

**STAFF REPORT:** 11/16/2022 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** T. BOSCARINO

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 22-8119

**VIOLATION NUMBER:** 21-463

**ADDRESS:** 6102 AND 6125 14TH STREET

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** KING SOLOMON BAPTIST CHURCH

**APPLICANT:** REV. CHARLES WILLIAMS II, PASTOR

**PROPERTY OWNER:** KING SOLOMON MSNY CHURCH (6102 14TH); SON OF DAVID MINISTRIES (6125 14TH)

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** NOVEMBER 9, 2022

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** OCTOBER 28, 2022; NOVEMBER 3, 2022; NOVEMBER 9, 2022

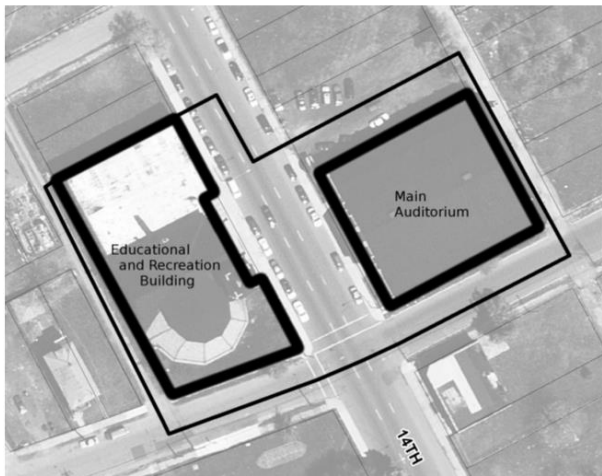
**SCOPE:** REPLACE DOORS AND WINDOWS (WORK STARTED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

## **BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS**

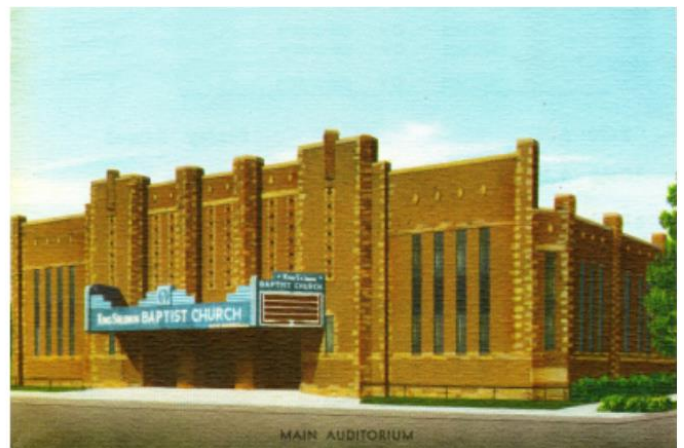
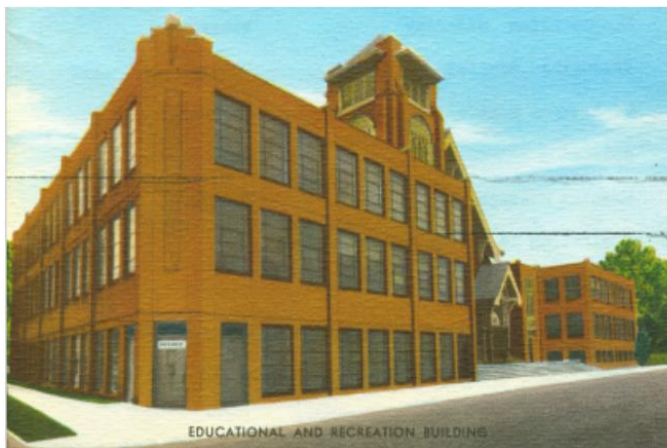
The subject property, historically known as King Solomon Baptist Church, consists of two large church buildings of comparable scale separated by 14th Street. On the west is the Educational and Recreation Building (6125 14th), a somewhat larger Tudor Revival building, with Arts and Crafts and Gothic Revival influences, built in 1917 and expanded with additions to the north and south in 1937 and 1940, respectively. On the east is the Main Auditorium (6102 14th), an Art Deco building built in 1937. The Period of Significance extends from 1917 through 1964; both buildings as well as their additions and alterations from the Period of Significance are historically significant.



*Top: Educational and Recreation Building. Bottom: Main Auditorium. November 2022 photos by staff.*



Left: Site plan. Image: National Register of Historic Places, 2015. Right: Temple Baptist Church (now King Solomon Baptist Church) circa 1937–1940. Image: Joel Carpenter, Inside History of First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, and Temple Baptist Church, Detroit (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).



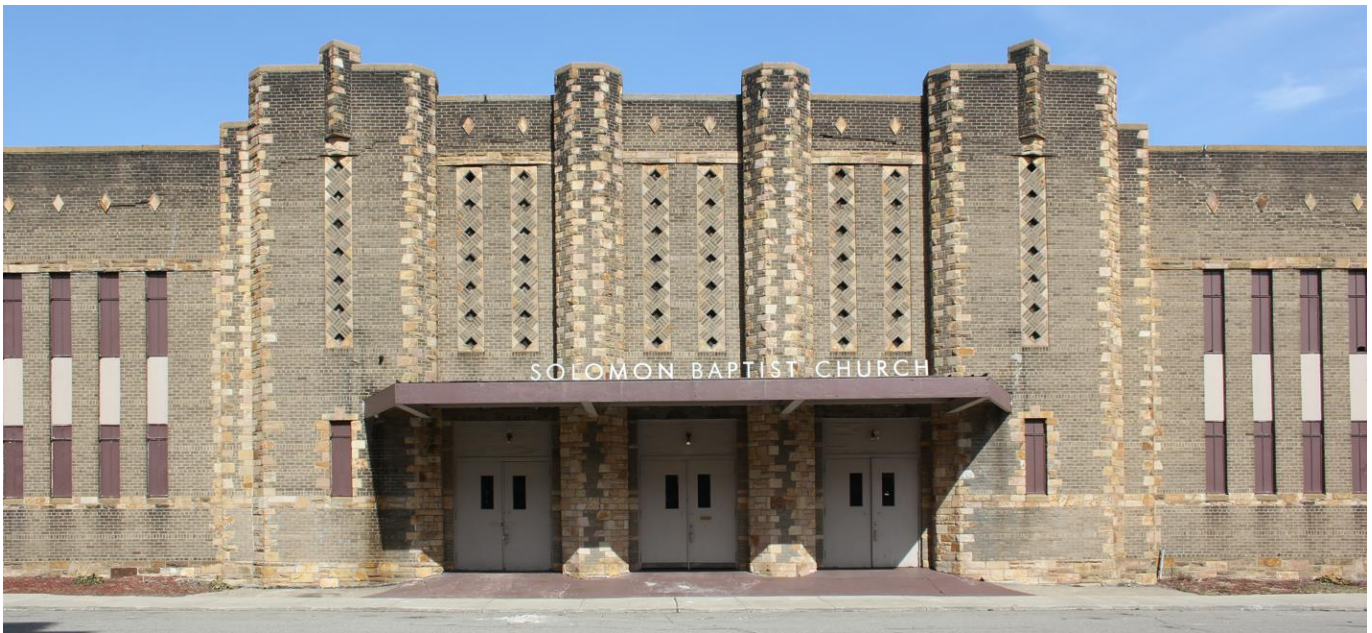
King Solomon Baptist Church in 1979. Image from church program.



Main Auditorium, April 12, 1964, the date of Malcolm X's "The Ballot or the Bullet" address. Image: Wayne State University Virtual Motor City.



*Educational and Recreation Building in 2014. Image: National Register of Historic Places.*



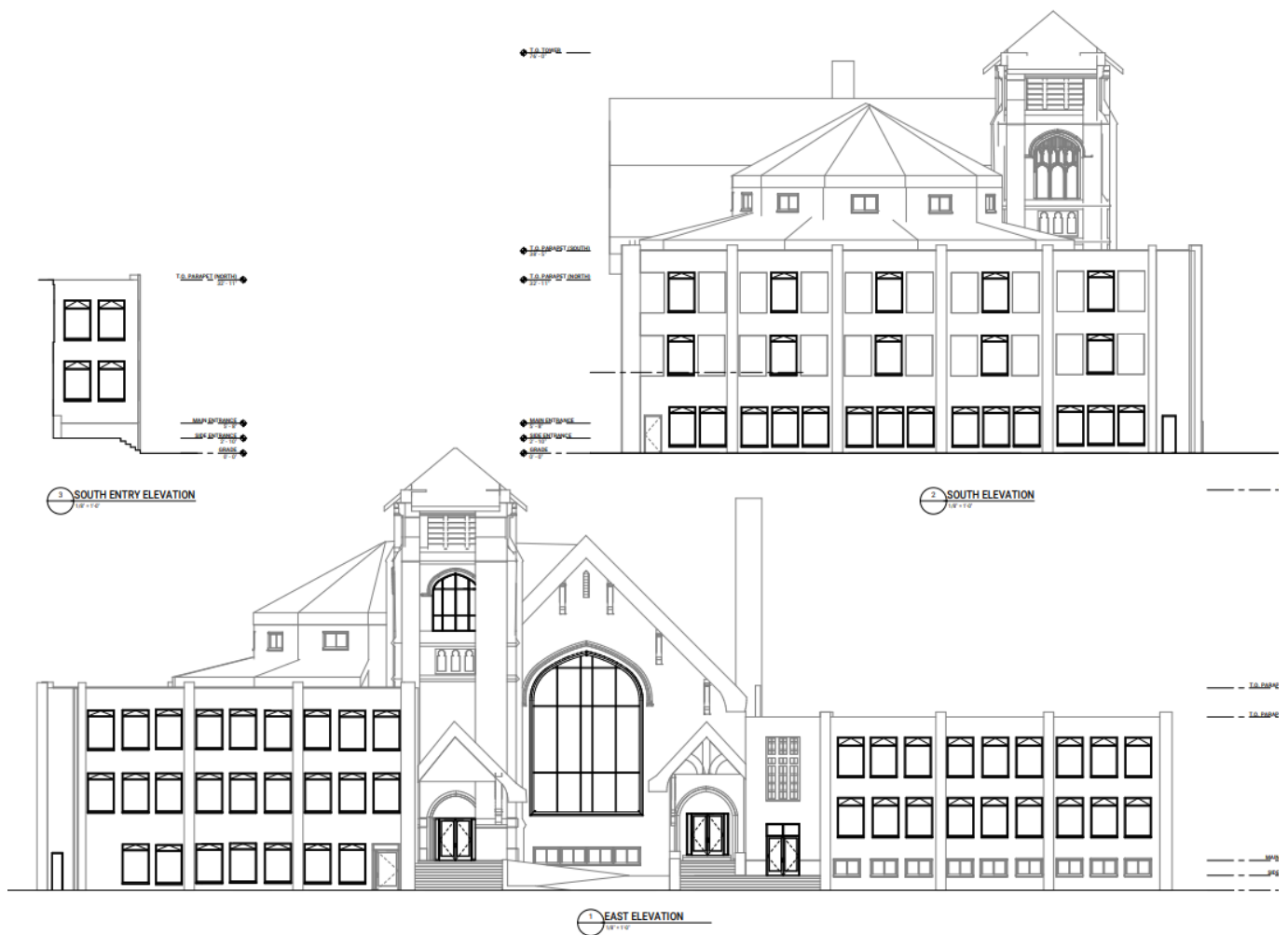
*Main Auditorium in 2014. Image: National Register of Historic Places.*

## **PROPOSAL**

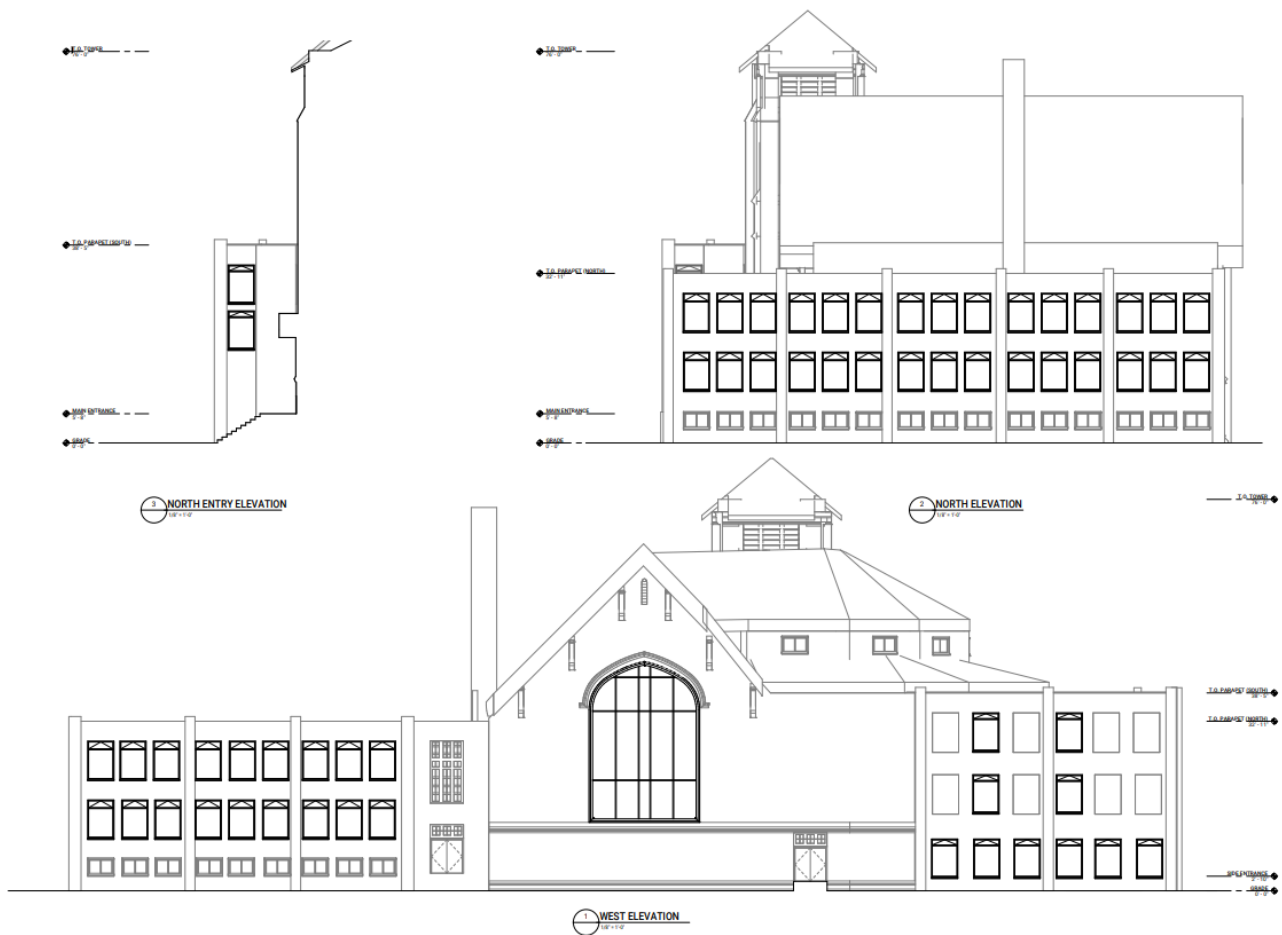
The applicant proposes to replace doors and windows on the Educational and Recreation Building (6125 14th), as described below. Some of this work was begun without approval, and is presently on hold pending application to the Historic District Commission.

An abbreviated timeline describing work performed without approval is as follows:

- June 22, 2021: Planning and Development Department staff (HDC staff) observes windows being removed and window openings being bricked in at Educational and Recreation Building (6125 14th).
- June 23, 2021: Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department staff (BSEED) visits the property and speaks to the applicant. HDC staff receives call from the applicant requesting information on the application process.
- July 23, 2021: BSEED posts a Stop Work order on the property.
- August 24, 2021: BSEED visits the site and finds new windows installed, work ongoing.<sup>1</sup>
- November 22, 2021: HDC staff mails Notice of Work Observed letter.
- August 24, 2022: Project Review Request (Historic District Commission application) received by HDC staff.
- August 25, 2022: HDC staff visits the site and observes removal of windows and alteration of openings in progress.<sup>2</sup>



East and south elevation drawings showing proposed work. Image from application.



North and west elevation drawings of proposed work. Image from application.

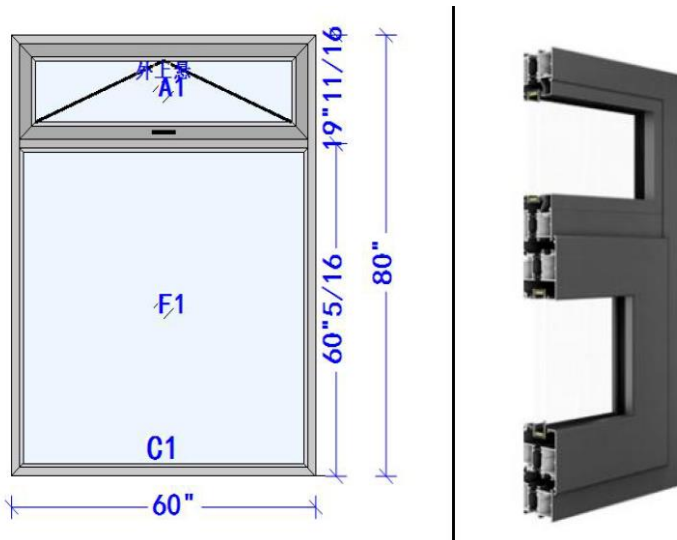


Rendering of proposed work. Image from application.

## Window Replacement

The applicant proposes to replace almost all historic windows on the building (as shown in submitted elevations). Staff has observed that twenty (20) of these windows have already been installed on the building's south (1937) addition in locations that formerly held historic rolled steel windows.

The proposed replacements each consist of a larger, fixed lower window with an out-swinging upper awning window. They are made of aluminum and powder coated in black.



*Proposed replacement window. Image from application.*

These would replace original and historic windows. The windows proposed for replacement include steel windows on the building's 1940 addition, wood sash windows of various muntin and mullion configurations on the building's 1937 addition, and Gothic-arched stained glass windows with wood mullions and tracery on the building's 1917 core.



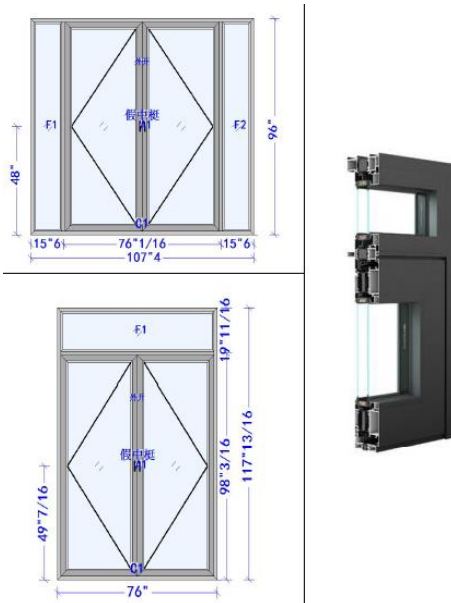
*Recently replaced windows. November 2022 photo by staff.*



The same window bay in 2015. "Less elaborate windows can also provide strong visual interest by their small panes or projecting planes when open." National Park Service, Preservation Brief 13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows. Image: National Register of Historic Places.

## Door Replacement

The applicant proposes to replace the front (east elevation) doors on the building. The proposed replacements are black, aluminum and glass doors.



Proposed doors. Image from application.

The existing doors consist of two sets of double, wood panel doors with trefoil decoration in relief.



Existing doors proposed for replacement. November 2022 photo by staff.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The King Solomon Baptist Church Historic District was established by Ordinance 06-11 in 2011. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-216) describe windows in several subsections:
  - 3. *Proportion of Openings within the Facades* describes “a large, Gothic-arched leaded glass window with wood mullions and tracery; the window is flanked by a pair of double wooden panel doors with glazing surmounted by trefoil decorations in relief” on the Educational and Recreation Building.
  - 7. *Relationship of Materials* mentions wood and metal windows.
  - 8. *Relationship of Textures* states that “wood and stone detail focused on door and window surrounds” provide textural interest.
  - 10. *Relationship of Architectural Details* again mentions the Gothic tracery of the central wood windows on the east and west elevations of the Educational and Recreation Building.
- According to the Final Report for the King Solomon Baptist Church, the church is primarily significant as the location of Malcolm X’s “Message to the Grass Roots” address, one of the most pivotal speeches of the minister’s career; it also hosted the influential, second annual conference of Progressive National Baptist Convention. As both events took place in 1963, the features of the buildings that date from this era are no less significant than the original 1917 and 1937 attributes.
- King Solomon Baptist Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015, under criteria A, B, and C at the national level of significance, with a Period of Significance of 1917–1964.

- The windows proposed for replacement are largely located on the 1937 and 1940 additions to the building. According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, namely Standard #4, these additions have "acquired historic significance" and their defining features "shall be retained and preserved." According to the National Park Service, "one test of the importance of windows is to ask if the overall appearance of the building would be changed noticeably if the windows were to be removed ... if so, the windows are important in defining the building's historic character, and should be repaired if their physical condition permits."<sup>3</sup> Staff suggests, based on the above guidance, that the historic windows are important, character-defining features.
- The doors proposed for replacement, based on staff's assessment of design and materials, appear to be original to the design of the 1917 building, for which the building has been recognized as significant under National Register Criterion C. They are also mentioned in the Elements of Design. Thus, they are also character-defining features; their removal or alteration "shall be avoided." (Standard #2).
- Staff was invited to view the remaining steel windows during a site visit on November 9, 2022. Staff observed that the upper sections of the remaining windows were bent inwards, apparently due to sagging or expanding lintels. Repairing this condition is labor-intensive, but not impossible:

"Sometimes a section, such as the bottom of the frame, will bow out as a result of pressure exerted by corrosion and it is often necessary to cut the metal section to relieve this pressure prior to pressing the section back into shape and making a welded repair."<sup>4</sup>



*Typical damaged window. November 2022 photo by staff.*

- Staff sees a possible technical and financial feasibility argument regarding the repair of the historic windows. First, they are numerous (over 100 historic windows on the Educational and Recreation Building) and much larger than residential wood or steel windows. A small number were missing and many more

were significantly damaged even prior to the establishment of the historic district in 2011. Together, these factors pose obstacles regarding their removal and repair. Second, demographic changes, including a declining and aging population, have led to diminished church enrollment citywide, presenting challenges for fundraising. On the other hand, window repair is still more affordable than replacement in many instances,<sup>5</sup> and further, even appropriate replacement windows would still be required to match the originals in “design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials” (Standard #2).

- The condition of the historic steel and wood windows and doors, a few of which were missing and many of which were in an advanced stage of deterioration since before the establishment of the historic district in 2011, has left the building open to the elements, as well as potential trespassing and vandalism. This situation complicates ongoing interior rehabilitation work. However, staff suggests that a more appropriate approach would be to explore less intrusive mechanisms for securing the building before moving on to approaches that remove or destroy historic materials:

It is important to protect the exterior envelope from moisture penetration before securing the building. Leaks from deteriorated or damaged roofing, from around windows and doors, or through deteriorated materials ... can cause long-term damage to interior finishes and structural systems. Any serious deficiencies on the exterior, identified in the condition assessment, should be addressed. To the greatest extent possible, these weatherization efforts should not harm historic materials. The project budget may not allow deteriorated features to be fully repaired or replaced in-kind. Non-historic or modern materials may be used to cover historic surfaces temporarily, but these treatments should not destroy valuable evidence necessary for future preservation work.<sup>6</sup>

- Other work items, performed without approval, were observed by Planning and Development Department staff (HDC staff)<sup>7</sup> and by Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department inspectors in 2021 and 2022, but are not the subject of this application. These include:

### **Educational and Recreation Building**

- Glass block windows have replaced wood windows above the front façade (east elevation) main entry doors, divided wood transom windows above the secondary, front facade (east elevation) entrance, steel transom windows on the bottom level of the south elevation, and many basement windows; some glass block windows have been added to the west elevation.
- Stained glass window, including wood mullions and tracery, has been removed from the belfry east elevation.
- Many wood and steel windows have been removed on all sides of the building.
- Wood boards have been added to window openings on upper levels; it is unclear if historic windows exist under the boards.
- Lintels have been removed to accommodate window replacement described above; brickwork at window openings has also been altered.
- Concrete block foundation and wall repairs have been made on the north elevation (this work potentially adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, particularly the direction of Standard #6 that “[w]here 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” although it has not been approved by the Historic District Commission).

- One historic door of unknown material has been replaced by steel door at a secondary entrance of the Educational and Recreation Building, east elevation.

### **Main Auditorium**

- All steel windows and spandrels have been replaced with glass block (note that many of these windows were covered with concrete parging, concrete masonry units, or metal panels at the time the historic district was established in 2011, making a visual assessment of their condition and character-defining status difficult).
- Freestanding lettering over main entrance has been removed.
- Wall sign has been added at the north elevation.
- Murals have been added at the north and east elevations.
- Raised concrete flower beds have been added.

### **Work Previously Approved**

- Additional rehabilitation work previously approved for the subject property is discussed in Certificate of Appropriateness 22-7701 (dated April 5, 2022; staff report March 16, 2022) and focuses on the replacement of the roof of the Educational and Recreation Building, related repairs, and the temporary removal of some ornamental elements near the roofline and eaves. The project scope of the COA is “Alter and repair portions of roof; stabilize masonry.” It appears that this work has not yet begun. This work was applied for February 4, 2022, with Quinn Evans Architects as applicant; the application stated that the project was funded by a National Park Service African American Civil Rights Grant administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. The February 4, 2022 application also states that “additional funding will be required for future projects to address remaining areas of deterioration.”
- The work covered by COA 22-7701 is unrelated to the current application for work begun in 2021 without approval.

### **ISSUES**

- Staff has observed evidence of vandalism and water infiltration which may have damaged many of the windows. Nonetheless, even if defining features of a building are damaged beyond feasible repair, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard #6, require that the replacement features “match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.” The proposed windows do not match the appearance of the old.
- The building contains many openings where windows are missing. Standard #6 also requires that “replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.” According to the Standards, missing windows must be replaced by new windows which replicate the appearance of the historic windows located elsewhere on the building and shown in historic photos.



*November 2022 photo by staff showing missing windows and one glass block window on the north elevation, work done without approval. Masonry repairs visible in the second bay from the left have likewise not received a Certificate of Appropriateness.*



*April 2015 photo showing prior conditions. Image: National Register of Historic Places*

- The April 5, 2022, Certificate of Appropriateness 22-7701 for roof repairs (described above) includes as condition that “once additional funding is in place, a new application is to be submitted to the Commission to complete an historically appropriate rehabilitation of the building.” Staff suggests that the above-listed work performed without approval also violates this condition.
- Staff’s opinion is that the proposed work does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, and should be denied. Staff also encourages the applicant to submit a complete application for the other work items performed without approval, as described above.

## 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 inof 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.*
4. *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
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.*

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<sup>1</sup> According to City of Detroit ACCELA records.

<sup>2</sup> As documented in photographs by staff.

<sup>3</sup> National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows*.

<sup>4</sup> *Preservation Brief 13*.

<sup>5</sup> See *Preservation Brief 13*, 1, and National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 9: The Repair of Historic Wood Windows*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 31: Mothballing Historic Buildings*.

<sup>7</sup> All work was verified as new by comparison to Google Street View images from 2011.