

**STAFF REPORT:** 9/13/2023 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** D. RIEDEN

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** #HDC2023-00023

**VIOLATION NUMBER:** #758

**ADDRESS:** 13320 BROADSTREET

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** RUSSELL WOODS - SULLIVAN

**APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER:** LUIS RAJNAR

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 8/21/2023

**DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS:** 7/21/23, 8/1/23, 8/22/23, 8/24/23

**SCOPE:** ALTER HOUSE AND GARAGE (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in 1926, the two-story dwelling at 13320 Broadstreet once featured a cross-gabled, asphalt-shingled roof with a central brick chimney and vergeboard detailing. The upper cedar shake floor slightly cantilevers out with wood bracket supports over the red brick cladding of the first floor that characterizes it as English Revival. The northwest corner wall swept out into the landscape, broadening the front façade, which featured a bay window and an arched front entrance with keystone details. A modest brick-walled porch with brick piers hugs the steps leading to the front entrance, which was once covered by a fabric awning. A metal railing surrounds the balcony above this entrance. Modest landscaping included a foundation shrub planting, a front lawn and a concrete driveway leading to the wood siding garage in the rear of the property. This property had suffered damage to the roof and siding. At the time of this report, many features have been altered or removed without approval and are the subject of this application.



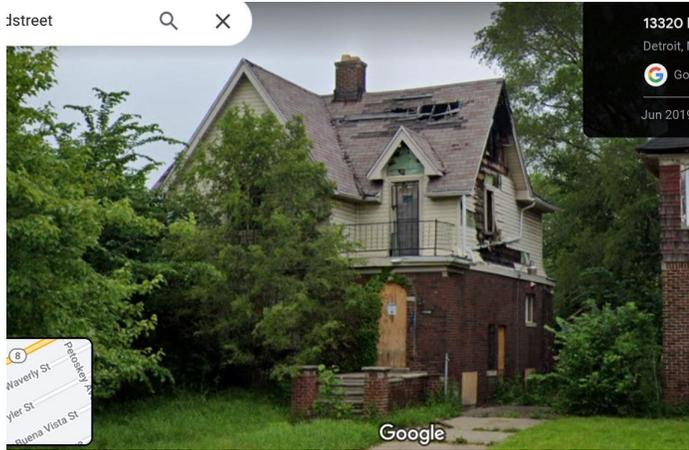
*Designation Slide, 1999: (West) front/side elevation showing original condition.*



*Illustration 1, by Applicant: Proposed (west) front elevation showing alterations to walls, windows, roof, door, porch, balcony, etc .*

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

- Violations: Removal of chimney, siding, walls, windows, doors, porch, railings, roof, landscaping, and garage siding and roof. Addition of new window openings, alterations of door and window openings, alterations of walls, roof, porch, balcony.



Site Photo 1, Google Streetview October 2022: (West) front/side elevation showing roof and siding conditions prior to applicants work.



Aerial of Parcel # 14012174.



Site Photo 2, by Staff July 21, 2023: (West) front elevation, showing work in progress without approval.



Site Photo 3, by Staff August 24, 2023: (West) Front elevation showing replaced roof, removed chimney, removed arched doorway, bay windows, siding, porch, and other features, and introducing new window in the gable without approval.

**PROPOSAL**

The proposal consists of “comprehensive exterior renovation plan” per the submitted materials and includes alterations to the property that include: replacement of all brick and wood siding for the house and garage with vinyl siding, installation of new window openings for the house and garage, removal of the brick chimney, alteration of the roof, replacement of the roof, replacement of all wood soffits and fascia with aluminum soffits and fascia, replacement of all doors and windows with steel doors and vinyl windows, installation of security doors, removal of bay window, replacement of front porch with a front deck, addition of stone veneer to front deck and foundation of the house, new garage door installation, installation of aluminum gutters and downspouts. (See submitted proposal.)

**STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The Russell Woods- Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999.

- Staff observed that the property had some fire damage at the roof and south elevation of the house, as observed in Google Street view images from August 2018-June 2019. (See site photo 1.)
- It is staff's observation that the cedar shake siding of the second floor was covered at some time prior to September 2007. (See Site photo 4.)
- Staff requested the applicant to provide the following materials, but has not not received a response at the time of this report:
  - confirm if any of the original materials from the house have been saved or stored
  - photographs of all elevations of the house and garage prior to the work
  - a site plan for proposed external work to the landscape.
- It is staff's opinion that the historic and distinctive character-defining features that have been removed, altered, or destroyed include, but are not limited to:
  - Brick chimney
  - Cedar shake siding (former owner)
  - Wood brackets and wood fascia/soffits with detailing
  - Brick cladding
  - Brick wall extension at the front facade
  - Front arched doorway with brick and stone detailing
  - Front bay windows
  - All original windows
  - All original doors
  - Balcony metal railing (former owner)
  - Front brick-walled porch and brick piers and stone details
  - Rear porch
  - Garage brick or wood siding
- Besides all of the features that have been removed or altered, it is staff's opinion that the introduction of new materials such as vinyl and aluminum in replacement of wood and brick are inappropriate, and that the new design utterly changes and destroys the historic character of the house in the context of the property and the district.



Site Photo 4, by Google Streetview August 2011, showing shake siding covered with vinyl and balcony railing removed.

## ISSUES

- No documentation establishing that the original conditions of the work proposed were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- All work in this application was completed or started without Historic District Commission (HDC) approval.
- It is staff's opinion that the removal and alteration of historic distinctive character-defining features with this proposal alters the original *scale*, *design*, and *materiality* and is incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property, and therefore does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Elements of Design for Russell Woods Historic District.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

#### Recommendation: Alter House and Garage (Work Completed Without Approval)

Staff finds that the proposed work does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- Distinctive, historic character-defining features have been destroyed, including but not limited to the following:
  - Brick chimney
  - Cedar shake siding (former owner)
  - Wood brackets and wood fascia/soffits with detailing
  - Brick cladding
  - Brick wall extension at the front facade
  - Front arched doorway with brick and stone detailing
  - Front bay windows
  - All original windows
  - All original doors
  - Balcony metal railing (former owner)
  - Front brick-walled porch and brick piers and stone details
  - Rear porch
  - Garage brick or wood siding
- The above features were critical to the building and district's historic character, and their removal and replacement with the proposed vinyl siding, aluminum soffits and fascia and vinyl windows will drastically alter the appearance and features of the structure and district.
- The introduction of new window openings, decks, and other features, further erases the historic features of this home. The apparent result of the proposed work is an entirely new building of no architectural character, which is substantially at odds with the intent and purpose of historic designation.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposal, as it does not meet 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.*

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