

ADDRESS: 15002 ASHTON

APPLICATION NO: #23-8399

HISTORIC DISTRICT: ROSEDALE PARK

APPLICANT/OWNER: AMANDA JOHNSON

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 5/30/2023

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 5/10/2023

SCOPE

REPLACE ALUMINUM WINDOWS WITH VINYL WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected ca. 1920, 15002 Ashton is a two-story, single-family dwelling that is located in Rosedale Park, at the northeast corner of the intersection of Ashton Road and Chalfonte Avenue. This handsome home features a hipped-roof central mass with projecting front-gabled wings at the primary elevation. A gabled-roof dormer at the side/north elevation. A one-story, hipped-roof wing is located at the rear elevation. Exterior walls are primarily clad with brick while vinyl siding is located at the rear elevation and at the dormer sidewall. Original windows are located at the building's first story, front elevation, and in the north elevation dormer. All other windows are non-historic aluminum units with aluminum coilstock trim, glassblock, and vinyl slider and 1/1 units. A vinyl fence which extends from the rear elevation to the garage's side elevation encloses the rear yard. A hipped-roof, historic-age garage is located to the rear of the home.



15002 Ashton, current appearance, staff photo taken 5/31/2023. The encircled window is proposed for replacement



15002 Ashton, current appearance, staff photo taken 5/31/2023. The three encircled windows are proposed for replacement. Also note that the white vinyl windows were installed sometime between 2013 and 2015 before the current owner purchased the property. HDC did not approve this work.

PROPOSAL

With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to replace four existing, non-historic aluminum windows with new 1/1, single hung vinyl windows. Specifically, the windows proposed for removal include the following:

- Three 1/1 aluminum windows with aluminum trim at the rear elevation (two at the second story and one at the first story)
- One 1/1 aluminum window with aluminum trim at the north elevation

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Rosedale Park Historic District was designated in 2007
- The window proposed for replacement at the side/north elevation is located within a wall which is clad with brick while the wall surface at the rear elevation, where the remaining three windows proposed for replacement are located, is clad with vinyl. Google Streetview images indicate that vinyl siding had been installed by 2009.
- A review of the property's designation photo and Google Streetview (see below) images from 2009 indicate that the four aluminum windows which are proposed for replacement were likely present at the date of the district's designation
- A review of Google Streetview images (see below) and records maintained by the Detroit building department and the Historic District Commission (HDC) indicate that the

following work was undertaken at the property without HDC approval sometime between 2009 and 2015 (**prior to the current applicant's purchase of the home**):

- Original windows were replaced with the current vinyl units at the south elevation, north elevation, and rear, hipped roof wing. It is staff's opinion that these unapproved white vinyl units and associated trim are not compatible with the property's historic character/do not meet the Standards as they do not adequately replicate the historic windows that they replaced in material, operation, light configuration, design, color, or texture
- Historic-age metal double overhead garage doors were replaced with a single steel door
- Vinyl fencing erected at the rear yard
- Wood deck added to the rear, hipped-roof wing

Staff did alert the applicant/property owner of the above-listed existing violations and offered her the opportunity to add the items to her current application so that the Commission might address the unapproved work. However, the applicant elected to limit her application to the current window replacement scope.

- As the property is located at an intersection, the three windows which are proposed for replacement at the rear elevation are readily visible from the public right of way. However, the window at the side/north elevation which is proposed for replacement is less visible from the public right-of-way due to its location at the rear of the wall and relatively close proximity of the neighboring home.
- The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Guidelines for "Windows" [The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings-Windows \(nps.gov\)](#) notes the following when it comes to designing and installing new windows when the historic windows (frames, sash and glazing) are completely missing:
 - ***recommended*** - *The replacement windows may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building.*
 - ***not recommended*** - *Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.*

Further National Park Service (NPS) guidance [Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards - Historic Preservation Tax Incentives \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#) states the following re: the installation of "replacement windows where no historic windows remain"

- *Replacement windows for missing or non-historic windows must be compatible with the historic appearance and character of the building. Although replacement windows may be based on physical or pictorial documentation, if available, recreation of the missing historic windows is not required to meet the Standards. Replacement of missing or non-historic windows must, however, always fill the original window openings and must be compatible with the overall historic character of the building. The general type of window – industrial steel, wood double-hung, etc. – that is appropriate can usually be determined from the proportions of the openings, and the period and historic function of the building. The appearance of the replacement windows must be consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period, but need not replicate the missing historic window. In many cases, this may be accomplished using substitute materials. There may be some additional flexibility with regard to the details of windows on secondary elevations that are not highly visible, consistent*

with the approach outlined for replacing existing historic windows. Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards.



15002 Ashton. Designation photo, taken in 2008



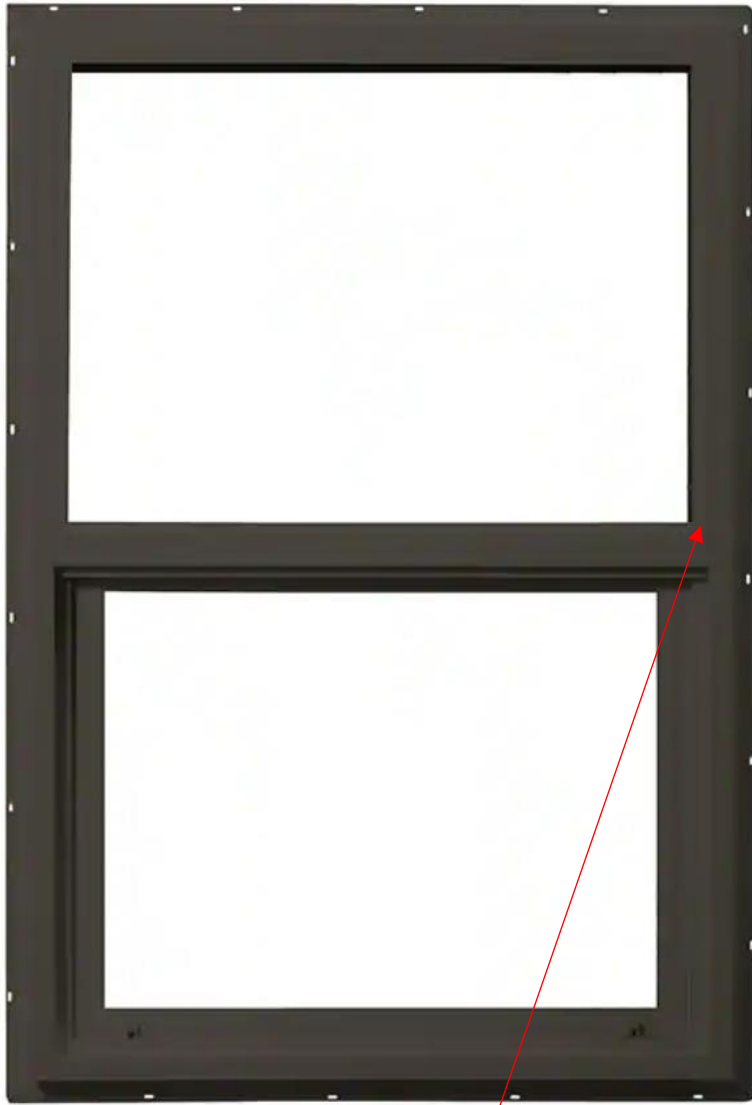
2009 Google Streetview image. Note the presence of steel casement windows at the casement windows at the rear wing's first story and the side elevation's first story. Also a rear deck and gate is not present in 2009 and the garage doors are different from the current single overhead door.

ISSUES

- Per the above referenced National Park Service guidance, replacement windows for **non-historic windows** need not replicate the original window in materiality or detailing, however they must be compatible with the historic appearance and character of the building.
- It is staff's opinion that the four windows which are proposed for replacement are incompatible with the historic character of the home. Therefore, staff does support the applicant's proposal to remove these four units.
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed vinyl replacement windows (both the "American Craftsman" and "Ply Gem" products) are not compatible with the home's historic character for the following reasons (see the below images):
 - It appears that the two proposed products are meant to be installed in new construction vs existing construction. It is not clear how the project contractor will appropriately install either unit type within the current window openings
 - Both proposed window unit types are single hung so that the top, fixed "sash" is integrated with the casing/brickmould. Therefore, a true jamb, sash channel, and blind stop is not visible from the exterior. As a result, the windows display a flat appearance which is wholly inappropriate to an historic property. A compatible replacement window should be double hung/display an independent upper sash, true jamb, sash channel, and blind stop. If single hung, the top sash of the unit should be independent of the brickmould/trim and the brickmould/trim should adequately display a true jamb, sash channel, and blind stop.
 - The window unit casing/brickmould for both products is too flimsy and flat/lacks depth
 - The sill is minimal at both units
 - The sash top, side and bottom rails appear to be too wide/thick vs and historic-window (due to strength limitations of the material and each unit's accommodation of double paned glazing)
 - The white finish color of the "American Standard" unit is not consistent with the color of the brick and/or the home's trim and does not conform to any of the colors outlined in the HDC's Color Systems.
 - It is staff's opinion that windows of any materiality which display the above-listed qualities would detract from the integrity of historic properties. Per the above-referenced NPS guidance "replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards."
 - Note that most residential grade vinyl window products display the above qualities, which cumulatively result in an appearance that is generally inconsistent with an historic window unit and detract from the historic character of the home. Therefore, the Commission seldom approves such replacement window proposals.
- The current application does not include specifications for the proposed new windows so the dimensions of the windows at key locations (to include the jambs, head, meeting rail sill, side rails, and bottom rail) are unknown. Also, information re: the manner in which the windows will be trimmed out to fit in each opening has not been included in the current application. It is therefore unclear to staff how the windows will be installed. Staff did reach out to the applicant's contractor to request this information. However, staff has yet to receive a response to her request as of the date of this report's completion.



See the proposed “American Craftsman” brand window [American Craftsman 24 in. x 36 in. 70 Series Single Hung White Vinyl Window with Nailing Flange 2030729 - The Home Depot](#). Note that the top sash appears to be integrated with trim vs presenting as an independent sash which is typical of historic windows. Also note the thickness of the top, bottom, and side rails of the sash casing (the part of the window that holds the glass) when compared to the historic window and the flimsiness of the trim.



Similarly, see the proposed “Ply Gem” brand window [Ply Gem 23.5 in. x 35.5 in. Select Series Single Hung Vinyl Bronze Window with HPSC Glass and Screen Included 24x36SELSH - The Home Depot](#) and note that the top sash appears to be integrated with trim vs presenting as an independent sash which is typical of historic windows. Also note the Thickness of the top, bottom, and side rails of the sash casing (the part of the window that holds the glass) when compared to the historic window and the flimsiness of the trim.

RECOMMENDATION

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

The proposed new windows are incompatible with the home’s historic character for the following reasons:

- It appears that the two proposed products are meant to be installed in new construction vs existing construction. As a result, it is not clear how the project contractor will appropriately install them within the current window openings
- The window unit casing/brickmould is too flimsy and flat/lacks depth

- Both proposed window unit types are single hung so that the top, fixed “sash” is integrated with the casing/brickmould. Therefore, a true jamb, sash channel, and blind stop is not visible from the exterior. As a result, the windows display a flat appearance which is wholly inappropriate to an historic property. A compatible replacement window should be double hung/display an independent upper sash, true jamb, sash channel, and blind stop. If single hung, the top sash of the unit should be independent of the brickmould/trim and the brickmould/trim should adequately display a true jamb, sash channel, and blind stop.
- The sill is minimal at both units
- The sash top, side and bottom rails appear to be too wide/thick (due to strength limitations of the material and each unit’s accommodation of double paned glazing)
- The white finish color of the “American Standard” unit is not consistent with the color of the brick and/or the home’s trim and does not conform to any of the colors outlined in the HDC’s Color Systems.

Additionally, the current application does not include specifications for the proposed new windows so the dimensions of the windows at key locations (to include the jambs, head, meeting rail sill, side rails, and bottom rail) are unknown. Finally, information re: the manner in which the windows will be trimmed out to fit in each opening has not been included in the current application. It is therefore unclear to staff how the windows will be installed. HDC staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a *Denial* for the project because the proposed replacement windows do not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, in particular, Standards #:

- 2.) *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

And....

9) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*