

**STAFF REPORT: OCTOBER 11, 2023 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: A. DYE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2023-00055**

**ADDRESS: 9120 DWIGHT**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BERRY SUBDIVISION**

**APPLICANT: BRETT MAHAFFEY, RENEWAL BY ANDERSON**

**PROPERTY OWNER: DIANE AND THOMAS LINN**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**

**SCOPE: REPLACE WOOD WINDOWS WITH COMPOSITE WINDOWS**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Erected circa 1920, the 2 ½ story house is a wood frame, masonry clad dwelling. The hipped roof, seven-bay symmetrical design is dominated by a wide, two-story portico whose gable end is detailed as a closed pediment. Four tapered, fluted Corinthian columns support the portico and create a semi-closed space. The symmetry continues with the fluted rectangular Corinthian pilasters that match the detailing and dimensions of the columns. The roof and dormer walls are covered with slate shingles. Accentuating the front entrance is a fan light above the 12-light main door; another 12-light door on the second floor opens to a wrought iron Juliet balcony. The windows adjacent to the front door have decorative transoms, and all the door and window openings are topped with cast stone pediments.



*Staff photo, September 26, 2023.*

The front lawn is dominated by a very large tree, whose central location further accentuates the symmetrical house design. A straight driveway at the left side of the lot is shared with the property to the east, and an extended drive across the front of the house joins the neighboring house's (to the west) circular driveway.



Applicant photo

The rear elevation of the house faces the Detroit River. Due to its visible and prominent location, many of the architectural details on the rear are copied from the front elevation, including an extending portico supported by Corinthian fluted columns and pilasters, doors at the first and second floor, and keystones above the windows. Replacing the pedimented portico is a flat roof that is accentuated by a richly detailed dormer in the shape of a Palladian window. The second story French door with matching sidelights is capped with a wide arched window. Alterations and additions have been erected at this elevation, reducing its level of symmetry.

### PROPOSAL

Replace 13 windows and one patio door - Renewal by Anderson, wood composite frames. Double-hung windows to have between-the-glass grilles in the upper sash to match existing replacement windows.

#### Front-North Elevation

- Two dormers – one 6-over-1 double-hung unit in each dormer opening.

#### Side-West Elevation

- Two dormers – one 6-over-1 double-hung unit in each dormer opening.

#### Rear-South Elevation

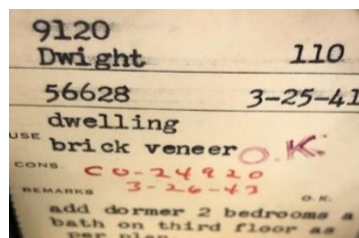
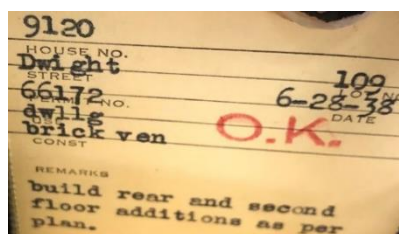
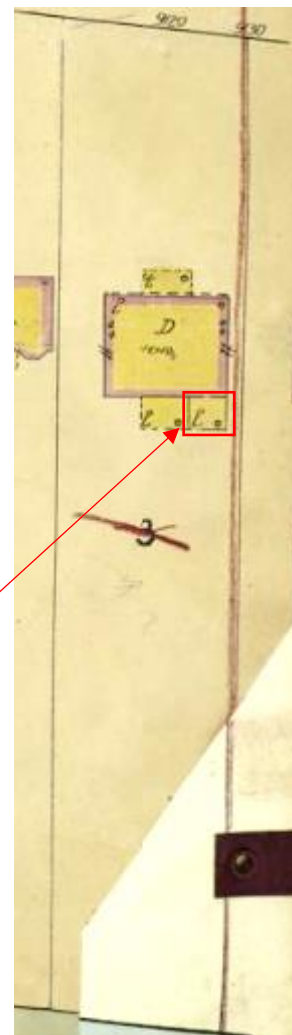
- One Palladian-style dormer – one 4-over-1 double-hung unit in each dormer opening.
- Three first-floor openings – reverse cottage-style window divided into a 2/3-over-1/3 proportion, no grille pattern; custom lower wood panel.
- Sliding (full glass in each panel) door.

#### Side-East Elevation

- One wide, four window dormer / two sets of mulled windows – one 4-over-1 double-hung unit in each window opening.

### STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Berry Subdivision Historic District was enacted on June 13, 1978.
- BSEED's historic building permit files documents that a rear two-story addition was erected in 1938. In 1941, a dormer was erected as part of a third floor renovation to create two bedrooms and one bathroom. Staff assumes the large, shed dormer is the result of the 1941 scope of work. Submitted interior photos show that two of the four windows in the east-facing dormer are for a bathroom.



Sanborn map, 1915 – 1951.



- Staff didn't find electronic or paper documentation to show that the existing replacement windows at the first and second floors were reviewed/approved by the Commission. However, staff did locate an online building permit for windows dated 2007.
- The existing dormer windows show the double-hung units with a six-over-six muntin pattern (four-over-four pattern is found on the rear elevation's narrower units), which, in staff's opinion, is the most common window pattern for Colonial Revival houses erected in the 1920s, especially in the instance of this "high style" Georgian Revival design which has an abundance of detailing on each elevation. It is staff's opinion that the multi-paned upper and lower double-hung sash are a distinctive character-defining feature to this house.
- It is staff's opinion that the large openings at the first floor rear elevation likely had French doors that led to the rear yard patio, but there is no visual confirmation on what had been in these openings. The current fixed glass windows are not historic nor character-defining features of the property.

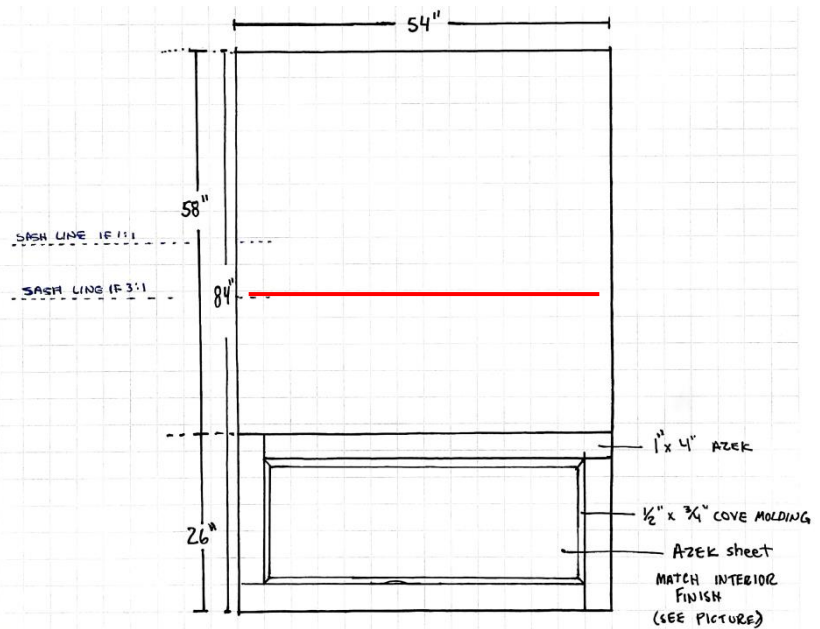


Applicant photos.

- According to the National Park Service document "Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards":
  - Replacement windows for missing or non-historic windows must be compatible with the historic appearance and character of the building.
  - 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 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.
- The applicant submitted the following mock-ups to give an idea on how the window openings numbered 101, 103, and 104, will be modified. The red line demonstrates the location of the meeting rail for the reverse cottage-style window. According to the window order, the cottage windows will not have a grille pattern in the top and bottom sash.
  - It is staff's opinion that the proposed design for the exceptionally large openings at the rear of the house will be compatible with the historic character of the building.
  - Staff received clarification that the exterior lower wall will receive the paneling design as shown below, which mimics the paneling in place on the interior walls. Staff asked for a more detailed mock-up to show the cottage window in place so its proportionality, in contrast to a double-hung window, can be assessed.



Applicant photo and drawing. The trim detail for the lower wall panel will be the exterior treatment below the window.

## ISSUES

- The submitted photos show the third-floor window sash as intact and protected behind storm windows. Documentation to substantiate that the existing dormer windows are beyond repair wasn't submitted, which could include a detailed repair estimate provided by a window repair company.
- The Renewal by Anderson order does not break out the pricing for each window, so staff doesn't know the individual price for the replacement windows scheduled for the dormers. However, staff will surmise that repairing the existing windows may likely be cheaper than replacing them.
- It appears the existing replacement windows have between-the-glass grilles. This placement eliminated the dimensionality for each window and creates a lighter/hazier appearance for the upper sash grille pattern. The Renewal by Anderson order specifies between-the-glass grilles.
- In contrast, even with storm windows in place, the existing true divided-light windows offer a depth and visual weight that is equal to the exterior detailing on the house. The photographs on the following page illustrate this point.





Staff photos, September 26, 2023. The visual difference of the replacement windows' grid pattern compared against the original windows' muntin pattern is noticeable from the street. The depth of the true-divided light muntins offer a sharp contrast to the glass and create a decorative visual plane equal to the surrounding architectural features. It is staff's opinion that the replacement windows offer a weak pattern in the upper sash and therefore, the windows openings appear much darker than the surrounding heavily articulated surfaces.



## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation One – Denial – Replacement of third floor historic wood double-hung windows**

Staff finds that the proposal for the replacement of the wood double-hung dormer windows at the third floor does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The historic wood windows appear to be intact and in solid, repairable condition. Visual and physical information substantiating the windows are beyond repair was not submitted.
- The six-over-six and four-over-four true divided-light double-hung windows are a distinctive character-defining feature. The multi-pane glazing in both sashes is a common design of early 20<sup>th</sup> century colonial revival houses. The dimensionality of the historic windows is highly visible from the street and offers a depth and visual weight that is equal to the abundant exterior detailing on the house.
- The proposed replacement windows specify between-the-glass grilles with a patterned upper sash, like the existing replacement windows. The flat, diminished appearance of this type of grille pattern, in conjunction with a clear glass lower sash, would alter the features of the windows and appearance of the dwelling.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2, 5, and 6:

- 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.*

### **Recommendation Two – COA – Replacement of sliding door, replacement of fixed first floor windows at the rear elevation.**

Staff finds that the proposal for the remaining work items will not alter the features and spaces that characterize the property and district and therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed as it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Elements of Design for the district.

*Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following conditions:*

- A dimensioned drawing that clearly shows how the reverse cottage-style window will look within the newly sized opening, as well as clarification over the exterior detailing of the lower wall, will be submitted to staff for review.
- Should staff determine the reverse cottage-style window is not appropriate for these windows openings, a standard double-hung window (no grid pattern in the upper or lower sash) will be selected.