

STAFF REPORT: 8/10/2022 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-7951

ADDRESS: 1773 PARKER

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE

APPLICANT: JENNIFER LYON

PROPERTY OWNER: JENNIFER LYON

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: JULY 2022

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: JULY 22, 2022

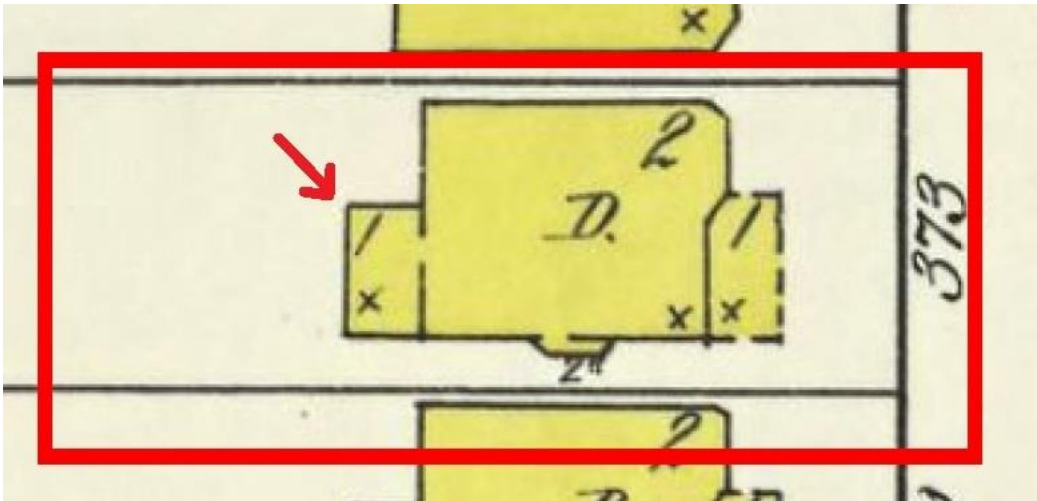
SCOPE: REPLACE GLASS BLOCK WINDOWS ON ENCLOSED REAR PORCH WITH VINYL WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

1773 Parker is a two-and-a-half story, wood-sided house built in 1909. It faces east onto the street in the West Village Historic District. The house is comparable to the other houses on its block in age and scale. Ornamentation specific to a particular architectural style does not exist, though it is possible that this has been removed or is concealed behind asphalt fiber siding. The enclosed rear (west) porch, subject of this application, is shown on a 1915 Sanborn map, indicating that it is either original to the building, or an early addition.



July 2022 photo by staff.



Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 8, 1915. Arrow shows porch location. Solid line on map indicates porch was enclosed.

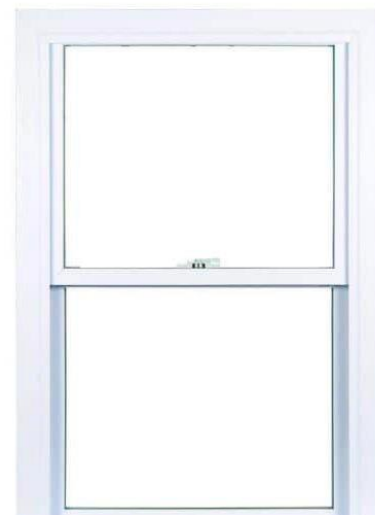
PROPOSAL

Background

On November 18, 2020, the applicant received a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace six glass block windows and two vinyl windows on the building's rear (west) porch with appropriate new windows (specifically, Pella Architect Series, aluminum-clad, double hung one-over-one wood sash windows with a white finish). However, the applicant now states that "window companies are all 7 months out for installation" and instead seeks approval of vinyl windows.

Scope of Work

According to a submitted project narrative, the applicant proposes to remove glass block windows and install new vinyl windows. Presumably, as the narrative does not mention the replacement of vinyl windows, the existing two vinyl windows are to remain in place; only the six glass block windows are proposed for replacement.



Left: Rear (west) porch viewed from alley, July 2022. Photo by staff. Right: Proposed window. Image provided by applicant.

The applicant has not provided a product name or specifications for the proposed windows, but has included a

photo with the project narrative.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The West Village Historic District was established by Ordinance 547-H in 1983. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-132) reference windows as being “always subdivided, the most common window type being double-hung sash, whose area may be further subdivided by muntins.” The Final Report for the district states that it is “of historical importance as a benchmark to the growth of Detroit in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” implying a Period of Significance.
- Glass block windows are an anachronistic addition to the building. The original windows are missing. Double-hung, wood sash windows would have been used at the time of the porch’s construction. Such windows are nearly ubiquitous on comparable houses in the vicinity, as observed by staff during a site visit.
- Additional rehabilitation work proposed for the subject property is discussed in COAs dated November 18, 2020 (mentioned above, staff report November 12, 2020) and March 16, 2021 (staff report March 10, 2021).

ISSUES

- The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard #6, requires that “replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.”
- The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are intended to be “applied in a reasonable manner ... taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.”¹ This condition provides a mechanism for a property owner to suggest a substitute treatment when a more appropriate treatment is technically infeasible. In order to demonstrate infeasibility, a property owner must “prove the unavailability of any reasonable, historically correct preservation methodology.”² However, the supply-related delay indicated by the applicant is a temporary condition, and does not constitute “unavailability.” Therefore, staff recommends denial.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial of the proposed work as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

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.*

¹ 36 C.F.R. § 67.7(b).

² Dragomir Cosanici and Nicholas L. Bozen, “Economic Hardship, Feasibility, and Related Standards in Historic Preservation Law,” (Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries Office of Regulatory Affairs). The authors use the example of a traditional building trade “when there was no longer any company in the state” engaged in that craft.