

**STAFF REPORT:** 11/16/22 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** T. BOSCARINO

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 22-8092

**ADDRESS:** 740 VAN DYKE

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** WEST VILLAGE

**APPLICANT:** MARQUES KING, FABRICK DESIGN, LLC

**PROPERTY OWNER:** 313 PROPERTY GROUP

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** OCTOBER 13, 2022

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** NOVEMBER 2, 2022

**SCOPE:** DEMOLISH GARAGE, DEMOLISH REAR ADDITION, ALTER REAR ELEVATION

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The property at 740 Van Dyke is an attached single-family townhouse (sharing a common wall with another townhouse to the north). The building is two-and-a-half stories, brick- and shingle-sided, built in 1909 and displaying Arts and Crafts elements. It faces west onto the street. Items subject to this application are on the rear (east) of the house, and include an enclosed addition and a detached garage.



*November 2022 photo by staff.*

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes several work items, as follows:

### **Demolish garage**

The application proposes to demolish a single-bay garage in the rear yard. The application states that the garage is in “poor” condition with “noticeable structural slab defects. Door and window frames at the exterior are splitting

away from each and the foundation itself is sinking in a few places.” The application also states that “the framing and the foundation of the garage have failed ... the structure has noticeably sunk into the ground ... inside the garage the concrete slab on grade has completely caved inward.”



*Garage proposed for demolition. Photos from application.*

The application proposes to replace the garage with a gravel or paved surface parking area.

### **Demolish addition**

The application seeks to demolish an addition. The applicant states that the addition is “fairly recently built” and is of poor quality, “not properly sealed and insulated,” and “not conducive to tempered habitable space.” This addition is integrated with a wood deck which is also proposed for demolition. (Staff’s assessment of the addition is given below.)

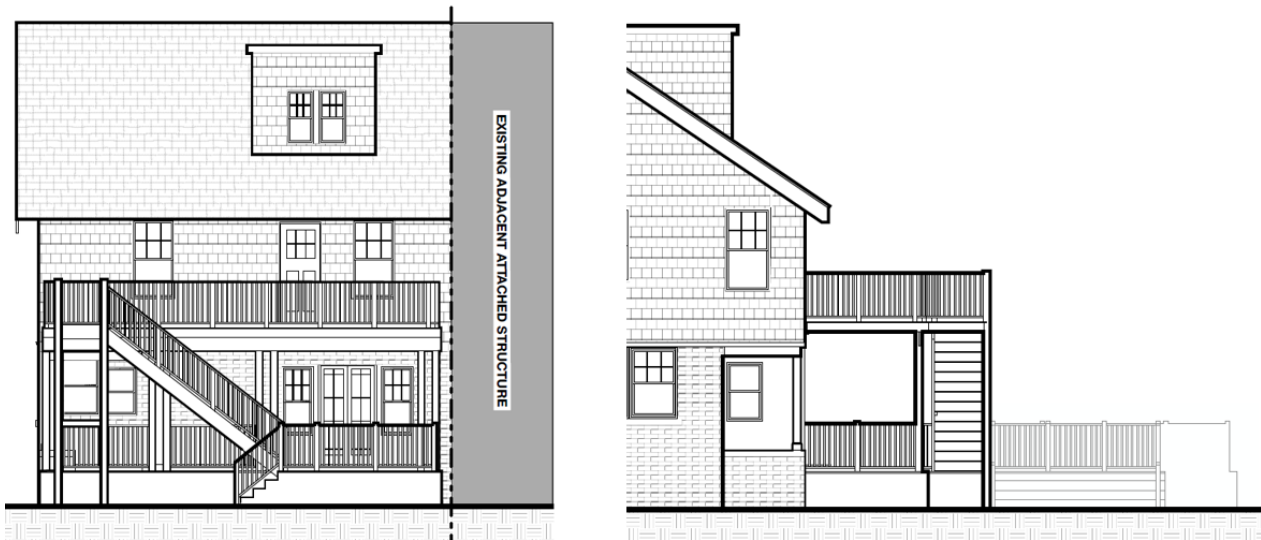


*Addition and deck proposed for demolition. Photo from application.*



## Build new deck

The applicant proposes to construct a new deck. The application includes scale drawings of the proposed deck but does not describe its materials or foundation.



*Proposed deck. Images from application.*

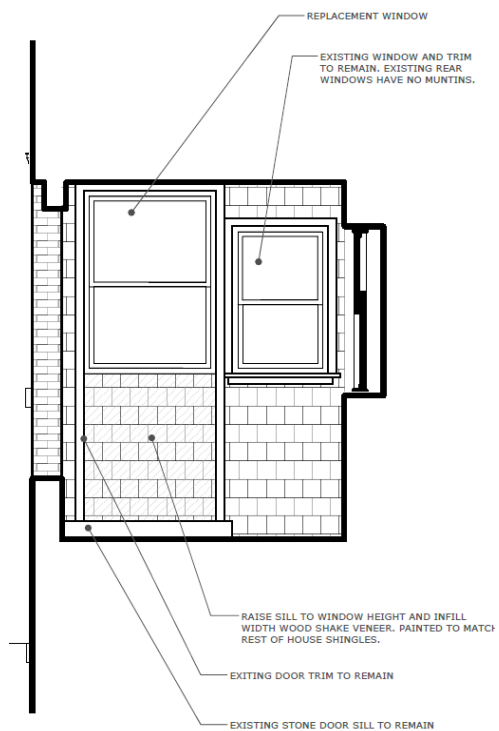
## Alter door opening

Also proposed is the elimination of a door opening on the rear (east) elevation.



*Rear door proposed for elimination. Photo from application.*

The proposal removes the rear (east) kitchen door and transom, closing in the space with wood shingles and an Anderson 400 Series Woodwright double hung fiberglass-clad wood window.



*Proposed alteration of rear door opening. Image from application.*

### **Change paint color**

The application proposes to paint the house the following selections from Color System E:

- Body color, B2 Dark Yellow
- Trim color, B19 Black



*Rendering of proposed paint colors. Image from application.*



*Rendering of rear of house with all proposed work items shown. Image from application.*

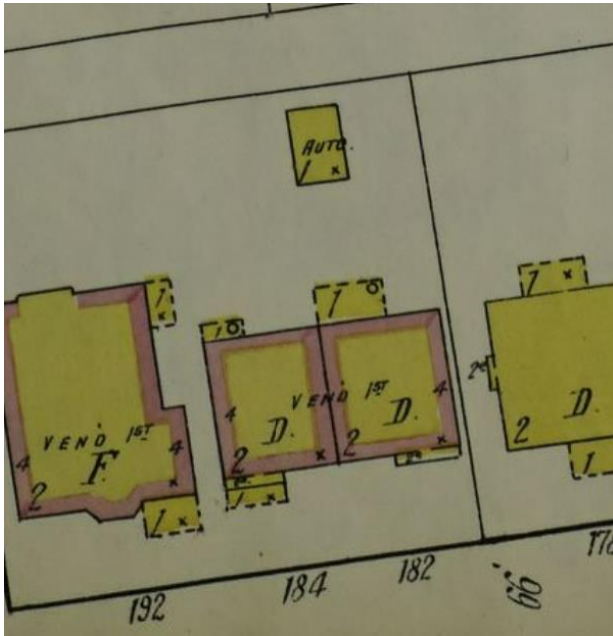
## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The West Village Historic District was established by Ordinance 547-H in 1983. 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.
- The Elements of Design for West Village states that Arts and Crafts buildings in the district demonstrate a “freedom” in placement of porches, solids, and voids.
- Staff considers the garage to be a contributing building. Its design and materials appear to be original and reflect the design of the house; these include wooden shingle siding, a glazed wood panel door, and wood six-over-six sash windows. The size, scale, and hip-roof massing are also significant features. The only alteration to the garage is the replacement of the original door with a sectional steel garage door.



*October 2022 staff photo showing non-historic garage door.*

- Staff has requested additional photos and description of the garage foundation and framing,
- Staff agrees with the applicant that the addition is not an important or defining feature. Although a 1915 Sanborn map, as well as physical evidence (a door at the second-floor level) show that a porch once existed at that location, the current addition appears to be more recently added (the Sanborn map indicates a single-story, open porch). The current addition obscures a set of double doors and side lights, defining features that presumably were intended to be visible on the exterior. Mismatched siding, an anachronistic fenestration pattern, and inferior quality of construction all suggest that the addition was not part of the original or historic design of the house. It is possible, though not certain, that the addition includes elements of an original or historic porch, such as the brick footings and tongue-and-groove floorboards visible on the exterior. Even so, it lacks “integrity” in its current condition and configuration.



1915 Sanborn map. The subject property is shown as 182 Van Dyke.

- An open deck, provided that the colors and materials are not incompatible with the existing building, would meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, especially Standard #9: “new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features” of the historic building.
- The proposed alteration of the rear door opening retains the door frame and sill, and is potentially reversible.
- The Arts and Crafts Movement inspired building does not fit squarely within a particular architectural style, though it does demonstrate some English Revival (Color System D) influence. Staff suggests that the selected colors from Color System E are appropriate. The current color scheme, which was completed circa 2019, was not approved by staff or the Historic District Commission.

## ISSUES

- Although the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are intended to be “applied in a reasonable manner ... taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility,”<sup>1</sup> a feasibility argument places the burden of proof on the property owner to “prove the unavailability of any reasonable, historically correct preservation

methodology.”<sup>2</sup> Staff suggests that stabilization or repair of the garage foundation and framing, though potentially more expensive than demolition, is still feasible (perhaps even more feasible due to the relatively small size of the garage). Therefore, staff recommends denial of the garage demolition.

- Even if the garage has deteriorated beyond feasible repair, Standard #6 requires that “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.” If the garage is not repairable, replacement with a new garage bearing the character-defining features mentioned above is potentially an appropriate solution.
- The application does not specify materials or color for the proposed deck.
- Staff suggests that the transom window above the kitchen door is a defining feature and should be retained. (The height and size of the proposed new window may be adjusted as needed to accommodate the transom window.)

## RECOMMENDATION

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

#### Recommendation 1 of 2: Demolish garage

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a *Denial* of the proposed demolition as it 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 of 2: Remaining work items

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a *Certificate of Appropriateness* for the remaining work items as they meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, with the following conditions:

- *The materials, color, and foundation of the proposed deck shall be subject to approval by staff.*
- *The transom window above the rear door shall be retained.*

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<sup>1</sup> 36 C.F.R. § 67.7(b).

<sup>2</sup> 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).