

STAFF REPORT: 4/12/2023 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

ADDRESS: 3606 LINCOLN, 3618 LINCOLN & 1352 BRAINARD

APPLICATION NO: 2023-8272, 2023-8297 & 2023-8297

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WOODBRIDGE FARM

APPLICANT: CARLO LIBURDI/STUDIO BD ARCHITECTS

OWNER: DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 4/1/2023

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:

SCOPE: ERECT MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project area consists of three adjacent parcels which are located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Brainard and Lincoln Streets. The parcels are currently overgrown vacant lots.

Vacant lots and ca. 1890 2-story, single-family brick homes are located to the west of the project area, across the Lincoln Street, while a ca. 1890, 2-story brick single-family home and a 5-story apartment building sits directly to its north. All extant historic-age, single family dwellings and duplexes in the district, within the immediate vicinity along Lincoln are set back from the sidewalk between 10' and 20' to allow for shallow front yards. Only one nearby building within the district, the apartment at 3650 Lincoln, sits close to the sidewalk/lacks a front yard.



Current conditions (HDC staff photo taken 4/1/2023)



Current conditions (HDC staff photo taken 4/1/2023)

PROPOSAL

With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to erect four, 2-story duplexes and establish a rear parking area within the project area. Specifically, per the submitted documentation, the new buildings will be erected according to the following:

- Each building has a rectangular footprint and measures 25'-0" in height (building plus parapet). The roof will be flat and exterior walls will be clad with fiber cement panels (manufactured by Nichihia) with a reclaimed brick skirting/base at the front elevation. The first floor of each building will be raised 3'-0" from grade. A partial width porch with a reclaimed brick base will be located at the front elevation. Each front porch will have a flat roof which is supported by square posts (material not specified). Two-story staircases (material not specified) will be located at the rear façade of each building. Windows are fixed and casement aluminum units (cutsheets/specs not provided) and doors are composite and steel. A paved/concrete parking area will be located to the rear/east of the buildings and will be accessed via new curbcuts on Brainard and Gibson. A 6'-high wood privacy fence will be installed at the north and east property lines. The fencing at the south property line will consist of 6'-high wood privacy fencing and 3'-high metal fencing on a 3'-high brick wall. Front yard fencing consists of 3'-high metal fencing on a 3'-high brick wall. The two front buildings will sit back 6'-0" from the sidewalk while each building's porch will directly abut the sidewalk.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- As noted above, all extant historic-age, single family dwellings and duplexes in the district, within the immediate vicinity along Lincoln are set back from the sidewalk between 10' and 20' to allow for shallow front yards. The proposed new buildings along Lincoln will have a 6'-0" setback from the sidewalk while their primary elevation porches will directly abut the sidewalk. This shallow setback is inconsistent with the majority of the residential buildings within the historic district, but is consistent with commercial properties, including a large apartment building on the same block (see below photo).
- The height of the proposed new buildings is generally in keeping with the extant nearby historic buildings.
- The application does not include specifications for the windows. Staff therefore cannot comment on the compatibility of this element.
- The application specifically identifies the use of Nichiha brand fiber cement panel exterior cladding for the exterior walls and reclaimed brick for the front elevation skirting at each building. Staff notes that the proposed materials are of a good quality that will contribute to an esthetic that is compatible with the development's extant historic surrounds. However, note that the submitted drawings also allow for an opportunity for the installation of an equivalent "equal" siding to be installed at the approval of the applicant. Therefore, staff does recommend that any alternate exterior cladding outside of the proposed Nichiha brand fiber cement panel be approved by HDC staff prior to the issuance of the project's permit and/or installation.



This apartment building has a 5'-0" setback. The project area is located here (4/1/2023 staff photo)

ISSUES

- None

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Certificate of Appropriateness

It is staff's opinion that the project generally conforms to the Elements of Design for the district and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed with the following conditions:

- Staff shall be afforded the opportunity to review and approve any alternate exterior cladding outside of the proposed Nichiha brand fiber cement panel prior to the issuance of the project's permit and/or installation. If staff determines that the quality of new siding is inconsistent with the proposed Nichiha brand fiber cement panel and/or the character of the nearby historic-age buildings, the work item will be forwarded to the Commission for review at a regular meeting
- Staff shall be afforded the opportunity to review and approve the window specifications prior to the issuance of the project's permit and/or installation. If staff determines that the quality is inconsistent with the character of the nearby historic-age buildings, the work item will be forwarded to the Commission for review at a regular meeting