

## ORDINANCE NO. 33-12

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CHAPTER 25  
ARTICLE II**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND  
CHAPTER 25, ARTICLE II, OF THE  
1984 DETROIT CITY CODE BY  
ADDING SECTION 25-2-190 TO  
ESTABLISH THE PALMER PARK  
APARTMENT BUILDINGS LOCAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT, AND TO  
DEFINE THE ELEMENTS  
OF DESIGN FOR THE DISTRICT.**

**AN ORDINANCE to amend Chapter 25, ARTICLE II of the 1984 Detroit City Code by adding Section 25-2-190 to establish the Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Local Historic District, and to define the elements of design for the district.**

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT THAT:

**Section 1.** Chapter 25, Article II, of the 1984 Detroit City Code be amended by adding Section 25-2-190 to read as follows:

**Sec. 25-2-190. Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Local Historic District.**

(A) A historic district to be known as the Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Local Historic District is established in accordance with the provisions of this article.

(B) This historic district designation is certified as being consistent with the Detroit Master Plan.

(C) The boundaries of the Palmer Park Apartment Buildings Local Historic District are as shown on the map on file in the office of the City Clerk, and are as follows:

Land within the Merrill-Palmer Subdivision, L 45, P 54 of Plats, Wayne County Records, described as beginning at the intersection of Woodward Avenue and Merton Road; thence west along the centerline of Merton Road to the centerline of the alley west of Woodward Avenue; thence south along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the alley between Merton Road and McNichols Road; thence west along the centerline of said alley to the south property line of 17122-17142 Second Avenue (south line of lot 165); thence west along said property line to the centerline of Second Avenue; thence south along said centerline to the intersection of the centerlines of Second Avenue and McNichols Road; thence west along the centerline of McNichols Road to the west property line of 642 W. McNichols Road (west line of lot 65); thence north along said property line to the centerline of the alley

between Merton Road and McNichols Road; thence west along the centerline of said alley to the centerline of the alley east of Third Avenue; thence south along said centerline to the centerline of McNichols Road; thence west along said centerline to the intersection of the centerline of McNichols Road and Third Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Third Avenue to the intersection of the centerlines of Third Avenue and Merton Road; thence west along the centerline of Merton Road to the east property line of 831-841 Merton Road (east line of lot 139); thence south along said property line to the centerline of the alley between Merton Road and McNichols Road; thence west along the centerline of said alley to the west line of the alley east of Pontchartrain Boulevard; thence north along said west line of said alley to its intersection with the west property line of 1000 Merton Road (west line of lot 399); thence north along the west property line of 1000 Merton Road (lot 399) to the west line of the alley west of Manderson Road; thence north along said west line to the west property line of 17765 Manderson Road (lots 438-441); thence north and east along the property line of 17765 Manderson Road to the north line of Covington Drive; thence east along said line to the centerline of Woodward Avenue; thence south along said centerline to the point of beginning. (Legal description; Lots 54-65, 84-88, 124-139, 144-189, and 197-497, "Merrill-Palmer Subdivision, being a subdivision of part of Sec. 11, T. 1 S., R. 11 E., City of Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan" as recorded in Liber 45, Page 54 of Plats, Wayne County Records.)

(D) The defined elements of design, as provided for in Section 25-2-2 of this Code, are as follows:

(1) Height. Apartment buildings within the district range in height from two (2) stories to five (5) stories. Other building types are one (1) or two (2) stories in height. In general building heights vary within the district. Two-(2)- story apartment buildings are often in the form of broad rowhouses, while taller apartment buildings are often clustered in buildings of similar height.

(2) Proportion of Building's Front Façades. While the proportions of individual front facades varies considerably within the district, buildings are typically wider than tall on all elevations. Older residential buildings within the district tend to



be slightly wider than tall, while newer residential buildings tend to be significantly wider than tall.

(3) *Proportion of Openings Within the Façades.* Openings typically amount to between twenty (20) and thirty-five (35) percent of the front façade. Religious buildings feature a somewhat lesser amount of fenestration on the front façade. Two (2) apartment building façades fronting on McNichols Road feature commercial storefronts with additional door and window openings on the first floor. Window types and proportions of individual windows vary greatly within the district, and include sash, easement, fixed, jalousie, glass block, and other types of windows appropriate to the variety of time periods and architectural styles found within the district.

(4) *Rhythm of Solids to Voids in the Front Façades.* Despite a variety of building types, the overall impression is one of regular, repetitive openings arranged horizontally within façades. While individual buildings are sometimes irregular in plan and display more varied, sometimes asymmetrical, arrangements of openings, the overall impression is dominated by regular, repetitive openings. Window openings are usually, but not always, arranged one over the other by floor. Door openings tend to be human in scale on residential buildings.

(5) *Rhythm of Spacing of Buildings on Streets.* Rhythm of spacing on streets is generally determined by setbacks from side lot lines. The overall character of the district is one of densely clustered, yet visually distinct, structures separated by narrow, relatively uniform side setbacks. Although spacing between buildings tends to be regular, the width of subdivision lots, and of individual buildings, varies considerably. Front setbacks of buildings vary greatly from one building to the next, and even on the same building as façades are often defined by irregular building footprints.

(6) *Rhythm of Entrance and/or Porch Projections.* Front entrances to apartment buildings are often recessed within partial courtyards on buildings with U-shaped footprints. Entrances themselves often project slightly with simple porches. A few entrances are recessed slightly within their façades. Entrances are typically located one step, or a small number of steps, above grade. In general, there is little uniformity among primary entrances, as a great variety of architectural styles is found within the district.

(7) *Relationship of Materials.* A majori-

ty of buildings are faced with brick and feature stone or cast stone trim. Accents in materials such as wood timbering or glazed tile may exist, depending on architectural style. Religious buildings within the district are clad predominantly in stone. The building at 999 Whitmore is clad in stucco. Roof materials are usually asphalt shingle or membrane but clay tile roofs are also present, depending on architectural style. Copper roof accents exist on a small number of buildings. Sash windows are typically wood, while other windows are typically metal, though in some cases windows have been replaced with windows of more modern materials. In general, the district is rich in its varieties and relationships of materials.

(8) *Relationship of Textures.* On a majority of buildings within the district, the major textural effect is that of brick with mortar joints juxtaposed with cast stone or limestone trim. Patterned brickwork is used to create subtle detail on apartment buildings. Brick corbelling may create strong textural interest, such as on the building at 17725 Manderson. Architectural details and ornamentation such as belt courses, pilasters, dentils and crenellation, and round, Tudor, and Moorish arches provide textural variety and interest to the building façades in the district. In general, the district is extremely rich in textural relationships. A wide variety of window configurations and materials within the district contributed to textural interest. Asphalt shingle roofs do not contribute to textural interest.

(9) *Relationship of Colors.* Natural brick colors in shades of brown, red, and buff, predominate on wall surfaces, while natural stone colors in shades of gray, red and brown also exist. Although many roofs are flat and therefore not visible, sloped roofs typically feature gray asphalt, while some feature red or clay tile. Wooden architectural details are frequently painted in subdued colors, appropriate to the architectural style of the building. Brick apartment buildings are generally unpainted, with gray stone trim contrasting with brown or buff brickwork. The original colors of any building, as determined by professional analysis, are always acceptable for that building and may provide guidance for similar buildings.

10. *Relationship of Architectural Details.* Buildings in the district exemplify a broad range of architectural styles, and their architectural details relate to their style. Architectural styles include Jacobethan Revival, Egyptian Revival, Mediterranean Revival. Tudor Revival,





Moorish Revival, Art Deco, Moderne, International Style, Neo-Georgian, and Colonial Revival. Buildings tend to be high-style in appearance, with the level of architectural detail varying greatly from one building to the next. In general, the architectural detail on buildings in the district is very rich.

11. *Relationship of Roof Shapes.* A majority of apartment buildings have flat roofs which cannot be seen from the ground, but hip roofs are also common. Gable roofs are rare. The building at 17425 Second bears a tall steeple.

12. *Walls of Continuity.* Although many buildings feature irregular or U-shaped footprints, a wall of continuity is maintained by end bays with similar setbacks. The wall of continuity is broken only where building demolitions have created vacant lots. Mature trees and public lighting fixtures generally do not contribute to a wall of continuity due to their irregular placement throughout the district.

13. *Relationship of Significant Landscape Features and Surface Treatments.* Trees, hedges, and other landscaping features are significant, but vary from one building to the next. Trees in the front yards of buildings vary in size, age, and species. Apartment buildings typically feature flat, grassy front lawns, often bisected by concrete sidewalks. Alleys provide access to the rear of a majority of lots in the district. Most commercial buildings, and a smaller number of apartment buildings, are built up to the front lot line. Public sidewalks run alongside all streets in the district. Curbs, while historically stone, have been replaced with concrete in a much of the district. Covington Drive, with its broad median, is a significant landscape feature.

14. *Relationship of Open Space to Structures.* Apartment buildings typically feature front yards that vary in size. Many apartment buildings have irregular or U-shaped footprints, with end bays that extend forward towards the street to embrace partial courtyards. Large areas of open space exist only where they have been created by building demolition; sometimes these spaces serve as parking lots or are maintained as open lawns.

15. *Scale of Façades and Façade Elements.* Despite a range of building heights and widths, a sense of uniform scale is maintained throughout the district. Two houses on Alwyne Drive are much smaller in scale than the rest of the district, while religious buildings tend to be larger in scale.

16. *Directional Expression of Front Elevations.* Due to a wide variety of architectural styles in the district, facades may be either horizontal or vertical in direction expression, with neither type dominating.

17. *Rhythm of Building Setbacks.* While a degree of irregularity is introduced by varying setbacks of front facades, the overall impression is one of a consistent rhythm of building setbacks. Where building demolition has occurred, the original rhythmic progression of buildings has been disrupted.

18. *Relationship of Lot Coverages.* Lot coverages within the district range from approximately forty percent (40%) to approximately eighty percent (80%), with many apartment buildings featuring grassy lawns and courtyards. Religious buildings include significant amounts of open space.

19. *Degree of Complexity Within the Façades.* The facades within the district range from simple to complex, depending on style. Architectural complexity, when found on front facades, tends to continue on side elevations as well. Front facades are often irregular in their massing and fenestration, and a variety of window and door shapes, materials, architectural elements, and details of individual buildings increase the overall level of complexity of the district.

20. *Orientation, Vistas, Overviews.* Buildings generally face the streets and are entered from the front facade by a single or double doorway. Religious buildings, due to their somewhat larger scale, constitute landmarks that are often visible from several blocks away. Buildings on Covington Avenue are oriented to face the mostly-wooded Palmer Park located directly across the street.

21. *Symmetric or Asymmetric Appearance.* The appearance of front facades in the district may be symmetrical or asymmetrical in massing and architectural detail. Single family residential buildings tend to display a modest degree of asymmetry in massing and architectural detail. The district as a whole is diverse in its array of building designs, setbacks, and footprints, creating a general feel of asymmetry throughout the district.

22. *General Environmental Character.* The general character of the district is that of a high-density, pedestrian-friendly, urban residential neighborhood of moderately-sized apartment buildings. Although the neighborhood is almost exclusively residential in use, the varied physical appearance of its buildings





creates the feel of a diverse environment.

**Section 2.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances, resolutions or parts of resolutions, in conflict with this ordinance are repealed.

**Section 3.** This ordinance is declared necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and welfare of the people of the City of Detroit.

**Section 4.** This ordinance shall be

given immediate effect upon publication in accordance with Section 4-118 of the 2012 Detroit City Charter.

(J.C.C. Page )	November 7, 2012
Passed:	November 20, 2012
Approved:	December 3, 2012
Published:	December 11, 2012
Effective:	December 11, 2012
JANICE M. WINFREY	
City Clerk	



