

STAFF REPORT: 09/11/2024 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00435

ADDRESS: 4031 FULLERTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS- SULLIVAN

APPLICANT: BRETT MAHAFFEY (RENEWAL BY ANDERSEN)

PROPERTY OWNER: DAMON ROBINSON

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 08/19/2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 08/22/2024

SCOPE: REPLACE STEEL SASH WINDOWS WITH COMPOSITE WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1940, the property at 4031 Fullerton has a pyramid-hipped roof with asphalt shingles. The façade features a two-story bay with steel casements and stone quoins and detailing. A leaded glass second-story window is centered over the front porch awning. The front door is also surrounded with stone detailing. The house is clad in dark red brick. Original steel casements are also evident on the side elevations, publicly visible. Most casements feature transoms and side lights, all with true divided light. The slightly elevated front porch has a central step flanked by garden beds and a walk through the front lawn to the public sidewalk. Property files indicate that there was a Historic District Commission (HDC) approval issued in 2020 for a new roof. There are no violations on this property.



Site Photo 1, by Staff Aug 22, 2024: (North) front showing original windows still in place.



Site Photo 2, designation slide 1999: (North) front showing original steel sash casements with true divided light.

PROPOSAL

The current project is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of 13 original steel casements with wood-vinyl composite (Fibrex) windows.

WINDOW DETAIL

- Front (north), (Windows numbered 101-103, 202-204, *See fig. 1*): Replace six (6) steel casements with Anderson Renewal composite fixed and casement windows. The transoms and sidelights of the existing windows will be replaced with full operational casements at the side bays (101, 103, 202, and 204), whereas the casements, transoms and sidelights of the front facing windows will be replaced with fixed windows.
- Rear (south) (Window numbered 108, *See fig. 2*): Replace one (1) steel casement with Anderson Renewal composite casement window. The transoms and sidelights of the existing window will be replaced with full operational casement, with 4x4 configuration.

- Side (east) (Window numbered 201, *See fig. 3*): Replace one (1) steel casement with Anderson Renewal composite casement window. The transoms and sidelights of the existing window will be replaced with full operational casement, with 4x4 configuration.
- Side (west) (Windows numbered 104-107, 205, *See fig. 4*): Replace five (5) steel casements with Anderson Renewal composite fixed and casement windows. The transoms and sidelights of the existing windows will be replaced with full operational casements with no transoms or sidelights.
- All new windows will be installed inside the brick pocket with L-shaped aluminum bent to seal the window to the brick. Spray foam, caulk, and yellow insulation will be used to insulate around the window.
- As noted above, all steel windows with center located casements (and surrounding transoms and sidelights) would be replaced with casement windows that open the entire height/width. All grille patterns will match existing configurations. All proposed grids are between the glass.
- The exterior trim color of the windows is proposed to be “Anderson Red Rock”.



Fig 1, by Applicant, 2024: Front (North) showing proposed window replacement locations.

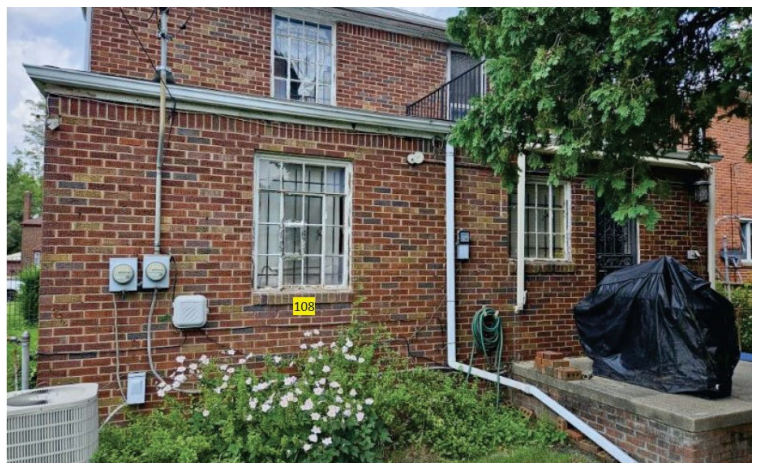


Fig 2, by Applicant, 2024: Rear (South) showing proposed window replacement location.

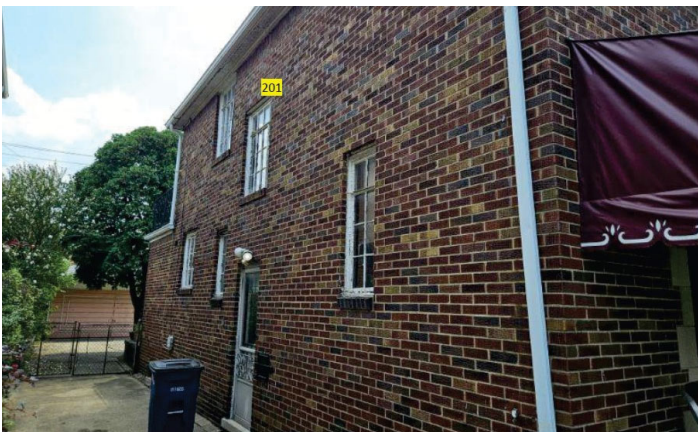


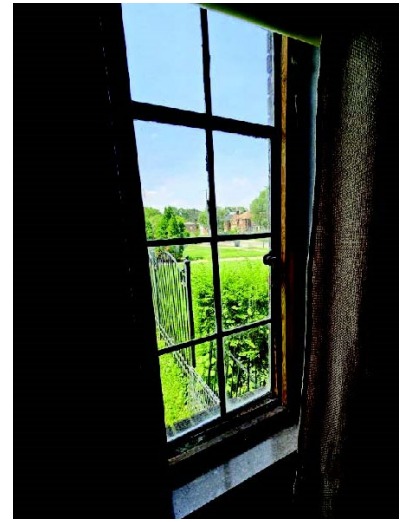
Fig 3, by Applicant, 2024: Side (East) showing proposed window replacement location.



Fig 4, by Applicant, 2024: Side (West) showing proposed window replacement locations.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods- Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999, and its Elements of Design offer the following:
 - *Proportion of openings within the façade.* Typical openings are taller than wide. It is not uncommon for several windows, which are taller than wide, to fill a single opening, which is wider than tall. Houses built later in the period of development sometimes have individual windows which are balanced or somewhat wider than tall; such a window is often the main opening of the first floor front façade.
 - *Relationship of materials...* Stone trim is common, and wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim. Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash...



Figures 4&5, by applicant 2024: Window #104, west side, showing casement window condition with foam applied to exterior.

- The front and the west side windows are particularly visible from the public and are proposed for replacement with fibrex windows. It is staff's opinion that these true divided-light, steel casements are distinctive character-defining features. Their loss would substantially detract from and destroy the historic appearance of the building. (See photos 1-2, Figs 1-4)
- The applicant provided no repair estimate. They stated that the homeowner has sought one but was unable to find one that is responsive. The cost estimate for these 13 casement replacements is \$37,811.
- Staff reviewed the exterior and interior photos of the casements provided by the applicant. Although there does appear to be some corrosion along the west elevation windows where spray foam was applied to the exterior, staff does not see evidence that these or any of the other casements are beyond repair. Wire brush cleaning of the area, along with replacement of glass panes where needed, the replacement of operation cranks, and similar work appear to be within a reasonable range of repair.
- Staff requested dimensions for the proposed casements and received the comparison of the existing and proposed mullion dimensions (see fig. 7) and the section dimensions of the proposed casements (See fig 8). Staff observed how these dimensions increase in width, ignore the existing transoms and sidelights, and provide a bulkier appearance in the head and jamb.
- In addition to a material change from steel casements to fibrex, the design and operation of the windows would also change. For example, the front elevation casement windows would change to fixed windows (Windows 102 and 203), and the flanking casements would lose their transoms with the whole height of the windows being operational casements (Windows 101, 103, 202, and 204).



Figure 6, by Applicant: Windows 202-204, (North Interior, 2nd floor) Interior casements proposed to be replaced with fibrex windows.

- All window replacements would replace true-divided light with grids between the glass, creating a flat surface and destroying the complexity and dimensionality that was historically present.
- Even if the Commission finds the existing windows to be beyond repair, replacements must be in accordance with the National Park Service (NPS) guidance, [Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards](#). The proposed windows are not close matches. Besides the reasons listed above, the proposed windows would:
 - Alter the operator frame location, width and depth dimensions.
 - Slight differences in the dimensions of the muntins and frame has a noticeable effect on the overall character of the window. These proposed changes are noticeably larger, increasing the top frame dimension, for example, from 2" to 3 1/4". (See figures 7&8.)
 - The operating sash of the steel casements, which are centrally placed, is wider (2 1/2") than the 5/8" muntin grid of the window. The frame of this operating sash has slight projections and overlaps that vary from the surrounding muntins. These details create shadow lines and add historically important three-dimensional layers to the overall appearance of the window that are erased when these proposed windows change the operation to a full casement style with uniform 3/4" between the glass grid.
- Staff received confirmation that the brick mould would be removed and an aluminum or fibrex "L trim" (see fig.9) be installed between the window opening and the new casements. This L trim does not meet NPS guidelines, which necessitates that any replacement of steel sash windows with a new frame should be of minimal dimension.

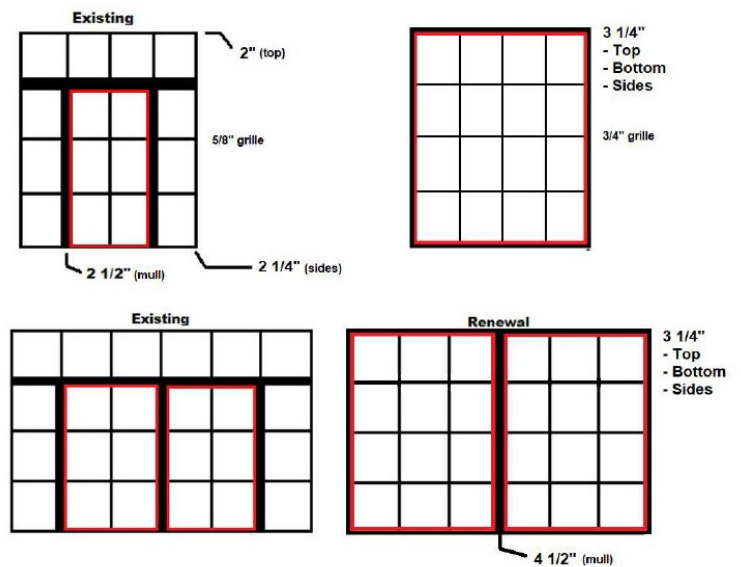


Figure 7, by Applicant: This illustrates existing (left column) and proposed (right column) dimensions of the mullion pattern for the casements

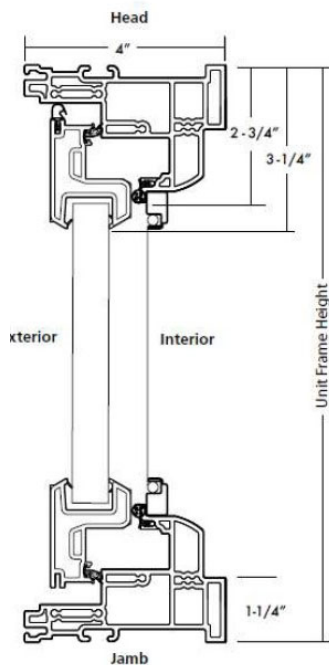
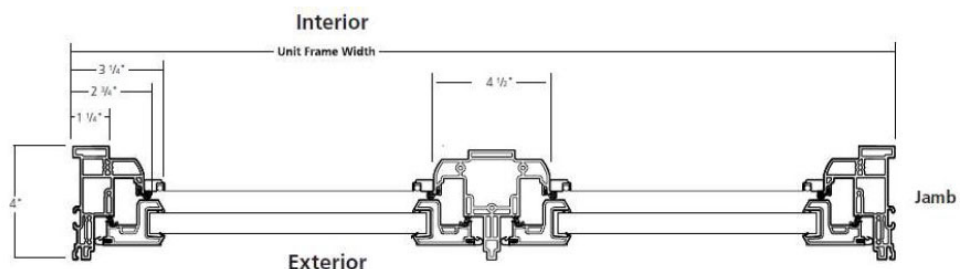


Figure 8, by Applicant: Sectional dimensions of the proposed casement's head and jamb.



ISSUES

- There is no documentation establishing that the condition of the original casements is beyond repair and there is no repair estimate to compare with the cost of the installation of these new windows.
- It is staff's opinion that the removal of the original casements and replacement with fibrex casements greatly alters the original *scale, design, and materiality* of the building's fenestration and the new windows are incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property. Therefore, this work item does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, NPS Guidelines, and does not conform to the district's Elements of Design.



Figure 9, by Applicant: This is a mock-up to illustrate the use of the "L-Trim" aluminum coil stock that would be set between the window and brick opening.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

Recommendation: Replace Steel Sash Windows with Composite Windows

Staff finds that the replacement of the original steel casements with composite windows, does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- No documentation establishing that the original condition of the casement windows was beyond repair was submitted or available, nor was a cost estimate provided for the repair of these windows.
- A full replacement of the original windows may not be necessary to return to acceptable service.
- The replacement of the original steel casements with fibrex casements is not compatible with historic architecture in the house in that they:
 - destroy the distinctive, character-defining features of the original windows, particularly the true-divided lights, transoms and sidelight detailing,
 - introduce a new design, operation, and scale,
 - introduces a new material, fibrex, which is contrary to National Park Service guidance and not historically appropriate material and does not conform to the District's Elements of Design.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the above work items, as it do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards:

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.