

**STAFF REPORT: JULY 12, 2023 REGULAR MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 23-8435**

**ADDRESS: 19540 SHREWSBURY**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: SHERWOOD FOREST**

**APPLICANT: LINDA HRIBAR, WEATHERGARD WINDOWS**

**PROPERTY OWNER: BRENDA BELL**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: MAY 31, 2023**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: JUNE 27, 2023 AND JULY 6, 2023**

**SCOPE: REPLACE STEEL WINDOWS WITH VINYL WINDOWS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

19540 Shrewsbury is a two-and-one-half-story, French Eclectic house in the Sherwood Forest Historic District, built in 1926 and facing southwest at the corner of two curved streets. Defining features include a steeply pitched, flat-decked hip roof with wood shingles, flared eaves, and through-the-cornice hipped wall dormers, a wide, coursed, rough-cut stone chimney, rough-hewn brick walls, and rolled steel casement windows.

The windows, subject of this application, appear to be original and come in several configurations depending on size, typically operable casements set within fixed portions. At least one opening features historic wood storm windows.



*Front (southwest facing) view of subject property, June 2022 photo by staff.*

### **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to replace eight windows on the building according to the submitted window schedule. The windows proposed for replacement are shown below.



*Windows proposed for replacement. From left to right; Back (northeast): zero windows; side (northwest): 4 windows; front (southwest): 3 windows; side (southeast): 1 window. Illustration by staff.*

The proposed new windows are WeatherGard 700 series vinyl slider windows, tan colored, with flat grids matching the existing divided light pattern. In one instance (window #8 shown above), the installation would require removal of a steel mullion. It is not clear if the metal frames would remain in place.



*WeatherGard 700 Series window (optional grid not shown). Image from product website.*

## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The Sherwood Forest Historic District was established by Ordinance 02-02 in 2002. The Final Report states that the Sherwood Forest Historic District is significant for both architecture and community planning from the 1920s through the 1940s.
- The Elements of Design for Sherwood Forest (Sec. 21-2-178 [d]) provide the following observations about windows:
  - They are “usually subdivided;” the presence of subdivided windows creates “considerable” textural interest.
  - “Individual windows are often grouped together to fill a single opening which is wider than tall.”
  - “Windows are commonly either of the metal casement or wooden sash variety.”

- The homeowner submitted an email (included with the application materials) expressing the rationale for wishing to replace the windows.
  - The email describes deterioration, “windows have now decayed and the metal is hard to maneuver.”
  - The email describes security concerns: The current windows “crank out very vividly to be seen,” but with slider windows, “I could slide the window over and no one would even know it was open on the street if looking up.”
  - The email explains concerns with moisture inside the house due to a lack of air circulation.
  - The homeowner is also concerned that the existing windows do not have screens.
- The windows proposed for replacement are unambiguously character-defining as they are subdivided, as described in the Elements of Design, adding textural interest to the façade. They serve as a prominent visual component of the building. Each window is unique and clearly visible. Casement windows are also a common feature of the French Eclectic style.
- Staff observes that one of the windows (#2 in the above image) appears to be deteriorated beyond feasible repair. The window shows signs of corrosive expansion, which has deformed the bottom portion of the unit. Broken glass and evidence of prior repairs are visible. A full repair would require removal of the window, disassembly, and the welding in of new rolled steel sections. Even so, the repaired window would be subject to the same deterioration, likely caused by rainwater collecting against the brick sill. Continued expansion of the window would eventually cause additional damage to the building’s exterior and interior.



*Window #2. Photo by staff.*





Window #2. Photo by homeowner.

- Staff observes wood storm windows on the northeast-facing, first-floor bay window. Although this window and its storms are not subject of this application, it provides an example of how storm windows can be employed to increase energy efficiency and security. Other, nearby houses show additional examples of functional, well maintained storm windows.



Left: storm windows on subject property. Right: storm windows on adjacent property. Photos by staff.

## ISSUES

- The windows are historic (appearing to be original to the house). The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard #2, requires that “the removal of historic materials ... shall be avoided.”
- Standard #6 allows for the replacement of historic features if they are deteriorated beyond repair, as is the case with window #2. However, the replacement features must “match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials.” The proposed windows do not match because they are slider windows, rather than casement, because the grids would not mimic the texture and depth of true divided lights, and because they are vinyl rather than metal.
- Although the remaining windows are described as being difficult to open, this condition can be improved by regular maintenance, such as the removal of layers of paint. They are not beyond repair; Standards #2 and #6 direct that they retained.

## SECTION 21-2-78: DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Recommendation One: Denial, replacement of window #1 and #3 through 8

Staff concludes that the proposed replacement of window #1 and windows #3 through 8 (as numbered in the application materials) does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the following reasons:

- The existing windows proposed for removal are historic and distinctive materials and features that contribute to the character of the property that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair.
- The proposed new windows are not appropriate as they do not match the existing windows in design (they are slider windows rather than casement), visual qualities (the proposed flat grids do not provide the same textural depth as the existing windows), or materials (they are vinyl rather than metal).

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial as the proposed work fails to 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.*
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 where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

### Recommendation Two: Certificate of Appropriateness, replacement of window #2

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the remaining work item (the replacement of window #2, as numbered in the application materials) as it meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Elements of Design for the Sherwood Forest Historic District with the following condition:

- The new window will be a metal casement window matching the visual qualities of the old window, subject to approval by staff.