and methods with 3-foot-square test patches;
- cleaning the masonry where it is soiled or stained (only areas that need to be cleaned will be washed, and never exceeding 300-400 psi when pressure washing);
- cleaning sensitive areas of historic architectural detailing using low-pressure water (100 psi or less); and
- inspecting each wall for deteriorated masonry joints and repointing them with matching mortar in color and strength, mostly around openings and windowsills.

Staff finds these practices generally compliant with the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines and other National Park Service guidance, but staff would recommend starting with the gentlest method (<100 psi water and gentle scrubbing with natural bristle brushes) before testing any other method. In other words, it is staff's opinion that the potential methods should be tested in order of strength (starting with the gentlest method) and also sequentially instead of administering all tests at once on different patches.

Doors

- None of the existing doors are historic.
- Staff finds the in-kind proposed replacements for the current simple, black storefront doors at the main entrance compatible with the building, and notes that hardware on the doors should remain understated to preserve compatibility.
- Staff finds the proposed steel, paneled-style doors compatible for the roof access and the side doors, but without the incompatible modern "fanlight" window. The Clay Hearth color proposed is intended for the roof access and side doors, and that color would be within the City's Style and Color Guide, Color System F for this Spanish Revival building. The primary façade is where the Spanish Revival style is expressed most formally, with the buff bricks and clay tiles, and white is not featured in the design. As a result, the doors at the northwest and northeast corners should not be white, as proposed. The introduction to Color System F explains that on large buildings of stone or with stone trim, matching that stone is recommended for painting windows, frames, and doors. As such, pale tan or beige that could blend into the buff brick and stone should be specified instead of white for those corner doors.

Lighting Scope and Security Cameras

- None of the existing light fixtures are historic.
- As long as the lights are installed so that they do as little damage to historic material (like masonry) as possible, they do not destroy historic materials, and they seem to staff to be compatible with massing, size, and scale to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- Regarding the design of the proposed fixtures, the lanterns flanking the front, main doors seem to staff to meet the Standards in terms of compatibility with the building's architectural features, whereas the security lights, in staff's opinion, do not. A security light that is more compatible with the building's architectural features should be specified.
- As long as the selected security cameras are small and unobtrusive, and are installed in mortar joints with as little damage to the historic building as possible, they should not destroy historic materials or character.

Concrete Work

- Replacing damaged concrete in the courtyard, around the front steps and stoop, and along the walks around the building would not destroy historic materials that characterize the property, but untinted "bright white" concrete should not be used. Because there are stone details and buff-colored bricks on the building's primary façade, and an absence of bright white, the concrete for the courtyard, new steps, stoop, and low walls should be tinted to match the color of the stone surrounding the entry (see photos below).



The steps and low walls that form the stoop in front of these main entry doors match the stone details around the doors. If the concrete for the steps and low walls were bright white, the harmony of these historic features together would be diminished.



The gray or beige of the sidewalk in this court, the entry steps, and the stone surround of the entry all work together to create a harmonious whole with the buff bricks of the building. Bright white concrete would negatively impact the composition.

ISSUES

- On the high, sloped roofs, retaining the red color that matches the remaining historic clay tiles is important to the Spanish Revival style of this building, as noted in the Elements of Design. Staff notes that the current, pre-designation three-tab asphalt roof has a similar appearance to flat tiles and the red color matches the clay roofing and accent wall tiles. The proposed asphalt roof shingles, in contrast, are dimensional and so look more like wood shingles and the proposed color does not match the clay as well as the current shingles do.
- The paint color for new fascia boards needs to be specified.
- Gutters and downspouts are distinctly character-defining elements. Where historic copper gutters remain, they should be retained—either repaired or replaced in kind if necessary. Matching copper downspouts should be specified as well where the historic gutters remain. In areas where gutters and downspouts were replaced prior to designation, they should be brown or a shade of green.
- Regarding masonry cleaning, best practice would be to test the very low-pressure water and natural brushes in an inconspicuous area first. If that method has the desired effect, there is no need to try the other methods. The cleaning method tests should be administered sequentially and not simultaneously.
- The doors should not be white, nor should they feature contemporary versions of door fanlights or other contemporary windows. The first-floor doors at the northwest and northeast corners should be a pale tan or beige that blends into the buff brick and stone.
- Security lights that are more compatible with the building's architectural features should be specified.
- Security cameras need to be specified.
- Bright white concrete should not be used in the courtyard or for the replacement of concrete steps or concrete walls on the stoop to the main entrance to the building.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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 West Chicago-West Boston Boulevard Historic District's Elements of Design, with the conditions that:

- The applicant will specify asphalt roof shingles that are closer in color to the existing asphalt and closer in consistent color saturation across all shingles (instead of varied colors across the shingles as currently proposed), so that the proposed roofing better imitates clay tile on the sloped roofs. New roof product specs will be submitted to staff for review and approval. If an asphalt shingle cannot be located that is closer to the existing, staff will have authority to approve the proposed or similar product.
- Staff will review and approve gutter and downspout colors. No historic copper gutters can be replaced unless in kind.
- Windows on proposed steel panel-style replacement doors, and colors for the doors (for corner doors, side doors, and roof doors) must be submitted to staff for review and approval.
- Product cut sheets for replacement front entry doors will be submitted to staff for review and approval.
- Concrete replacement in courtyard and on steps and low walls of front stoop must be colored to match stone to avoid being bright white.
- The proposed masonry cleaning protocol with staff review is acceptable, with the tests run sequentially instead of simultaneously. Staff will review and approve mortar color match before repointing work begins. The mortar joints must retain historic joint size, mortar color and recess, and power tools to remove mortar will be carefully controlled and only used on horizontal joints.
- The building's stone architectural details must be protected during masonry cleaning, and the cleaning of these details must be conducted carefully with low-pressure water (less than 100 psi) and any cleaning products if needed must be tested in an inconspicuous place first before cleaning more conspicuous features.
- The applicant will submit for staff review and approval product specs/ cut sheets for a security light that is more compatible with the historic building's architectural features.
- The applicant will submit for staff review and approval product specs/ cut sheets for the proposed security cameras.
- Wood trim boards, such as fascia boards, must be replaced in kind and staff will review and approve their paint color.