

STAFF REPORT: JULY 10, 2024 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00329
ADDRESS: 1450 SEYBURN
HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE
APPLICANT: VOYTEK MARDULA
PROPERTY OWNER: VADELLA LLC
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: JUNE 18, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: JUNE 21, 2024

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

SCOPE: ALTER PORCH (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL), PAINT TRIM AND PORCH POSTS, RETAIN FRONT DOOR SURROUND

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in 1911, the building at 1450 Seyburn is a 2-1/2-story dwelling clad in dark brown brick. The facade has a symmetrical design, hip roof, brick band separating the first and second floors, and box bay windows at the first floor. The entry door, second floor bay and arched dormer, offers a strong central element to this early 20th century Neo-Georgian design with American Four-Square influences (horizontal emphasis emphasized by overhanging eaves and the connected bay windows and portico fascia). Vinyl one-over-one windows fill the first and second floor openings, while the three window opening dormer has one small one-over-one unit that is flanked by fixed or casement units with a two-over-two pattern. The window openings' brick mould has been covered, and the trim surrounding the box bay windows has also been covered in an inconsistent way. Wood paneling is in place below the southern box bay window, but the northern window's lower panel appears to remain unfinished.

The full width porch with new concrete pad has walls veneered with reclaimed brick. A portico extends the depth of the porch; small wood posts support the extended roof. Concrete steps lead to the porch and aluminum black railings with horizontal balusters are in place on either side of the steps. An outline of the original porch wall is evident at the northern corner of the house, giving solid evidence of the height of the original porch wall. The front door and surround include a black contemporary panel door with five narrow/wide glass panels and plywood that is painted black.



Façade, west-facing wall. Staff photo, May 21, 2024.

PROPOSAL

The applicant states that a number of projects were initiated and/or completed by previous owners. Staff reviews this earlier work under Staff Observations and Research. Listed below are the work items, copied directly from the application, that the owner is putting forward for the Commission's review.

Completed

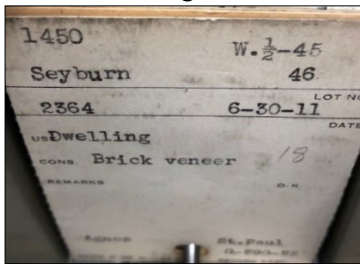
- Restored porch surround with reclaimed red bricks, poured cement porch cap, installed iron railings to porch steps.
- Sealed cracks on front walkway. *This is ordinary this maintenance, per Section 21-2-4, and therefore does not require review by the Commission.*
- Affixed temporary white vinyl trim to two front first floor windows.
- Installed temporary particle board painted black around front door trim.
- Poured porch cement cap to back porch

Proposed

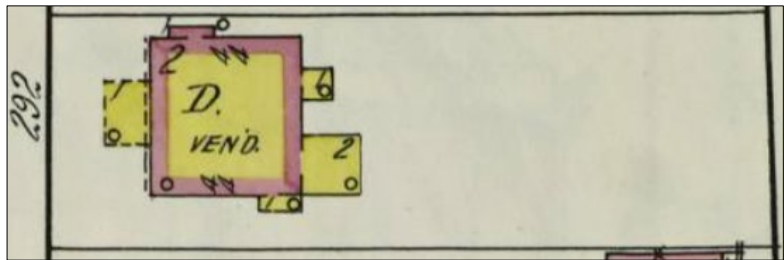
- Remove white vinyl window trim; sand, seal and paint wood window trim.
- Paint front and rear porch pillars
- Paint all existing window trim and pillars in black (Color System E) for 20th Century composite.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

The West Village Historic District was enacted on February 25, 1983.



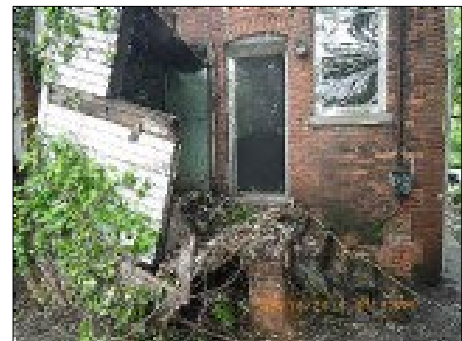
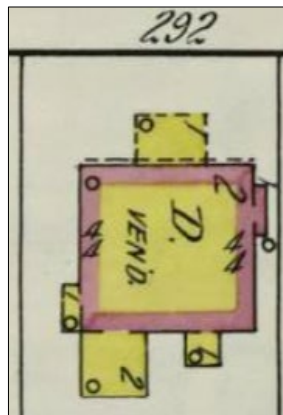
Building permit card for dwelling, BSEED



Sanborn Map, Vol. 8, 1915

The Sanborn Map identifies the entire dwelling as frame construction (yellow). The red/pink border running the perimeter of the house and northern box bay identifies that these walls (all levels) are covered with brick veneer. The "ven'd" confirms the remaining extensions of the house have brick veneer at the first floor walls; the second story of the rear extension would be covered with wood siding.

The circa 2013 photos below offer a visual confirmation of the materiality of the rear two-story extension and single story porch at the north end of the wall (which was in a severe state of disrepair).



Photos from 2013 HDC application.

FACADE



1983 designation photo, HDAB.

The character-defining features of the façade are evident in the designation photo: hip roof, box bays with full surround wall trim and cottage-style windows (the upper sash are slightly shorter in height than the lower sash), double-hung windows at the second floor, overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, brick band/integrated stone sills at the second floor, and an eyebrow dormer with multi-paned arched casement windows that match the dormer's roofline. The porch was accessed by concrete steps enclosed with brick/cast stone topped wing walls, and the porch was fully enclosed with a low brick wall, topped with cast stone. The portico was supported by paired porch columns with geometrically designed capitals and bases.

This house has a long history of deterioration and replacement of features, which will be explained on the following pages. This history needs to be explained and understood before the current proposal is discussed.



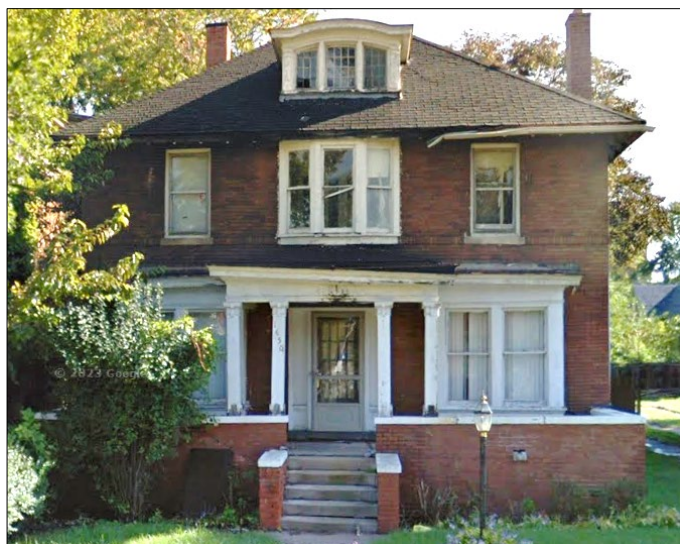
These circa 2013 photos, provided by the applicant as part of a rehabilitation application, show the porch enclosed by low walls, whose height matched that of the box bay panels.



This house's deterioration is shown in the below photo timeline.



July 2009, Google streetview. The porch roof is beginning to sag, but otherwise the façade is intact. This photo offers a good view of the 16-light wood front door and wood side panels.



September 2011, Google streetview.

September 2013, Google streetview.

It appears the historic front door was replaced during the time between these two images, but the side panels remain. The new door appears to be a solid panel unit.

In November 2013, the then-owner, The Villages Community Development Corporation, applied for an extensive rehabilitation of this property. A copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness, issued by staff, and supporting documentation is posted on the property page. The project list was extensive, but in short, the character-defining features of the house, including the front porch, two-story rear extension/wing, rear porch, entry doors, and bay window surrounds, were to be restored or replaced in-kind. The windows were to be retained and repaired as necessary.

In July 2018, the West Village CDC obtained another COA issued by staff, for the installation of a new asphalt shingle roof, masonry repair of the existing front porch including the concrete porch platform, and repair (rebuild as needed) of the porch portico that included the installation of two additional square wood columns, as well as the addition of decorative elements to the columns to match the historic details. A copy of this COA and supporting documentation is posted on the property page. The replacement of windows was not a part of the 2018 application.



August 2018, Google streetview.

Within one month of a COA being issued for the asphalt shingle roof and front porch repair, a new roof was installed, wood windows were removed from the second floor and dormer, and the box bay windows were covered. The rafter tails are clearly visible here due to the missing fascia.



May 2019, Google streetview.

This 2019 photo shows extensive work continuing to take place on the façade, including the removal of the rafter tails, new windows (most of which don't match the historic window units in operation, design, and possibly material), and the removal and rebuilding of the box bays, front porch and portico.

Reminder: The 2013 COA approved the rebuilding of the front porch with the condition that the new porch matches all dimensions, details, materials and finishes of the historic design, which was possible at this point in time. However, the replacement of the façade's windows and the replacement of the box bays were not reviewed/approved by the Commission or staff. The replacement windows in the dormer destroyed the curved window opening that echoed and accentuated the curved roof line, the mixed operation is awkward, and the side panel designs have not been replicated.



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Fall 2020 photos submitted with the application for the installation of new gutters and downspouts. FYI - The wood panels on either side of the door remain in place.

Continued documentation of the rebuilding of the box bays and front porch/portico appears in the 2020 photos. The wood posts supporting the portico offer intermediary support for roofs while construction around these posts occur. However, once the porch floor was finished, these posts should have been wrapped in wood, with trim applied for the base and capital, matching the historic design's dimensions and details. This was not done, and the posts remain per the 2020 condition.



*Left: 1983 designation photo. The design of the almost flat trim at the base of the columns is accentuated by red paint.
Right: This zoomed-in 2013 applicant photo offers a fairly clear view of the design that was at the top of the columns.*



Staff photo, May 2024.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards state:

Standard 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.

Standard 5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Standard 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.

As character-defining historic features and elements were present at time of designation, and even as recently as 2013, the removal of these features is a violation, and the installation of new designs, features and dimensions which are not appropriate and do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, add to the violation. Unless the Commission approves these alterations, the ordinance will require that the original architectural features be restored in full.

REAR WALL



Above: 2013 photo submitted by applicant.

Below: Rear elevation drawing submitted as part of the 2013 rehabilitation application and approved by staff (COA 13-328).



Photo timeline of rear wall.



2013 applicant photo.



2020 photo provided with application for new gutters.



Above and bottom right: Staff photos, May 2024. Stone threshold.

Alterations made to the rear elevation, not reviewed/approved by the Commission or staff, include:

- Removal of the central (one of three) windows in the dormer; and window operation changed from multi-light casements to one-over-one double-hung.
- Door leading to the upper porch was removed and bricked in; and the narrow double-hung window was changed to fixed/casement. Upper porch railing was removed (ghost image is present).

- Two doors at the first floor that led to the raised porch were removed and bricked in, but the historic opening's stone threshold remains. It appears as though there are not any stairs that lead from the yard to the raised open porch. Unadorned, thin posts support the roof.
- The two-story extension was not built as approved.
 - Window openings at the rear wall changed in size and operation; mullied one-over-one double-hung openings are now smaller single fixed openings with clear glass.
 - Vinyl siding was installed on all walls, rather than brick at the first floor and wood clapboard siding at second floor.
 - The door, wood platform and stairs at the rear wall were not installed.



ISSUES

While some of the work completed without HDC approval occurred prior to the applicant owning the house, alterations made to a property remain with the property, not the owner that completed them. Therefore, the applicant will need to submit future applications that offer proposals on how to rectify work completed without approval.

It is staff's opinion that the work items in this application don't meet the Standards; staff's explanation follows each work item:

- Erection of front porch with reclaimed red bricks, poured concrete porch cap, and iron railings at porch steps. *The existing front porch does not match the character-defining features of the historic front porch. The low walls that enclosed the concrete platform and adjoining brick wing walls at the front stairs, created a cohesive design for the porch whose massing balanced the façade of the house.*
- Affixed temporary white vinyl trim to two front first floor windows. Remove white vinyl window trim; sand, seal and paint wood window trim. *Removal of the vinyl covering is a positive step. However, it appears the surface below the vinyl is unknown and likely doesn't have the "cornice like" casing that was originally designed for the top of the window openings. This profiled trim was a character-defining feature to the box bay windows.*
- Installed temporary particle board painted black around front door trim. *The contemporary door and particle board surround (replacing the dimensional side panels) destroyed the historic dimensional opening and is not an appropriate design for an early 20th century Neo-Georgian/Four-Square house. The applicant states the particle board is temporary but didn't include a permanent design solution in this application. According to the Standards, new side panels must match those that were removed without approval. The flat panel/5-light door should be replaced with a minimally adorned traditional design, compatible with the vernacular style of the house.*
- Paint front and rear porch pillars. Paint all existing window trim and pillars in black (Color System E) for 20th Century composite. *The applicant doesn't propose to wrap the posts to create columns. The retention of the supporting posts as a finished detail is not appropriate for this house's design and era of construction, as well as their prominent locations. One of the hallmark features of Neo-Georgian houses is contrasting trim. As this house has dark brown brick, the appropriate colors for the trim (windows, posts, etc.) are various shades of white to yellowish white, not black..*



2013 Google street view.



May 2024 staff photo.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation One – Denial: Front porch, painting rear porch posts

Staff finds that the proposal for the retention of the as-constructed front porch (including all associated elements), rear porch posts, front door and surround, box bay window trim, and painting of all trim and posts black does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The historic components at the front and rear walls of the dwelling present at time of designation, and even as recently as 2013, were character-defining features of the house. Their removal and/or installation of new designs whose features, dimensions, materiality, and finish do not match nor are compatible with the age and design of the house, are not appropriate.
 - The existing front porch does not match the character-defining features of the historic front porch. The low walls and enclosed concrete platform, and adjoining brick wing walls at front stairs, created a cohesive design for the porch whose massing balanced the façade of the house.
 - The wood surface at the box bay windows is currently obscured by vinyl is unknown, and likely doesn't have the "cornice like" casing that was originally designed for the top of the window openings. This profiled trim was a character-defining feature to the box bay windows.
 - The contemporary door and particle board surround (replacing the dimensional side panels) destroyed the historic dimensional opening and is not an appropriate design for an early 20th century Neo-Georgian/Four-Square house. The applicant states the particle board is temporary but didn't include a permanent design solution in this application. According to the Standards, new side panels must match those that were removed without approval. The contemporary flat panel/5-light door should be replaced with a minimally adorned traditional design, compatible with the vernacular style of the house.
 - The applicant doesn't propose to wrap the posts to create columns. The retention of the supporting posts as a finished detail is not appropriate for this house's design and era of construction, as well as their prominent locations.
 - One of the hallmark features of Neo-Georgian houses is contrasting trim. As this house has dark brown brick, the appropriate colors for the trim (windows, posts, etc.) are various shades of white to yellowish white, not black.

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: Rear porch concrete platform

Staff finds that the proposal 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.