

STAFF REPORT: 9/13/2023 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: #23-8523

VIOLATION NUMBER: #705

ADDRESS: 4325 FULLERTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS - SULLIVAN

APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER: EHLERS, LEE & ERIN

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 8/21/2023

DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 3/13/23, 4/20/23, 8/24/23

SCOPE: REMOVE WINDOWS (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL), INSTALL ALUMINUM CLAD WOOD WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in 1924, the two and half-story dwelling at 4325 Fullerton features a front, sweeping gable from the 3rd to 2nd floor that characterizes it as English or Tudor Revival. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The walls are clad with light brown brick with a running limestone band between the first and second floors. The third-floor gable and the second-floor side gable siding are clad in wood clapboard. The former wood, double hung windows were in a 6/1 or 8/1 true divided lite configuration, have since been replaced with 1/1 vinyl on the 2nd and 3rd floors on the front and side elevations. Each window opening has a limestone sill. Basement windows have been replaced with glass block on the side elevations. The elevated front porch shows no railing in the designation photo, and the brick porch with concrete decking remains without a railing. The arched entrance is roofed with a portico that meets the front edge of the porch and steps, flanked with brick walls that lead to a concrete arching walkway through the front yard.



Site Photo 1, by Staff August 24, 2023: (North) front elevation showing replaced windows on 2nd & 3rd floors.



Designation Slide, 1999: (North) front/side elevation showing original windows.

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

- Violations: Wood windows on 2nd and 3rd floors replaced with vinyl, replaced rear deck and balcony railings, removal of front yard light post, and siding and trim painted without approval.
- HDC COA, December 2019: Remove existing roof, gutters and downspouts and replace with asphalt shingles and aluminum gutters, white to match existing.
- HDC Denial, May 2023: Replacement of original wood windows, with vinyl 1/1 windows
- HDC COA, May 2023: Replacement of rear deck and balcony, repair shake siding, paint siding and trim, removal of front yard lamp post.



Site Photo 2, Google Streetview June 2022: (North) front/side elevation showing windows before work.



Aerial of Parcel # 14004828.



Site Photo 3, by Applicant (unknown date) March 22, 2023: (South) rear elevation, showing original windows.



Site Photo 4, by Applicant 2022: (South) rear elevation showing replaced windows (unapproved) and approved repaired siding, new railings, and trim/siding paint work. Notice windows on 2nd and 3rd floor have been replaced, while the original first-floor windows remain.

PROPOSAL

The applicant has previously submitted this application in May 2023 for the replacement of all 2nd and 3rd story original wood windows with vinyl windows (work completed without approval). This application was denied by the Commission 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 6/1 divided lite, 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 lite, which replaced the true divided lite of the original wood windows, and the introduction of vinyl windows, particularly for the front elevation, are not an adequate match for the original true divided lite of the original, double-hung windows.
- And the work failed to meet Secretary of the Interior's Standards, 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 historic 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.

The current proposal consists of the following work: replace all previously installed vinyl windows (without approval) with aluminum clad wood windows. All first-floor windows, which are original wood windows, will remain and are not part of this application. (*See also submitted window schedule and window order.*)

WINDOW DETAILS

The applicant proposes to replace 23 vinyl double hung, 1/1 windows on all second and third floor elevations with double-hung aluminum clad windows. The window product is sourced by Marvin Windows. The windows were installed at all 2nd and 3rd floor elevations. All windows have 6/1 simulated divide lites, except two small bathrooms which will have 4/1 divided lites. See attached product details showing the window's cross-sections and dimensions. The window replacement includes removal of vinyl or aluminum cladding and restoration of original wood brick molds or replacement in-kind with new brick molds to match the historic if the underlying condition is discovered to be too deteriorated to salvage.

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:
 - “Stone trim is common, and wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim. Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash.”
- In the previous, May 2023 Staff Report, staff received a sample photo of the original windows' condition (*see Site Photo 5*) and the following description: *“When I purchased the home, it was completely derelict and had been occupied by squatters. After removing them from the property, we discovered that the second-floor windows had at some point been replaced, and were non-functioning/rotted through. At first, we attempted to repair the windows, but after continual breakage, degradation, and a repair specialist telling me they weren't able to be fixed, we were forced to use Mulligan Windows in Farmington to replace them”*.
- Staff confirmed with the applicant that the original windows have been removed and destroyed by the window contractor.
- From the designation slide, it is staff's observation that the original windows were wood, double-hung with a 6/1 configuration on the upper floors. It is staff's opinion that these original wood windows, their double-hung



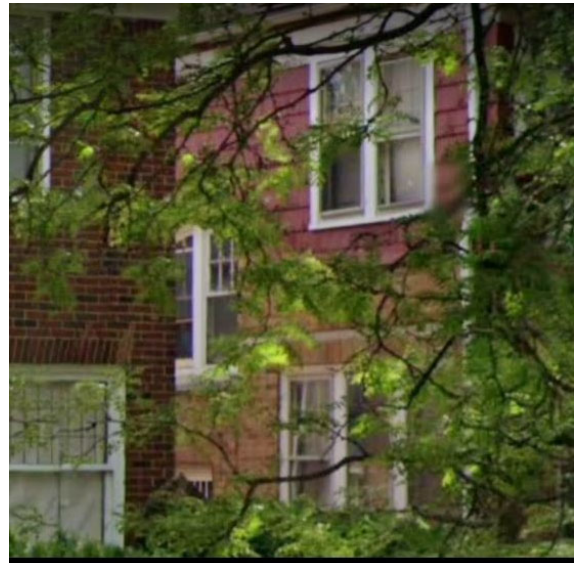
Site Photo 5, by Applicant, showing conditions of original windows removed. The archtop window shown here may be from the window pair discussed on the next page.

operation, and 6/1 divided lite configuration are distinctive character-defining features that have been removed/destroyed. However, because these materials were lost or destroyed, it is staff's opinion that the aluminum-clad wood windows are a reasonably appropriate remedy to the current vinyl window installation. Staff offers the recommendation that all the front elevation windows should also include a 6/1 true or simulated divided lite configuration. Staff received confirmation that the window order has been updated with this configuration.

- Staff observed that above the side entrance (east elevation), a pair of double hung windows with a curved top rail were replaced with a pair of rectilinear vinyl windows with what appears to be a vinyl cover at the remaining arch of the former windows. It is staff's opinion that this pair of windows is a distinctive character defining feature that was altered without approval. Vinyl is not an appropriate material in the Russell-Sullivan Historic District, given its inability to faithfully replicate historic profiles, its detracting color/sheen, and its poor detailing. Staff also observed that this pair of windows were missing from the window schedule, but present as double-hung rectangular windows in the window order. Staff received an update from the applicant, which states that the window order will be updated later to include this window pair, as arched upper railings, which has not been received at the time of this staff report. *(See Site Photos 5, 6 & 7.)*
- Staff observed that vinyl covers the areas around the brick mould and requested that the applicant supply the following information, which has not been provided at the time of this report:
 - Address how the windows will be installed in the window openings by providing a detail showing dimensions of the brick moulds and placement in the window openings.



Site Photo 6, by Applicant, showing vinyl cover arch over vinyl window pair, located over the side entrance.



Site Photo 7, by Google Streetview 2019, showing original curved top rail of the double hung window pair, located over the side entrance.

ISSUES

- No documentation establishing that the original windows were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- All window replacement work in this application was completed without Historic District Commission (HDC) approval and received a denial in the May 2023 HDC Regular Meeting for the replacement of the original wood windows with vinyl sash.
- The original windows have been removed without approval and they were considered a distinctive character-defining feature. However, it is staff's opinion that the proposal to replace the vinyl windows with double-hung, aluminum-clad wood windows with simulated divided lites is a reasonable and feasible solution in an effort to retain the dimensions, operations, and configuration of these windows, thus not greatly altering the features and spaces that characterize the property, given that the original material is

lost and a true replacement may not be feasible. Staff opines that this solution is reasonable and feasible provided that the applicant uncovers and restores the brick molds as well.

- It is staff's opinion that the removal of the original arch over the east elevation window and proposed replacement with a vinyl cover alters the original *scale*, *design*, and *materiality* and that is incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property, and therefore does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Elements of Design.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation 1: Replace windows

It is staff's opinion the installation of the proposed aluminum-clad windows is a reasonable and feasible solution to restore the design, operation, and configuration of the original windows, thus not greatly altering the features and spaces that characterize the property. 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.

Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following conditions:

- The applicant provide HDC staff with the dimensions and description of method to install the windows and restore the brick moulding of the window openings.
- The applicant provide 6/1 simulated divided lites, 4/1 for the two smaller bathrooms.
- The east elevation vinyl windows be removed and replaced with an appropriate curved top rail design with double-hung, aluminum clad wood or wood windows and a 6/1 configuration.
- The applicant provide a window trim color selected from Color System D of the HDC color chart guidelines.
- HDC staff shall review and approve these submissions before their application/installation.