

August 20, 2024

**NOTICE OF DENIAL**

Michael Eisenberg  
1430 S. Dixie Hwy, Ste. 105  
Miami, FL 33146

**RE: Application Number HDC2024-00381; 3747 Tyler; Russell Woods Historic District  
Project Scope: Install vinyl windows (WDWA), alter porches**

Dear Applicant,

At the Regular Meeting that was held on August 14, 2024, the Detroit Historic District Commission (“DHDC”) reviewed the above-referenced application. Pursuant to Section 5(1) and 9(1) of the Michigan Local Historic District Act, as amended, being MCL 399.205 (1), MCL 399.209 (9) and Sections 21-2-78 and 21-2-80 of the 2019 Detroit City Code; the DHDC hereby issues a Denial for the following work, effective on August 20, 2024, as it will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the district’s Elements of Design:

***Window replacement and window alteration, rear porch alteration, side door enclosure, repair / rebuild masonry porch per the submitted documents, drawings, and presentation materials.***

The Commission’s reason for the denial is that:

- The historic windows and doors were distinctive, character-defining features of the house, and their removal substantially altered the appearance of the building. When windows are removed without Historic District Commission approval, new windows should match all the details of the historic windows that were removed. The proposal to install vinyl windows that will be covered by separately installed aluminum-clad wood frames will not restore nor improve the historic and architectural design of this property.
- The uniformity and relationship between the window openings on each floor and each elevation is an important architectural component of the dwelling. The casement units on the front elevation and the three-over-one double-hung window pattern on the side and rear walls offered a verticality to each window opening. Adding additional framing to the openings will further disrupt the original uniformity of this house’s architectural design and features.
- The proposed vinyl windows (and aluminum frames) do not match the original windows in materiality, dimensionality, operation, decorative features, and color.
  - Single-hung windows are fabricated with a stationary upper sash that is welded to the frame and doesn’t offer the dimensionality of a double-hung window.
  - Sliding windows proposed for side walls are contemporary window designs; they disrupt the traditional uniformity of mullied windows.
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.

- Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
- The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
- Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
- The installation of the proposed vinyl windows does not follow NPS guidelines for new replacement windows, as the proposed windows are not “consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period”, are not “compatible with the overall historic character of the building”.
- The proposed aluminum-clad wood framing system, akin to a storm window, will not adequately disguise the vinyl windows, and this outer framing can be easily removed.
- At the rear wall, the proposal to install a double-hung window and panel below within the two door openings is the least intrusive of the three options provided by the applicant. However, the proposal as it is currently designed with vinyl single-hung windows, aluminum covered brick mould and panel, will not be approved.
  - The option to permanently alter the rear door openings to smaller window openings significantly reduces the opportunity to re-establish a wood porch at this area at some time in the future .
  - The option to erect a two-story masonry porch would create a distinctive non-historic element at this location, and conflict with Standard 3 which says, “Changes that create a false sense of historical development...shall not be undertaken.”
- The applicant’s condition assessment of the front porch is not fully documented, and the scope of work is not detailed to the level needed, to understand the areas of concern as well as the construction methods that will be used to repair the masonry porch.
  - Dimensioned drawings confirming the existing historic design and construction are needed, as are pictorial and written descriptions of existing conditions.
  - Detailed processes to embark on, such as “clean structures using the gentlest means possible” need to be fully explained, including method, material and pressure of cleaning proposal.
  - If a section of the existing porch is to be deconstructed and rebuilt (like possibly the outer, east masonry pier which isn’t identified in the current scope of work), a dimensioned drawing confirming how it will be reconstructed is required.
  - Assuming that some new brick will be needed, on this porch or the house, brick samples that closely match the existing brick in dimension, color, pattern, finish and profile will be submitted to staff for review against the historic brick. Also, specification of the new mortar, including composition and installation dimension, profile, etc. must be submitted to staff for review.
- The west side entrance that is currently covered will not be bricked in as this door opening is one component of a symmetrical design directly related to the dwelling’s two-family function. Individual photos documenting the existing front and side doors will be submitted to staff prior to reviewing the door replacement product.

Therefore, this work fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, specifically Standards or Elements:

- 1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- 2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

- 3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
- 5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
- 6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

The application may be resubmitted for the Historic District Commission's review when suggested changes have been made that address the cited reasons for denial, if applicable.

Please be advised that, in accordance with MCL 399. 211 and Section 21-2-81 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, an applicant aggrieved by a decision of the DHDC may file an appeal with the State Historic Preservation Review Board. Within sixty (60) days of your receipt of this notice, an appeal may be filed with:

Jon Stuckey, Michigan Department of Attorney General  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, G. Mennen Williams Building  
525 West Ottawa Street  
P.O. Box 30754  
Lansing, MI 48909

Phone: 517-335-0665  
E-mail: [stuckeyj@michigan.gov](mailto:stuckeyj@michigan.gov)

If you have any questions regarding the foregoing, please contact staff at 313-224-1762 or [hdc@detroitmi.gov](mailto:hdc@detroitmi.gov).

For the Commission:



Audra Dye  
Detroit Historic District Commission