

STAFF REPORT: 9/14/22 REGULAR MEETING

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-8016

ADDRESS: 1773 PARKER

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE

APPLICANT: JENNIFER LYON

PROPERTY OWNER: JENNIFER LYON

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: AUGUST 22, 2022

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO

SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS ON ATTIC DORMERS, SOUTH ELEVATION BAY WINDOW, AND REAR PORCH

EXISTING CONDITIONS

1773 Parker is a two-and-a-half story, wood-sided house built in 1909. It faces east onto the street in the West Village Historic District. The house is comparable to the other houses on its block in age and scale. Ornamentation specific to a particular architectural style does not exist.



September 2022 photo by staff.

PROPOSAL

The proposed scope, as described in the application, and clarified in an email to staff dated September 8, 2022, consists of several work items, as follows:

Attic Windows

Attic fenestration consists of two dormers. A front-facing (east) dormer features three, apparently original, wood one-over-one sash windows; a south-facing dormer features a single, non-historic glass-block window.



Left: front-facing (east) dormer. Right: South-facing dormer. Photo by staff.

The applicant proposes to replace the sash windows on the front-facing (east) dormer with hopper windows that are “identical in appearance” to the existing windows.

The applicant proposes to replace the glass block window on the south-facing dormer with a “hand crafted wooden picture window.” (The applicant does not provide dimensions or specifications for the proposed window).

South Elevation Bay Window



A projecting bay window on the south elevation of the house currently contains a larger, central, non-historic glass block window flanked by narrower, non-historic, vinyl sash windows.

The applicant proposes to replace the bay’s central glass block window with a custom wood “picture window,” and replace the bay’s vinyl side windows with “custom opening wood casements” (as described in the application) or “fixed windows” (as described in the September 8, 2022 email to staff).

South elevation bay window. Photo by staff.

Rear Porch “Three Season Room” Windows

The rear porch currently contains six glass block windows and two vinyl windows.



Rear (west) porch viewed from alley. Photo by staff.

The applicant proposes to replace these windows with new Andersen 400 Series casement windows. The 400 Series is a wood window with a vinyl exterior surface, according to the Andersen website.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The West Village Historic District was established by Ordinance 547-H in 1983. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-132) reference windows as being “always subdivided, the most common window type being double-hung sash, whose area may be further subdivided by muntins.” The Final Report for the district states that it is “of historical importance as a benchmark to the growth of Detroit in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” implying a Period of Significance.
- Additional, ongoing rehabilitation work pertaining to the subject property is discussed in COAs dated November 18, 2020 (staff report November 12, 2020) and March 16, 2021 (staff report March 10, 2021).
- Glass block windows are an anachronistic addition to the building. Where glass block windows exist, original windows are missing. Double-hung, wood sash windows would have been used at the time of the porch’s construction. Such windows are nearly ubiquitous on comparable houses in the vicinity, as observed by staff during a site visit.
- Appropriate windows for the south-facing dormer would match those on the north-facing dormer in materials and profile (though not necessarily in operation).
- No known evidence exists regarding the original appearance of the central glass block window on the south elevation projecting bay. Staff suggests that replacing this window a fixed, wood, single-pane window would be appropriate given the diversity in architecture and the broad Period of Significance of the district.
- On November 18, 2020, the applicant received a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace six glass block windows and two vinyl windows on the building’s rear (west) porch with appropriate new windows (specifically, Pella Architect Series, aluminum-clad, double hung one-over-one wood sash windows with a white finish). Appropriate replacement windows in this location may also be approved by staff. The windows proposed for this location in this application, however, are not appropriate (see “Issues,” below).

ISSUES

- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard #6, requires that "replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence." Appropriate windows for the south-facing dormer would match those on the north-facing dormer in materials and profile (though not necessarily in operation). Similarly, appropriate windows for the side lights on the projecting bay window, and the rear porch windows, would be double-hung wood sash windows comparable to those found elsewhere on the house and on similar houses within the historic district.
- Standard #2 directs that "the removal of historic materials ... shall be avoided." Thus, the replacement of wood sash windows on the front-facing (east) dormer is not appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78: Determination of Historic District Commission

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, with conditions, for the following work items, as they meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- Replacement of the glass block window on the south-facing dormer
- Replacement of the projecting bay window's central glass block window with a custom wood "picture window"
- Replacement of the projecting bay's vinyl side windows with "custom opening wood casements" or "fixed windows"

Staff recommends that the above three work items be granted a Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions that:

- The replacement window on the south-facing dormer be identical in materials and profile to the windows on the front-facing (east) dormer, subject to approval by staff;
- The dimensions of the projecting bay's "picture window" will be subject to approval by staff; and
- The dimensions of the projecting bay's "custom opening wood casements" or "fixed windows" will replicate the appearance of sash windows elsewhere on the building, subject to approval by staff.

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial of the following proposed work items:

- Replacement of front-facing (east) dormer windows with fixed or hopper windows
- Replacement of rear porch windows with casement windows

The two items mentioned above do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, in particular:

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.*

6. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
7. *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.*