

STAFF REPORT: JULY 10, 2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00326

ADDRESS: 19511 SHREWSBURY

HISTORIC DISTRICT: SHERWOOD FOREST

APPLICANT: JOHN JOHNSON

PROPERTY OWNER: JOHN JOHNSON

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: JUNE 18, 2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: JUNE 21, 2024

SCOPE: REPLACE PORCH TILES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The dwelling at 19511 Shrewsbury is on the southern side of the street, about mid-block between Chesterfield and Stratford. The building permit was issued on September 26, 1924. The footprint of the house is predominantly a reverse gable design, but the extending cat slide roof of the small cross gable creates a focal point at the primary entrance on the east-side wall. The porch is accessed by two steps from the front walk as well as from the driveway. The extending roof covers the porch at the front door, and one arched opening faces the street and two arched openings face the driveway. The porch floor is comprised of quarry tiles which create an octagonal repeating pattern.

The house's brick veneer walls are punctuated by grouped windows and narrow single window openings. Brick laid in soldier and rollock courses serve as headers and sills. The grouped window openings are further accentuated with wood beams/infill painted dark brown. Steel casement units with a vertically oriented muntin/glass pattern is the uniform design for the window openings. The steeply pitched roof is covered with slate tiles.



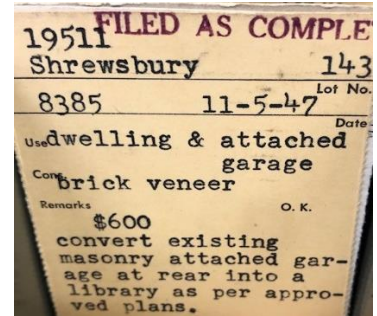
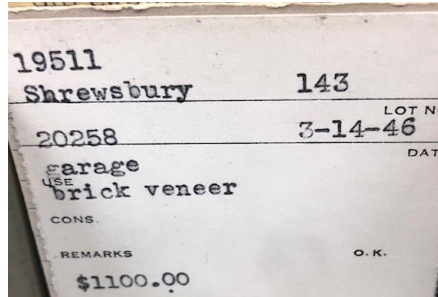
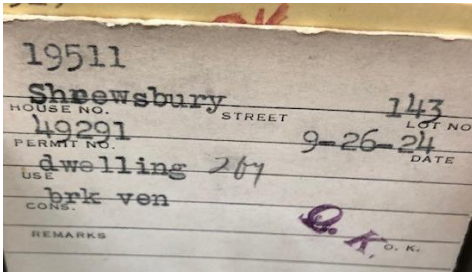
Staff photo, June 21, 2024.

PROPOSAL

- Remove entire front porch tile floor; porch foundation and brick steps to remain.
- Install concrete pavers in a hexagon pattern. Colors: tan and brick red.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Sherwood Forest Historic District was enacted on May 13, 2002.
- According to the city’s building permit cards, the house was erected in 1924. In 1946 a permit was issued for the erection of a brick veneer detached garage, and 18 months later a permit was issued for the alteration of the attached garage for use as a library.



Building permit card, BSEED.



Designation photo, 2002. HDAB.

As seen in the below photos, the porch floor is a visible element as seen from the public right-of-way, but the specific pattern is not a dominant feature due to its horizontal placement.



Staff photos, May 2024.



The applicant supplied the following photos documenting the pattern and condition of the floor.



Applicant photo. View from steps at front walkway. Three different materials are used to edge the tile floor: square clay or quarry tiles at the west perimeter, narrow rectangular tiles at the northern perimeter, and a rowlock course of dark colored bricks at the western perimeter adjacent the house.

The applicant said the porch floor was in place when he purchased the house 30+ years ago, and so it was present in the designation photo that was taken 22 years ago. Staff doesn't know if this porch floor is original to the house.

It is staff's opinion that the above photo and close up images on the following pages document a high level of deterioration to the exposed tiles. Evidence of numerous repairs is also noticeable due to a large number of mismatching tile colors and subsequent altered patterns. The inconsistent design and materials used to frame the tile floor is incongruous with the restrained Tudor Revival design and the finely detailed brick accents (including those framing the arched porch entrances).



Applicant photos. View looking west from driveway.





Applicant photos.



As a large number of the tiles on the open porch are broken, and is more than half the surface area of the porch, staff agrees that the existing porch floor is deteriorated beyond repair.

Standard Six states: *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.*

In October 2023, the National Park Service updated its guidance on [Evaluating Substitute Materials in Historic Buildings](#):

Need for substitute materials

When the level of deterioration makes repair infeasible...there are circumstances in which the use of substitute materials may generally be considered appropriate, taking into consideration technical and economic feasibility reasons, including:

- the unavailability of historic materials,
- the unavailability of skilled artisans or historic craft techniques,
- inadequate durability of the original materials,
- the replacement of a secondary feature; construction of a new addition,
- the reconstruction of a missing feature;
- code-required performance; and
- for enhanced resilience and sustainability.

Staff believes the long-term wear and tear of this surface must be considered, as the porch floor is in direct contact with water/ice and snow. Salting and shoveling will continue to inflict a level of wear that vertical materials/features don't face.

Amount and location of proposed application of substitute materials

Different materials and features play different roles in the building's historic appearance. The overall visibility of a character-defining material or feature is an important determinant in whether substitute materials will be appropriate. Generally, the more visible a feature is and the more important that feature is to the building's historic character, the more likely any change will negatively affect that character.

Staff considers this porch floor a secondary feature due to its horizontal placement and limited visibility.

Visual and other matches for the historic material to be replaced

Substitute materials, like all replacements, must closely match the design, color, surface texture, reflectivity, finish, details, and other visual qualities of the material or feature to be replaced. Before one can evaluate the appropriateness of either substitute, one has to first identify the characteristics of the historic material that are most important to how it is perceived on the particular building. While visual qualities are an important component, other factors should also be considered when evaluating the appropriateness of a particular substitute material. In some cases, if the surface texture of a substitute material differs markedly from the historic material, the building's character could be diminished by its use. Use of a substitute material should also take into account any differences in the physical properties of the new material and adjacent or related existing materials.

It is staff's opinion the following features/components that are the most important to match:

- Materiality and finish (i.e., stone, unglazed fired, non-porous clay tile),
- Subtle lighter/contrasting color,
- Uniform geometric pattern, close in size to the existing 12-inch octagon and a two color palette like the existing floor,
- A border of consistent dimension and placement (emulating the formality of the Tudor Revival design).

The selected replacement product are [Fendt pavers](#), a high-density, high-strength concrete paver. These contemporary designed products are commonly used for patios, pool decks, driveways and sidewalks. The large paver size and monolithic look upon installation does not offer a compatible match with historic materials such as mortared stone and brick.

Right: *Fendt website*



ISSUES

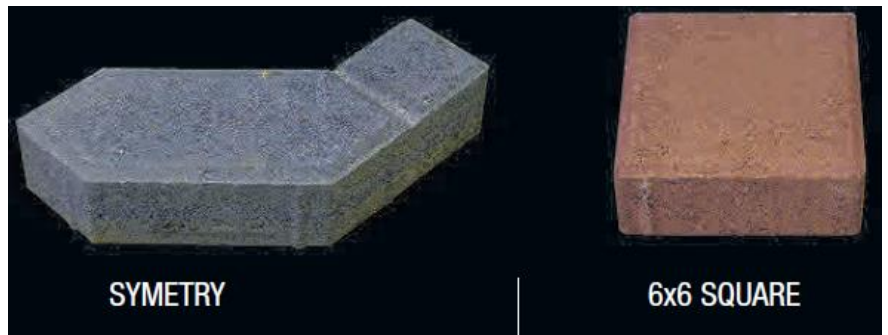
The applicant said he couldn't find a company that fabricated and installed small clay or stone tiles similar to the existing porch. Therefore, the application focuses solely with the review of the proposed replacement material. It is staff's opinion that the proposed pavers do not meet the standards set forth when determining an appropriate/compatible replacement material.

Using the identified features/components on the previous page, the reasons on why staff recommends a denial are listed below:

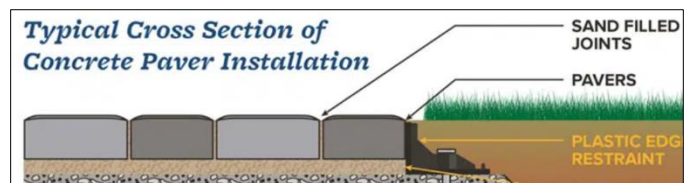
- Materiality and finish (i.e., stone)
 - The existing tiles have a matte finish, whereas the pavers have a polished sheen.
 - The pavers have beveled edges and the symmetry block has a stamped adjoining square block, all of which does not mimic the clean edges and uniform four-sided mortar joints of tile and brick.
 - The use of sand between the blocks, rather than mortar, creates a monolithic appearance to this flooring/pavement system.
- Uniform geometric pattern close in size to the existing 12-inch octagon
 - The proposed product is twice the size (24-inch octagon, compared to existing 12-inch).
 - This will drastically change the proportion of the pattern and increase the visual dominance of the porch floor. The proposed paving pattern may work well with a large expanse, such as a driveway and patio, but will likely overpower the small dimensions of this porch and its proportional relationship with the other building materials (slate tiles and brick) used on the house.
- A consistently designed border (emulating the formality of the Tudor Revival design) are the features to be matched.
 - The applicant must submit a floor plan that identifies the material, dimension, pattern and color of the bordering material.



Applicant photos



*Above and above right: Images from Fendt website
Right: Section showing installation method for pavers.*



RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal for the replacement of the tile porch floor does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- Materiality and finish (i.e., stone)
 - The current tiles have a matte finish, whereas the pavers have a polished sheen.
 - The pavers have beveled edges and the symmetry block has a stamped adjoining square block, all of which does not mimic the clean edges and uniform four-sided mortar joints of stone and brick.
 - The use of sand between the blocks, rather than mortar, creates a monolithic appearance to this flooring/pavement system.
- Uniform geometric pattern close in size to the existing 12-inch octagon
 - The proposed product is twice the size (24-inch octagon, compared to existing 12-inch).
 - This increased size will drastically change the proportion of the pattern and increase the visual dominance of the porch floor. The proposed paving pattern may work well with a large expanse, such as a driveway and patio, but will likely overpower the small dimensions of this porch and its proportional relationship with the other building materials (slate tiles and brick) used on the house.
- A consistently designed border (emulating the formality of the Tudor Revival design) are the features to be matched.
 - The applicant must submit a plan view that identifies the material, dimension, pattern and color of the bordering material.

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.*