

STAFF REPORT: 04/09/2025

PREPARED BY: L. SAINT JAMES

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00060

ADDRESS: 14520 ASHTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: ROSEDALE PARK

APPLICANT / PROPERTY OWNER: VALRIE BENNETT

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 03/09/2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 03/29/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE VINYL WINDOWS WITH VINYL WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1927, 14520 Ashton is a two-story, single-family dwelling that is in Rosedale Park. The gambrel asphalt shingled roof features a large, shed-roof dormer which is intersected with two front facing gables. While the upper floor is clad in wood shake, the first floor is clad in vinyl siding. All visible windows are non-historic vinyl units with aluminum coil stock trim. The vinyl windows, aluminum coil stock trim, and vinyl siding were in place at the time of historic designation.



Staff photo, 03/29/2025



Staff photo, 03/29/2025

PROPOSAL

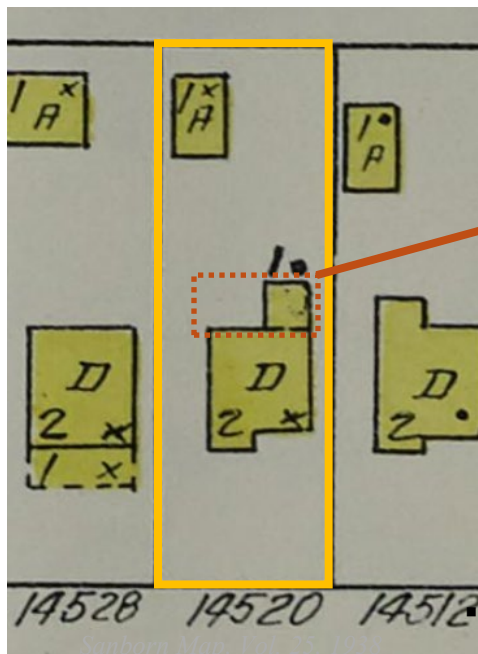
- Replace four white vinyl windows with white vinyl windows
 - (1) Back of house, first floor, North elevation
 - (2) Back of house, first floor, East elevation
 - (1) Back of house, first floor, South elevation

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Rosedale Park Historic District was enacted in 2007.



Designation photo, 2007



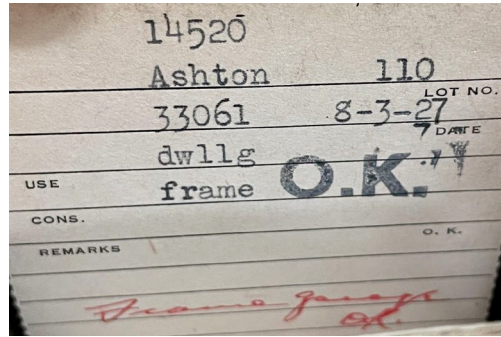
Sanborn Map, Vol. 25, 1938



Detroit Parcel Viewer

- Rear portion was expanded sometime between 1938 and 2009, though no records were found in BSEED.

- The building permit for the erection of the dwelling was issued 08/07/2027.



BSEED permit card

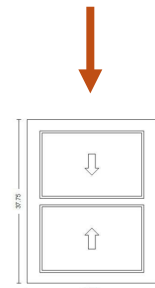
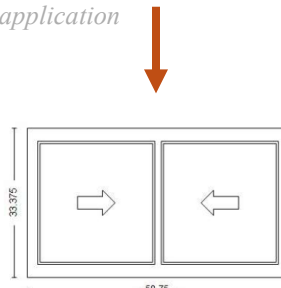
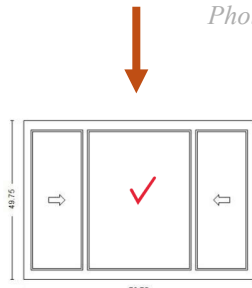
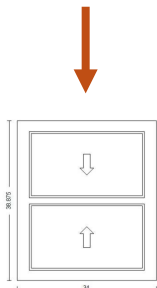
- Applicants reasoning for replacement is that the current vinyl windows are “drafty and cannot open.”



Google Street, 08/2025



Photos from application



Proposed vinyl windows, in white, from application

- The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-199) for the district provide the following observations:
 - *(3) **Proportion of openings within the façade.** Proportion of openings varies greatly according to the style of the building. Typical openings are taller than wide, but individual windows are often grouped together to fill a single opening which is wider than tall. Windows are often subdivided; ... In buildings derived from classical precedents, double-hung sash windows are further subdivided by muntins.*
 - *(7) **Relationship of materials.** Masonry is the most significant material in the majority of houses in the Rosedale Park Historic District in the form of pressed or wire cut brick, often combined with wood, stone, and/or stucco. Wood is almost universally used for window frames, half-timbering, and other functional trim. Windows are commonly either of the metal casement or wooden sash variety. ... vinyl siding and vinyl windows, where they exist, are replacements.*
- 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,” are not “compatible with the overall historic character of the building.” According to the National Park Service’s document [Replacement Windows that meet the Standards](#) (emphasis by staff):
 - *Replacement windows for missing or non-historic windows must be compatible with the historic appearance and character of the building. Although replacement windows may be based on physical or pictorial documentation, if available, recreation of the missing historic windows is not required to meet the Standards. Replacement of missing or non-historic windows must, however, always fill the original window openings and **must be compatible with the overall historic character of the building.** The general type of window – industrial steel, wood double-hung, etc. – that is appropriate can usually be determined from the proportions of the openings, and the period and historic function of the building. **The appearance of the replacement windows must be consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period, but need not replicate the missing historic window.** In many cases, this may be accomplished using substitute materials. There may be some additional flexibility with regard to the details of windows on secondary elevations that are not highly visible, consistent with the approach outlined for replacing existing historic windows. **Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards.***
- Although the current installation of vinyl windows predates the historic district and are therefore not in violation of historic standards, replacement installations must meet the referenced standards (NPS guidelines) under Chapter 21.
- Staff has authority to approve incompatible windows with compatible windows.

ISSUE(S)

- The four proposed replacement units are not compatible with the overall historic character of the dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Rosedale Park Historic District's Elements of Design, specifically:

Standards #:

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

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.

Elements of Design #: 3, 7

For the following reasons:

- The proposed vinyl windows are not consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period (material, operation, and, consequently, profile, are noticeably different than what typically were to had historically existed on the property).
- It is staff's opinion that through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.
 - 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.