

STAFF REPORT: OCTOBER 9, 2024, REGULAR MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00522
ADDRESS: 19566 CANTERBURY
HISTORIC DISTRICT: SHERWOOD FOREST
APPLICANT: JUSTIN BERCHENY, MAX BROOCK REALTORS
PROPERTY OWNER: WOLCOTT LAND DEVELOPMENT LLC
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: SEPTEMBER 10, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: DECEMBER 6, 2024

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO
Revised December 11, 2024

SCOPE: REPLACE STEEL WINDOWS WITH ALUMINUM WINDOWS



Front view (view facing northeast from the street) of the subject property, December 2024 photo by staff.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

19566 Canterbury faces southwest onto Canterbury Road; located on a corner lot, it also presents a prominent façade southeast to Chesterfield Road. It is a two story, Neo-Tudor house built in 1941. Subject of this application, rolled-steel windows are prominent. Other character-defining features on this irregular, multi-gabled façade include brickwork in various contrasting patterns, stone-tabbed window and door surrounds, a hip-roofed first floor bay window topped by a second-story, arch-roofed wall former, and, on a side elevation, a prominent wall chimney.

Some alterations have been made in recent months, including new asphalt roofing, subject to a Certificate of Appropriateness, and the in-kind replacement of deteriorated woodwork, meeting the Chapter 21 definition of “ordinary maintenance.” A rear sleeping porch was enclosed in the mid-twentieth century, with aluminum jalousie windows that are not subject of this application.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to replace all 29 steel windows with Quaker “Historic” H450 Series aluminum fixed and casement windows.



Side view (view facing northwest from the street) of the subject property, December 2024 photo by staff.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- A previous application to replace windows on this property, HDC2024-00533, was acted upon at the October 2024 Historic District Commission meeting. That application received a Denial for the stated reasons that the historic windows “have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair” and the proposed new windows were “not appropriate.” This application contains additional information on the deterioration and a different selection of proposed window.
- 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 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 Neo-Tudor style in general. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, namely Standards #2 and #6 (quoted below) require that they be retained unless they are beyond repair.
- The application materials include a quote from Metro Detroit Window for restoration of the existing windows, with a dollar amount of \$87,000. The applicant instead seeks to replace the windows, citing cost

as a key reason.

- The submitted application materials include information from several sources arguing that the windows are beyond repair:
 - The application provides a written statement from Tri-County Home Restoration stating “A little more than 50% of frames are bent and/or deteriorated beyond what seems to be reasonably restorable. ... Gears, locking mechanisms, hinges and handles will need full replacement. Windows with bent frames are the most difficult to restore. Based on the quantity and extent of damage, the likelihood that some windows will not be restored to operating standards and the expected cost of restoration I do not believe that restoration is a viable option for this property.” (Note: it is unclear to staff if Tri-County Home Restoration has particular experience with historic steel windows.)
 - Ron Hendricks, the contractor for the proposed window replacement, has provided a report showing photos and condition of each window. The report notes whether each window is operational, whether the hardware is damaged, and provides measurements for any warping or distortion observed. From the report (also confirmed by an earlier site visit, see below), staff observes that noticeable deterioration is present for each window, though the nature and extent differs from one window to the next. (Again, it is unclear to staff if this contractor has particular experience with historic steel windows, though the submitted assessment does clearly document the deterioration of each window.) **The applicant has provided additional information on the contractor’s prior experience.**
 - The applicant also expresses concern that the restoration quote from Metro Detroit Window does not guarantee full operability for each window. The bid from Metro Detroit Window states that the windows would be “functioning as best as possible;” the applicant states, “when we spoke further with Metro Detroit Windows about any windows that could not be properly straightened and restored to the standard of operation, the stated remedy was that those individual windows would need to be sealed shut.”



October 2024 staff photos showing warped casements.

- Staff was invited (see photos above) to view the windows in person at the time of the October 2024 staff report. As is common with steel windows, they consist of an outer row of fixed panes, with operable casement panels set within. Staff observed that the outer panes generally appeared to be in need of sanding, painting, and reglazing. These conditions are not beyond repair. However, staff also observed that the inner casements were visibly warped or racked to the extent that they are misaligned and do not close, often leaving a gap of about an inch or more at the top or bottom. This condition was clearly visible on about half of the windows on the property.
- *Preservation Briefs 13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows*, notes “since moisture is the primary cause of corrosion in steel windows, it is essential that excess moisture be eliminated and that the building be made as weathertight as possible before any other work is undertaken.” Extensive roof damage, formerly visible, has recently been repaired.



Area of prior roof deterioration. Image from August 22, 2024, application documents for roof repairs.

- *Preservation Briefs 13* describes a repair process for bent casements:

“Bent or bowed metal sections may be the result of damage to the window through an impact or corrosive expansion. If the distortion is not too great, it is possible to realign the metal sections without removing the window to a metal fabricator’s shop. The glazing is generally removed and pressure is applied to the bent or bowed section. In the case of a muntin, a protective 2 x 4 wooden bracing can be placed behind the bent portion and a wire cable with a winch can apply progressively more pressure over several days until the section is realigned. The 2 x 4 bracing is necessary to distribute the pressure evenly over the damaged section. Sometimes a section, such as the bottom of the frame, will bow out as a result of pressure exerted by corrosion and it is often necessary to cut the metal section to relieve this pressure prior to pressing the section back into shape and making a welded repair.”
- The applicant provides an argument against repair, also citing *Preservation Briefs 13*. The Brief states:

“Damage to windows may be so severe that the window sash and sometimes the frame must be removed for cleaning and extensive rust removal, straightening of bent sections, welding or splicing in of new sections, and reglazing. These major and expensive repairs are reserved for highly significant windows that cannot be replaced... (Page 6)”

Indeed, the work items mentioned in the Brief are needed for most windows, according to the submitted restoration bid from Metro Detroit Windows. (Staff response is provided under “Issues,” below.)

- The applicant states that the quoted restoration cost \$87,000, is “just under half the cost of the house itself.” The quote for replacement is \$42,589.

- Realtor.com states that the house sold for \$192,500 on July 31, 2024.
- Should the Commission approve replacement, staff opinion notes that the proposed replacement has been approved by the Commission to in similar situations *when the historic windows have been determined to be beyond repair* (see staff opinion under “Issues,” below).
- Some of the windows include non-historic exterior storm windows composed of thin, visually unobtrusive aluminum frames. Replacement of these with newer storm windows would be appropriate.

ISSUES

- Regarding *Brief 13* (quoted on the previous page), staff argues that the windows are indeed “highly significant” as they are an important, character-defining feature of the house, and are highly visible; historic rolled steel windows, in general, are important to the character of the Sherwood Forest Historic District as a whole. Standard #2 (quoted below) requires that character-defining features be retained when possible (i.e., financially and technically feasible).
- Per 36 CFR 67.7, the Standards “are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.” As such, staff argues that it is “reasonable” to require repair rather than replacement. Staff suggest that the restoration quote of \$87,500 is not financially infeasible, given the sale price and the overall value of houses in the vicinity. The restoration is also not technically infeasible, given the scope provided.
- Standard #6 (quoted in full below) requires that replacement materials “shall match the old.” Although the proposed windows appear to largely match the pattern and operability of the historic windows, the submitted window schedule does not include an elevation or sketch to clearly indicate each window location. Should the Commission approve this proposal, staff suggests that the Commission include an approval condition empowering staff to confirm the matching pattern and operability of each window including a dimensional comparison of the existing and proposed framing. Should either item not match, the applicant can propose another product for review.
 - **In response to this concern, the applicant obtained a statement from Gary Shinault of Quaker Windows: “The key for a manufacturer to obtain approval [from historic preservation reviewers] is to possess the ability to modify profile products to match profiles on specific projects. We achieve this by producing a side-by-side comparison of proposed design adjacent to the original design.” A staff review would confirm that this process occurs satisfactorily.**

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission

Staff concludes that the proposed window replacement does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the following reasons:

- The existing windows proposed for removal are “highly significant” character-defining features that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair; repair would be economically and technically feasible, and reasonable under the Standards.

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.*