

STAFF REPORT: 9/14/22 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-8018

ADDRESS: 2523 ATKINSON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: ATKINSON AVENUE

APPLICANT: GEORGE O'REE

PROPERTY OWNER: GEORGE O'REE

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: AUGUST 17, 2022

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: AUGUST 29, 2022 AND SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

SCOPE: REPLACE TEN (10) WOOD WINDOWS WITH EIGHT (8) VINYL WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

2623 Atkinson Ave. is a two-and-a-half story, red brick, side-gabled house built in 1919. It faces north to Atkinson Avenue in the Atkinson Avenue Historic District. The house is comparable to the other houses in the district in overall massing, and distinguishes itself with a subtle Arts and Crafts influence, particularly evident in a projecting front porch that exhibits wide vergeboards and projecting brackets. A projecting rear ell, clad in clapboard siding, is potentially a later addition to the building. The home contains a mix of wood windows and fiberglass or vinyl replacement windows.



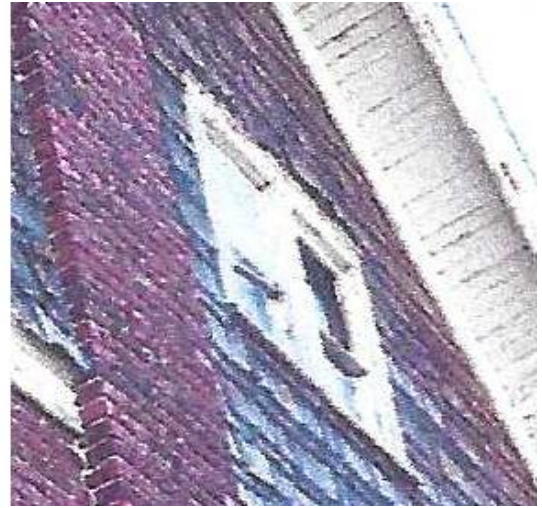
August 2022 photo by staff.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to replace a total of ten (10) windows (see submitted application), as follows:

- Four (4), wood, two-over-one sash windows, grouped into pairs separated by a mullion, on the east and west elevations on the attic story.
- Two (2) wood one-over-one sash windows, paired and separated by a mullion, on the rear (south elevation), second floor.

- Two (2) wood one-over-one sash windows, paired and separated by a mullion, on the rear (south elevation), first floor.
- Two (2) wood one-over-one sash windows, paired and separated by a mullion, on the west elevation.



Attic windows proposed for replacement. Left: west elevation; Right: east elevation. Photos from application.



Left west elevation windows; Center: first floor windows; Right: second floor windows. Photos from application.

The proposed new windows are Hanson’s “traditional” vinyl windows in white. The windows on the first and second floor would be double-hung sash windows. According to the proposal, the attic window configuration would be changed, with each pair of sash windows replaced with a single, sliding window. Neither the application nor the Hanson’s website provides detailed specifications regarding the dimensions of the proposed windows.



“Traditional” double hung and casement windows. Image: www.hansons.com

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Atkinson Avenue Historic District was established by Ordinance 582-H in 1984. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-139[d]) reference windows as being most commonly “double-hung sash ... sometimes further divided by muntins,” typically made of wood, and again note “window sashes are usually subdivided by the muntins” (subsections [3], [7], and [15], respectively), suggesting these elements and materials as distinctive character-defining features of the district. The Final Report does not provide a Period of Significance for the district, but references events pertaining to architectural and social history from 1914 through 1950. It does not provide a list of contributing (historic) resources.
- The existing first- and second-floor windows are not visible from the public-right-of-way, and in photos included in the application, they are covered by storm windows and not clearly visible. Staff is therefore unable to provide additional information on the condition or other qualities of the windows. The applicant states that they are wood windows.
- The attic windows, based on architectural style, appear to be original to the building.
- The first floor and second floor windows are located on a rear ell that, based on materials and style, appear to be original to the building, or an addition built early in the building’s history. The south and west faces of the ell subject to this application are not visible from the public right-of-way, but are visible from the alley.



Rear (south elevation) of building. September 2022 photo by staff.

- Staff suggests that the existing windows proposed for replacement are historic; this opinion is based in the building’s age and architectural style as well as the inclusion of wood sash windows in the Elements of Design.

- The application states that the windows are “drafty,” dry-rotted,” and that the “attic windows are falling out.”
- Staff was not able to locate a Certificate of Appropriateness or a Notice to Proceed for the windows on the building that have already been replaced. The applicant states that the windows were replaced prior to the creation of the historic district.

ISSUES

- The building’s windows are both historic and distinctive (see above) and staff has not seen indication that they have deteriorated beyond repair. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, cited below, direct that they be retained and preserved or repaired.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial of the proposed work as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, 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.*
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.*