

STAFF REPORT: 11/16/2022 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: #22-8095

ADDRESS: 3451 IROQUOIS

HISTORIC DISTRICT: INDIAN VILLAGE

APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: GERALDINE COX GRAVES

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 10/17/2022

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 10/21/2022

SCOPE: REMOVE TREE, REPAIR DRIVEWAY AND PORCH STEPS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1926, the property at 3451 Iroquois is a 2 ½ story, colonial single-family residence facing northeast. The hipped, asphalt-shingled roof is moderately pitched with sweeping eaves that reveal bracketed soffits. The house is clad in yellow brick with brick quoins and stone and brick lentils. Stone sills underline the symmetrically placed double hung windows. Wood columns support the pediment-shaped portico over the front entrance. The modest front porch is slightly raised above the foundation evergreen yew hedges, the cracked front concrete steps are included in this application. The house is positioned central to its property and features an open lawn with a driveway along the southwest property line to the rear yard. The property is dappled in shade from its great tree canopy, of which one of the trees, the silver maple, between the driveway and neighbor's driveway, is the subject of this application.



Site Photo 1, by Staff October 21, 2022: (Northeast) front elevation side



Site Photo 2, designation photo 1980: (Northeast) front elevation.

This property has the following HDC approvals on Detroit Property Information System (DPI):

- September 1998, Denial: New fence in front of house, alley and lot lines.
- October 2005, COA: Replace asphalt roof with new asphalt roof, house and garage.



Site Photo 3, by Staff October 21, 2022: (North) front. Silver maple and driveways (foreground is neighbor's drive, rear is applicant's driveway).



Aerial of Parcel # 17007498: red circle indicates location of silver maple base of trunk

PROPOSAL

The proposed work consists of three work items: removal of the silver maple tree at the front yard, the replacement of the concrete driveway and concrete rear walkway with concrete, and the replacement of the front porch, concrete steps with concrete steps. The area of the driveway for replacement is approximately 900 SF and is centered on the upheaval and cracked area caused by the silver maple's roots.

Staff requested more information regarding a certified arborist review of the health of the silver maple, how the trunk and roots will be removed, and photos of the rear walkway and front porch steps but have not yet received a response to the date of this report.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Indian Village Historic District was established in 1970.
- Staff visited the site on October 21, 2022 and observed the condition of the front yard maple tree, its proximity to the house and any other historic structures, and the proximity to the public right of way. (See staff photos enclosed.) Staff observed that the central trunk is split and has a hollow filled with concrete in one of the trunks. The roots are surfacing, which is a typical behavior of silver maples and will continue to do so in its lifetime. Although the tree's main trunk has some lean, the tree appears to be balanced in its overall structure and appears to be in good health. Staff did observe some smaller branches that require deadwood pruning. Photos show that most branches are still green with life.
- Upon receipt of the application material, staff requested the following information that has not yet been received upon the date of this report:
 - A letter from the applicant's certified arborist on the condition of the front yard silver maple. (Administrative approval of tree removal requires certification by an arborist.)
 - Photos of the front porch steps and rear concrete pathway.
 - A description/dimensions of the total area of replacement of the rear concrete pathway.
- While the front yard silver maple contributes to the overall historic character of the property and the surrounding Indian Village Historic District, it is staff's opinion that this particular species, *Acer saccharinum*, Silver Maple (not to be confused with *Acer saccharum*, Sugar Maple), is prone to continue

its growth habit of a shallow root system that can crack sidewalks, foundations and driveways. The tree itself produces brittle wood, which is commonly damaged in storms. It is staff's opinion that removal of this particular tree, due to its current state of roots, split and hollowed trunk, is advised to prevent further damage. Staff offers this opinion with a condition that two additional shade trees be planted to support the future historic canopy of Indian Village.

- Staff observed general opinion is that the driveway is not a character-defining feature of the property.

ISSUES

- For administrative approval, certification of the tree's health is required by Staff is required by an arborist, which has not yet been provided at the time of this report.
- Staff has no issues with the proposed replacement of the driveway, rear walkway and front porch steps.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation: Remove Tree, Repair Driveway, Rear Concrete Pathway and Porch Steps

It is staff's opinion the removal of the silver maple, repair of the concrete driveway, concrete pathway and front porch concrete steps 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.

Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following conditions:

- The applicant supply a description of the treatment of the tree's trunk and root removal for HDC review and approval before work is started.
- Two shade trees be planted on the property as a replacement for the loss of this tree. HDC staff review species and location for approval.
- The applicant provides photos of the rear pathway and front steps for HDC review before work is started.