

STAFF REPORT: FEBRUARY 12, 2025 REGULAR MEETING **PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO**
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00700 (VIOLATION #24-891)
ADDRESS: 4340 GLENDALE
HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN
APPLICANT: KARINA LABARCA
PROPERTY OWNER: AFIWI LLC
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: DECEMBER 10, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: FEBRUARY 5, 2025

SCOPE: REPLACE WOOD WINDOWS (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL) WITH ALUMINUM-CLAD WOOD WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The dwelling at 4340 Glendale was constructed in 1925. The one-and-a-half story, cottage-like building exhibits Tudor Revival design influences, and is an uncommon example of its type in the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District. The dwelling features a steeply pitched side gable roof, shingle siding, a prominent masonry chimney centered on the façade, and a front door with a rounded arch top covered by a semicircular canopy. A two-bay garage, also clad in shingles, sits behind the dwelling.



February 2025 photo by staff.

Most of the windows on the house have been replaced without approval from the Commission, as described in the following timeline:

At the time the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was enacted by the City Council in 1999, a photo shows original windows remained, including wood sash and casement windows. Due to storm windows over the openings and because the 1999 photo only shows one perspective, it is difficult to tell the original

configuration of the historic windows. However, it is clear that some were subdivided with muntins and at least one had a quarrel pane (that opening, beside the front door, has since been eliminated altogether).



1999 photo by the Historic Designation Advisory Board

Sometime between 1999 and 2013, An unknown number of original windows were removed and replaced with vinyl windows by a previous owner. This work was done without review or approval by the Commission. This work included the vinyl windows at the façade. A window opening to the west of the front entrance that contained a leaded glass window was also covered during this time.

During the spring of 2024, the present applicants removed additional original windows from the sides and rear of the dwelling and replaced some of the earlier vinyl windows on the facade. Some of these windows fill the width of the original window openings, whereas others required dimensional modifications to the rough openings. The windows are a mix of double-hung, picture, and slider windows. Two window openings, one at the east wall and one at the rear, were infilled entirely. Three remaining original wood windows—a paired set on the rear and one on the garage—were still in place at that time and remain in place today.

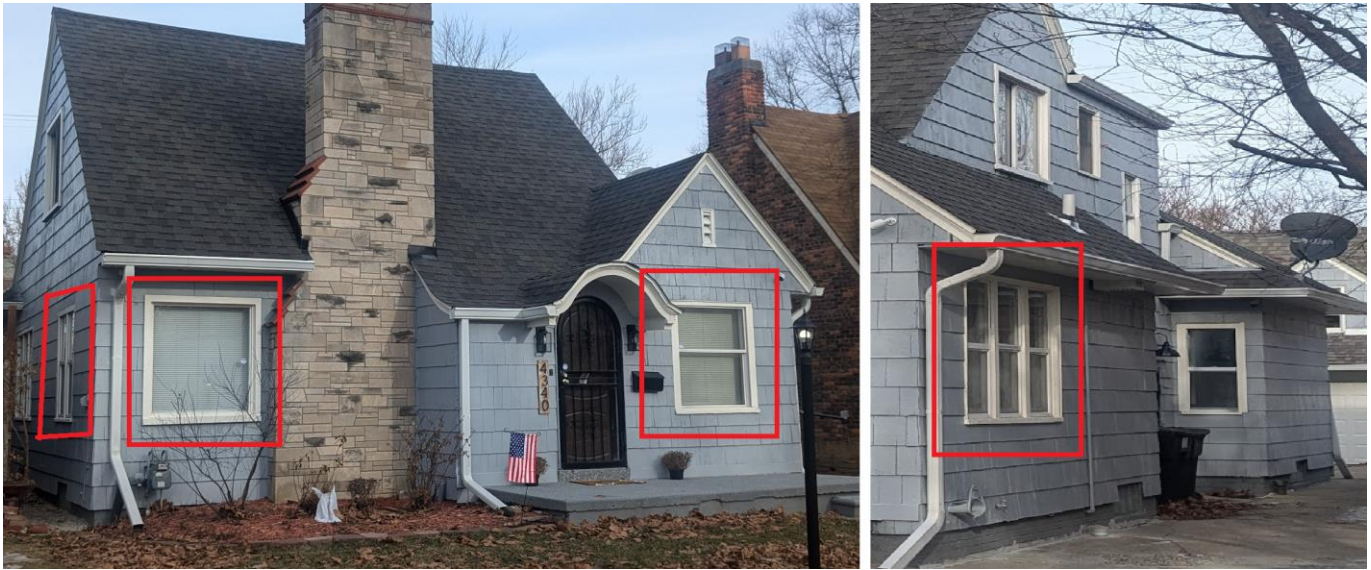


Image from 2024 application documents showing the two remaining historic windows on the house (partly hidden behind the patio heater).

For the July 10, 2024, Historic District Commission meeting, the applicant submitted an application for the window work described above and received a Denial. (Additional, unrelated work received a Certificate of Appropriateness.)

PROPOSAL

The applicant is to replace the windows on the four most prominently visible openings with Pella Lifestyle aluminum-clad wood windows in Classic White. The affected openings would be both remaining windows on the front (south) façade, and the frontmost opening on each side (west and east).



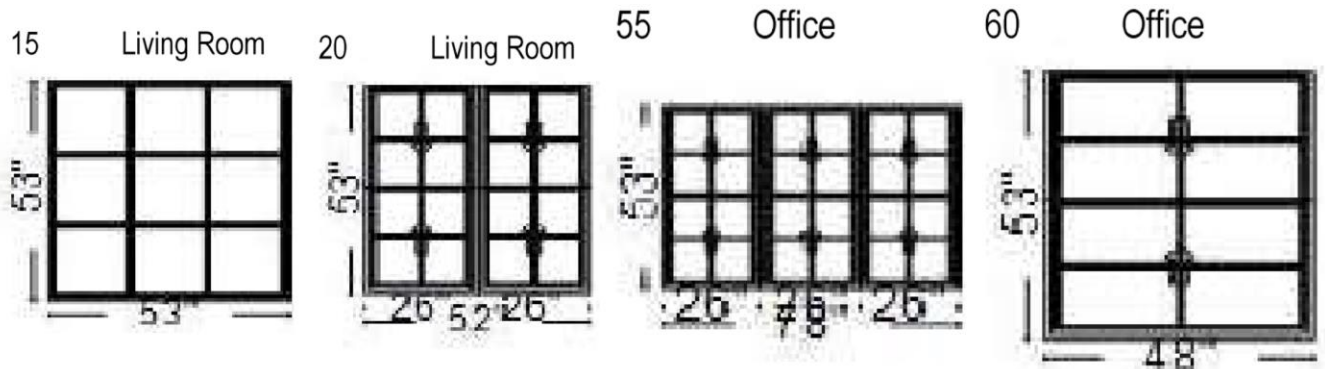
Openings proposed for replacement with aluminum-clad wood windows marked with red boxes. February 2024 photos by staff.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was established by Ordinance 33-99 of the Detroit City Council in 1999. The Final Report for the district states, “The residential buildings in Russell Woods are among the finest examples of middle class, builder-designed residential architecture in the city of Detroit erected between 1920 and 1949,” implying a period of significance.
- The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-168) for the district provide the following observations:
 - (3) *Proportion of openings within the facades.* 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.
 - (7) *Relationship of materials.* The majority of houses are faced with brick, often combined with wood, stone, or stucco. ... wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim. Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash.
- Staff’s ability to assess the appropriateness of the proposed replacement windows is hindered by a lack of information on the appearance of the historic windows. The four openings appear to have been filled as follows, from east to west (right to left on the photos above):
 - Frontmost opening on east elevation: Triple-ganged, mullioned sash windows, as seen in the 1999 photo. Based on other known historic windows, it is likely that a four-over-four muntin

pattern existed, but this is not certain.

- Easternmost opening on front (south) elevation: Most likely, double-ganged, four-over-four, sash windows, as seen in the 1999 photo. A pair of eight-pane casement windows is also possible, as this would not be inconsistent with the house's Tudor style.
- Westernmost opening on the front (south) elevation: Same as above.
- Frontmost opening on west elevation: The original configuration is not known.



Proposed windows, not to scale. The windows marked "20" and "55" approach appropriateness. Image from submitted window schedule.

- In general, the proposed Pella Lifestyle windows have the ability to match the lost historic windows as closely as possible given the limited information available. However, the submitted window schedule falls short of appropriateness. A triple-ganged, four-over-four window shown in the submitted schedule would be a good match for the first opening mentioned above, and a double-ganged, four-over-four window would be a good match for the second opening mentioned above. However, the window schedule states these would be "FactoryMull" which is not a compatible treatment, in staff opinion. A true wood mullion would match the condition of the lost historic element. As for the other two windows, an uncommonly wide, four-over-four sash window, and fixed, nine pane window as shown would not be a good match for the remaining two openings. Further, the submitted window schedule is not clear as to which window is intended for which opening.
- Additionally, even if appropriate replacement windows were specified for all openings, the proposed work would still be inappropriate, overall, as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation direct that the original windows should not have been removed in the first place. Standard #2 (quoted below) directs that historic materials be retained. If deteriorated beyond feasible repair, Standard #6 (also quoted below) would require that they be replaced with compatible windows.

ISSUES

- The applicant has not shown that the removed windows had deteriorated beyond feasible repair.
- The four proposed replacement units do not match the three-dimensional qualities of the historic windows: two have integrated factory mullions instead of true mullions, and two have the wrong muntin pattern.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial

Staff concludes that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District Elements of Design, 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.*

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 where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

For the following reasons:

- The wood windows proposed for removal (already removed without approval) are historic and materials and features that contribute to the character of the property that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair.

- Of the proposed four new windows, two of the units are clearly not appropriate as they do not match the old windows in design (they have muntin patterns, operation, and, consequently, profile, noticeably different than what is known to have historically existed on the property), and the other units are not appropriate as they have a factory mullion, rather than a true mullion.