

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
MAY 18, 2015
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
C14H-1978-0038
Paramount Theater
713 Congress Avenue

PROPOSAL

Restore exterior balconies pursuant to an ACVB Heritage Grant.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes to restore the balconies, which consist of a cantilevered slab with structural reinforcement. The original construction of the balcony slabs had no flashing, which allowed water penetration to the decks. The slab is wrapped in ornamental metal that has rotted. The applicant proposes to replace the metal on the deck and install proper flashing.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Commission's Standards for Review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness include:

- Do not destroy the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment. Avoid the removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features.
- Recognize all buildings, structures, and sites as products of their own time. Do not construct alterations which have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance.
- Repair, rather than replace deteriorated architectural features wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Base the repair or replacement of missing architectural features on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
- Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties are appropriate when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historic, architectural, or cultural material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee requested detailed photographs of the existing conditions, and recommended replacing all materials in kind to the greatest extent possible. The Committee further recommended using thermally-treated wood for the flashing backing to avoid a warping problem in the future, and to address the possibility of galvanic action with the reaction of different metals with each other.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The applicant has followed the Committee's recommendations. Staff recommends approval of the application as proposed.

Constructed in 1915, this year the Paramount Theatre celebrates its 100th year of serving Austin residents and visitors with diverse, quality programming. As one of the few remaining early twentieth-century vaudeville theatres, we continue our tradition of providing our more than 200,000 guests each year with world-class live entertainment and presentations of 35mm classic films, in a historically pristine environment.

In eager anticipation of our centennial celebration this fall, we have made great strides in restoring the Paramount Theatre's exterior so it can be enjoyed just as it was in its early years by our guests and passersby along historic Congress Avenue. We have repaired and cleaned the bricks and repointed the masonry of our front façade, and reconstruction of the historically accurate Paramount bulb-lit blade is underway. The vertical

blade will be mounted prior to our centennial celebration in late September. Our next project, for which we respectfully request ACVB funding, is to fully restore the three balconies on the front of the theatre that overlook historic Congress Avenue. The addition of the replicated historic Paramount blade will draw welcome attention to our theatre's façade; and, having recently restored the original contrasting red and black brickwork, we are excited at the prospect of restoring the balconies, prominent features that so elegantly define the historic Classical Revival style of our theatre.

The balconies consist of galvanized steel surrounds, steel guardrails, and a concrete floor which is an extension of the theatre's second floor, cantilevered from the exterior wall. Currently, the guardrails have been removed and are in storage, there exist surface cracks in the concrete balcony floor, the metal cornice has developed indentations and rust over the years, and the surrounds have suffered broken seams that allow for water infiltration into the building. This restoration project will consist of first removing the existing metal surrounds and guardrails and cleaning them of flaking paint. Qualified metalsmiths will then work the dented cornice to restore it to its original shape, and will repair broken seams and joints. They will treat minor rusted areas on the backside of the metal cornices with "Ospho," or equal, primer and finish coat for long term metal protection.

The metalsmiths will install the galvanized steel surrounds including new decks of 28-gauge stainless steel "terne"-coated flat locking sheet metal, and will properly solder the seams to create a complete waterproof system, correcting the current situation of water infiltration into the building structure. New flashing systems will be installed on the balcony decks at the intersections of the wood door jambs, sills and brick, to prevent any future water infiltration. The guardrails will be reinstalled by attaching them to the brick with necessary repairs made to the levelling feet which connect the deck metal. The steel surrounds, decks and guardrails will then be properly primed and painted per industry standards. The Austin Theatre Alliance will paint the balconies and guardrails white, as determined by photographs of the theatre from the 1920s.

During the course of this project we will ensure pedestrian and worker safety using appropriate scaffolding and extension ladders, while protecting the theatre and marquee deck with sheet foam and plywood. The restoration methods used will comply with OSHA and City of Austin policies. The contractor will obtain the required permits from the City of Austin.

We plan to begin this project by June 1st, 2015, and complete it by August 31st, 2015. Our goal is to complete all balcony restoration work prior to installation of the Paramount Blade, and our centennial celebration in late September, 2015.

PLEASE LIST HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS OF THE PROPERTY, AND IF LOCATED WITHIN A NATIONAL REGISTER OR LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (PLEASE SPECIFY WHICH DISTRICT), AND IF THE PROPERTY IS CONTRIBUTING:

The Paramount Theatre is a City of Austin and State Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1976. It is also a contributing structure to the Congress Avenue Historic District.

Steve,

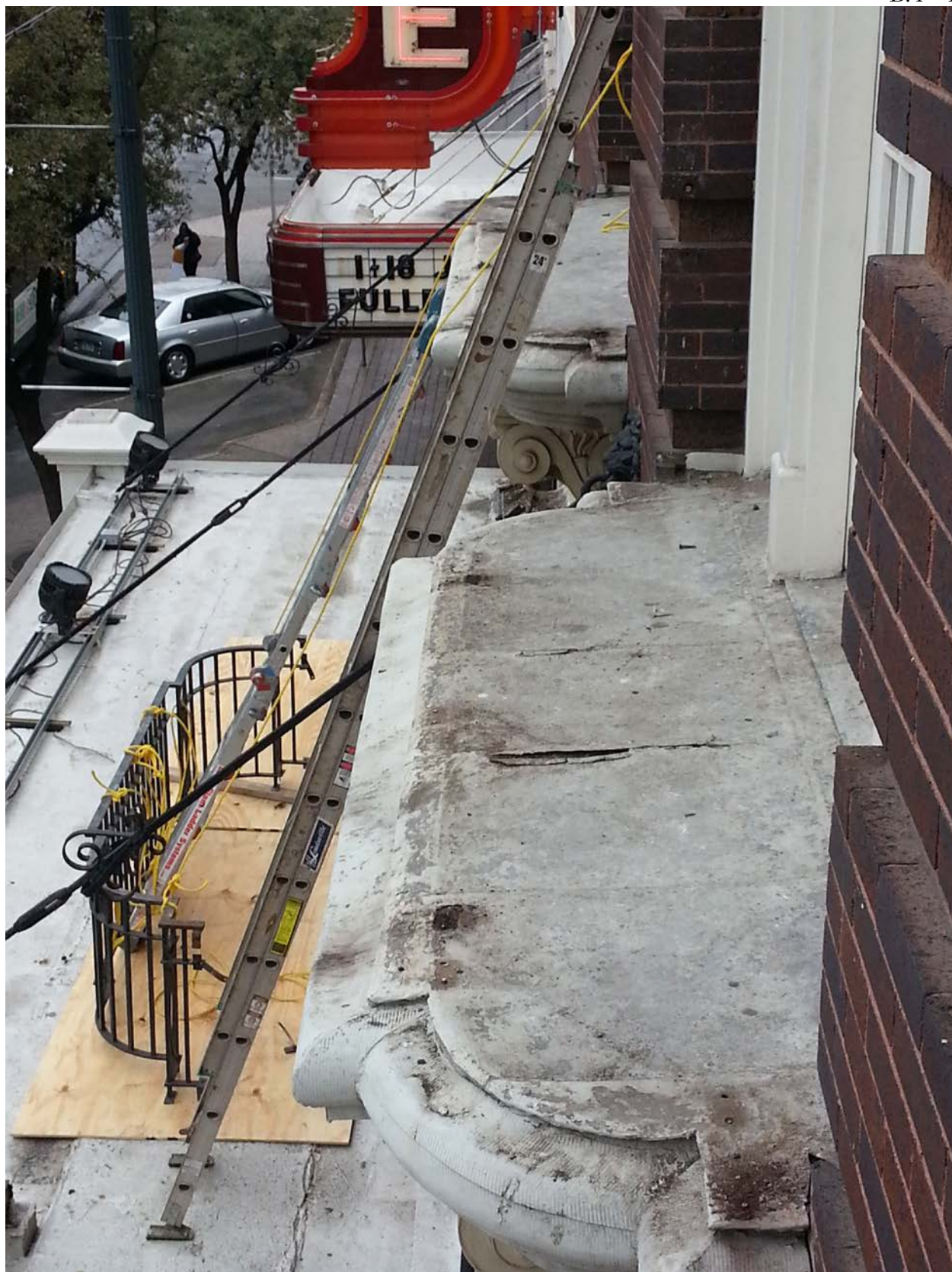
Attached are photos of the balconies and flashing details for the new stainless steel decking with terne coating. The new deck is stainless steel and will attach to the existing ornamental galvanized steel wrap. There is no evidence to provide threat of galvanic reaction between the two metals.

We will use either thermal wood or steel to provide fastening points for the balcony metal wraps to prevent rotting wood or reaction to metal.

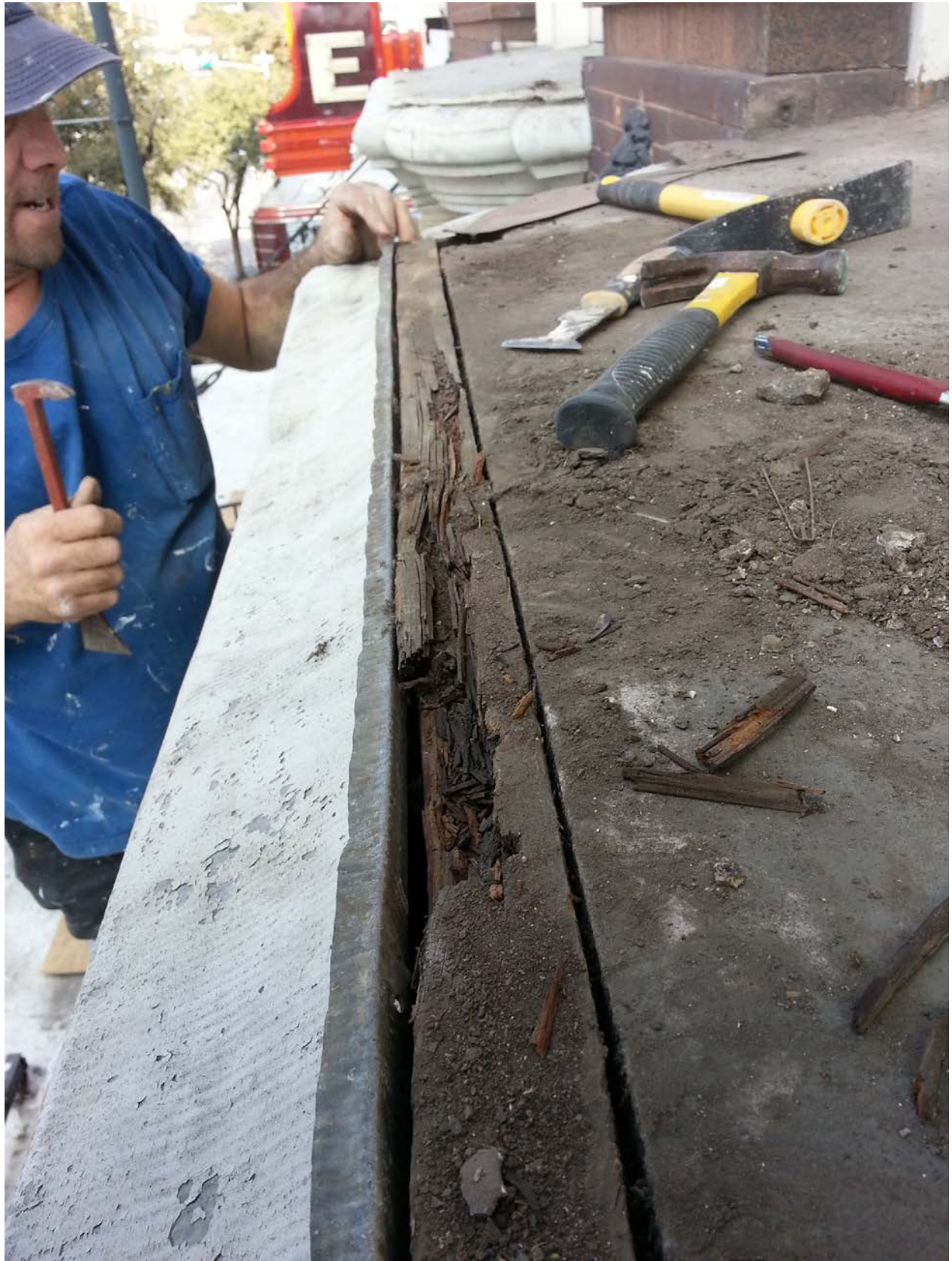
We will preserve and retain, in kind, historical accuracy and authenticity in this endeavor.

The new stainless steel is an austenitic 300 series.

Thank you,
Jonathan Humphrey









Paramount Balcony Image 3



Paramount Balcony Image 4