

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

**PREPARED BY:** T. BOSCARINO

**REVISED OCTOBER 11, 2023**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** HDC2023-00056

**ADDRESS:** 226 MACK

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** BRUSH PARK

**APPLICANT:** HINA M. HASSAN

**OWNER:** HINA M. HASSAN

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 AND OCTOBER 3, 2023

**SCOPE:** REPLACE WOOD AND VINYL WINDOWS WITH ALUMINUM-CLAD WOOD WINDOWS

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

This building faces north onto Mack Avenue, a prominent thoroughfare and the northern boundary of the Brush Park Historic District. The building is adjacent to the exceptionally significant Albert Kahn residence, later known as the Detroit Urban League, further underscoring the prominence and importance of the location and setting.

226 Mack is a two-and-one-half-story, side-gabled house, built in 1927. The irregular placement of window openings adds interest to all facades; this includes a dominant, five-faceted bay window on the primary (north) façade, box bay windows on the primary façade and east elevations, and segmental dormers on the front-facing roof slope. The only remaining historic wood windows are a row of four, one-over-one sash windows on the box bay window that projects from the east wall, and two small windows on the west elevation. All other windows are either vinyl replacements or are missing entirely.

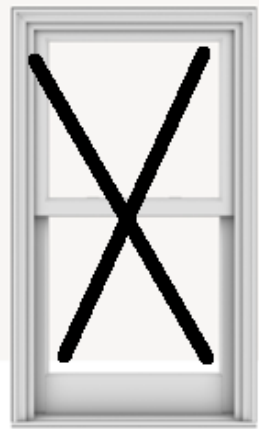


*September 2023 photo by staff.*

## PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to install new windows in all window openings. The proposed windows are ~~Andersen E-Series~~ **Pella Lifestyle Series** aluminum-clad wood windows. The windows are proposed to be ~~white~~ **brown**.

~~The existing window casing is proposed to be clad in aluminum, also white.~~



~~Andersen E-Series aluminum-clad wood window in white. Image from product website.~~



~~Before (left) and after (right) examples of aluminum cladding provided by the applicant. Note that the proposed color is white rather than the black shown.~~

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was established by resolution of the City Council in 1974. No Final Report was prepared for this district. The Elements of Design for Boston-Edison provide the following relevant observations:
  - “The most common window type is double-hung with sashes that are generally further subdivided by muntins or leaded glass.”
  - “Paint colors often relate to style.”
- The windows on the three, north-facing dormers were replaced sometime between 1980, when the historic district was established, and 2009, when newer windows are visible in a Google photo. There is no record of Historic District Commission approval for this work. The original windows were eight-over-eight sash windows with a curved upper sash. The original casing has also been clad in aluminum. **An undated historic photo clearly shows the original window casing. Comparison with current photos suggests that the aluminum stock has been applied over the historic casing, and that the**

historic casing remains encapsulated beneath. Original dentil trim, visible at the top of the front (north-facing) bay window, is also likely enclosed beneath the aluminum stuck.



Subject property in 1980 Historic Designation Advisory Board photo (left) and 2009 Google photo (right).



Undated photo from the Burton Historical Collection.

- Most other windows on the house have also been removed. Some of these openings now contain vinyl windows; others are missing windows. There is no record of ~~the prior appearance of~~ **when** the original windows ~~or when they~~ were removed, as they are concealed behind storm windows in the 1980 photo.



*Examples of missing windows and vinyl windows on the property. October 2023 photos by staff.*

- A box bay window on the east elevation contains four wood sash windows that appear to be historic or original. Two small, eight-light rectangular windows on the west elevation, first floor, appear to be original wood windows. These six windows are the only remaining historic windows on the building.



*Left: Box bay with wood, one-over-one sash windows (not readily visible due to glare from storm windows). Right: Wood window, possibly a fixed or hopper window (typical of both). October 2023 photos by staff.*



- Though the exact appearance of the missing windows on the property is not documented (other than the dormer windows, discussed under “Issues,” below), the proposed Pella Lifestyle window closely approximates the appearance of a typical historic wood window and is a compatible replacement for the missing windows and vinyl windows. The photo above also demonstrates that one-over-one windows are appropriate for the property. (See National Park Service, *Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards*, 2022)<sup>1</sup>

## ISSUES

- The arch-top windows on the three, north-facing dormers, previously replaced without approval, were original or historic windows. There is no evidence that they were deteriorated beyond repair. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards require that historic materials and features be retained and preserved (Standard #2, quoted below). If deteriorated beyond repair, historic features may be replaced with matching features (Standard #6, quoted below).
- The windows on the three, north-facing dormers formerly had curved upper sashes and both sashes were subdivided by muntins into eight panes each. Neither the current vinyl windows, installed without approval, nor the proposed replacement windows, match these characteristics, contrary to Standard #6.



North-facing dormers, left to right: 1980 (Historic Designation Advisory Board), 2007 (Google Maps), existing condition (photo by staff), ~~proposed replacement (from submitted window schedule).~~

- Likewise, the four windows on the east-facing box bay and the eight-lite windows on the west elevation are historic features that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair. The Standards require that they be preserved.

- The proposed use of aluminum wrap for the window surround is ~~not~~ **would not be** appropriate as it obscures historic window casing and **may obscure historic dentil trim**, contrary to Standard #2, which states that “alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.”
- ~~Pure white is not an appropriate color for the period and style of the house. Given the architecturally eclectic nature of the building, many appropriate color choices are available. A dark color, contrasting with the stucco finish, would be most appropriate, but any color from Color System C or D would be appropriate, including several earth tones and off-whites.~~

## RECOMMENDATION

### Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission (Recommendation One, Denial of historic window replacement)

Staff concludes that the proposed replacement of the three, north-facing, arch-top dormer windows (already done without approval), the four wood sash windows on the east elevation, and the ~~one~~ **two** wood windows on the west elevation does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the following reasons:

- The windows are historic materials that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair.
- For the north-facing dormer windows, the proposed work replaces nonrectangular, eight-over-eight windows (already removed without approval) with rectangular, one-over-one windows.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposed replacement the three, north-facing, dormer windows, the four wood sash windows on the east elevation, and the one wood window on the west elevation as the proposed work fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

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.*
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, other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

### Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission (Recommendation Two, Certificate of Appropriateness)

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed replacement of missing windows and vinyl windows as these work items meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, with the following conditions:

- Existing historic window casing will be retained (it may be replaced with matching wood casing if missing or deteriorated beyond repair) and will not be obscured by aluminum cladding.
- ~~The color of the windows will be a color selected from Color System C or D, or another color approved by staff.~~

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/windows-replacement-meet-standards.htm>