

STAFF REPORT: APRIL 10, 2024, SPECIAL MEETING **PREPARED BY:** T. BOSCARINO
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00039
ADDRESS: 702 W. CANFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST CANFIELD
APPLICANT: HANNAH BAILEY, KENDALL DESIGN BUILD
OWNER: ELLEN R. STRABER
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: FEBRUARY 7, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: FEBRUARY 27, 2024

SCOPE: REPLACE WOOD WINDOWS WITH ALUMINUM-CLAD WOOD WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This building faces south in the one-block West Canfield Historic District. It is a grand, two-and-a-half story, hip-roof, brick building built in 1880. It is richly embellished with Queen Anne details including patterned brickwork, dentil cornices, decorated gable dormers, and bonded-arched, stone-tabbed window openings.

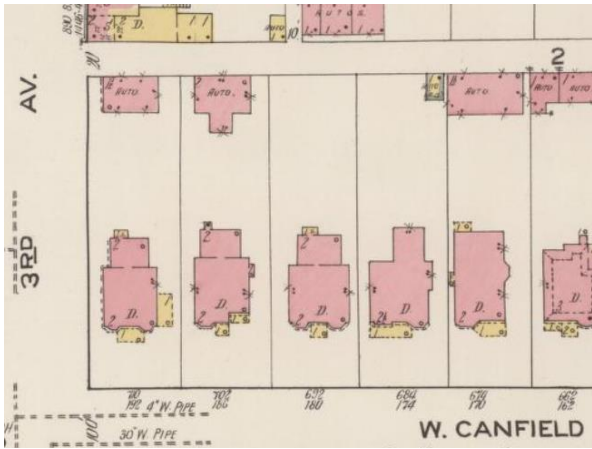


February 2024 photo by staff.

The exterior is only minimally altered since its construction and presents outstandingly important historic character. According to city records, a rear addition was added in 1945 and later removed. Stonework was painted at an unknown date; the paint was removed in 1979. A closed front porch has been restored. Dormer windows, not subject of this application, appear to be vinyl replacements installed without Historic District Commission approval sometime between 2016 and 2019, as seen in Google Street View images. Early in the building's history and likely before the West Canfield Historic District was established, a secondary front porch was removed and two window openings on the east elevation were reduced in size. These two openings have non-historic windows that are not clearly visible from public areas.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to replace 13 wood windows, or slightly fewer than half the windows on the house. The proposed replacements are Pella Reserve Traditional sash windows in black. Existing wood brickmould and other trim would be retained.



Sanborn Map Company 1921; subject property is second from left.



1970s photo; <http://www.westcanfield.org/702.html>



February 2024 photo by staff. Reduced window openings with non-historic windows are visible at the east (left of photo) elevation, second floor.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The West Canfield Historic District was established by resolution of the City Council in 1970. No Final Report was prepared for this district. The Elements of Design for the district provide the following relevant observations:
 - “Window surrounds ... are sometimes treated with wood detailing.”
 - “Window sills and lintels are sometimes treated with imitation stone or stone detailing.”
 - “Wooden trim is painted white, stone gray, gray-blue, brown, green, olive, or black.”



Three examples (interior and exterior views of each) of windows proposed for replacement; images from application, cropped by staff. Please see application for additional, higher-resolution photos.

- Based on configuration, materials, and style, the windows appear to be original to the building. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (quoted below) direct that historic elements be retained.
- Five of the thirteen windows proposed for replacement have arched upper sashes. These add a distinctive character to the building exterior that is difficult to replicate with new windows. Likewise, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards direct that they be preserved.
- Most windows (see application photos) appear to have exterior tracks to accommodate storm windows or screens. Only a few storm windows are installed.
- The application documents, along with a supplemental letter from the homeowner, state that the windows are “in such bad shape that the wind permeates,” and that “some of the frames are in bad condition, some are painted shut or have nails in them.” The letter also expresses that the homeowner has had difficulty finding someone to repair the windows.
- The letter states that some of the windows on the building are replacements from around 2012. Staff did not observe any windows that appear to be new other than the dormer windows mentioned above; however, the sides and rear of the building are difficult to view due to their orientation and distance from public areas. The windows proposed for replacement, shown clearly in application photos, are historic wood sash windows.

- Pella Reserve Traditional wood sash windows are a close match for a historic wood sash window and would likely be appropriate for a house of this style and period, if the historic windows were missing or beyond repair. Black is also an appropriate color, as dark sashes are common on Queen Anne brick buildings, and black is mentioned in the Elements of Design as a sash color.

ISSUES

- The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards require that historic materials and features be retained and preserved (Standard #2, quoted below). The Standards allow windows to be replaced with matching new windows if they are deteriorated beyond repair (Standard #6, quoted below). However, the existing windows do not appear, to staff, to be beyond repair.
- The shortcomings mentioned in the application and supplemental letter can be addressed with maintenance and repair. The National Park Service provides helpful guidance, *Preservation Briefs 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*, describing how to repair these conditions. According to the National Park Service, this work is labor intensive but “uncomplicated” and “allows the do-it-yourselfer to save money” due to the far greater expense of new windows.¹
- Staff also notes that drafts can be reduced, and energy efficiency increased, with the installation of storm windows. The openings already appear to be prepared to accept exterior storm windows; interior storms are also possible.
- Even if the windows warranted replacement, the five arched sashes are not adequately matched by the proposed new windows. The proposal would replace each operable arched sash with an operable rectangular sash topped by a fixed, arched section. This would remove a distinctive feature and result in a conspicuously incompatible appearance. According to the Standards, “distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved” (#5) and “the alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided” (#2).

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission

Staff concludes that the proposed window replacement does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the following reasons:

- All thirteen windows are historic elements that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair.
- For the five windows with arched sashes, proposed work replaces distinctive, curved features with non-matching, rectangular features, noticeably changing the appearance of the building from its original design.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposed window replacement 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.*

5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic 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, other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-09-wood-windows.pdf>