

STAFF REPORT: 10/9/2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

ADDRESS: 4081 PORTER

APPLICATION NO: HDC2024-00501

HISTORIC DISTRICT: HUBBARD FARMS

APPLICANT/OWNER: MIGUEL ANGULO

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 9/30/2024

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 9/23/2024

SCOPE: PAINT DWELLING AND INSTALL STONE VENEER AT FAÇADE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The property located at 4081 Porter includes a detached, single-family dwelling erected ca. 1915. The two-story, Dutch Colonial Revival style building features a gambrel roof which faces towards Porter Street. The exterior walls are primarily clad with vinyl (painted blue), although stone is located at the front façade. Windows are vinyl, 1/1 units. A masonry porch with aluminum guard rails has recently been installed at the primary elevation. A patio and walkway composed of masonry pavers have been added to the front yard. A 6'-0"-high, aluminum fence encloses the parcel.



4081 Porter. Current appearance. Photo by staff 9/30/2024

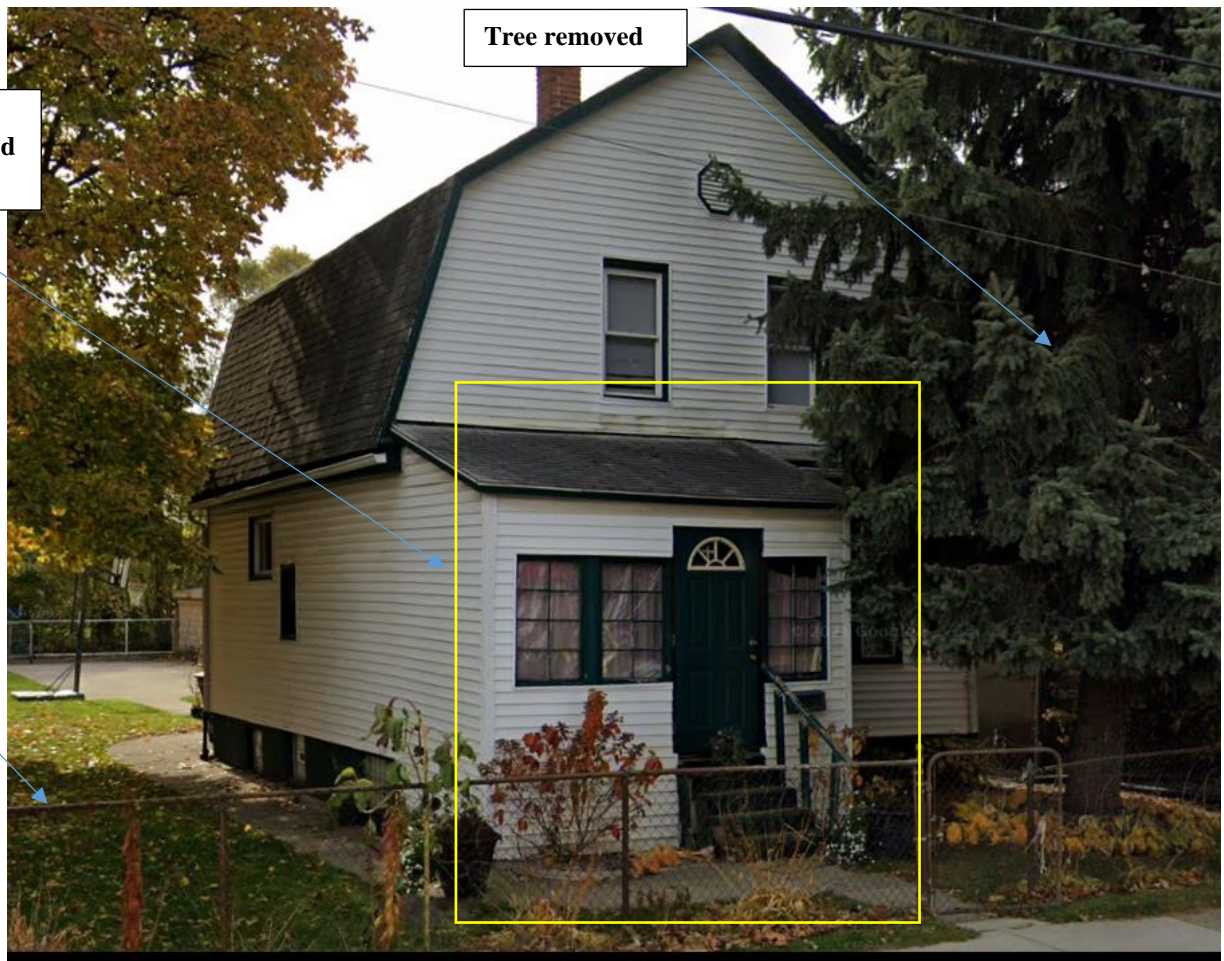
PROPOSAL

Per the submitted project documents, the applicant/property owner is seeking the Commission's approval of exterior work items which he recently completed without a Certificate of Appropriateness. Specific work items included in the current proposal include the following:

- Install new dimensional asphalt shingles at roof to replace existing asphalt shingles
- Replace existing 5'-0"-high chain link perimeter fencing with new 6'-0"- high aluminum fencing
- Install stone cladding at front façade enclosed porch
- Replace three wood windows at front enclosed porch with 1/1 vinyl windows
- Replace wood steps at the front entrance with a masonry porch/deck
- Install masonry paver patio and walkway at front yard
- Install a new steel front door
- Remove an evergreen tree at the front yard
- Paint vinyl siding blue

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Hubbard Farms Historic District was designated as a local historic district in 1993
- On August 21, 2024, HDC staff was made aware that unapproved exterior work was being undertaken at the property. Staff therefore reported the unapproved work to the building department for enforcement. The work items which staff observed as having been completed without approval are listed above and, as previously noted, have been submitted to the Commission for an "after the fact" approval with the current application

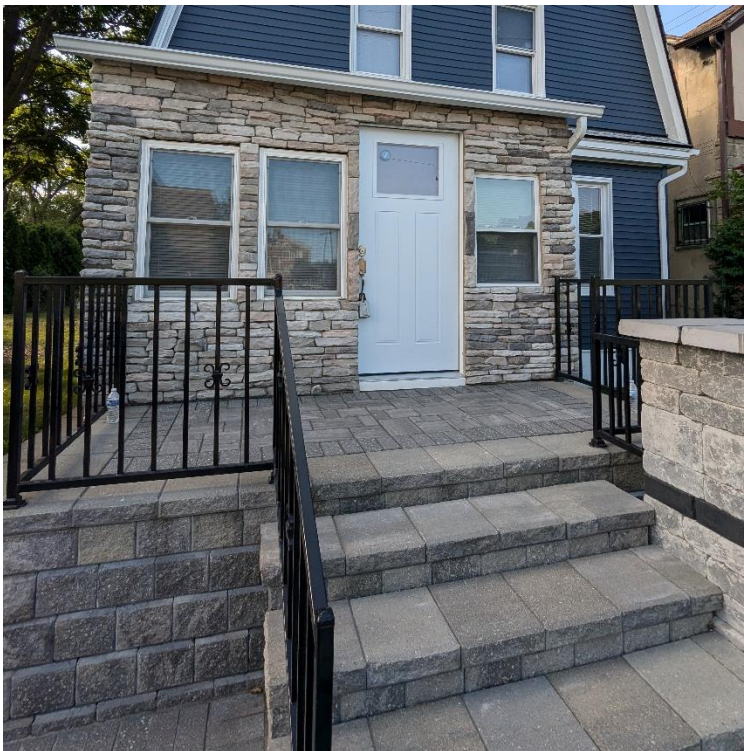


4081 Porter 2019, showing appearance before recent unapproved work. Google Streetview



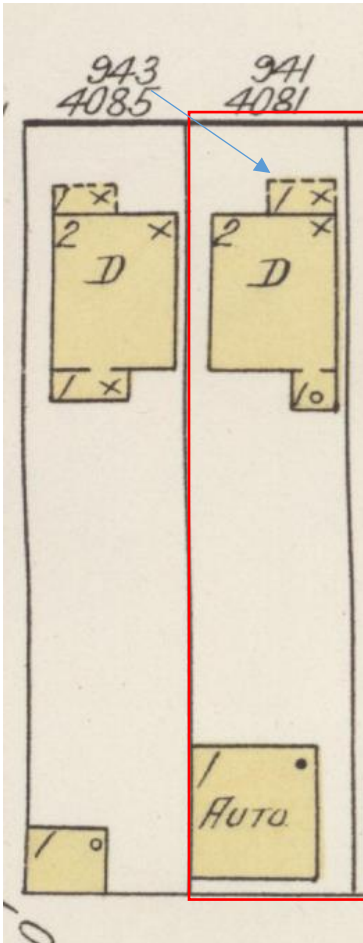
4081 Porter. Photo by staff taken in August 2024 after unapproved work.

New masonry porch/deck and paver patio/walkway

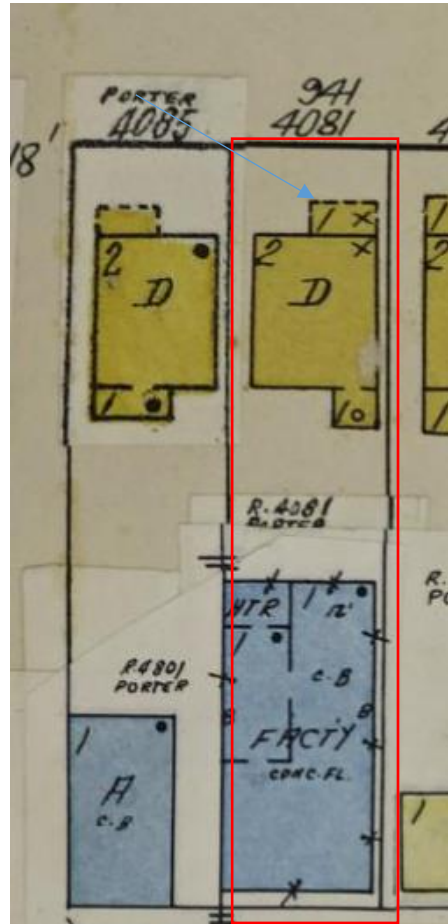


4081 Porter, detail of new masonry porch/deck. Photo by staff taken in August 2024 after unapproved work.

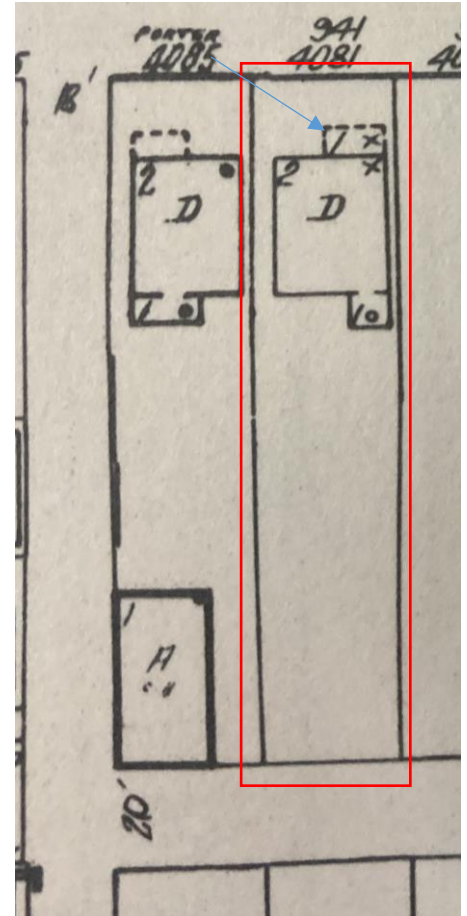
- Please see the below Sanborn Fire Insurance maps which indicate that the front porch was open in 1921, 1951, and 1971 (4081 Porter is outlined in red, blue arrows show porch)



1921 Sanborn map



1951 Sanborn map



1971 Sanborn map

- Sometime after 1971 the front porch was infilled and windows and a new front door opening added. Staff was unable to locate the designation slide of the property. However, it is likely that the porch was infilled prior to the district's designation as the windows which were present at the enclosed porch prior to the recent unapproved/2024 work were wood and do appear to date from the 1970s (see the above Google Streetview image of the building which dates from 2019). A review of Google Streetview images indicate that the front porch infill, the vinyl siding, and the vinyl windows which are not located at the infilled porch were extant by 2007.
- Regarding the work which was recently completed without HDC approval and now presented to the Commission for review via the current application, HDC staff notes the following:
 - The evergreen tree in the front yard that was removed without approval did appear to be very close to the house to an extent that its roots would have the potential to damage the foundation. Also, the owner has planted a new tree in its place. Staff does support this work item.
 - Staff has no issue with the blue paint added to the vinyl siding
 - Staff has no issue with the new fence as it replaced a chain link fence that had previously enclosed the parcel. The new fencing was installed at the location as the

previous fence and is of a height that is common for front yard fencing within the district.

- The district's Element of Design # (7) *Relationship of materials* notes that "brick and wood are the primary building materials originally used." As it stands, the vinyl siding present at the dwelling's exterior walls is an incompatible element which was installed sometime after the district's period of significance. The current masonry which was installed at the dwelling front façade without approval is a modern expression of stone cladding which is incongruent with the historic stone/masonry that exists within the district and its installation serves to further diminish the historic character of the building itself and its nearby surrounds. It is staff's opinion that the siding does not conform to the Standards and district's Elements of Design.
- Similarly, it is staff's opinion that the new masonry front porch deck and paver patio do not conform to the Standards and district's Elements of Design as they present a modern expression of masonry that is incompatible with the property's historic character. Also, regarding the new porch/deck, note that it replaced a small set of wood steps which extended well south of the sidewalk and north property line, which was in keeping with the established setback along the block. Although the other porches within the same block are all open, they each do include a similarly dimensioned set of steps which lead from the porch to the front yard beyond, leaving a comfortable amount of space between the edge of the steps and the sidewalk. However, due to the large size of the current porch/deck, the steps push well north of the datum established by the historic front porch steps in the near vicinity, with the bottom step landing only inches south of fence and sidewalk beyond. This is inconsistent with the existing porches within the district and the property's near vicinity.
- Regarding the three vinyl windows which were recently installed without HDC approval, staff does note that the wood windows that were removed were likely installed after the district's period of significance and therefore not distinctive character-defining elements that needed to be retained or replicated if replacement was merited due to condition. However, any new windows installed at the dwelling should be compatible with the house's historic character per National Park Service (NPS) guidelines. It is staff's opinion that vinyl windows are incompatible with the historic character of this ca. 1915 historic house for the following reasons;
 - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
 - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
 - The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
 - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
 - The installation of the proposed vinyl windows does not follow NPS guidelines for new replacement windows, as the proposed windows are not "consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period" which would have been originally present at the house.

For these reasons, it is staff's opinion that the three windows which were recently installed at the enclosed front porch do not meet the Standards. Staff does note that several other vinyl windows exist at the dwelling's exterior. As previously noted, these inappropriate windows were installed without HDC approval sometime before 2007. It is staff's opinion that any new windows which shall be installed at the property should be composed of a material which presents a more accurate replication of wood windows in order to forestall further diminution of the building's historic character.

- Staff has no issues with the new front door or roof

ISSUES

- The three vinyl windows as well as the masonry cladding, porch/deck, and front yard paving which were recently installed without HDC approval are incompatible with the building's historic appearance and are inconsistent with the historic character of the property's nearby surrounds and the historic district in general. The work items therefore do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation #1 - Section 21-2-78 -Denial – Install three vinyl windows and masonry cladding at enclosed front porch; install a masonry front porch/deck at primary entrance; install masonry paver patio and walkway at the front yard

It is staff's opinion the three vinyl windows as well as the masonry cladding, porch/deck, and front yard paving which were recently installed without HDC approval are inappropriate for the following reasons:

- The new masonry front porch deck, paver patio and walkways, and enclosed porch cladding do not conform to the Standards and district's Elements of Design as they present a modern expression of masonry that is incompatible with the property's historic appearance and the historic character of the historic district.
- Also, the due to the large size of the porch/deck, the steps extend well north of the datum established by the historic front porch steps in the near vicinity, as the bottom step lands only inches south of fence and sidewalk beyond. This is inconsistent with the existing porches within the district and the property's near vicinity.
- Regarding the three vinyl windows that were installed at the enclosed front porch it is staff's opinion that such windows are inappropriate for installation in historic districts because:
 - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
 - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
 - The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
 - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
 - The installation of the proposed vinyl windows does not follow NPS guidelines for new replacement windows, as the proposed windows are not "consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period" which would have been originally present at the house.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the above work items because they 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*

&

9) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

Recommendation #2 - Section 21-2-78 -Certificate of Appropriateness – Install a new front door, aluminum fence, and asphalt roof; remove a tree; paint siding

It is staff's opinion that above-listed work items conform to the district's Elements of Design and meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following work items as completed:

- Install new dimensional asphalt shingles at roof to replace existing asphalt shingles
- Replace existing 5'-0"-high chain link perimeter fencing with new 6'-0"- high aluminum fencing
- Install a new steel front door
- Remove an evergreen tree at the front yard
- Paint vinyl siding blue