

STAFF REPORT: 10/09/2024 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00542

ADDRESS: 3960 (3966) W. 7 MILE RD.

HISTORIC DISTRICT: SHERWOOD FOREST

APPLICANT: JAMES HOLLAND (CONTRACTOR), UNITED BUILDING SERVICE

PROPERTY OWNER: JURLENE HURST

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 09/16/2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 09/19/2024

SCOPE: REPLACE DOORS, WINDOWS AND SIDING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1951, the property at 3960 (3966) W. 7 Mile Road is a two-story duplex that features a cross gabled asphalt-shingled, roof with an asymmetrically placed front gable. The eaves slightly project out over the second story and feature dentals and a curved fascia along the first-floor porch roof. The house is clad in red brick with lap siding around the second-floor protruding gable. All original wood double-hung, 2/2 true divided-light windows are still in place, featuring a horizontal muntin in the upper and lower sash, and have a cast stone sill with wood shutters on the second floor. The slightly raised front porch is shared by two entrance doors, each with wood paneling on the door and on each side of the door. The porch roof is supported by modest wood columns. A half-circle concrete walkway joins the main entrances' front step to a singular walkway that leads from a slightly raised garden bed, through the front lawn to the public sidewalk. Tightly trimmed evergreens are planted along the front foundation. Property files indicate that there are no violations or former Historic District Commission (HDC) approvals found.



Site Photo 1, by Staff Sept. 19, 2024: (South) front showing dual entrances and current conditions.



Fig. 1, Designation image 2001: (South) front showing original features that are still in place today.

PROPOSAL

The current project is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of all windows, doors, siding, fascia and porch ceiling as follows:

WINDOWS and DOORS

- Replace all (42) windows and storms with 42 Pella Lifestyle aluminum-clad wood, double-hung windows per attached window order. Windows at the front will have “traditional” grid patterns, 4/4 or 6/6 grille between the glass.

- Brick moulding shall be replaced and wrapped in aluminum coil stock as needed.
- Paint window trim and molding white.
- Replace front 2 wood doors with Menard's fiberglass doors. The two front doors will have a frosted glass vision panel over panel detailing. Painted white.
- Replaced rear 2 wood doors with Menard's steel doors, with frosted glass vision panel over panel detailing. Painted white.
- Reuse original storm doors for front and rear.

SIDING and FASCIA

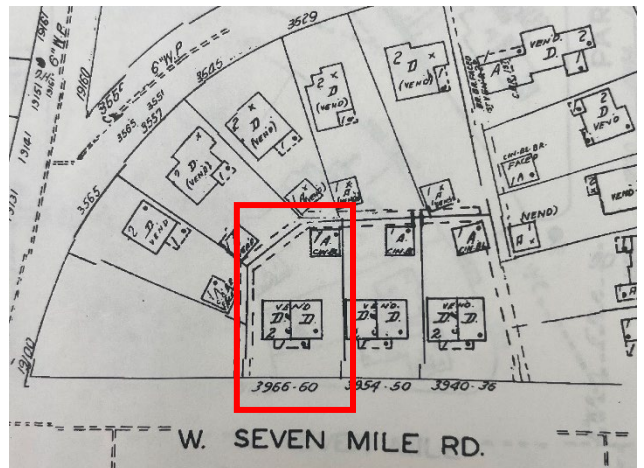
- Remove all wood lap siding, front and rear.
- Remove all wood soffits and fascia, front and rear.
- Install 6" Hardie lap siding with underlay of Tyvek house wrap.
- Install aluminum fascia and soffits with wood grain finish.
- Install white aluminum wrap on corners.
- Prime and paint all new siding white.

FRONT PORCH

- Install Hardie board on porch ceiling.
- Wrap 4 front porch's posts in aluminum with a wood grain finish.
- Remove front gutter and wood dental molding.
- Install vinyl dentil molding.
- Replace front porch curved wood trim board between the posts with Trex PVC, color white.
- Remove existing vertical wood paneling, house numbers and mail slot on either side of the front doors.
- Install vapor barrier and Hardie cement board paneling with 1 1/2" batten strips.
- Prime and paint all new trim white.
- Reinstall existing gutter, house numbers and mail slot.



Aerial 1 of Parcel # 02004555 by Detroit Parcel Viewer.



Sanborn, 1926 revised 1997, Vol 16.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Sherwood Forest Historic District was established in 2002.
- The Historic District Advisory Board's report for Sherwood Forest states that of the 440 single family houses and 11 duplexes, 15 do not contribute to the historic district because they post-date 1955. This duplex was constructed in 1951 and therefore is a contributing building.

WINDOWS and DOORS

- The 2/2 true divided-light, double-hung wood windows with the horizontal muntins are historic distinctive character-defining features. Their loss would substantially detract from and destroy the historic appearance of the building.
- While the applicant states that the windows are "very old and cannot be repaired", no documentation was provided that shows the condition of the original windows are beyond repair.
- All front window replacements would replace true-divided light with grilles between the glass, creating a flat surface and destroying the complexity and dimensionality that was historically present and replacing the historic character-defining 2/2 horizontal muntin with a conventional 4/4 or 6/6 grid, thus altering the original configuration.
- Staff observed that the rear kitchen casement is steel but of similar design and light configuration with matching horizontal muntins. It is staff opinion that this casement appears to be repairable.
- Staff observed from Google Street Images that glass block windows have been installed at the building's east side since at least 2009. Staff has no record for this installation and may predate designation of the district in 2002. (See Site Photo 4.) Staff has the opinion that replacement of these glass block windows with the proposed double-hung aluminum-clad wood windows would be appropriate provided that no grilles between the glass are produced, the brick mould be reconstructed if no longer present, and no aluminum coil stock is used to cover the brick mould.
- The front doors feature a centered vision panel above wood paneling that complements the surrounding wood paneling, are historic



Site Photo 2, by Applicant: (North) rear side showing original double hung wood windows and doors and clap board siding.



Site Photo 3, by Applicant: Interior kitchen window facing north, at (North) rear side showing casement windows with similar horizontal detailing of double-hung wood windows.



Site Photo 4, by Applicant: (East) side showing glass block windows on first floor and original windows on second floor.

character defining features of the home. (See Site Photos 1,3 and 6.)

The replacement of these doors and the replacement of the wood paneling with Hardie board is inappropriate in Staff's opinion.

- Staff has the opinion that the replacement of the rear doors with steel doors is reasonably appropriate provided that these rear doors have a simple, rectangular vision panel rather than the multi-divided version that is presented in this application.



Site Photo 5, by Applicant: (South) Front door showing original wood panel features and side panel features.

SIDING and FASCIA

- Staff has the opinion that the replacement of the wood clapboard siding, soffits, fascia and trim with Hardie board and aluminum trim is inappropriate and does not meet National Park Service Standards, which states that materials shall be repaired and if not repairable, replaced with matching materials.

FRONT PORCH

- Staff observed from Sanborn maps that the front porch is shown. (See Sanborn image.)
- It is staff's opinion that the wood dentil molding, curved wood trim board, wood posts, and wood paneling by the front doors are historic, distinctive character defining features. Removal, covering and replacement of these features destroys and alters these features, introduces new materials and therefore does not meet the Standards.



Site Photo 6, by Applicant: (South) front elevation showing detail of porch roof, front door side paneling, and second floor wood siding.

ISSUES

- No documentation establishing that the condition of the original windows are beyond repair was submitted.
- The removal of the original 2/2 true divided-light, wood double-hung and steel casement windows and replacement with aluminum-clad wood windows with aluminum coil stock and 4/4 or 6/6 grilles between the glass greatly alters the original *scale, design, and materiality* of the building's fenestration, and the new windows are incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property.
- Besides the windows, many details of this mid-century duplex are proposed to be altered or erased, thereby diminishing and destroying the historic character of this architecture, which includes: the replacement of the wood paneled front doors with fiberglass doors, the replacement of the wood paneling around the front door openings, the replacement of the wood dentil detailing and curved trim board along the front porch roof with vinyl and/or Trex PVC, the wrapping of the front porch posts with aluminum, and the replacement of all soffits, fascia and siding with Hardie board. While small or nuanced, the features contribute to this mid-century style home and the property's historic expression.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation 1: Replace Original Windows and Front Doors, Removal and Alterations Of Architectural Siding and Details

Staff finds that the replacement of the original windows with aluminum-clad wood windows with grilles between the glass, replacement of the front door, siding, fascia and soffits and the removal and alteration of front façade architectural details, does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- No documentation establishing that the original condition of the windows were beyond repair was submitted.
- The replacement of the original windows with aluminum-clad wood windows is not compatible with historic architecture in the house in that they:
 - destroy the distinctive, character-defining features of the original windows, particularly the true-divided lights with a 2/2 horizontal configuration,
 - introduce a design, scale, and configuration with grilles between the glass,
 - remove the original brick mould and introduce a new material, aluminum coil stock to cover the window trim, which does not conform to the District's Elements of Design.
- Many important details are proposed to be altered or erased, thereby destroying the historic character of this architecture, which includes: the replacement of the wood paneled front doors with fiberglass doors, the replacement of the wood paneling around the front door openings, the replacement of the wood dental detailing and curved trim board along the front porch roof with vinyl and/or Trex PVC, the wrapping of the front porch posts with aluminum, and the replacement of all soffits, fascia and siding with Hardie board.
- The proposed fiberglass material and multi-faceted vision panel of the front door is not compatible with the mid-century style of the house.

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.

Recommendation 2: Replace Glass Block Side Windows and Rear Doors

It is staff's opinion that the replacement of the glass block windows with double-hung, aluminum-clad wood windows at the building's east side and replacement of the rear doors are 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 District's Elements of Design.

Staff recommends the COA be issued with following conditions to be completed with Staff review for approval before completed:

- The side windows have no grilles between the glass.
- The brick mould be reconstructed if no longer present, and no aluminum coil stock is used to cover the brick mould.
- The rear steel doors have a simple rectangular vision panel.