

**July 2022**

*Date:* 12/28/2021

*Requested by:* John Chaffee [johnrrchaffee@gmail.com](mailto:johnrrchaffee@gmail.com)

*Address:* 5324 Bridget Ave. SE, Auburn, WA 98092

*Location of Tree:* 624 E. De La Guerra Plaza/ 726 State St., Santa Barbara CA 93101

**Tree Species:** *Washingtonia robusta*, **Common Name:** Mexican Fan Palm

*Requested Reason for Removal:* Palm tree is growing around or possibly into the building threatening the structure of the building. **On 3/23/22, PRC concurred with STAC to deny without prejudice.**

*Current designated Street Tree:* Mixed species designations.

*Advisory Committee Recommendation:* Approve Removal: ☐ Deny Removal: ☒

*Staff Recommendation:* Approve Removal: ☐ Deny Removal: ☐ N/A ☒

*Date Posted:* 7/13/2022

*Comments:* The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission deny the removal.

**PHOTO INVENTORY**



# Tree Removal Application

## APPLICANT/OWNER DETAILS

CHAFFEE	JOHN
YOUR LAST NAME	YOUR FIRST NAME
CHAFFEE FAMILY TRUST, John R. Chaffee, Successor Trustee	
OWNER'S FULL NAME (IF YOU ARE NOT THE OWNER)	
5324 Bridget Avenue SE	
YOUR MAILING ADDRESS	
Auburn	WA 98092
CITY	STATE ZIP CODE
253 632-4678	JOHNRRCHAFFEE@GMAIL.COM
DAYTIME PHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS

## TREE INFORMATION

TYPE OF TREE:    **SETBACK TREE(S)** ☐    **STREET TREE(S)** ☒

1	624 De La Guerra Plaza / 726 State Street (one building with two addresses. The trees is on the
NUMBER OF TREES	LOCATION OF TREE(S)) – please be sure to indicate the <b>property address</b> where the trees are located
Palm	
SPECIES OF TREE(S), IF KNOWN	

### REASONS FOR REMOVAL (TELL US WHY YOU WANT TO REMOVE THE TREE[S]). PLEASE INCLUDE:

- Whether or not the removal application is associated with new development or redevelopment of property
- Status of development application, including whether the project is scheduled for review by the Single Family Design Board, Architectural Board of Review, or Historic Landmarks Commission
- Whether or not the tree is a designated Specimen or Historic Tree or located on a property with a designated Historic Landmark

If you feel you need more space to outline the goals of your request, please feel free to attach a supplemental letter when you submit this form.

There is a palm tree in Storke Placita at the corner of our building and is growing around or possibly into the building corner threatening the structure of the building. This needs to be cut off at the base. It would probably be wisest not to try to remove the root ball as this could damage our building. The remaining stump should be treated to ensure that the tree dies. The root ball can rot away over time.

John R. Chaffee, Trustee  
Chaffee Family Trust, owner of the 624 De La Guerra/ 726 State Street building.  
253 632-4678.

Please contact me to let me know where to send a \$75 check if required.  
Where would we upload the photograph of the tree? Please provide step by step instructions.

WILL YOU REPLACE THE TREE(S)?    YES ☐    NO ☒

IF YES, WHAT WILL YOU REPLACE THE TREE(S) WITH?



July 3, 2022

Nathan Slack  
Street Tree Advisory Committee  
City of Santa Barbara-Urban Forestry Department  
620 Garden St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
[nslack@SantaBarbaraCA.gov](mailto:nslack@SantaBarbaraCA.gov) / (805) 564-5592

## **ARBORIST FIELD REPORT - Mexican Fan Palm at 726 State St.**

### **BACKGROUND**

I was called out to look at a Mexican Fan Palm at the southeast corner of the building of the subject property, adjacent to De La Guerra Plaza. The trunk of the tree was growing against the building and facilitated flooding of the adjacent office, damage to the sidewalk, and potential damage to the structure. The owners, John and Christi Chaffee, requested the city to remove the tree to protect their property. I was retained to assess the tree and prepare a report with my findings and recommendations. I inspected the tree on June 27, 2022.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The tree is a twin trunk Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), each with diameters of 21".
2. The northern trunk (closest to the building) is approximately 70' tall. The southern trunk is approximately 60' tall.
3. Immediately south of the fan palm is a 25' Queen Palm.
4. The fan palm is in good health.
5. The RIZ (root initiation zone) extends more than 24" above ground and is tight against the building, thus blocking drainage and applying pressure to the side and footing of the building corner (both south and east sides). The trunk is within 4" of the roof line, thus reasonable to assume that it hits the building during extreme wind events.
6. There are many other palms trees within the plaza providing a consistent landscape feature.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The base of the tree is clearly a problem that warrants action to stop damage to the building and reduce the city's liability. There are adequate root initials to generate more root growth, even if the trunk closest to the building is removed along with a portion of the stump. I am also confident that the undamaged portion of the root system will support the remaining trunk.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Remove the northern trunk of the palm as low as possible and then grind a portion of its stump below ground level to provide at least 24" of clearance from building.
- Every month, irrigate the remaining tree to moisten the soil to approximately 6"-12" below ground. Apply water at the base of the tree and extend approximately 6" outward. This should help the tree develop more roots.
- Removing the one trunk and portion of the stump will absolve the conflict between the tree and building and provide adequate support for the remaining trunk.
- Repair the concrete to change the flow of water away from the building corner.

Please contact me with any questions.

Prepared by: Bill Spiewak

Bill Spiewak  
Registered Consulting Arborist #381  
American Society of Consulting Arborists  
Qualified Tree and Shrub Appraiser

Board Certified Master Arborist #310B  
International Society of Arboriculture  
Qualified Tree Risk Assessor

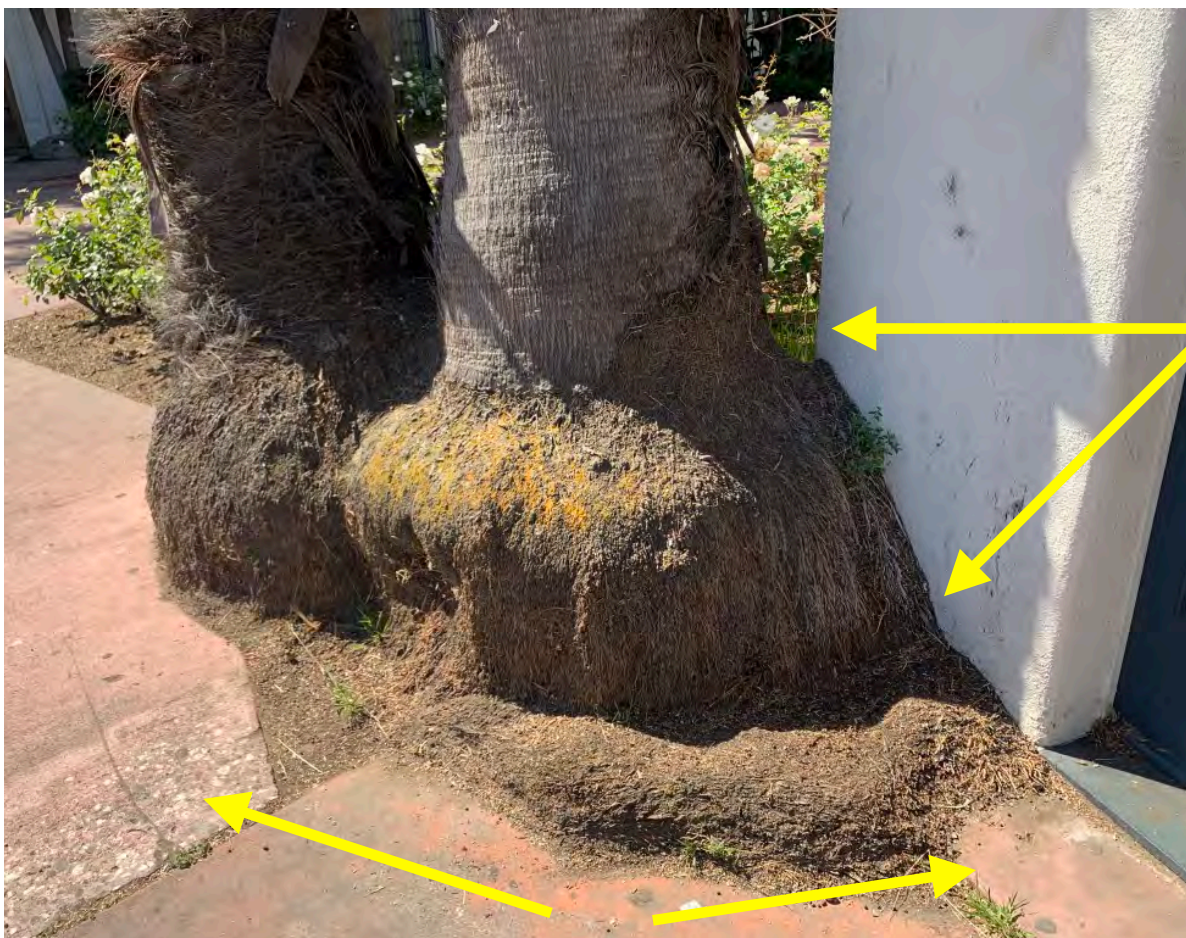


Looking west at the problematic fan palm (arrows)





Looking south  
at the  
problematic fan  
palm



The RIZ extends  
more than 24" above  
the ground, blocks  
drainage and applies  
pressure to the  
building corner.

Also note damage to  
sidewalk (repaired  
with grinding)





Above left: extended RIZ pushing wall and blocking drainage.



Above right: trunk is 4" from roof, likely to hit during extreme wind.

Lower right: Remove northern trunk and grind stump along dotted line, similar to palm stump below, in De La Guerra Plaza







February 1, 2022

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA, P&R  
(805) 564-5592 | [nslack@SantaBarbaraCA.gov](mailto:nslack@SantaBarbaraCA.gov)

**Attention: Nathan Slack/Street Tree Advisory Committee**  
*Urban Forest Superintendent*

Dear Mr. Slack and Committee Members,

I am a long-time building contractor and construction specialist in Santa Barbara. I have been in this county my entire life, and I started working in the construction industry in 1993 here in Santa Barbara. I have a degree in Civil Engineering from California Polytechnic University and I am a licensed General Contractor (B) in California. I am also the past Chair and current board member of the chamber of commerce.

I am writing on behalf of the Chaffee family, owners of 726 State St. They consulted me to evaluate the effect of the Washingtonia Robusta at the back of their building which is located at 726 State Street. This tree is on City Property and is growing against the bottom base of their building and is at least 15" up the wall on the back base of the building.

The tree is causing moisture intrusion and will, if it hasn't already, cause degradation of the masonry mortar and concrete foundation. This poses a risk to the structural integrity of the building.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Bill Shields*

Bill Shields  
President, Shields Construction Services

[bill@shields-co.com](mailto:bill@shields-co.com)

583 El Sueno Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
CA Lic. 985422

Phone (805) 456-9740

5324 Bridget Ave SE  
Auburn, WA 98092  
November 18, 2021

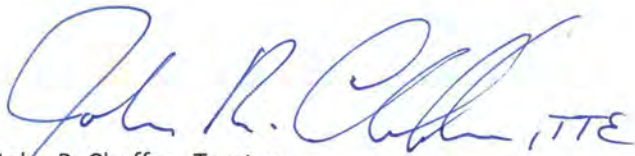
Street Tree Advisory Committee  
Attn Nathan Slack, Urban Forest Superintendent  
402 E. Ortega Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Reconsideration of decision of November 18, 2021 meeting regarding the Mexican Fan Palm at 726 State Street/725 De La Guerra Plaza

Dear Tree Advisory Officers,

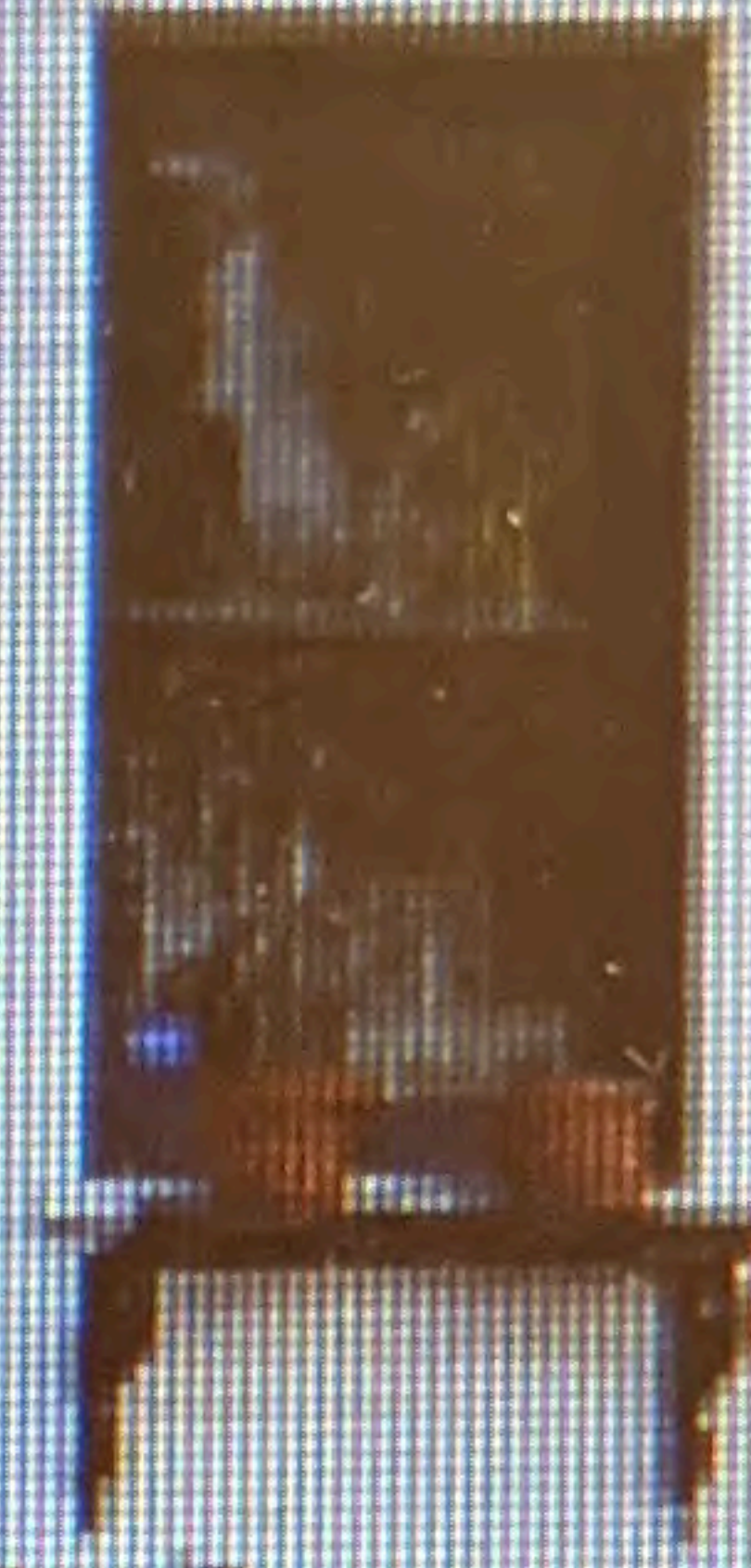
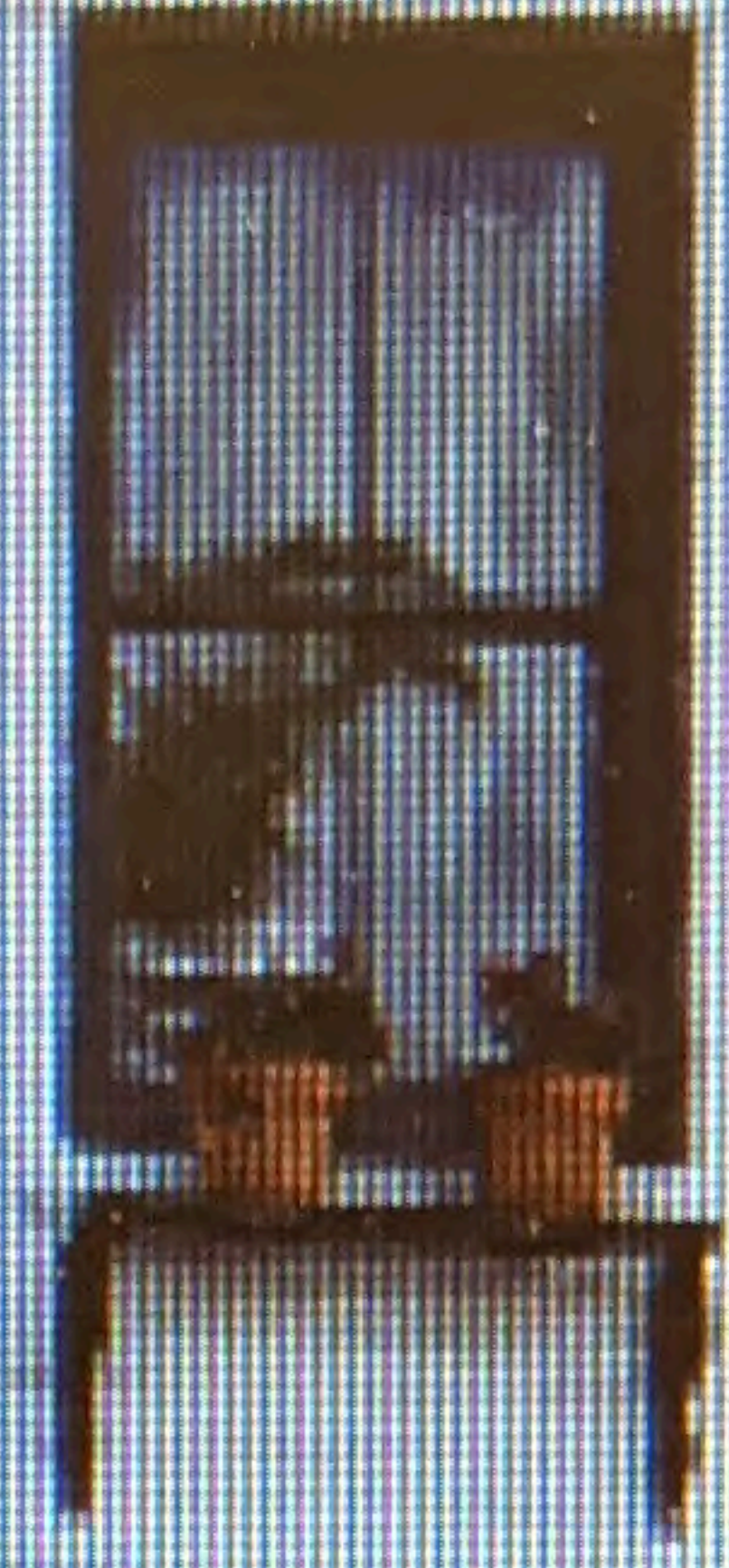
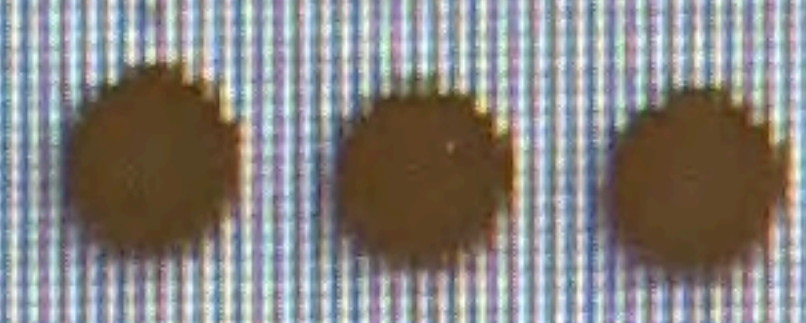
As owners of the 726 State Street/725 De La Guerra Plaza property, we have concern about the palm tree that is growing around the corner of our building. We have had damage to the brick at the base of our building due to moisture to the West of the location of the palm tree which has required mitigation to protect the brick from further erosion/damage. The palm tree in question has grown over the corner of the building and precludes both 1) our ability to assess for moisture damage to the brick; and 2) to mitigate damage done to the brick/structure of our building by moisture over time. For these reasons we feel strongly that the tree should be removed to allow us to appropriately assess and care for our building.

Sincerely,

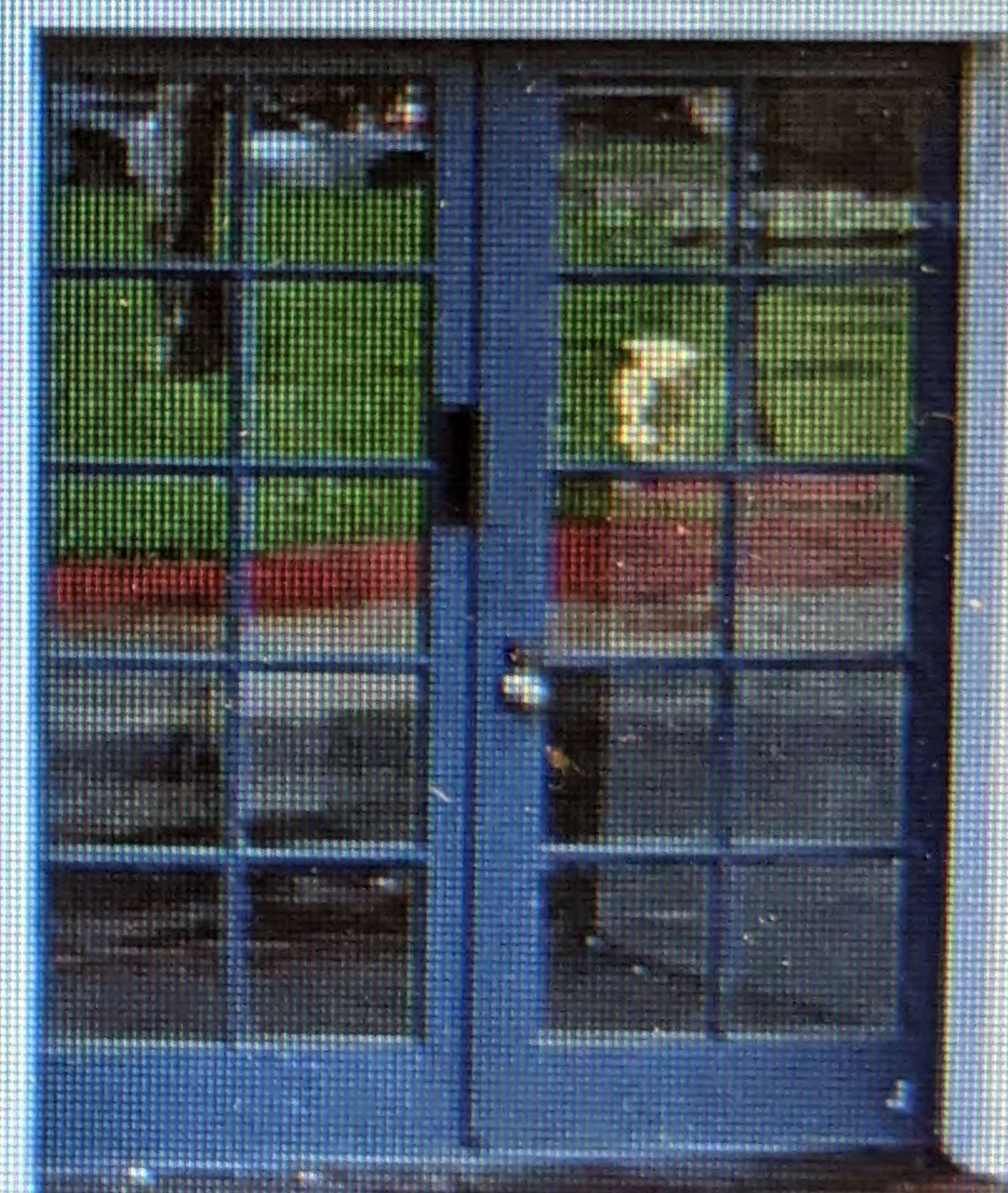
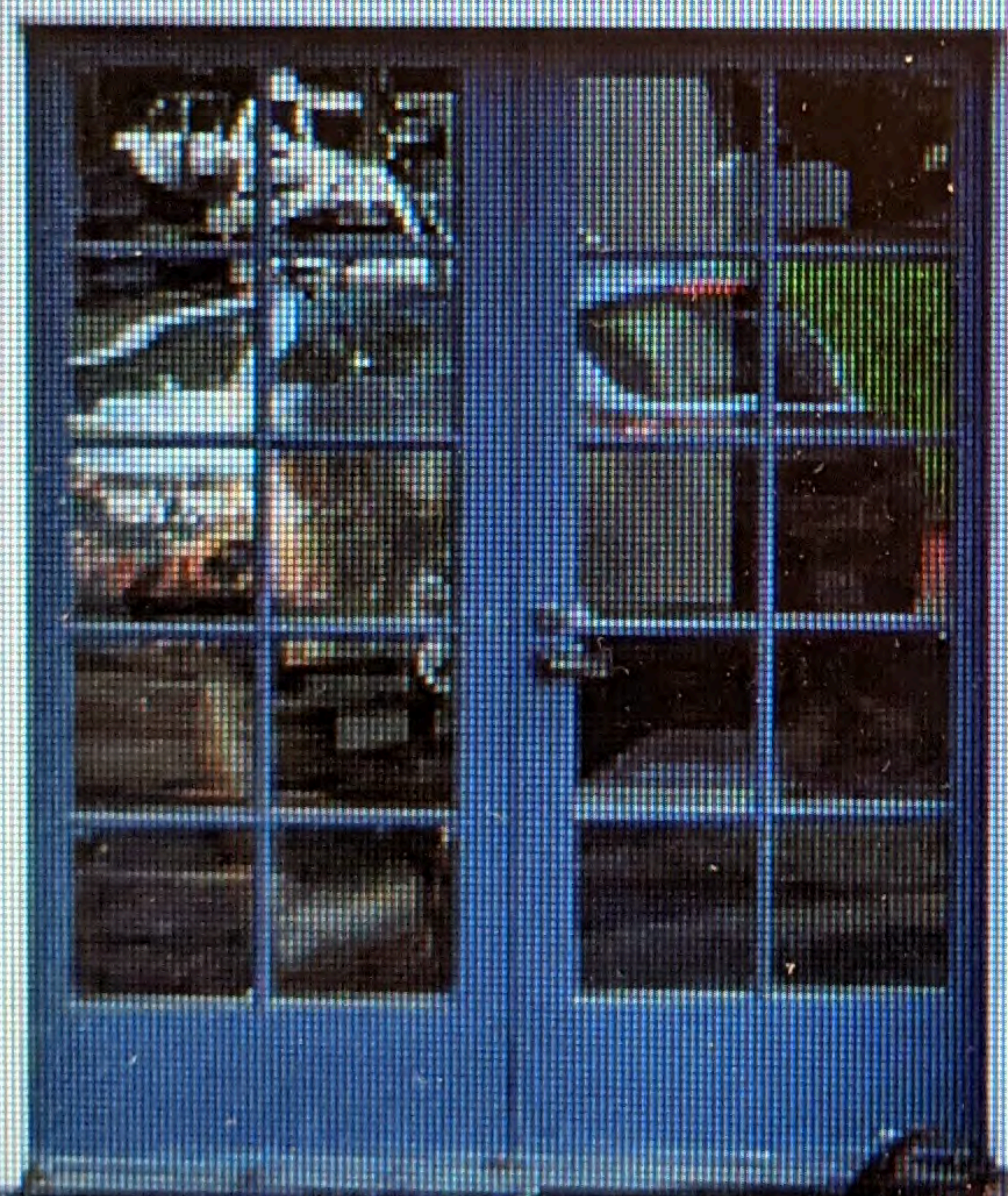
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John R. Chaffee, TTE". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "TTE" clearly visible at the end.

John R. Chaffee, Trustee  
Chaffee Family Trust





725



WELCOME  
TO THE  
DESERTS  
OF THE  
WEST