



March 18, 2021

Ms. Jennifer Ross
City of Detroit
Historic District Commission
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

RE: Grabowski Residence – Request for Rehabilitation Approval
791 Seminole Avenue, at the southwest corner of E. Lafayette Blvd and Seminole Avenue

Dear Ms. Ross:

Alexander and Lisa Grabowski, the owners of the building at 791 Seminole, request that the Historic District Commission grant approval for the proposed rehabilitation of the building's façade in conjunction with the complete renovation of the house after the fire that was suffered in February 2018. Proposed Exterior Elevations completed by Oakewood Design for the renovated residence are attached as Exhibit A. Following approval, the Owners intend to proceed with build out and construction work per the approved certificate of appropriateness for the exterior work.

Background

The building is a 2 1/2-story wood-frame structure with a steeply pitched gambrel roof. The building's overall footprint is t-shaped, with the house measuring 41 feet on Seminole Avenue and 53 feet on E. Lafayette Blvd in overall dimension, including the service wing to the west. The building is currently clad in multiple layers of rough textured stucco. The two primary decorative facades face east on Seminole Avenue and north on E. Lafayette Blvd.

The primary, east-facing facade is largely symmetrical in nature, with a center front door and a one story porch with a flat roof and fluted wood columns with doric capitals. A photograph that was published in the *Inland Architect and News Record*, Volume 38, No. 3 (October 1901) indicates that many decorative elements were stripped from the house at some point in the past. The house originally had open-air, uncovered, front porch extensions either side of the extant central porch. The extant front porch was capped by a decorative balustrade, as was the bay window to the north of the front door. At the second floor level, pilasters with doric capitals frame all 3 window bays at the second story level. The center window was an arch-topped unit with leaded glass. The window bays on either side of the central window were capped with an arch-topped trim piece to mimic the shape of the center window. Small rectilinear leaded glass windows with a pattern composed of half ellipses at the third floor level were trimmed out with an Adamesque head casing. A wood decorative balustrade connected the two symmetrical street-facing gambrel roofs.

The north-facing primary facade is punctuated with a chimney at the central portion of the main mass of the house. A service wing extends off to the west, again, punctuated by a chimney. A small one story service porch extends into the rear yard. An oval window opening, once filled with a leaded glass panel, exists at the apex of the roof in the attic level.

The south facing façade faces and is largely obscured from view by the adjacent structure, approximately 8 feet south. Like the north, the south facing facade is punctuated by fireplace chimneys, and has an existing oval decorative window at the attic level. A first floor covered loggia exists at the west end of the main mass of the house.

The west facing façade opening onto the rear yard has a small one-story service porch protrusion capped by a flat roof. The lower quadrant of the southern side of the west facade is punctuated by a one-story covered loggia.

The building was constructed in 1898-1899 and designed for Dr. Andrew Biddle by the architectural firm Rogers & MacFarlane. The structure suffered a major fire on February 21, 2018. The prior owner began rehabilitation of the structure, largely completing the interior rehabilitation; however, fire and prior contractor negligence resulted in the destruction of the vast majority of the house's original windows. The prior owner did work without obtaining Historic District Commission approval, and began to install inappropriate windows intended for new construction houses with muntins between the glass and muntin configurations that did not match the original windows. This was flagged by the HDC, and further work stopped at that time. It was purchased in March 2021 by Alexander and Lisa Grabowski, who intend to complete the rehabilitation of the building, move into the neighborhood, and occupy the house as their primary residence.

The building sits within the Indian Village National Register and Detroit Local historic districts.

Scope of Work

The following describes the proposed exterior work planned for the residence and site, which includes: Removal of exterior stucco and restoration of original wood clapboard siding, replacement of 35 non-historic era windows in existing openings, repair and restoration of 9 original leaded glass windows, gutter replacement, replacement of rear exterior doors, installation of new exterior lighting fixtures, and construction of a new wood privacy fence at the rear and side yard. The following is a detailed description of each work item:

Stucco Removal & Wood Clapboard Restoration

Today the facades are composed of rough-textured stucco; however, the house was constructed with wood clapboard siding as evidenced by the aforementioned historic photograph. Stucco was added later on top of the original wood clapboard and is evident in a 1971 historical photo. As this stucco aged and began to fail, a second, and in some places third, layer of stucco were added. These layers are of a rougher texture and not uniform in color. Failure and lack of color uniformity can be noted in the 2010 historic photo. Today all stucco layers are failing and in poor condition. Significant cracking and missing sections that expose the original wood clapboard are evident. Field examination indicates that the stucco is built up nearly 2 inches thick in places, and the weight of the stucco has begun to cause structural issues with the exterior envelope. The build-up of stucco has also left all exterior window trim flush with the stucco, eliminating the depth and shadow lines that were originally present.

All layers of stucco are failing, and the walls show signs of heavy staining, cracking, bulges, and missing stucco. Water intrusion behind the stucco is apparent, and field investigation shows that the stucco was

not properly installed over the top of building paper, and with furring strips to separate the stucco installation from the wood clapboards, as was standard for the time. This places the moisture-wicking stucco in direct contact with the underlying wood. The only way to repair the multiple layers of failed and failing stucco is to entirely remove all of the stucco and fix any underlying damage to the wood substrate.

Because the home was not originally designed to support the weight of stucco, the cost, extent, and nature required to properly replace the stucco, the owner is proposing to fully remove all non-original stucco and return to the original design intent through rehabilitating the underlying original wood clapboards. Indications are that the wood clapboards are in generally good condition, with the expectation that some areas will be fair or poor, with rotting wood requiring replacement. Missing or damaged clapboards will be replaced in kind, with new horizontal lap siding matching the existing historic siding in material, dimension, appearance, reveal and texture. Field investigations show that the original clapboards were installed with a 4 5/8" reveal and were 7/16" at the butt dimension of the clapboard. New clapboards will be 1/2" x 6" beveled lap siding and will be installed with a 4 5/8" reveal to match the existing historic siding to remain.

The house originally had many wood trim elements, as indicated above, some of which the owner is planning to restore as a part of this effort. This trim includes vertical corner boards at all building corners, as well as the arched window hoods above the east facade second story windows, which are presumed to exist behind the subsequent layers of stucco as evidenced by a shadow outline visible where these elements were once located. The soffits will also be repaired. Original decorative wood pilasters at the east facade still remain, and will be restored as a part of the facade restoration effort.

The original chimneys appear to have been parged smooth and painted a light color according to the historic photograph. The chimney appears to be composed of soft common brick, and the brick was not intended to be seen. The owner is proposing to repoint the chimneys with historically compatible lime mortar as required and parge them. The parging will be color matched to the approved trim color for the house so that the masonry does not need to be painted, or painted in Benjamin Moore HC-27 Monterrey White to match the proposed trim color.

The entire house will be painted in accordance with Detroit Historic District Commission Color System C. The body of the house will be painted Van Courtland Blue (Benjamin Moore HC-145), in accordance with Color System C's C:3 "Pale Blue." The trim will be painted Monterrey White (Benjamin Moore HC-27), in accordance with Color System C's C:5 "Yellowish White." Exterior doors will be painted black.

This scope of work meets Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #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.

Window Replacement

Of the building's 45 window openings, all but 9 windows were either destroyed by fire or removed and discarded by the prior owner. The remaining 36 window openings were either boarded up or filled with inappropriate new construction windows. The owner plans to restore and rebuild all nine of the original

leaded glass windows. The leaded glass sidelites and transom surrounding the front door will also be restored. The owner proposes to remove all inappropriate new construction windows and install 35 historic replica Quaker Brighton Classic Fit windows in accordance with NPS Preservation Brief 9 – Window Replacement Guidelines. In circumstances such as exist here, Brief 9 permits replacement windows if they match (i) the appearance, size, design, proportions, profiles, and sightlines of the existing historic windows, (ii) the existing window position in the wall, and (iii) the dimensions of the individual elements including head, sill, panes, jambs, sash, and overall depth.

The proposed replacement window has an extruded aluminum cladding, which will minimize joints in the cladding and extend the life of the underlying wood window. The window finish will complement the historic character of the building, and will be in accordance with Color System C’s C5 “Yellowish White” . Glazing will be clear glass with an applied low-e coating for maximum visible light transmittance. The proposed windows will have simulated divided lights with muntin patterns as indicated on the proposed elevation drawings and the supporting window schedule.

It should be noted that the proposed windows maintain the original window frames and historically significant exterior trim and brick moulds. Further effort to maintain the glazing size would require us to remove the original brick moulds, which are mortised into the jambs and would pose a high risk of their damage. We feel that the presented solution is the most feasible, as it ensures preservation of the original trim and brick moulds that still remain. Trim and brick mould destroyed by fire will be milled to match the original features in dimension and profile.

The historic leaded glass attic window and two third floor windows currently located beneath it on the south facade will be restored and placed on the north facade, where the original windows were destroyed by fire on the primary elevation. A louvered vent is proposed for the oval opening and new historic replica windows in the other openings on the south facade

This proposed scope of work meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #6 as referenced above, and Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. and should be approved.

Door Replacement

The owner proposes to replace two non-historic age insulated steel doors and steel security doors, one at the rear facade (kitchen porch), and the other on the south elevation of the service wing (grade entry leading to the basement) with new, fiberglass doors with an insulated glass vision lite. Please refer to the attached cut sheet. All exterior doors will be painted Black.

This proposed scope of work meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #6 as referenced above, and Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. and should be approved.

Exterior Lighting

Only one exterior light fixture remains, and it is not of historic age. The owner plans to replace it, and install new wall-mounted exterior wall sconces at each exterior door. Cut sheets for the lighting are attached. This proposed scope of work meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #9, as referenced above.

Rooftop Scope of Work

The roof is a steeply pitched asphalt shingle roof with a small overhang around all four sides. The existing roofing material is a black asphalt architectural shingle that was approved previously by HDC staff. There are currently no gutters on the building, increasing the amount of water infiltration that the building is suffering.

The original gutters were built-in box-style gutters, which rotted the soffits and were removed decades ago. We are proposing new, 6" aluminum K-Style gutters and downspouts. Cut sheets for the gutters and accessories are attached. The gutters will be factory finished to match the owner's selected trim color. This proposed scope of work meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #6 and 9, as referenced above.

Sitework

The owner proposes to install a new 6 foot tall wood privacy fence along the Lafayette side and an 8 foot tall fence with an opening gate parallel to the public alley in the rear of the property as shown on the architectural site plan. This fence replaces a previous fence that was removed by the prior owner after the fire. A cut sheet for the proposed fence is included. The fence will be stained brown in color such to be harmonious with the rest of the building and surrounding landscape.

Additionally, the owner proposes to erect a 3 foot high picket fence extending from the residence to Seminole Avenue along the Lafayette Blvd. right of way to prevent pedestrians from using the front yard as a shortcut. This front yard fencing is allowable per the exemption for corner lots in the Commission's Fence & Hedge Guidelines. The fence will be stained brown in color such to be harmonious with the rest of the building and surrounding landscape. Once a stain is selected for both fences it will be submitted to HDC staff for review and approval.

This proposed scope of work meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #9 as referenced above, and the Detroit Historic District Commission's Fence & Hedge Guidelines.

Conclusion

The items listed above and attached exhibits provide a synopsis of the Owner's proposed scope of work for the rehabilitation of the building at 791 Seminole Avenue. All of the proposed rehabilitation work



meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation Nos. 1-9, as well as the specific standards mentioned above. As such, we believe that this plan should be approved.

Sincerely,
Infuz Architects Ltd.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan Machielse'.

Allan Machielse, RA, NCARB
Architect

Scope of Work

- Replacement of 35 non-historic era windows in existing openings with new aluminum clad wood windows with simulated divided lites. Existing historic trim and brick moulds to remain.
- Repair, restoration & reinstallation of 9 original leaded glass windows
- Removal of failing exterior stucco and restoration of original underlying wood clapboard siding. Replacement of damaged wood clapboards in-kind. Restoration of existing remaining historic trim elements as required. Replacement of missing trim elements, including vertical corner boards at all building corners, and arched window hoods above the east facade second story windows. Paint the entire building.
- Parging and painting of existing brick chimneys.
- Replacement of two non-historic age insulated steel doors and steel security doors with new, fiberglass doors with an insulated glass vision lite.
- Replace existing non-historic age front porch light fixture. Install new wall-mounted exterior wall sconces at each exterior door.
- Replacement of and installation of new aluminum gutters
- Install a new 6 foot tall wood privacy fence along the Lafayette side of the property and an 8 foot tall fence with an opening gate parallel to the public alley in the rear of the property.
- Erect a 3 foot high wood picket fence extending from the residence to Seminole Avenue along the Lafayette Blvd property line

THIS IS A 3-PAGE FORM - ALL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR PROJECT REVIEW

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION PROJECT REVIEW REQUEST

City of Detroit - Planning & Development Department
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Date: _____

PROPERTY INFORMATION

ADDRESS: _____ AKA: _____

HISTORIC DISTRICT: _____

SCOPE OF WORK: Windows/Doors Roof/Gutters/Chimney Porch/Deck Landscape/Fence/Tree/Park General Rehab
(Check ALL that apply) New Construction Demolition Addition Other: _____

APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION

Property Owner/Homeowner Contractor Tenant or Business Occupant Architect/Engineer/Consultant

NAME: _____ COMPANY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ MOBILE: _____ EMAIL: _____

PROJECT REVIEW REQUEST CHECKLIST

Please attach the following documentation to your request:

PLEASE KEEP FILE SIZE OF ENTIRE SUBMISSION UNDER 30MB

- Completed Building Permit Application** (highlighted portions only)
- ePLANS Permit Number** (only applicable if you've already applied for permits through ePLANS)
- Photographs** of ALL sides of existing building or site
- Detailed photographs** of location of proposed work (photographs to show existing condition(s), design, color, & material)
- Description of existing conditions** (including materials and design)
- Description of project** (if replacing any existing material(s), include an explanation as to why replacement--rather than repair--of existing and/or construction of new is required)
- Detailed scope of work** (formatted as bulleted list)
- Brochure/cut sheets** for proposed replacement material(s) and/or product(s), as applicable

NOTE:

Based on the scope of work, additional documentation may be required.

See www.detroitmi.gov/hdc for scope-specific requirements.

Upon receipt of this documentation, staff will review and inform you of the next steps toward obtaining your building permit from the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) to perform the work.

SUBMIT COMPLETED REQUESTS TO HDC@DETROITMI.GOV

P2 - BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION

Date: _____

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address: _____ Floor: _____ Suite#: _____ Stories: _____

AKA: _____ Lot(s): _____ Subdivision: _____

Parcel ID#(s): _____ Total Acres: _____ Lot Width: _____ Lot Depth: _____

Current Legal Use of Property: _____ Proposed Use: _____

Are there any existing buildings or structures on this parcel? Yes No

PROJECT INFORMATION

Permit Type: New Alteration Addition Demolition Correct Violations

Foundation Only Change of Use Temporary Use Other: _____

Revision to Original Permit #: _____ (Original permit has been issued and is active)

Description of Work (Describe in detail proposed work and use of property, attach work list)

MBC use change No MBC use change

Included Improvements (Check all applicable; these trade areas require separate permit applications)

HVAC/Mechanical Electrical Plumbing Fire Sprinkler System Fire Alarm

Structure Type

New Building Existing Structure Tenant Space Garage/Accessory Building

Other: _____ Size of Structure to be Demolished (LxWxH) _____ cubic ft.

Construction involves changes to the floor plan? Yes No

(e.g. interior demolition or construction to new walls)

Use Group: _____ Type of Construction (per current MI Bldg Code Table 601) _____

Estimated Cost of Construction \$ _____ By Contractor \$ _____ By Department

Structure Use

Residential-Number of Units: _____ Office-Gross Floor Area _____ Industrial-Gross Floor Area _____

Commercial-Gross Floor Area: _____ Institutional-Gross Floor Area _____ Other-Gross Floor Area _____

Proposed No. of Employees: _____ List materials to be stored in the building: _____

PLOT PLAN SHALL BE submitted on separate sheets and shall show all easements and measurements (must be correct and in detail). SHOW ALL streets abutting lot, indicate front of lot, show all buildings, existing and proposed distances to lot lines. (Building Permit Application Continues on Next Page)

For Building Department Use Only

Intake By: _____ Date: _____ Fees Due: _____ DngBld? No

Permit Description: _____

Permit #: _____ Current Legal Land Use: _____ Proposed Use: _____

Permit#: _____ Date Permit Issued: _____ Permit Cost: \$ _____

Zoning District: _____ Zoning Grant(s): _____

Lots Combined? Yes No (attach zoning clearance)

Revised Cost (revised permit applications only) Old \$ _____ New \$ _____

Structural: _____ Date: _____ Notes: _____

Zoning: _____ Date: _____ Notes: _____

Other: _____ Date: _____ Notes: _____



IDENTIFICATION (All Fields Required)

Property Owner/Homeowner Property Owner/Homeowner is Permit Applicant

Name: _____ Company Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Driver's License #: _____ Email: _____

Contractor Contractor is Permit Applicant

Representative Name: _____ Company Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____ Email: _____

City of Detroit License #: _____

TENANT OR BUSINESS OCCUPANT Tenant is Permit Applicant

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

ARCHITECT/ENGINEER/CONSULTANT Architect/Engineer/Consultant is Permit Applicant

Name: _____ State Registration#: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____ Email: _____

HOMEOWNER AFFIDAVIT (Only required for residential permits obtained by homeowner.)

I hereby certify that I am the legal owner and occupant of the subject property and the work described on this permit application shall be completed by me. I am familiar with the applicable codes and requirements of the City of Detroit and take full responsibility for all code compliance, fees and inspections related to the installation/work herein described. I shall neither hire nor sub-contract to any other person, firm or corporation any portion of the work covered by this building permit.

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Homeowner)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 20 ____ A.D. _____ County, Michigan

Signature: _____ My Commission Expires: _____
(Notary Public)

PERMIT APPLICANT SIGNATURE

I hereby certify that the information on this application is true and correct. I have reviewed all deed restrictions that may apply to this construction and am aware of my responsibility thereunder. I certify that the proposed work is authorized by the owner of the record and I have been authorized to make this application as the property owner(s) authorized agent. Further I agree to conform to all applicable laws and ordinances of jurisdiction. **I am aware that a permit will expire when no inspections are requested and conducted within 180 days of the date of issuance or the date of the previous inspection and that expired permits cannot be**

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Permit Applicant)

Driver's License #: _____ Expiration: _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 20 ____ A.D. _____ County, Michigan

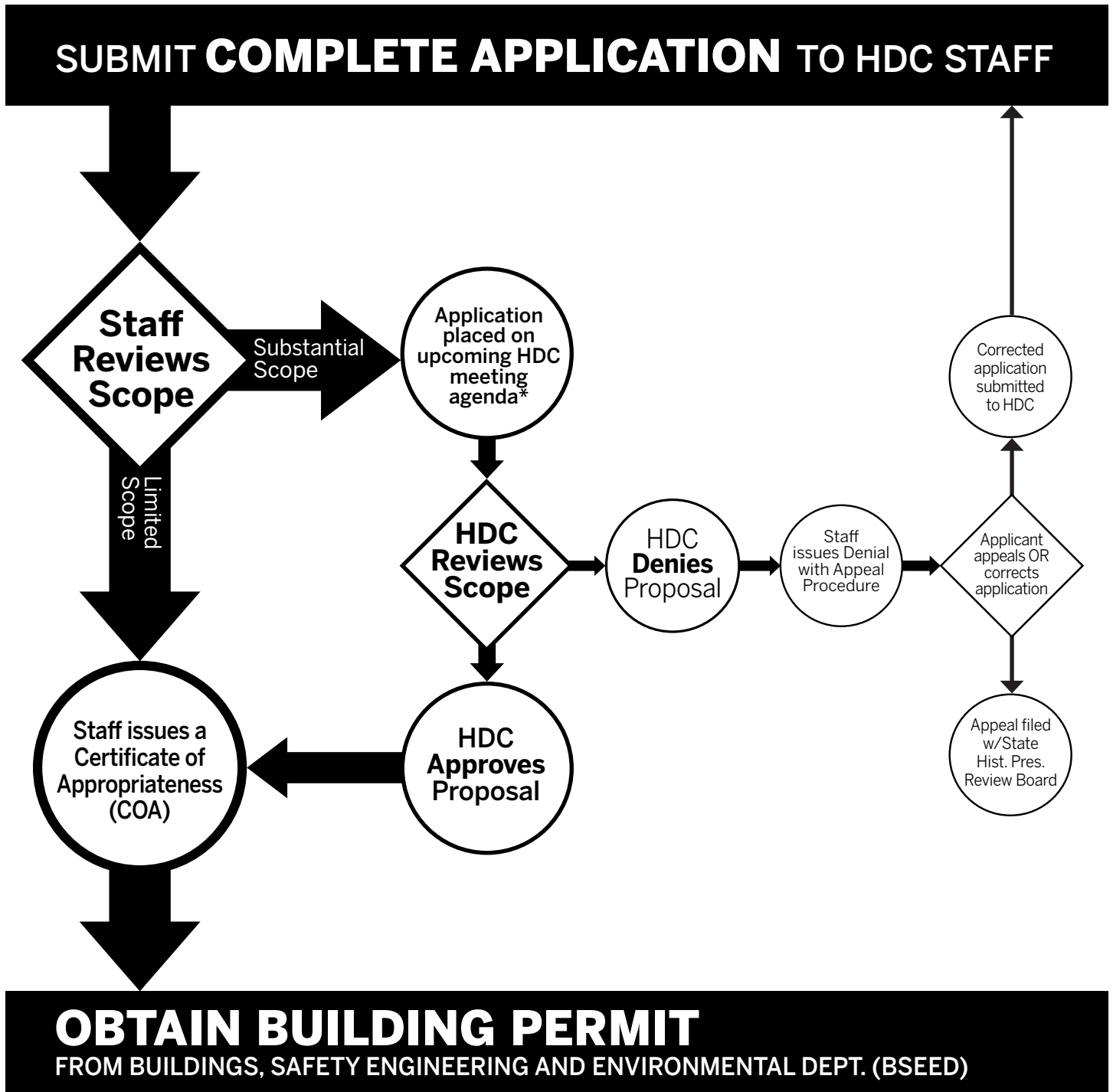
Signature: _____ My Commission Expires: _____
(Notary Public)

Section 23a of the state construction code act of 1972, 1972PA230, MCL 125.1523A, prohibits a person from conspiring to circumvent the licensing requirements of this state relating to persons who are to perform work on a residential building or a residential structure. Visitors of Section 23a are subject to civil fines.

This application can also be completed online. Visit detroitmi.gov/bseed/elaps for more information.



HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION REVIEW & PERMIT PROCESS



OBTAIN BUILDING PERMIT

FROM BUILDINGS, SAFETY ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEPT. (BSEED)

* THE COMMISSION MEETS REGULARLY AT LEAST ONCE PER MONTH, TYPICALLY ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH. (SEE WEBSITE FOR MEETING SCHEDULE/AGENDAS)

FIND OUT MORE AT www.detroitmi.gov/hdc