

# HamiltonAnderson

May 26, 2026

Ms. Ellen Thackery  
Deputy Director  
Detroit Historic District Commission  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave., Ste. 808  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Request for Rehabilitation Approval - Alhambra Apartments, 2024046.00  
100-112 Temple Avenue, at the northwest corner of Temple and Park Avenues

Dear Ms. Thackery:

Hass Systems LLC, the owners of the building at 100-112 Temple, request that the Historic District Commission grant approval for the proposed rehabilitation of the building's façade in conjunction with the planned stabilization work proposed at the above-mentioned address. The building requires stabilization efforts to preserve and prepare the building for future renovation and occupancy. Proposed Exterior Elevations for the structural stabilization are attached as Exhibit A. Following approval, the Owners intend to proceed with build out and construction work per the approved certificate of appropriateness for the exterior work. The building sits within the Cass Park National Register and Detroit Local historic districts.

## Background

The building is a 6-story wood-frame structure with load-bearing masonry exterior and interior bearing walls with a low-pitched "flat" roof. The building's overall footprint is rectangular, with the building measuring 105 feet on Temple Avenue and 60 feet on Park Avenue in overall dimension. The two primary decorative facades face south on Temple Avenue and east on Park Avenue.

The building was built in 1895 as an upscale, flat-style apartment building. Initially the floors were configured with 3 large apartments per floor. As the neighborhood grew and changed all units were subdivided into smaller units. The building later operated for a time as a hotel called the Embassy, and then finally again as apartments. The building has been unoccupied since approximately 2006.

The primary, south-facing facade is asymmetrical in nature, with an off-center main entrance door with recessed balconies above. There are turrets above the first floor punctuating the corners of the building at the east and west ends of the façade. A central projection with bay windows adorn the façade above the first floor. Four round medallions with a beaded edge exist between the arch-topped windows. Light fixtures were added at some point, though these are not evident in the early photographs available of the building.

The primary, east-facing facade is symmetrical in nature, with a pair of off-center main entrance doors with recessed balconies above. A metal fire escape obscures the recessed balconies. There are turrets above the first floor punctuating the corners of the building at the east and west ends of the façade. A historic photograph of the building shortly after its construction circa 1897 and a later photograph dating to the 1920s indicate that the metal fire escape was added after the 1920s.

Both primary facades are faced with rough-faced coursed stone on the first and second floors, with face brick on floors three through six. All masonry has been painted. A photograph of the building from the 1976 Urban Conservation Project shows that the entire building appears to have been painted white. More recently, the first and second floors have been painted red.

The north-facing secondary facade is largely utilitarian in nature. It is faced with common brick which has been painted at the first and second floor levels. A central projection with wood-framed projecting bay windows exists. A series of service recessed service porches is also present. These have been enclosed at all levels. Two insignificant chimneys punctuate the parapet line.

The west facing secondary façade adjacent to the alley is similar to the north. The rough stone base and face brick wrap the corner and extend one structural bay into this face. The remainder of the façade is common brick. A series of bay windows similar to those found on the north elevation is also found on the north elevation. A fire escape of unknown age partially obscures the bay windows, while an exterior metal ladder exists adjacent to the bay windows. One chimney of common brick is visible. As with the other elevations, the first two stories have been painted red.

### **Scope of Work**

The following describes the proposed exterior work planned for the building, which includes:

Removal of fire escapes at Park Avenue and Alley elevations, modifications to the Park Avenue entrance, cleaning and repainting of the building's painted masonry, rebuilding of the parapet wall and installation of a new cornice, reboarding of all window openings, gutter and downspout replacement. The following is a detailed description of each work item:

#### **Fire Escape Removal**

Historic photos show that the Park Avenue fire escape was added after the 1920s but prior to 1976. It is unclear when the west façade's fire escape was constructed; it seems unlikely to be original given the building's original 3-unit per floor layout. Both of these fire escapes are extremely corroded and deteriorated. The anchorages into the façade are deteriorated such that both of these fire escapes need to be completely removed and replaced. As they serve no practical purpose and obscure character-defining features of the facades where they are present, the owners wish to remove them completely and restore the underlying masonry.

#### **Bay Window Restructuring**

Due to the deterioration of the floor structure that supports the bay windows, the bay windows must be entirely dismantled and reconstructed. The applicant proposes to document with photos and measured drawings, including dimensions, window opening sizes, sill and head heights, and exterior trim and siding for future replication prior to dismantling them. 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.

#### **Park Avenue Entry Modifications**

Historic photos show that the Park Avenue entry was originally a shared balcony for two ground floor residential units. The original, low, rough faced stone railing was removed at some point prior to 1976 to create direct access to the first floor from Park Avenue. A poorly-configured concrete stair was added, and a security gate was added at some point thereafter. ~~The proposal seeks to enhance this entrance by providing a proper staircase and public~~

~~entrance into the building. The existing stair will be removed and a new concrete stair will be constructed to lead to a proper building entry. New stairs will lead to a new front door.~~ **The Owner intends to maintain the Park Avenue entrance as-is at this time. They will submit plans to the HDC for revisions to this entry once occupancy plans for the building are more clearly defined.**

### **Masonry Rehabilitation and Cornice Installation**

The building needs masonry repairs throughout. The applicant seeks to rebuild sections of masonry where missing, repair cracking and missing units, and tuck point the joints as required to ensure the long-term stability and longevity of the building.

The parapet at the south elevation has partially collapsed and requires rebuilding. The parapets at the south and east elevations have been parged, which is deteriorating. The parapets have been wrapped to prevent the shedding of debris onto pedestrians below. Parging will be removed from the parapets and the parapets will be repointed, repaired, and reconstructed as required. After reconstruction, a new cornice will be installed to mimic the historic cornice, which was removed sometime prior to 1976. All repairs and pointing will be completed in accordance with the National Park Service (NPS) Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings.

After the masonry repairs have been completed, the owner proposes two potential solutions:

1. Test the removal of paint from the masonry using commercially-available chemical paint removers. If successful, not shown to be damaging to the masonry, and the results are visually satisfactory, the owner will proceed with stripping the paint from the masonry to return the building to its original appearance.
2. If, upon testing, the results of paint stripping efforts are visually unsatisfactory or damaging to the masonry, the façade will be repainted in two compatible colors (base – floors 1 & 2) and upper levels (floors 3-6) which will be determined once cleaning attempts have been made and the original building coloration can be better understood.

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.

### **Window Boarding**

All of the existing windows on the building are boarded for protection. The owner plans to re-board these windows and the balcony recesses with painted plywood panels for protection. The Owner will present an application for window repair and/or replacement options in a future application.

### **Rooftop Scope of Work**

The roof is a flat roof that sheds towards the west (alley) side of the building. The existing roof structure is compromised and will be rebuilt in its entirety. Once rebuilt, the roof will be covered with a new membrane, and new gutters and downspouts will be added to the west elevation.

There are two light wells with skylights that are not visible from the public right of way. Additionally, there is an elevator penthouse and three non-character-defining chimneys proposed for removal. A new elevator penthouse

and a new roof access will be constructed. The elevator penthouse and roof access above the roofline will be constructed of pigmented concrete masonry units in a color that is compatible with the masonry colors on the building once determined.

## Conclusion

The items listed above and attached exhibits provide a synopsis of the Owner's proposed scope of work for the rehabilitation of the building at 100-112 Temple Avenue. All of the proposed rehabilitation work meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation Nos. 1-9, as well as the specific standards mentioned above. As such, we believe that this plan should be approved.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Anderson Associates, Inc.