

**STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF HIDALGO  
CITY OF MCALLEN**

The Historic Preservation Council convened in a meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 12:01 p.m. at the McAllen Development Center – 311 N. 15<sup>th</sup> Street – Executive Conference

<b>Present:</b>	Dr. Jaclyn Miller	Chairperson
	Carolina Civarolo	Member
	Melissa S. Knerr	Member
	Marc Millis	Member
<b>Absent:</b>	Danny Boultinghouse	Vice-Chairperson
	Daniel Padilla	Member
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Martin Canales	Assistant City Attorney III
	Omar Sotelo	Planning Director
	Hilda Tovar	Planner II
	Carmen White	Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Jaclyn Miller - Chairperson**

**1. Minutes**

- a) Approval or Disapproval of Minutes held on May 21, 2025.

The minutes will Approved or Disapproved at the next meeting.

**2. Public Hearing**

- a) Request of Almondine Properties, LLC., Inc. for a Certificate of Appropriateness for architectural alterations that will include repainting, replacing windows, opening the front porch and removing an existing canopy to the City Landmark Designation located at Block 58, McAllen Addition Subdivision, Hidalgo County, Texas; 710 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street. **(CLM2025-0003)**

**The Board adjourned into Executive Session at 12:00 p.m.**

**The Board reconvened at 12:36 p.m. after Executive Session.**

Ms. Tovar stated the property was located along the west side of South 16<sup>th</sup> Street, between Galveston Avenue and Houston Avenue. The lot size is approximately 84,000 square feet. The property is currently zoned C-3 (general business-OC) District. The style of architecture of the building is Mission Revival Style and contains Aztec ornamentation.

The applicant is proposing to make architectural alterations such as painting exterior walls and trim of the main building and metal building – Oyster White and Black Magic color swatches are included within the packet. The applicant is proposing to replace windows with the original sizes with new windows – window specs are included within the packet. The proposal also includes opening the front porch to original size and removing the canopy on the west side of the courtyard.

The property, also known as the Old Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School Building was designated as a City Landmark on June 8, 2009. The building was constructed in 1921 serving the residents of McAllen's Mexican Ward. The current applicant is proposing to make additional exterior changes as previously mentioned.

The design review process for the Certificate of Appropriateness is critical for a designated Historic Landmark to ensure the unique and defining characteristics of the building are maintained according to McAllen's design standards.

1. *Consistency of Style* – New construction should not try to replicate the architectural styles of the past but should look to them for guidance on fenestration patterns, façade organization, level and extent of detailing, massing, roof forms and height, and materials used. New construction should reflect modern design but be sensitive to the historical architectural styles of the past.

The applicant submitted plans showing details of the architectural alterations. The plans submitted comply with the consistency of style design standards.

2. *Materials* – New construction should maintain the characteristics of existing exterior materials.
3. *Setbacks* – To ensure consistency, new construction should follow existing ordinance requirements.

The proposed paint swatches include Black Magic and Oyster White, which does comply with the Mission Revival Style – must be minimal and can be used as trim colors. Mission Revival Style key colors include warm shades such as terracotta, beige and ochre. This style also includes cool accent colors such as deep greens and blues, white or off-white walls.

The plans submitted comply with the design standards of a Historic Landmark for Block 58, McAllen Addition Subdivision and will be verified during the building permit review.

The proposal mentioned above is the only request being made by the applicant. There are no other changes being made to the exterior or interior of the Historic Landmark.

The plans submitted comply with the Historic Landmark Design Standards for the proposed building. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed architectural alterations as requested by the applicant.

Ms. Angela Millis, the applicant stated the proposal also included opening the front porch to original size and removing the canopy on the west side of the courtyard. Currently it was obstructing the view from the tree, the building and the windows. The arches will stay the same. The windows that were framed in down the road they wanted to open up all the windows all the way around the building.

Following discussion, Ms. Carolina Civarolo **moved** to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. Ms. Melissa Knerr seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously with four members present and voting.

- b)** Request of Mario Luis Guerra Jr. for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a proposed concrete block fence for an existing single-family residence within the Las Palmas Historic District at Lot 11, Block 12, North McAllen Subdivision, Hidalgo County,

Texas; 604 North 15th Street. **(CLM2025-0002) (TABLED: 05/21/2025)**

Ms. Carolina Civarolo made a motion to remove the item from the table. Mr. Marc Millis seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously with four member present and voting.

Ms. Tovar stated a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for all proposed exterior alterations, new construction, and demolition within a local historic district. The goal of a Certificate of Appropriateness is to preserve historic, architectural, and cultural heritage by protecting character-defining features of the Las Palmas Historic District.

The property is located on the east side of North 15th Street, approximately 50 feet north of Fir Avenue. The lot has 50 feet of frontage along North 15th Street and a depth of 140 feet for a lot size of 7,000 square feet.

The applicant is proposing to construct a fence for an existing single-family residence within the Las Palmas Historic District at 604 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed concrete block fence will be built around the property. The fence will be of stucco with paint that will match the house and it will include a decorative wrought iron design.

The design review process for the Certificate of Appropriateness is critical within a designated historic district to ensure that the unique and defining characteristics of the area are maintained according to McAllen's design standards.

One of the most recognizable features of the Las Palmas Historic District is the palm-lined center median that extends the length of the district. Palm trees also line the street along each side of North 15th Street along the front yard of most lots. Well-manicured lawns with native plantings are typical of residences within the neighborhood. It is important to maintain the character-defining features of the district when planning a new construction on vacant lots.

- *Fencing* – Historically, fence enclosures at the perimeter of the Las Palmas historic district, if they existed, were isolated to the rear yard. Low landscaping walls of stone or brick masonry construction can be seen along front patios or along the side property line in the district. The low walls maintained the visual continuity between each adjacent lot and did not obstruct sight lines from one point in the neighborhood to another. New construction should respect the visual continuity present between lots in the neighborhood and if designed, landscape walls should be low and unobtrusive. Low-lying walls should be limited in location – they can surround small patios along the front façade of the residence or define side property lines with adjacent residences. Walls shall not be located along the front yard, abutting the existing sidewalk. They shall not be located adjacent to the street at corner lots. Privacy fencing shall be isolated to the rear yard – fencing shall not be constructed at the front yard.

The applicant was proposing a wall of 2 ft. (18-24 inch) height and 4 ft. (36-48 inches) height of wrought iron. This height will be along the front and rear property, excluding the driveway entrance, which will have a wrought iron gate. The fence will extend along the side property lines as a privacy fence to enclose the side yards. The submitted site plan indicates the side yard wall will have a height of 6 ft. for a distance of 20 ft. from the front property line to the front of the house and will be of the same material. The proposed sidewall increases to a height of 7 ft. for a distance along the side of the house of approximately 120 ft. The submitted site plan complies with the design standards of a privacy fence for the side yards and decreases to allow for visibility at the front yard setback and view from the street.

At the Historic Preservation Council, the board for further discussion tabled meeting on May 21, 2025 the item.

After the presentation, the board reviewed the site plan and visual examples proposed by the applicant. One neighbor was present in opposition to the request. The concern of the neighbor was that the fence was being proposed on the front yard of the property. As stated on the Las Palmas Local Landmark District design standards, *"Privacy fencing shall be isolated on the rear yard – fencing shall not be constructed at the front yard."* The neighbor resides on the Las Palmas District and mentioned that the proposed fence is not representative of the Las Palmas District design standards since it clearly states that fencing in the front yard is not recommended. The applicant, Mr. Guerra, was present and mentioned that there are a few neighbors on the district that have fences in the front yard of their property. He also mentioned that the Las Palmas Local Landmark District design standards also states that fencing *"shall not be located adjacent to the street at corner lots."* Mr. Guerra also mentioned that there are a few neighbors located within the district that have fences not only in the front yard of their properties but also on the corner side adjacent to the street.

During discussion, it was mentioned that the proposed fence conflicts with Las Palmas District design standards and that it should be tabled for further discussion for the following meeting. It was also recommended that the applicant should talk to staff and consider the possibility of a variance request or other alternatives.

After discussion, the board recommended that the request should be tabled for the next meeting.

After the meeting, the applicant met with staff and mentioned that he is willing to reduce the height of the base of the fence to 1 foot and 3 feet height of wrought iron.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed fence since it complies with the Las Palmas Local Landmark District Design Standards for fencing.

Board member Millis asked the applicant if he had design showing the dimensions what the wall and column height was going to be. The applicant stated he posted pictures of the neighbor to the north. It was going to be the same contractor to do the fence. They had between 18 and 24 inches of concrete and goes up with rod iron and concrete five and a half feet.

Chairperson Miller mentioned to Mr. Guerra regarding the landscaping he was encouraged to not allow completely visibly block the fence where there may be changes down the line.

Board member Millis asked the applicant concerning security, if he was tying it back to the house so no one can come around to your front door. Mr. Guerra stated yes he was. There will not be a gate but where it buds out on the south side that is where it will connect.

Board member Civarolo asked the applicant if he was proposing only to have four columns or to be similar to this with a gate, columns and then columns in the corner. Mr. Guerra stated yes.

Following discussion, Mr. Marc Millis **moved** to approve the concrete block fence with the newer height no greater than 24 inches, the column heights no greater than 72 inches and the railing height to be no greater than the column height and no more than four columns in the front. Ms. Melissa Knerr seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously with four members present and voting.

City Attorney Stevenson mentioned to the Board that at least once a year to do a tour of the District. Moreover, because the homeowners come and apply for Certificate of Appropriateness at least one homeowner is willing to host the Board for a tour of their home. They talk about the historic aspects, the flooring, and windows, etc. The Board agreed with the idea. In addition, the program Refresh 50/50 was brought up in the discussion.

### 3. Adjournment

Following discussion, Ms. Melissa Knerr made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Carolina Knerr **seconded** the motion, which passed unanimously with four members present and voting. The meeting was adjourned at 12.58 p.m.

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Dr. Jaclyn Miller  
Chairperson

ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_  
Carmen White