

ADDRESS: 1628 LEVERETTE

APPLICATION NO: HDC2024-00498

HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN

APPLICANT/OWNER: JASON FLORAREA

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 9/30/2024

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 9/21/2024

SCOPE: REHABILITATE DWELLING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The resource located at 1628 Leverette is a one-story- single family home that was erected ca. 1880. The building features a cross-gabled roof main/central mass with lower, rear gabled-roof wings. A shed-type porch roof on wood posts has recently been added to a partial width porch at the building's east wall. Asphalt shingles and new wood fascia board have recently been installed at the roof. All exterior siding has also been removed from the front façade and the south portion/half of the west wall. The original, lapped wood siding remains at the rear half of the west wall, the east wall, and the rear. A bay window at the front façade appears to have been recently rebuilt, while the historic bay at the east wall's porch area appears to remain intact, albeit damaged by a 2019 fire. All exterior doors are missing. The only remaining windows are the first story and gable end vinyl units located at the east side wall and the fire damaged vinyl windows at the west wall's first story bay. New window openings have recently been added to the front façade's second story.



1628 Leverette, facing northeast. HDC staff photo taken 9/30/2024



1628 Leverette, facing northeast. HDC staff photo taken 9/30/2024

PROPOSAL

Per the submitted drawings and narrative, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval of the following work items:

- Build a new partial-width, shed roof wood porch at front façade
- Build a new partial-width, shed roof wood porch at east side (work initiated)
- Rebuild a canted bay window at the front façade (work initiated)
- Where wood siding remains, retain and repair in kind where necessary. Where lapped siding is missing (due to fire damage) at front façade and east wall replace with new lapped wood/clapboard siding to match existing wood siding. Also, at front gable end, install new decorative vertical siding to match historic condition
- At walls maintain historic corner board and frieze boards. Where missing install new wood elements to match historic
- Install new, 1/1, double-hung, aluminum-clad wood windows at first story and fixed single lite, aluminum-clad wood windows at 2nd story gable ends at front and side. At west side gable end window, retain decorative window surround. Replicate decorative surround at front and east side gable end window
- At roof, replace existing asphalt shingle with new asphalt shingles (work completed). Existing historic fascia and soffit will be retained. Where new wood new fascia board has been installed without HDC approval, it will be removed and be replaced with new stepped wood soffit/fascia to match the remaining historic elements
- Install new exterior doors

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Corktown Historic District was established in 1983
- See the below Sanborn Maps, which depict the building footprint in 1884 and 1897



1628 Leverette, 1884. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



1628 Leverette, 1897. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

- Note that application materials which proposed to rehabilitate the building were submitted to HDC staff in June 2024. Staff did forward the materials to the Commission for review at the July 2024 regular meeting and the Commission determined that the application was incomplete because the submitted drawings lacked sufficient detail. The owner has therefore revised the initial documents to provide a more definitive proposal for the dwelling’s rehabilitation with the current application.
- The below designation photo, taken in 1983, indicates that the house was clad with asphalt faux brick asphalt/”Insulbrick” siding at that time. A review of the address’s property file indicated that the HDC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of this siding in 2003.



1628 Leverette, photo taken in 1983 by HDAB. Note that any exterior decorative detailing/trim is covered by the siding

- See the below image dating from 2016, outlining the distinctive, character-defining features that were revealed as a result of the 2003 siding removal, to include decorative detailing at the front façade and east side wall. Also, the original lapped wood/clapboard siding was exposed at that time. The image also indicates that the front and side porch posts, piers, decking, and steps which were extant in 1983 had been replaced by 2016, likely during the 2003 exterior rehabilitation project.



Appearance in 2016, after faux brick asphalt siding was removed. Note exposed decorative detailing at front gable end, above the front door, at the front porch roof and bay window, and at the side porch roof and bay window. Also, the front and side porch posts, piers, decking, and steps which were extant in 1983 have been replaced by this time. Source: Google Streetview



Appearance in 2018, after faux brick asphalt siding was removed. Google Streetview

- Building department records indicate that the building suffered a fire on January 5, 2019. In May 2019, concerned residents contacted HDC staff to note that the building had been placed in the Dangerous Buildings review process as a result of the fire damaged conditions that had gone unaddressed by the property owners. The following photos, taken in May 2019, illustrate the building's conditions after the fire. Note the damage at the front and east sides.



Conditions in 2019. Photo taken by Debra Walker, facing northwest.

It is unclear if 2nd story jigsawn window trim/casing remained at this gable end in this 2019 photo or if it was damaged by the fire. Note that the trim *currently* is missing

Side porch and bay window remain in fire damaged condition. Siding at this wall also remains in damaged condition



At front façade, bay window, siding, 2nd story jigsaw window trim/casing, and stepped fascia/soffit gable end detailing remain in heavily fire damaged condition. Porch steps also remain, however all other elements of the porch were destroyed by the fire

Conditions in 2019. Photo taken by Debra Walker, north.

Note remaining elements at side porch

2nd story jigsaw window trim/casing remains at this gable end. Note the window at this opening is a non-historic casement unit

At front façade, bay window, siding, and stepped fascia/soffit gable end detailing remain in heavily fire damaged condition. Porch steps also remain, however all other elements of the porch were destroyed by the fire



Siding, vinyl windows, and fascia/soffits remain at west side

Conditions in 2019. Photo taken by Debra Walker, facing northeast.

- Staff does acknowledge the community's/neighborhood's expressed concern re: the building's condition and their desire that this building be rehabilitated versus demolished
- On 2/1/2024, the Detroit building department notified HDC staff that the following exterior work was underway at 1628 Leverette:
 - New asphalt shingle roof and fascia
 - New east side porch
 - New front façade bay
 - Two new window openings added at front façade 2nd story gable end

HDC staff reviewed our records and noted that the work had not received an approval. Staff also noted that siding had also been removed. See the below pictures from 2023 and a 2/1/2024 staff visit to the site. Photos taken on 6/25/2024 indicate that additional exterior work had been undertaken at the site without HDC approval, after the 2/1/2024 violation was recorded and reported to the Detroit building department. Finally, please note that staff conducted a recent site visit for this report on 9/30/2024 and found that the remaining windows (two, 1/1 double-hung units which were at the rear wall) had been removed without HDC approval and/or permit sometime after the HDC's July 2024 regular meeting.



Appearance in 10/2023. Prior to unapproved work. Google Streetview



Appearance in 2/2024, after unapproved work. HDC staff



Facing northwest. Photo taken by HDC staff on 6/25/2024



Rear, photo taken by HDC staff in 2/2024. Note that the two wood windows visible in this photo have been removed the openings covered by plywood.



West side wall vinyl windows and remaining casing. Current condition. Photo taken by HDC staff on 9/30/2024



West side wall, 2nd story gable end trim. Showing current conditions. 9/30/2024 by HDC staff. Note that the remaining damaged window is a non-historic vinyl casement



West side wall, 2nd story gable end window. Showing current condition/missing trim. 9/30/2024 HDC staff



Interior, showing remaining historic east wall bay. Note that remnants from the windows which were damaged by the 2019 fire. Photo by HDC staff on 9/30/2024



East wall bay, current conditions. Note that the historic wood detailing remains at this location despite the damage caused by the 2019 fire. Photo by applicant



East wall bay, current conditions. Note that the historic wood detailing remains at this location despite the damage caused by the 2019 fire. Photo by HDC staff, 9/30/2024

- Staff notes the following regarding the damage caused by the 2019 fire:
 - With the exception of the wood steps, which were added ca. 2003, all portions of the front porch were destroyed by the fire.
 - At the front façade, the roof fascia/soffit, siding, window units and trim/casing, bay, door and door trim remained but were deteriorated beyond repair as a result of the fire
 - At the east side wall, the roof fascia/soffits, porch, projecting bay, and siding were damaged by fire. It appears these historic elements could have been retained and repaired in kind where required. The window sash at this was not historic. The historic casing/trim of the decorative jigsawn window at the second story gable end is currently missing and was likely damaged by the fire. It is unclear to staff if the historic window trim/casing at the first story bay is present because the openings are currently covered with plywood board.
 - At the west side, wall elements, roof elements, and historic window trim/casing, to include the historic casing/trim of the decorative jigsawn window at the second story gable end, appear intact/undamaged by the fire. Note that the actual window sash at this wall is vinyl/not of historic age.
 - At the rear, wall elements, roof elements and the historic window casing/trim appeared intact/undamaged by the fire. The two wood sash, 1/1 windows were recently removed without HDC approval as previously mentioned. The applicant had stated that the windows were severely damaged by the fire and therefore merited removal. As review of the 2019, post fire photos do indicate that it is plausible that the two remaining wood windows were heavily by the fire and merited removal.

Per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard #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.

It is staff's contention that the Standards require that the missing historic character-defining features/those which were **completely destroyed** by fire need not be replicated. Rather, the replacement feature can be **compatible** with the property's historic character. However, damaged historic character-defining features which remained after the fire should be retained and repaired where possible. If deteriorated beyond repair, they must be replicated in kind/to match existing. Therefore, according to the Standards:

- A compatible new front porch can be installed as the 2019 fire destroyed all of the porch's historic elements
 - The remaining character-defining elements which were damaged by the fire (as outlined in the above annotated images to include wood windows and trim, front façade bay, the east side bay and porch, the siding and associated decorative detailing, roof fascia and soffit) must be retained and repaired where possible. If these elements cannot be repaired, they must be replicated in kind
 - It is staff's opinion that the proposed project generally meets the above outlined conditions/generally meets the Standards.
- As previously noted, the owner did previously submit application materials re: the proposed rehabilitation to the Commission for review at their regular July 2024 meeting. However, the Commission determined that the application was incomplete because the

project drawings lacked sufficient detail. It is staff's opinion that the drawings included in the current application do provide more definitive notes which indicate that owner intends on rehabilitating the building in a manner which generally meets the Standards. However, staff does recommend that additional information be included in the final permit drawing documents which graphically depict the design detail for the following elements for review and approval (this can be accomplished via the inclusion of enlarged detail drawings or annotated photographs):

- Front and side porch handrails, guardrails, and columns
 - The new wood siding which will be installed to replace the fire damaged siding, noting the exposure and profile dimensions
 - The decorative detail proposed for the front and side porch roof/cornice
 - The decorative vertical siding proposed for installation at the front façade gable end
 - The jigsaw window surrounds proposed for location at the front and east side gable ends
 - The detailing for the rebuilt and side front bays
 - The stepped roof fascia and soffit that is proposed to replace the recently installed/unapproved basic wood fascia which was installed when the new roof was added
 - The new frieze board and corner trim boards which will be installed to replace those which were removed without approval
 - The new front, side, and rear doors
- The applicant is proposing to install new aluminum-clad wood windows throughout, to include 1/1 double-hung units at the first story and fixed units at the second story gable ends (per the drawings). Staff generally supports this proposal as the extant vinyl units are incompatible and the proposed wood units better align with the building's historic character and the two wood units at the rear wall were fire damaged according to the applicant. However, the application does not indicate that the existing historic-age wood casing and sills will be retained. As these elements remain as historic, character-defining elements of the property, staff recommends that they be retained and repaired and that new aluminum clad wood sash inserts be installed within the existing casing.
 - It appears that a skirting will not be installed at the east side porch floor/deck. It is staff's opinion that the addition of a skirting of an appropriate design and material, such as a wood beadboard panels, would present a more historically appropriate appearance versus the open deck currently proposed.

ISSUES

- Per the above, more detail is needed in re: to the proposed reproduction of a number of historic exterior features that were damaged by the 2019 fire and/or significant features that were removed without HDC approval in order for staff to ascertain if they will be appropriately replicated per the Standards
- It appears that the historic distinctive character-defining wood windows trim/casing and sills will be removed. These elements appear to be in repairable condition and therefore their removal does not meet the Standards. Staff does recommend that they be retained and repaired in kind where required.
- The submitted drawing set does not indicate that a foundation skirting will be installed at the reconstructed side porch floor/deck. As previously noted, of a skirting of an appropriate design and material, such as a wood beadboard panels, would present a more historically appropriate appearance versus the open deck/porch floor that is currently proposed.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation - Section 21-2-78 -Certificate of Appropriateness – Rehabilitate dwelling

It is staff's opinion that the proposed project generally conforms to the district's Elements of Design and meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issues a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work with following conditions:

- Additional information (either enlarged detailed drawings or annotated photographs) shall be included in the final permit drawing documents which graphically depict the design detail for the following elements:
 - Front and side porch handrails, guardrails, and columns
 - The decorative detail proposed for the front and side porch roof/cornice
 - The decorative vertical siding proposed for installation at the front façade gable end
 - The jigsaw window surrounds proposed for location at the front and east side gable ends
 - The detailing for the rebuilt and side front bays
 - The stepped roof fascia and soffit that is proposed to replace the recently installed/unapproved basic wood fascia which was installed when the new roof was added
 - The new frieze board and corner trim boards which will be installed to replace those which were removed without approval
 - The new front, side, and rear doors
- The existing historic-age wood casing and sills shall be retained and repaired in kind where necessary and new aluminum clad wood sash inserts be installed within the existing casing/opening.
- A skirting of an appropriate design and material, such as a wood beadboard panels, shall be installed at the rebuilt east side porch. The new design shall be subject to HDC staff review and approval.