

STAFF REPORT: 9/13/2023 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: #23-8515

VIOLATION NUMBER: #772

ADDRESS: 3515 SHERBOURNE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: SHERWOOD FOREST

APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: STERLING HOWARD

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 8/21/2023

DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 8/14/23, 8/29/23

SCOPE: DEMOLISH ADDITION, ERECT REAR DECK, REPLACE WINDOWS, REPAIR DRIVEWAY, PAINT TRIM (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in 1936, the 2 ½ story English/Tudor Revival dwelling at 3515 Shelbourne features prominent trusses in gables façade and a towering front facing chimney with an arched opening towards the top. The house features a series of brick lay types nestled within the second floor's half-timbering. Stone surrounds the main arched entrance and the first floor windows. Stone also appears at the foundation of the grand chimney and at the windowsills. The modest front porch and foundation were once embraced by evergreen plantings that encircled the front and side elevations of the house but have since been removed without approval. A concrete walkway meanders through the front lawn to the street. Visible from the front and around the east side of the house, a wood deck encloses a concrete pad that once supported a previously demolished extension. A concrete driveway leads to a pyramid-roofed, two car garage at the rear of the property.



Site Photo 1, by Staff August 29, 2023: (North) front elevation of house, showing location of removed foundation plantings and painted trim, work completed without approval.



Designation photo April 2002: (North) front elevation of the house.

This property has previous HDC approvals found on record and has the following violations for work done without approval:

- Violations: Removal of rear extension (by a former owner). Replacement of casement windows with vinyl. Construction of pergola. Removal of foundation plantings. Tuck pointing of wall and porch. Paint trim.
- All work items in this proposal attempts to address these violations and other new scopes of work.



Aerial 1, by Historicaerials.com 2002: Blurred image showing presence of rear expanded room at time of historic designation.



Aerial 2, by Detroit Parcel Viewer of Parcel # 02004890.



Site Photo 2, by Staff, August 14, 2023: South elevation of former room expansion by previous owner without approval and construction of the new pergola by current owner without approval. The surrounding deck and railing were repaired by current owner.



Site Photo 3, by Staff, August 14, 2023: East (side) and front elevation showing view of the deck, pergola and removed foundation plantings (without approval) from the public street.

PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of the following (See also submitted materials):

DEMOLISH REAR EXPANSION ROOM, CONSTRUCT PERGOLA, REPAIR DECK

- Demolish rear expansion room (work completed by previous owner)
- Construct 15' 6" x 10' 5" wood pergola over the remaining concrete slab of expansion room's footprint (work completed by current owner).
- Repair existing wood deck with in-kind pressure treated wood decking and railing materials.
- Stain deck and pergola with Minwax natural color finish.

REPLACE STEEL CASEMENT WINDOWS

- Replace thirteen (13) casement windows with 13 vinyl windows at the rear and side elevations as shown in the attached photos.

- While the former windows were steel casements, the new windows are double-hung, vinyl windows with grids between the glass. The stairwell window is a fixed, vinyl window with grids between the glass.
- All vinyl windows are supplied by North Star Windows & Doors and are of the Series 1000.

LANDSCAPE

- Remove foundation evergreen plantings.
- No landscape planting plan is proposed currently.

REPAIR: ROOF/TRIM/TUCK-POINTING/DRIVEWAY

- Replace rotted and missing fascia/soffits with wood in-kind and caulk.
- Paint all exterior wood trim with Color System D, B:11 Grayish Olive Green.
- Tuck-point brick around the house and porch.
- Replace for damaged sections of cracked driveway with concrete.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Sherwood Historic District was established in 2002.
- No documentation on the construction of the rear expansion room and the surrounding wood deck was found, but evidence of their existence at the time of designation is found from historic aerial imagery. (*See aerial 1*)
- Images from real estate listings show that the following conditions were evident at the time of the of purchase and these conditions were confirmed from the current owner at the time of purchase (*see site photos 4-6*):
 - The rear addition/expansion room was demolished. This condition left a concrete slab footing, painted exterior brick walls (once interior), and replaced doors leading to the outside.
 - The rear deck and railing were present, although the conditions of the wood materials were aged and rotted at some locations. The pergola was not present and is a construct of the applicant prior to approval.
 - All windows, except for the steel casements and the picture window on the west elevation that were replaced by the current owner, had been replaced with vinyl, aluminum, or glass block windows. The timing of the former window replacement is not known, but the age of many of these replaced windows appear to be present at the time of historic designation.
 - The foundation plantings were present at the front and side elevations of the house.



Site Photo 4, by realtor.com, April 2023: Front (north) elevation showing foundation plantings that have been removed and arched window on east elevation that was replaced by the current owner.



Site Photo 5, by realtor.com, April 2023: Rear (south) elevation showing extension room was removed, deck, and bay casement windows that were replaced by the current owner.



Site Photo 6, by realtor.com, April 2023: Dining room bay and kitchen interior showing steel casement windows that were replaced by the current owner.

DEMOLISH REAR EXPANSION ROOM, CONSTRUCT PERGOLA, REPAIR DECK

- Staff has the opinion that the expansion room was not historic character-defining feature of the property as evidenced by the construction materials of the concrete slab and aluminum or vinyl siding windows that were once present. While constructed prior to designation and removed without approval by a former owner, staff has the opinion that its absence restores the exterior expression, albeit painted brick, and would recommend approval for this work.
- The proposed construction of the pergola over the concrete pad of the former expansion, introduces, in staff's opinion, a new vertical element that conflicts with and is not compatible with historic features and proportions of the tudor, English Revival form of the property. Visible from the public street (*see site photos 2-3*), the pergola protrudes out from the dominant angles and line forms of the house, creating a disproportionate conflict of angles, scale, and line forms that pushes against and clashes with the stone, brick, and timbering of the house's architecture. Also, the proposed color, natural stain, rather than a color that is proposed to match the house trim, causes this element to stand out in front of the architecture, rather than recess into it and is not appropriate.
- The repair of the deck and railing with like material is appropriate. However, staff recommends that a paint or solid stain be applied instead of the proposed natural stain. In the absence of a planting plan to replace the unapproved removal of foundation plantings that is in this proposal, the deck once recessed in the landscape and now is highly visible. (*See site photos 3 & 7*)



Site Photo 7, by realtor.com, April 2023: Front elevation (north) showing foundation plantings that screened the deck in the rear and casement windows at the east bay that were replaced by the owner.

REPLACE WINDOWS

- Staff found no record of the replacement history of windows for this property other than those replaced by the current owner. Staff has not received a full assessment of all the windows and their conditions. Staff reviewed historic designation, preceding street-view and real estate images, and concluded that all windows have been replaced, except for those done by the current owner, by April 2023. It may be possible that many of these non-historic windows were in place prior to historic designation. Since April 2023, and prior to the current owner's actions, the only remaining historic windows that remained were the steel casements that were replaced by the owner without approval. Currently, it appears that all original windows have been replaced with vinyl, aluminum, or glass block windows.
- Staff confirmed with the owner that the replaced steel casements were disposed and not stored or salvaged.
- The owner states that these 13 remaining steel casements windows, located at the rear and side elevations, had broken glass, missing parts and were inoperative. However, staff did not receive any photographic



Site Photo 8, by realtor.com, April 2023: Dining room bay interior showing steel casement windows that were replaced by the current owner.

evidence or statement from an architect or window specialist. Staff did observe that the windows appeared to be in place and in fair condition from real estate images, but not able to view any particular details as stated by the owner, in these images. (See site photos 4-8 and floor plan 1)

- It is staff's opinion that these 13 remaining steel casement windows with true divided light are distinctive, character-defining features of the house that were remaining examples of the window expression for this English Revival home that were removed without approval.
- The proposed operation, configuration, vinyl material, between the glass grids and glass tint color have no resemblance to the original casement windows and are not appropriate.

LANDSCAPE

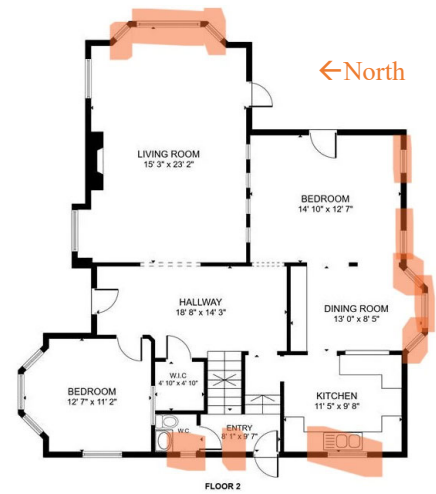
- From designation until April 2023, photos and documents show the presence of foundation plantings around the front and side elevation of the house. Staff observed that the removal of these foundation plantings without approval has exposed utilities, an air conditioning unit, and the deck at the rear. (See photos 1, 3, 7 and designation photo.)
- Staff received confirmation from the applicant that the proposal for removal of these plantings does not include a plan at this time to replant any plantings at this time. The owner stated that the foundation plantings were "overgrown". However, staff sees from the April 2023 real estate listing photos that the foundation plantings appeared healthy and well maintained. (See site photos 4 & 7)
- Staff has the opinion that these foundation plantings are a distinct character defining feature of the landscape that contributes and complements the architecture of the property. Their removal without substantial cause and without a plan for replacement is not appropriate.

REPAIR: ROOF/TRIM/TUCK-POINTING/DRIVEWAY

- Staff finds that the proposed repair of the fascia, soffits, concrete driveway and the proposed painting of exterior trim appropriate and follows the guidelines and standards.
- Staff observed that the tuckpointing at the porch and side elevation of the house was poorly executed and does not follow NPS guidelines. Staff found areas with mismatched pointing style and color to the existing mortar: the new mortar is bleached, nearly white and tuckpointing was left flush or even covering some of the brick units. It is staff's opinion that the proposed work for tuckpointing was not executed according to NPS Preservation Brief #2, "Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings", and therefore fails to preserve the historic craftsmanship that characterizes the distinctive character-defining features of the brick detailing of this property.

ISSUES

- The work in this application was completed without Historic District Commission (HDC) approval.
- While the demolition of the expansion room is appropriate, the construction of the new pergola creates a new element that is not compatible with the historic features, scale, massing and proportion (Standard 9).
- While staff has no issue with the repair of the existing deck and railing, staff recommends that deck be painted or solid stained to complement the trim of the house, rather than the proposed natural stain.



FLOOR 1: 1,385 sq.ft. FLOOR 2: 1,360 sq.ft. FLOOR 3: 1,171 sq.ft. FLOOR 4: 759 sq.ft. TOTAL: 4,675 sq.ft.
 Floor plan 1, by realtor.com, orange highlights by Staff showing former locations of 13 steel casements replaced by current owner at the rear (south) and side (east and west) elevations.



Site Photo 9, by Staff, August 29, 2023: East (side) and north (front) elevation showing tuckpointing below second floor window and front porch (completed without approval).

- No documentation establishing that the original condition of the casement windows were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- The replacement of steel casement windows with vinyl, double-hung windows is inappropriate as they introduce a material and design that alters the historic character of the property, remove distinctive features, and does not match the character-defining feature of the original divided light casements in design, texture, material, or operation.
- The removal of foundation plantings without cause or a planting replacement alters the historic character of the property by removing distinctive character defining features and exposing elements, such as utilities and decking that once were screened in the landscape.
- The execution of the proposed tuckpointing was not executed in a manner that complies with NPS guidelines and has created scarring on the east elevation and front porch by introducing mortar that does not match existing mortar and applied in manner that covers existing brick.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation: Construct Pergola, Replace Steel Casement Windows, Remove Foundation Plantings, Tuckpointing (work completed without approval)

Staff finds that the construction of the pergola, replacement of the 13 steel casement windows, removal of foundation plantings, and the manner by which the tuckpointing was executed (all work completed without approval) does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The construction of the new pergola creates a new element that is not compatible with the historic features, scale, massing and proportion to the English Revival architecture of the house.
- No documentation establishing that the original condition of the casement windows were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- The replacement of the casement windows with vinyl, double hung windows is not compatible with historic architecture in the house in that they:
 - destroy the distinctive, character-defining features of the original remaining windows, particularly the true-divided lights and steel casement detailing,
 - introduce a new operation, configuration, design and scale,
 - introduces a new material, vinyl, which is not an appropriate material for windows.
- Removing the foundation plantings drastically alters the appearance and features of the historic property, and exposes utilizes and other features that were previously screened.
- The execution of the tuckpointing was completed in a way that fails to preserve the historic craftsmanship that characterizes the distinctive character-defining features of the brick detailing of English Revival architecture.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the above work items, as it do not 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.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Recommendation 2: Demolish rear expansion room, repair deck, repair facia/soffits, repair driveway, paint trim (Work Completed Without Approval)

It is staff's opinion that the demolition of the rear expansion room, repair of the deck, facia, soffits and driveway and the painting of trim 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 and the Indian Village Historic District Elements of Design.

Staff recommends the COA be issued with following conditions:

- The applicant provides HDC staff with a paint or solid stain color for the rear deck and railing.
- The applicant provides HDC staff with a review of the above items before execution.