

STAFF REPORT: 8/10/2022 REGULAR MEETING

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22-8019

VIOLATION NUMBER: 22-650

ADDRESS: 4770 LESLIE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN

APPLICANT: JOEL PERRY

PROPERTY OWNER: BDE CREDITORS

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: OCTOBER 26, 2022 AND NOVEMBER 7, 2022

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO

SCOPE: REPLACE DOORS/WINDOWS, OTHER EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS (WORK STARTED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

4770 Leslie is a two-and-a-half story, brick, Tudor Revival house built in 1927. It faces south onto the street. Defining features include a prominent wall chimney on the front façade, sharp gables on the front façade and projecting entrance bay, steel windows, and a stone door surround on the entrance bay. Most of the windows have been replaced with vinyl sash windows; a few steel or wood windows remain.



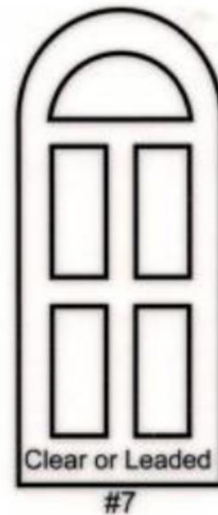
October 2022 photo by staff.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes several work items, as follows:

Front door

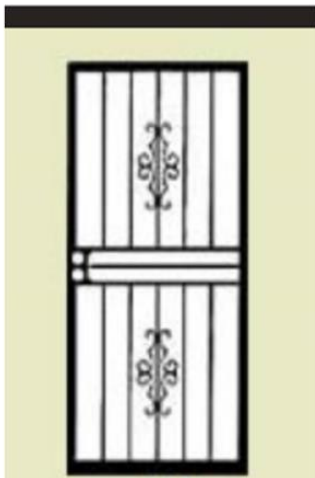
The applicant proposes to replace the current wood panel door and security door. The application does not provide materials, colors, dimensions, or product names for the proposed replacements.



Left to right: Current wood front door and security door, proposed security door, proposed front door. Images from application.

Side door

The applicant proposes a new aluminum side (east elevation) door; it appears that this door has already been installed. Also proposed is a black security door at the same location.



Left to right: Proposed security door (image from application), proposed aluminum door (image from application), door already installed (photo from October 2022 site visit).

Windows

The applicant proposes to replace the historic windows currently on the house, other than the attic window on the front façade, and, “if the vinyl windows need to be replaced, this will be done” (see November 10, 2022 email from applicant). The existing windows mostly consist of white vinyl windows, along with two historic steel windows on the front facade, and at least three historic wood windows. There are also several boarded-up openings (it is unclear if windows exist under the boards).

Historic windows proposed for replacement include one sash window on the east elevation, first floor, and two casement windows on the west elevation, first floor. There is also one boarded window on the east elevation, first floor, and a mullioned row of three boarded windows on the west elevation, first floor. It is unclear if the boarded openings contain historic windows.

If the existing vinyl windows are retained, they would be painted black or brown.



Examples of existing window openings. Left to right: Vinyl windows (note unpainted wood mullion), historic wood window, boarded-up opening. October 2022 photos by staff.



Historic steel window (typical of both windows on the front façade). Photo from application.

The proposed replacement windows are aluminum-clad wood windows, with casement windows to replace the two steel casement windows on the front façade, and sash windows to replace the remaining sash windows. The application does not provide detailed specifications on the proposed windows, but does include images.



Proposed replacement windows. Left: casement window; Center: six-over-six sash window; Right: one-over-one sash window. Images from application.

Fascias and soffits

The applicant proposes to replace fascias and soffits and add gutter guards. Materials and specifications are not provided, but images are included in the application.

Front porch

The application includes the replacement of the porch railing, and concrete resurfacing. The new railing is proposed to be the same height as the existing railing.

Rear balcony

The application proposes to replace the rear balcony door, and add a railing.



Left: Existing balcony door. November 2022 photo by staff. Right: Proposed new door. Image from application.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-168) provide the following guidance:
 - “Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash.”
 - “Original metal balustrades exist.”
 - “Subdivided windows” create textural interest.
 - “Buildings of vernacular English Revival styles generally have painted woodwork and window frames of a dark brown or cream color.”
- Staff was unable to locate a historic photograph of the building.

Front door

- Houses in the vicinity of 4770 Leslie in Russell Woods-Sullivan frequently feature security doors similar to the one proposed. The proposed door would not be out of place in the district. However, it is likely that many of these doors predate the 1999 ordinance enacting the historic district.

Side door

- Without information on the appearance of the historic side door, staff is unable to determine if it was a distinctive or defining feature, or when it was removed. However, the proposed door (already installed) is appropriate in that it is “clearly differentiated” (Standard #9) and does not introduce incompatible architectural elements.
- The above observations pertaining to the proposed front security door also apply to the proposed side security door.

Windows

- The vinyl windows currently on the building are an inappropriate, recent addition. With most of the original windows now gone, the proposed aluminum-clad wood windows are potentially an appropriate replacement. Retaining the current vinyl windows would not be appropriate.
- Staff suggests that the remaining one or two historic windows on the east elevation are not important character-defining features, as they are not a component of a broader fenestration pattern, are not on a principal façade, and not subdivided as referenced in the Elements of Design.
- Black is an appropriate sash color, as dark sash colors are typical of Tudor Revival architecture. Black is provided as an optional sash color in Color System D.

Fascias and soffits

- A rear extension of the building is missing original fascias and soffits; adding new material in this area is warranted.



Photo from application shows historic fascias and soffits on the core block of the house, and fascias and soffits replaced by OSB and dimensional lumber on a rear ell.

Front porch

- Porch railings are a common feature of Tudor Revival houses in the Russel Woods-Sullivan historic district. Staff is unable to determine if the current railing is original or historic to the house. The style suggests it may be a later addition. Also, photographs show that it is bent beyond feasible repair. Staff suggests that replacement of this railing with a new railing of a compatible design would be appropriate.
- Resurfacing of the front porch will not “alter features and spaces that characterize the property” (Standard #2) and is appropriate.

Rear balcony

- The proposed railing is potentially appropriate; however, the application lacks detail. Information on materials and dimensions will be required to determine if the railing is appropriate.

ISSUES

Front door

- Based on materials and architectural style, staff believes that the front door is original or historic. Due to its prominent location as a component of the projecting entrance bay, it is a defining feature. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards #2 and #5 suggest that it be retained.
- The curved pattern on the proposed security door introduces an incompatible visual element which distracts from the architectural character of the doorway and opening (Standards #2 and #9). A design without this element would be appropriate.

Side door

- The bright white color of the side door is not appropriate for the period and style of the building. The door should be painted an appropriate color from Color System D.

Windows

- The building's rolled steel casement windows are both historic (original to the house) and distinctive (as suggested by the Elements of Design); such windows are a hallmark of Tudor Revival buildings of the period. Appropriate and feasible preservation methodologies for their repair are well established (see, for example, National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows*).¹ Standards #2 and #5 suggest that they be preserved.
- A pair of leaded or zinc glass casement windows on the west elevation create "textural interest," as described in the Elements of Design, and thus are a defining feature. Standard #2 suggests that they be preserved. If historic windows exist within the boarded openings on the west elevation, they are likewise important, defining features.



Windows on the west elevation. November 2022 photo by staff.

Fascias and soffits

- Where original fascias and soffits exist on the building, they should be retained (Standard #2). In-kind replacement of damaged material is potentially acceptable, but would require additional documentation.

Front porch

- More detail is needed regarding the materials and appearance of the proposed railing.

Rear balcony

- The existing twelve-light door contributes to the historic character of the property, and should be retained if possible (Standard #2). If it has deteriorated significantly, a replacement should "match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials" (Standard 9). The proposed door does not closely match the old.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation #1) Section 21-2-78: Determination of Historic District Commission (Front Door, Balcony Door, and Windows)

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a *Denial* of the proposed front door replacement, and rear balcony door replacement, replacement of historic steel windows, and replacement of historic wood windows on the west elevation, as the proposed work does not 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 other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

Recommendation #2) Section 21-2-78: Determination of Historic District Commission (Remaining work items)

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed front and side security door installation, aluminum side door installation, replacement of vinyl windows, replacement of historic wood windows on the east elevation only, fascias and soffits, gutter guards, replacement of front porch railing, front porch resurfacing, and addition of rear balcony railing, as the proposed work conforms to the district's Elements of Design and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, subject to the following conditions:

- The design of the security doors shall be subject to approval by staff
- The side door shall be painted an appropriate color selection from Color System D
- The proposed replacement windows shall be subject to approval by staff
- Fascias and soffits may be replaced on the building's rear ell only; elsewhere, the existing fascias and soffits shall be preserved; and
- The design of the front porch and balcony railings shall be subject to approval by staff.

¹ <https://home1.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/13-steel-windows.htm>