

STAFF REPORT: 2/8/2023 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: #23-8208

VIOLATION NUMBER: #661

ADDRESS: 4277 LESLIE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS - SULLIVAN

APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER: HEATHER DELL (REMAX-APPLICANT), EYAL ADLER (FORMER OWNER-SUBMITTED WITH APPLICATION), VINCENT FIELDS (NEW OWNER-ADDED TO APPLICATION)

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 1/16/23

DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 10/20/22, 1/24/23

SCOPE: INSTALL VINYL WINDOWS (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in 1925, the two and half-story dwelling at 4277 Leslie is a Tudor Revival. The hipped with cross gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Half-timbering and stucco highlight the front elevation gables. The walls are clad with white brick laid in a running bond pattern and angled patterns over the front window lintel. The original 15/1 lead came windows on the first and second floor have been replaced with vinyl double hung windows with grids between the glass. Three remaining, diamond-patterned leaded glass windows are located on the front elevation. All other windows have been replaced with vinyl windows. Staff assesses that at the time of designation that the original door was already replaced. The elevated front porch has a matching brick wall surround and wingwalls that descend alongside the front steps. The walkway to the main entrance traverses the front yard lawn.



Site Photo 1, by Staff January 24, 2023: (North) front elevation.



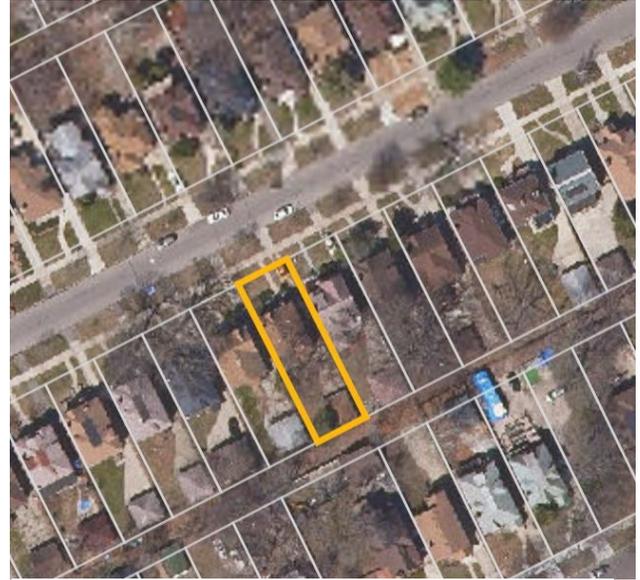
Designation Slide, 1999: (North) front/side elevation showing original windows.

This property has no Historic District Commission (HDC) approvals on Detroit Property Information System (DPI), and has the following outstanding violations for work done without approval:

- Front elevation first and second floor windows replaced with vinyl windows. Vinyl windows replacing original windows on east, west and rear elevations.



Site Photo3, Google Streetview June 2019: (North) front/side elevation showing window conditions before work and current owner purchase.



Aerial of Parcel # 14004934..



Site Photo 4, by Google Streetview June 2019: (North) front/side elevation before work.



Site Photo 6, by Staff October 20, 2022 : (North) front elevation showing replaced windows on first and second floor.

PROPOSAL

The current proposal consists of the following work that was completed without prior approval from the Commission: replacement of all windows with vinyl windows, excepting the three remaining leaded glass windows at the front elevation.

WINDOW DETAILS

Except for the three, front elevation, leaded-glass windows, the applicant proposes to replace all remaining windows with American Craftsman 70 Series, double hung, vinyl windows with between the glass muntins on the front elevation first floor, rear bay, and select side elevation windows, all other windows have no muntins. All windows sash and trim are proposed to be white.

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.”
 - “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.
- This application is in response to a staff notice that was sent to the real estate listing agent who had this property up for sale. In this notice, staff informed the listing agent that this property had work completed without approval and that this would become the responsibility of the new owner. The violation that was on this notice was for the windows that were replaced with vinyl and doors replaced. Since this letter has been issued. Staff has withdrawn the violation for the replaced doors because staff has since learned that the doors had been replaced prior to historic designation and the current doors have remained since historic designation.
- This property changed ownership on January 31, 2023, which happened during this application process. Staff received the signed updated application with the new owner on February 6, 2023.
- Staff received confirmation that the previous owner cleaned the hardware of the existing doors but did not change the doors. Staff also received confirmation that the leaded glass windows were cleaned but left in place.
- Staff received confirmation from the applicant that a full set of photos of the original windows were not available prior to the replacement of the windows. However the applicant provided one image of the east elevation window casement (*see detail photo 1*) and an original wood casement window found in the garage (*see detail photo 2*). The applicant was not able to identify the original location of this second window.



Detail Photo 1, by Applicant 2022 : (East) side elevation showing interior original window before replacement.

WINDOWS

- From the designation slide, it is staff’s observation that the original windows were wood, double-hung with a 15/1 lead came configuration on the front elevation’s first and second floors.
- Staff has no detailed report on the condition of the original windows before they were replaced.
- It is staff’s opinion that the original windows, which include their double-hung operation and casement operation, lite configuration and material, are distinctive character-defining features that were lost when replaced with vinyl windows. This alteration has substantially detracted from the building’s historic appearance of the building.
- Staff observed that the American Craftsman 70 Series, double hung, vinyl window series have:



Detail Photo 2, by Applicant January 2023 : wood casement window found in garage, original location unknown.

- Between the glass muntins (or none), which replaced the true divided light of the original wood windows, losing a character defining feature of the windows.
- The meeting rails in the double hung windows do not meet
- The stark bright white vinyl is not appropriate color for the Tudor Revival architecture.
- Staff observed that in most cases it appears that the original brick mould has been retained. However the wood mullions between the windows, on the front elevation, have either been covered or replaced with white vinyl.

ISSUES

- Original wood windows were replaced without prior approval of the Commission.
- No documentation establishing that the original windows were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- It is staff's opinion that the removal of the original windows and proposed replacement with 1/1 single-hung, vinyl windows has greatly altered the original *scale, design, and materiality* and introduces new materials that are incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property. Therefore, the proposed work does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- As noted above, vinyl is not an appropriate material for windows in the Russell Woods- Sullivan Historic District.
- Staff has not yet received full elevation photographs of the rear and side elevations of the house.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Replace wood windows with vinyl windows

Staff finds that the replacement of original windows with these proposed vinyl windows does not meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the following reasons:

- The windows that were removed without approval were a distinctive historic feature that characterized the property. The windows dated to the building's original construction and included true divide lite, double-hung and casement wood units. Each of these windows, which were removed at the front elevation also included lead coming at the top sash.
- The application does not include documentation that the removed windows were deteriorated beyond repair to an extent that merited their replacement.
- Vinyl material is not an appropriate material for the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District
- Between the glass muntins are not an appropriate replacement for the true divided light of the original wood windows.
- The meeting rails of the current vinyl windows do not meet.
- The stark bright white color of the new windows is not an appropriate color for the Tudor Revival style of architecture.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the above work items, as it does not meet the Elements of Design for the district nor the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards:

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.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be 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.