

STAFF REPORT: 9/11/2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

ADDRESS: 7873 VAN DYKE PLACE

APPLICATION NO: #HDC-2024-00471

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE

APPLICANT/OWNER: 7873 VAN DYKE PLACE LLC

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 8/30/2024

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 7/15/2024

SCOPE: REHABILITATE DWELLING, ERECT GARAGE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The resource at 7873 Van Dyke Place was erected circa 1900 as a single-family dwelling. While currently vacant, the building was converted to a multiple-family dwelling ca. 1955. The building features a central 2 ½-story, gabled-roof central mass with projecting, two-story hipped-roof wings at the front and rear. A hipped-roof dormer is located at the front two-story hipped-roof wing. Exterior walls are primarily clad with lapped wood siding while wood shake is present in the gable ends. Exterior cladding is not present at the dormer front and side walls. Windows are wood sash units. A small masonry porch deck with concrete steps and metal hand railing is located at the side/west wall. A non-historic, two-story open wood porch is located at the rear.



7873 Van Dyke Place, current appearance of front facade. Photo taken by staff on 8/30/2024

PROPOSAL

The applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to undertake an extensive rehabilitation of the building and erect a new garage to the rear of the dwelling. Per the submitted building plan and elevation drawings (sheets A1.3, A2.2, A2.3), the application includes the following work items:

Front/Primary Façade

- Where necessary, repair lapped wood siding/clapboard using wood to match existing
- Repair existing windows
- Per the submitted drawings, erect a new, hipped-roof porch which extends the length of the façade. The porch will measure 5'-0" in depth and shall include wood tapered columns and hand/guard railing. A wood, beadboard skirting will be added to the porch base. The decking will be composite. The material of the steps has not been specified.
- At the rooftop dormer front and sidewall, add wood shake siding. Paint/finish color not specified

Side/West Wall

- Per the submitted drawings, demolish/replace the existing side porch and replace with a new wood deck with composite decking. A new canopy/gabled roof will be installed over the side entry deck. The side deck will display a wood, beadboard skirting and will have hand/guard railing. Steps (material not specified) will be added to the north and south sides of the porch.
- Retain and repair all windows the exception of non-historic fixed rectangular window in gable end, which will be replaced with new arched fixed single-lite, aluminum-clad wood unit
- Where necessary, repair lapped and shake wood siding using wood to match existing. Paint per proposed

Side/East Wall

- Retain and repair all windows the exception of non-historic fixed rectangular window in gable end, which will be replaced with new arched single-lite, aluminum-clad wood unit (operation not specified in drawing)
- Install a new egress window below grade. Window dimensions, operation, and material not specified. Egress well material and dimensions not specified
- Where necessary, repair lapped and shake wood siding using wood to match existing. Paint per proposed

Rear

- Erect a new wood deck with wood railing and steps at first story
- Install a wood balcony with wood railing at second story
- At third story gable end, remove non-historic doors and reside opening to receive a set of aluminum-clad wood, double hung mulled 6/6 windows. Install lapped wood siding to match adjacent to enclose former opening
- Where necessary, repair wood shake and lapped wood siding/clapboard using wood to match existing. Paint per proposed
- Repair existing windows

Foundation

- Replace brick foundation with new concrete block foundation. Add parge coat to foundation exterior above grade to match current appearance.

Roof

- Install new dimensional asphalt shingle roof (Morning Harvest color) and aluminum gutters/downspouts (color off white)

Hardscape/Sitework

- Add new concrete walkway in rear yard per site plan
- Install a new fence in the rear yard (height, material, design not specified)

Garage

- Erect a new 22'x22', two-car, gabled-roof garage in rear yard. Exterior walls will be clad with lapped composite siding. The primary entrance will be a steel overhead door. A single, hinged steel pedestrian door will be located at the rear wall.

***Please note that the current site plan drawing **is not accurate/does not conform to the building's elevation and plan drawings** (sheets A1.3, A2.2, A2.3), as it depicts a front façade porch which wraps around the building's west façade. The applicant has stated that he wishes the Commission to review the front porch and side deck design **as depicted in the building plan and elevation drawings** (sheets A1.3, A2.2, A2.3) sent to staff on 9/6/2024 as a revision to the original submission/posted documents, which proposes a full width, one-story hipped roof porch on the front façade and a separate small porch deck at the west wall's entrance.

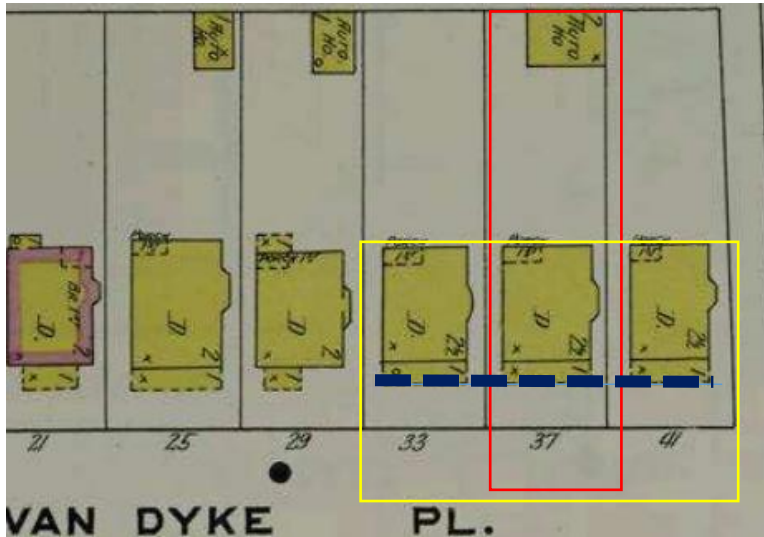
STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The West Village Historic District was designated in 1983
- See the below designation slide for 7873 Van Dyke Place which shows that the building was clad with non-historic asphalt shingles. On 7/18/2024, staff issued a COA to the applicant for the removal of the asphalt shingle siding as well as a deteriorated non-historic rear wood deck/porch. While the siding has since been removed per the COA, the rear deck remains but will be removed per the current drawings.



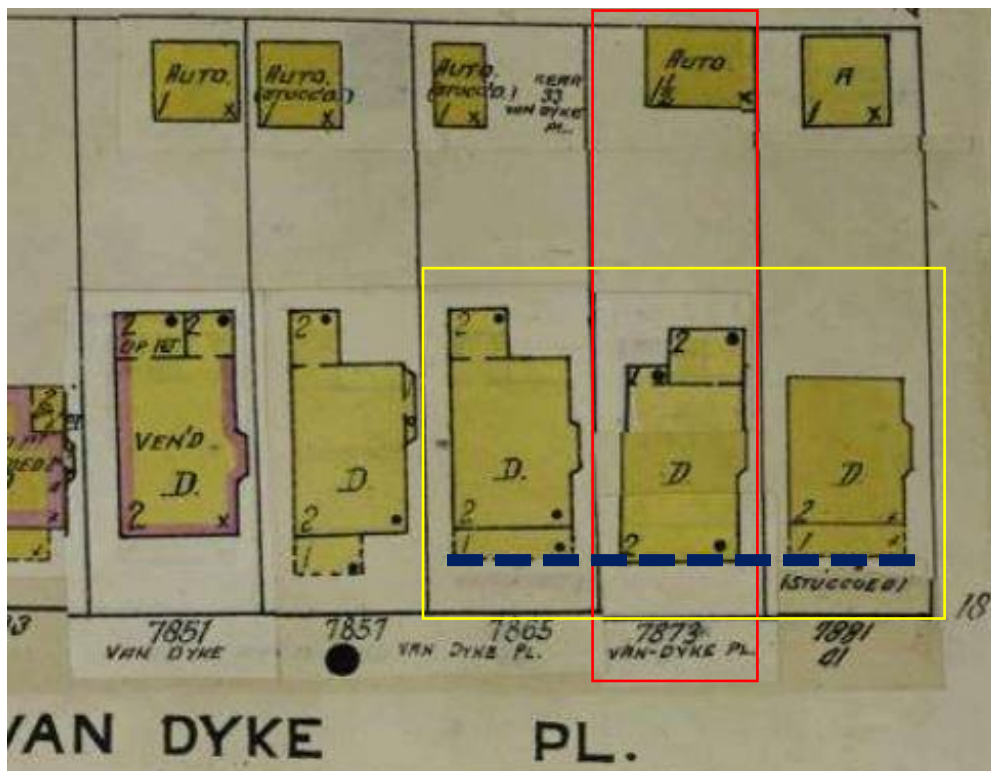
7873 Van Dyke Place, designation slide taken in 1983. Photo taken by HDAB staff

- The below Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1915 indicates that the building originally had a projecting one-story porch which extended the front wall's full width. Note that the houses to the east and the west appear to share a similar height, plan/footprint, porch design, and setback.



Sanborn Map, 1915. 7873 Van Dyke Place outlined in red. Note that the houses outlined in yellow and addressed as 33, 37, and 40 Van Dyke (the pre 1925 addresses) all share a similar plan and setback. See the consistent southmost edge of the porches (per the purple dashed line)

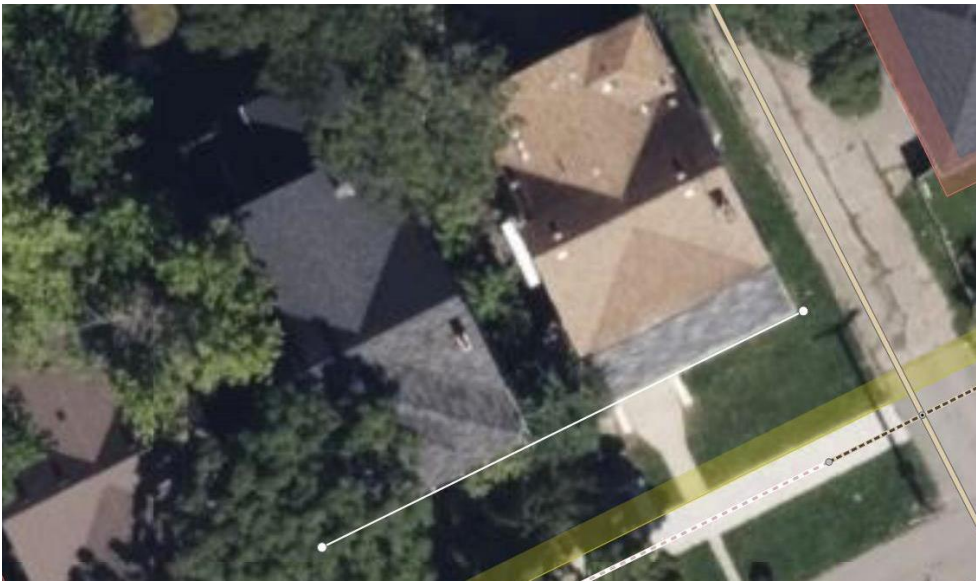
- Per the below Sanborn Map, by 1951 the front porch at 7873 Van Dyke had been infilled and a second story with a new hipped roof was added atop the former porch ca. 1920



Sanborn Map, 1951. 7873 Van Dyke Place outlined in red. Note that the 7873 Van Dyke Place's former front porch space porch had been infilled by that point and was identified as two stories in height.



7873 Van Dyke Place (left) and 7881 Van Dyke Place (right). Per the above Sanborn Map from 1915, both houses were similar in plan, form, and setback. By 1951 the porch at 7874 Van Dyke Place had been infilled and second story added (see area outlined in yellow). The red dashed line indicates matching gable end/peaks, the green dashed line indicates matching south gable edges, the dashed blue line indicates matching front/south wall face, and the white dashed line indicates matching south foundation wall. Face/setback, Source, 2022 Google Streetview



7873 Van Dyke Place (left) and 7881 Van Dyke Place (right). White line indicates the face of the front façade 7873 Van Dyke Place and the front façade of the porch at 7881 Van Dyke. Source, Detroit Assessor's office

- Note that the building's primary entry door is currently located on its side/west wall while the front/south façade lacks a door at the first story. Rather, the south/front wall, first story has three sets of historic-age, multiple-lite wood French doors (see below). Interior photos indicate that a centrally placed entry door was originally located at the

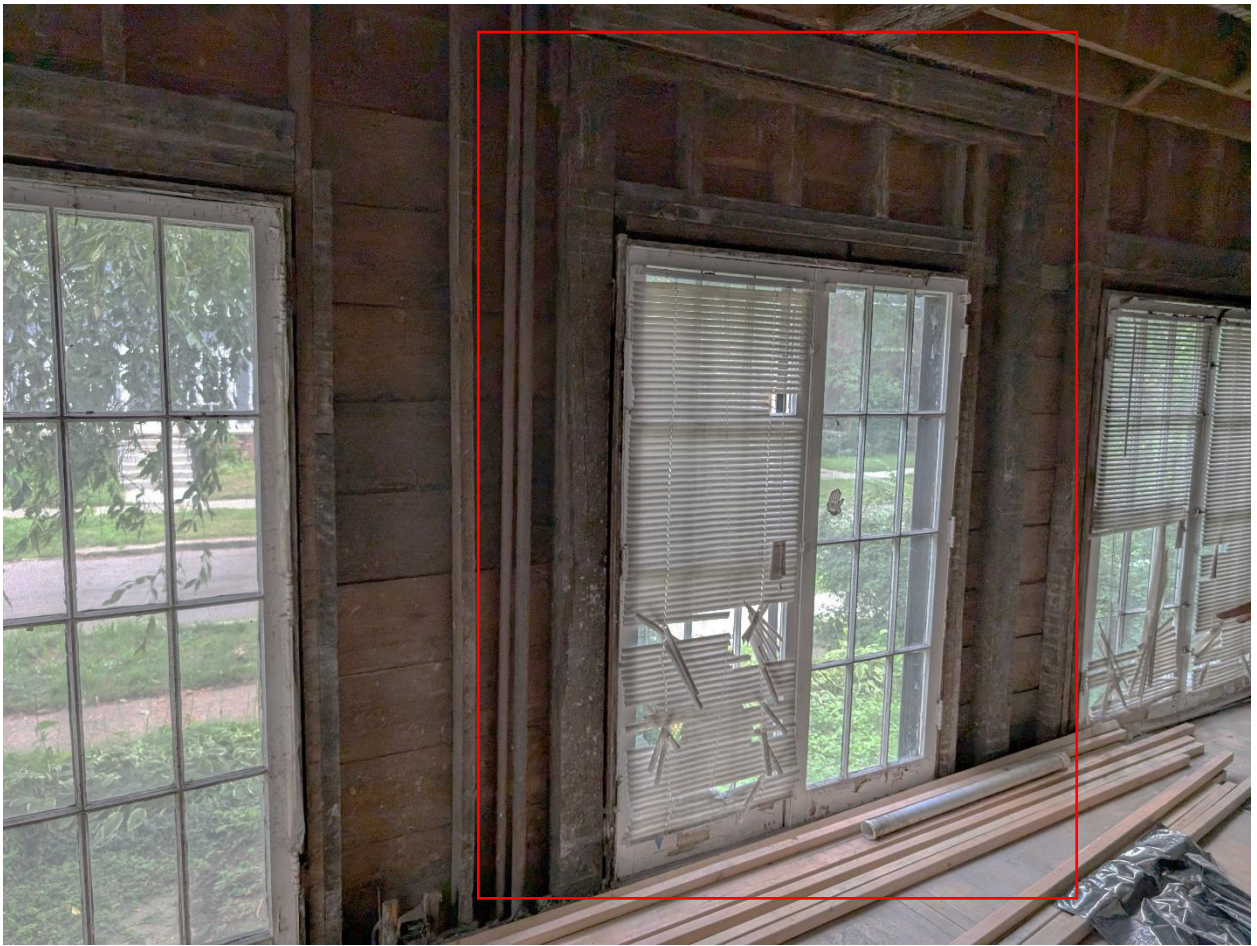
building's front/south wall when 7873 Van Dyke Place served as a single-family dwelling. The above Sanborn Map from 1951 does not depict the current west side porch and indicates that the house was a single-family dwelling at that time. It is therefore likely that the house was converted to a multiple-family use and the primary entrance was moved to the west side/its current location side by 1955.



7873 Van Dyke Place, west/side wall. Location of current primary entry door. Photo taken by staff on 8/30/2024



7873 Van Dyke Place, south/front facade. Photo taken by staff on 8/30/2024



Interior photo. Area outlined in red indicates the location of the central set of paired French windows/doors at the building's front/south elevation. Note that its header indicates that the current window opening once served as a doorway. Photo by HDC staff on 9/9/2024.

- Staff visited the site and noted the following:
 - As noted above, 7873 Van Dyke Place's front façade porch was infilled ca. 1920, soon after the building's construction. The front façade clapboard revealed as a result of the recent removal of synthetic siding, although not original, is clearly historic as it dates from the early 20th century in character and quality. The primary doorway and associated entry porch/deck was moved to the dwelling's side wall ca. 1955 (per Sanborn Maps). The building's lack of a front doorway is unusual within its immediate surrounds.
 - All of the houses on the south side of Van Dyke Place have a front façade entrance and a front porch which includes a set of entry steps that extend approximately 5'-0" from the porch
 - The front façade of 7873 Van Dyke Place is set back 18'-0" from the sidewalk
 - The houses on the north side of Van Dyke Place display a front façade setback which is similar to 7873 Van Dyke Place's. However, 7873 Van Dyke Place's front yard appears to be deeper than its neighboring yards because it lacks a set of front entry steps
 - 7873 Van Dyke Place's original front porch was approximately 6'-0" deep

It is staff's opinion that the location and design of the new south façade porch is compatible with the building's historic appearance as the home originally had a front porch. Because the new porch will measure 5'-0" in depth, it will align with the north

edge of the front porch steps of the neighboring properties. Also, the porch's depth is similar to the depth of the house's original porch and the front façade will retain its current clapboard siding. As previously stated, while the front façade siding is not original to the building's date of construction, it was installed soon after the dwelling was built, during the building's period of significance, and therefore has achieved its own significance. Finally, porches which incorporate elements such as a hipped roof, tapered wood columns, wood hand/guard railing, and wood bead board skirting are commonly found throughout the district, at houses of 7873 Van Dyke's style and vintage.

- As noted above, the current west side masonry/concrete and brick porch does not date from the building's period of significance. Staff therefore supports its removal. Staff does support the erection of a wood replacement deck which will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way at the building's south side as the current entrance/porch do not date from the building's original construction. However, it is staff's opinion that the new side deck should be detailed differently from the front porch to emphasize it as a discrete, wood deck/element which is separate from the new front porch. Historically, any porch constructed in wood would feature columns and a full roof to protect it from the weather. Despite the modern availability of treated wood and composite materials for constructing such a "wood" porch, architectural compatibility, in staff's opinion, dictates the inclusion of those elements. However, the addition of a "deck", as opposed to a "porch," has been approved by the Commission on secondary elevations as the present as modern features that do not destroy historic features and may be removed/replaced in the future. It is staff's interpretation that the side wall feature proposed in the current application is a deck, not a porch, and should be detailed differently from the proposed new front porch.
- The two windows at the third-story side gable ends proposed for removal are not original to the house and are incompatible with the building's historic character. Staff therefore supports their removal and replacement with the proposed arched-top aluminum clad wood windows as the new units will better approximate the design of the original windows, based upon the arched openings. Similarly, staff supports the replacement of the paired doors at the rear second story, because they are a relatively recent, non-compatible addition to the wall. The proposed paired double-hung, 6/6, aluminum clad, wood windows are appropriate to the house's historic appearance.
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed new garage is generally compatible with the house's and district's historic character
- As noted above, the application has not specified the height, material, and design of the new proposed new rear yard fence.
- **As noted above, the current site plan drawing is not accurate/does not conform to the building's elevation and plan drawings**, as it depicts a front façade porch which wraps around the building's west façade. The applicant has stated that he wishes the Commission to review the front porch and side deck design **as depicted in the building plan and elevation drawings**, which proposes a full width, one-story hipped roof porch on the front façade and a separate small deck at the west wall's entrance.

ISSUES

- The current site plan is inaccurate re: the design of the front porch and side deck
- Cementous siding with a faux wood grain finish is not appropriate for use in an historic district as it does not appropriately approximate the appearance of painted historic wood clapboard siding. Rather, painted historic wood clapboard siding typically displays a smooth finish.

Recommendation - Section 21-2-78 – COA: Rehabilitate dwelling and erect a new garage

It is staff's opinion that the project is generally appropriate to the property's and district's historic character, conforms to the district's Elements of Design and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as depicted in the submitted building elevation and plan drawings (sheets A1.3, A2.2, A2.3) with the following conditions:

- The new fence proposed for installation in the rear yard shall comply with the Commission's guidelines for fencing.
- Staff shall be afforded the opportunity to review and approve the final details for the east side egress window and well prior to the issuance of the project's permit
- The garage's siding shall display a smooth finish/shall not have a faux wood grain finish. The permit drawings shall be revised to note that the garage siding will be smooth.
- The applicant shall revise the site plan drawing so that it aligns with the building's elevation and plan drawings
- If the new side deck shall be constructed of wood per the submitted drawings, it shall have a subtle emphasis in its detailing that clearly distinguishes it as a deck, and not as a "roofless" porch. The applicant shall submit the final design of the new side deck to staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of the project's permit.