

STAFF REPORT: 4/12/2023 REGULAR MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: #22-8287
VIOLATION NUMBER: #679
ADDRESS: 4762 CORTLAND
HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS - SULLIVAN
APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER: KAGAN GURSOY
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 3/20/2023
DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 11/23/22, 3/22/23

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

SCOPE: INSTALL WOOD WINDOWS, INSTALL STEEL SIDE DOOR

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in the late 1930s, the two-story dwelling at 4763 Cortland is three bays wide, with vertically aligned openings at the first and second floors. The side gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The walls are clad with red brick laid in a running bond pattern. The unadorned fascia acts as a continuous header for the second-floor windows, and a vertical course of bricks below the fascia offers a subtle contrasting detail. Window sash are not present on the front elevation, but the limestone sills and shutters flanking each window opening remain in place. The transparent and solid boarding of the first-floor window openings suggest the original sash sat upon wood panels (which is confirmed by the designation photo). The front entry, that previously included a central door and sidelights, is accentuated by a wood door surround comprised of an entablature with a simple frieze and pilasters. The walkway to the main entrance traverses the front yard at the far-right side of the lot and ends at a raised open landing. A remnant of an awning remains attached to a course of bricks over the front entrance.



Site Photo 1, by Staff March 22, 2023: (South) front elevation.



Designation Slide, 1999: (South) front/side elevation showing original windows, porch, entrance, and roof. Note greater eave depth.

This property has the following HDC approvals and violations for work done without approval on Detroit Property Information System (DPI):

- Violations: all windows removed, front and side doors removed, front porch roof removed.
- HDC COA, December 2022: Front door and sidelights, repair of front elevation window's wood panels, repair for front porch, repair of the roof with asphalt shingles.
- HDC Denial, December 2022: Replacement of original windows with vinyl windows, installation of vinyl siding below front elevation windows



Site Photo 2, Google Streetview June 2019: (South) front/side elevation showing conditions before work and current owner purchase.



Aerial of Parcel # 14004592.



Site Photo 3, by Staff March 22, 2023: (South) front elevation, showing secure view and boarding on windows and side door missing on east elevation.



Site Photo 4, by Applicant 2022: (North) rear elevation showing proposed locations for new, single-hung windows, replacing the existing wood, double-hung windows on the first floor.

PROPOSAL

The current owner purchased this property from the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA). The proposed work consists of the following work: install single-hung and fixed wood windows and install a steel door.

WINDOW DETAILS

The applicant proposes to install wood windows, some are single hung, and some are fixed. See attached window order. Staff has requested that the photos that were previously supplied be updated to indicate which window design is proposed to go where, but at the time of this report, staff has not received this information. The proposed window product is sourced by Guandong Daji Doors Industry Co., Ltd of Guangdong, China. They are single-hung and fixed, wood windows (Thailand solid oak), each sized to match each opening. The single-hung windows will be installed at all front and rear elevations, and the fixed windows are proposed to be installed at all side elevation windows. All windows are to be painted white in color, no grids, simulated divide lites or muntins. The applicant provided product details showing the window's cross-sections with incomplete dimensions. The

applicant was also requested to provide a description of how the brick moulds would be restored. The applicant stated that they would be restored to their original dimensions according to the photos, using wood and painted white. See attachments.

SIDE DOOR DETAILS

The applicant states the east elevation door was missing and secure-view (plexiglass) was used to secure the opening. The applicant proposes to install a Jeld-Wen steel 36"x80" 6-panel, left-hand, inswing door with no windows, painted white. See attached images and details.

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:
 - “Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash.”
 - “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.
- The current owner purchased the property from the DLBA on October 6, 2022.
- Some work, such as the removal of the windows, wood paneling below the front first floor windows, front door and porch roof, were done by a previous owner. The wood panels below the front, first floor windows are no longer present and the sidelights on either side of the front door are still present. Both are currently covered in plywood and not visible. (*See photos 1 & 3*)
- Staff observed that much of the approved work from December 2022 has not begun, and some of these items address outstanding violations: the front door replacement, the front porch repair, and the front elevation wood panels below the first-floor windows.
- The application has a window order that includes the front door. The front door was already approved by the Commission in the previous application with the condition that the material change from fiberglass to wood. This order shows that the door will be wood (solid Ash), so the condition is satisfied. Because the front door is already approved, it is not part of this application.

WINDOWS

- The applicant states that there were no wooden windows upon purchase of the home. However, staff sees in the applicant photos that some wood windows remain in the rear.
- From the designation slide, it is staff’s observation that the original windows were wood, double-hung with a 6/6 or 4/4 configuration. Some remains of these wood frame windows are partially or fully present on the rear side of the house. It is staff’s opinion that the remaining two windows on the rear, first floor could be potentially repaired and not replaced. (Staff has not received a report on the condition of these windows.) It is staff’s opinion that these original wood windows, their double-hung operation, and formation are distinctive character-defining features that have been either removed or neglected.
- Regarding the fact that many openings are missing windows altogether, the National Park Service (NPS) Guidelines recommends that any new window at that location must be *compatible* by reflecting materiality that is harmonious with the house, dimensions and scale that align with the building’s openings and respect the architectural expression of this historic colonial style.
 - *“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...Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards”* <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/windows-replacement.htm>
- While the proposal to install these wood windows is appropriate, the replacement of double-hung windows with single-hung or fixed windows would introduce a new design and operation that

substantially detracts from and alters the historic appearance of the building. Furthermore, without understanding the full dimensions of the window's cross-sections, placement in the window openings and dimensions for the new brick moulds, staff has incomplete information as to how the proposed windows will be framed in the openings, and therefore be potentially inconsistent with the general characteristics of the historic windows.

- Staff recommends that compatible material does not necessarily have to be wood. Aluminum clad wood, for example, may be appropriate too, but the operation of the windows, i.e., double-hung, be consistent throughout the first and second floors of the building.

SIDE DOOR

- The proposed side door is made of steel. Staff has no issue with the proposed design or material of this side door. The proposed white color of the door would match the white trim of the fascia and pilasters of the front elevation.

ISSUES

- No documentation establishing that the original windows at the rear of the house were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- It is staff's opinion that the removal of the original windows and proposed replacement with single-hung or fixed windows with no divided lite alters the original *scale, design, and materiality* and introduces new operation of the windows that is incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property, and therefore does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The applicant has stated that they will rebuild the brick mould to existing conditions. However, staff has not received any brick mould or cross section details of the proposed windows. Staff is concerned that this may be a necessary detail to demonstrate that the proposal is compatible and historically appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation 1: Replace wood windows with single-hung and fixed windows

Staff finds that the replacement of the original wood windows with single-hung and fixed windows does not meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for the following reasons:

- The windows that were removed without approval were a distinctive historic feature that characterized the property. The windows dated to the building's original construction and included 6/6 or 4/4 double-hung wood units.
- The application does not include documentation that the windows removed without approval were deteriorated beyond repair to an extent that merited their replacement.
- The introduction of no divided light, which replaced the true divided light of the original wood windows, and the introduction of single-hung or fixed windows, particularly for the front elevation, are not an adequate match for the original true divided lite of the original, double-hung windows.
- The lost brick molds of all the window openings have not yet been adequately addressed with dimensioned drawings, as well as the cross section of the proposed windows as a whole to understand how the windows are set into the window openings.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposed window replacement, as it does not the district's Elements of Design nor meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards:

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.

Recommendation 2: Install side door

It is staff's opinion the installation of the proposed side door is appropriate. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.