

**STAFF REPORT: DECEMBER 14, 2022 REGULAR MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-8158**

**ADDRESS: 4205 FULLERTON**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN**

**APPLICANT: PAUL WINDEL, WINDOWPRO**

**PROPERTY OWNER: RUFUS S. EVANS, JR.**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: OCTOBER 24, 2022**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: DECEMBER 4, 2022**

**SCOPE: REPLACE REAR DOORS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

4205 Fullerton is a two-and-a-half story, brick house. It likely dates from the 1930s, though a construction date is not provided in public records. Tudor Revival or Neo-Tudor details include prominent gables, decorative timbering on the front (north) gables and projecting gable-roof front porch, brickwork in common bond with alternating Flemish courses, and leaded glass windows with horizontal and diagonal came patterns. The building is on the southwest corner of Fullerton Avenue and Petoskey Avenue with the rear (south) elevation clearly visible from Petoskey Avenue. Alterations include vinyl siding, and new windows on dormers, the apparent elimination of a door opening on the rear (south) elevation second floor, and rear (south) porch alterations as described below.



*December 2022 photo by staff.*

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to replace the rear doors (both inner lead came glass doors and outer screen doors) with a sliding, aluminum-clad wood door.

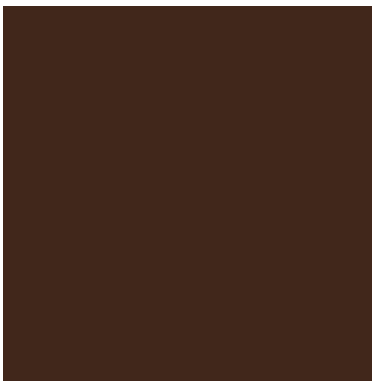


Ultimate Sliding  
French Door

*Left: Existing conditions. Photo from application. Right: Interior view of proposed replacement. Image from application.*

The existing doors consist of an interior, wood double door, with zinc came, beveled glass (hardware is not described in the application) and an exterior, wood panel double screen door.

The proposed new door is a Marvin Ultimate Sliding French Door, an aluminum-clad wood product. Detailed dimensions and specifications of the door are provided in the submitted application materials. The proposed door will also require aluminum coil trim on the exterior. Both door and trim are proposed to be Bahama Brown.



*Bahama brown. Image: <https://www.marvin.com/products/design-options/exterior-finish>*

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-168) provide the following guidance:
  - “Subdivided windows” create textural interest.
  - Buildings of vernacular English Revival styles generally have painted woodwork and window frames of a dark brown or cream color.”
- Rear doors in the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District are typically not clearly visible due to fences, adjacent buildings, and enclosed porches. Thus, staff was not able to compare the doors of the subject property with others in the vicinity.
- The doors proposed for replacement are clearly visible from the public right-of-way.
- The rear (south elevation) of the house appears to have been altered. The porch deck appears, due to having a different brick color and bond pattern, to have been added after the Period of Significance. Also, marks in mortar joints and the presence of a now-closed second floor door opening suggest a covered porch or balcony may have once existed. Staff was not able to locate any historical information, as Sanborn maps for this area were not available and tree cover hides the rear of the house in historical aerial photos. The rear porch is not mentioned in the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department card index.
- Based on materials, design, and hardware, staff concludes that both sets of doors date from the Period of Significance and are likely original to the building.
- The interior doors are a distinctive and defining feature, as their configuration represents the Tudor Revival style and they add “textural interest” as specified in the Elements of Design. The beveled glass adds additional textural interest.
- There is less of an argument for the exterior, screen doors as a character-defining feature. A survey of houses in the vicinity, along with historical photos or other evidence regarding the subject property, and whether its rear porch was originally covered or enclosed, would contribute to this analysis.
- The applicant suggests that both sets of doors have deteriorated significantly. They are stated to be in “inoperable condition ... the main door will not open and outside screen doors have to be forced open to swing out. The [owner] currently needs bricks and wood boards to be put in front of doors to hold them in place.”
- From photos provided by the applicant and from a site visit, staff observes warped and rotted wood on the exterior screen doors, to the extent that they might not be feasibly repairable. There is less information regarding deterioration of the inner doors. Protected from the elements and likely built of higher quality materials, they may be feasibly repairable.
- The dimensions of the upper, lower, and side rails of the proposed door closely match those of the existing screen doors, and would be appropriate for the building in some circumstances, such as on an addition, or if the historic doors were missing. However, to replace a historic door, Standard #6 applies (see “Issues,” below).
- Bahama Brown is an appropriate color, as dark browns are typical of Tudor Revival architecture, already used as a trim color elsewhere on the house, and provided as options in Color System D.

## ISSUES

- The interior doors create “textural interest,” as described above, in the Elements of Design, and thus are a defining feature. Standards #2 and #5 suggest that they be retained and preserved.
- The exterior screen doors are a “deteriorated historic feature” (Standard #6) and should be repaired if possible. If they have deteriorated beyond repair, Standard #6 states “the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.”

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation #1) Section 21-2-78: Determination of Historic District Commission

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a *Denial* of the proposed work, as the proposed work 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.*