

**STAFF REPORT: MAY 11, 2022 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: J. ROSS**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: #22-7808**

**ADDRESS: 647 ARDEN PARK**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: ARDEN PARK-EAST BOSTON**

**APPLICANT: SHALOM DUBOV**

**OWNER: SHALOM DUBOV/NN BUILDERS LLC**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 4/16/2022**

**DATE OF STAFF VISIT: 5/4/2022**

**SCOPE OF WORK: REPLACE GLASS BLOCK WINDOWS WITH VINYL WINDOWS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The parcel located at 647 Arden Park includes a two-story, single-family dwelling and a one-story garage. The brick dwelling, which was erected ca. 1915, is topped with a hipped roof with gabled-roof dormers. The roof's overhanging eaves have been covered with aluminum. Vinyl siding clads the dormer side walls. Windows are fixed, slider, and double-hung vinyl units (with grids between the glass) and glass block. A two-story porch is located at the front elevation. Vinyl railing has been installed at the second story of the front-elevation's porch. The primary entrance features a pair of non-historic steel doors. The hipped-roof brick garage sits in the rear northeast corner of the lot.



**647 Arden Park, current appearance**

## **PROPOSAL**

With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to replace a number of existing glass block windows with new vinyl windows. Specifically, the work includes the following items:

### **West Elevation**

- Replace three glass block windows at the first story with new, double-hung vinyl windows with muntins between the glass

### **East Elevation**

- Replace one glass block window at the first story with a new double-hung vinyl windows with muntins between the glass
- Replace one glass block windows at the first story with a new fixed vinyl window with muntins between the glass

### **Rear/North Elevation**

- Replace one glass block window at the second story with a new, double-hung vinyl window with muntins between the glass
- Replace two glass block windows at the first story with new, fixed vinyl windows with muntins between the glass
- Replace one glass block window at the first story with a new, double-hung vinyl window with muntins between the glass

## **OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- A review of the property files, a field assessment, and Google Earth Streetview images revealed that a number of work items have been undertaken at the home without Historic District Commission approval. This work appears to have been undertaken sometime between July 2009 and August 2011. These items include the following:
  - Replacement of all existing windows with vinyl (sliders, fixed and double hung with muntins between the glass) and glass block windows (installed between July 2009 and August 2011)
  - Wrap soffit and fascia with aluminum (installed between August 2011 and August 2013)
  - Replace original front door and sidelites with a set of paired metal doors in opening installed between July 2009 and August 2011)
  - Remove rear door and install metal door with glass block sidelites and transom installed between July 2009 and August 2011)
  - Install new vinyl railing at front elevation porch, second story (installed between August 2011 and August 2013)
  - Install vinyl siding at dormer sidewalls (installed between August 2011 and August 2013)
  - Install aluminum gutters and downspouts (installed between August 2011 and August 2013)
  - Replace concrete two-track driveway with new concrete driveway (installed between August 2015 and August 2018)
  - Install a satellite dish at side/west elevation (installed between August 2013 and August 2015)

- A review of the HDC property file indicated that a previous owner submitted an application to the Commission to wrap the eaves and soffits in aluminum and install new gutters and downspouts at the home in November 2011. The Commission denied that application.
- A review of the HDC property file indicated that a previous owner submitted an application to the Commission in December 2011 for the approval of new windows and doors which he had installed without HDC approval. The Commission denied that application.
- A review of Building Department files indicated that a previous owner had submitted an application for “General Repairs” in October 2009 (Permit #MRC2009-07869). It appears that BSEED issued a permit for the repairs however, a note in the BSEED permit file states “permit cancelled pending Historical Commission approval. Notification of permit cancellation sent December 12, 2011 from Daljit Singh Benipal.”
- The HDC property file includes an email from 2011 in which staff reached out to BSEED and noted that a previous homeowner stated that he had received a permit to undertake the window and door replacement in 2009. She further requested that BSEED staff send her a copy of the 2009 permit. As previously stated, the 2009 permit (Permit #MRC2009-07869 was for “General Repairs” and did not include any material which referred to windows and exterior doors.
- Staff cannot confirm if the 2009 permit which BSEED issued without HDC approval/in error included the replacement of windows with the current vinyl and glass block windows and the replacement of exterior doors. Nevertheless, the additional exterior work items (front porch railing, vinyl siding at dormers, aluminum at soffit/fascia, satellite dish, and driveway) appear to have been added after the BSEED cancelled the permit (on December 12, 2011).
- Staff has reached out to the current property owner to see if he would like to add the unapproved work exterior work items to the current application. Staff has yet to receive a response from the current owner/applicant.

## ISSUES

- It is staff’s opinion that the current vinyl and glass block windows are grossly incompatible with the building’s historic character and with the property’s nearby environs. The property sits at an intersection at the very eastern end of the historic district and is highly visible
- Per the National Park Service’s publication entitled “*Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards*” [Planning Successful Rehabilitation Projects, Replacement Windows—Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service \(nps.gov\)](#):
  - Replacement of missing or non-historic windows must, however, always fill the original window openings and must be compatible with the overall historic character of the building...The appearance of the replacement windows ***must be consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period***, but need not replicate the missing historic window. In many cases, this may be accomplished using substitute materials. There may be some additional flexibility with regard to the details of windows on secondary elevations that are not highly visible, consistent with the approach outlined for replacing existing historic windows. ***Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards.***
- It is staff’s opinion that the proposed replacement windows are not compatible with the building’s historic appearance and therefore the work does not meet the Standards. See the attached

designation photos and Google Streetview images of the home prior to the unapproved window replacement. Staff recommends that the applicant refer to these images for guidance around the design of any new windows installed at the home.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission**

It is staff's opinion that the project does not conform to the Elements of Design for the Arden Park-East Boston Historic District and does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular Standard #2). *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.* Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposal.



