

STAFF REPORT: JUNE 11, 2025 MEETING

PREPARED BY: B. SALIE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00269

ADDRESS: 3928 PORTER STREET

HISTORIC DISTRICT: HUBBARD FARMS

APPLICANT: ERIC HENSLEY & KHANH TRAN

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 05/12/2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 04/11/2025 & 05/27/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE HISTORIC WOOD WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

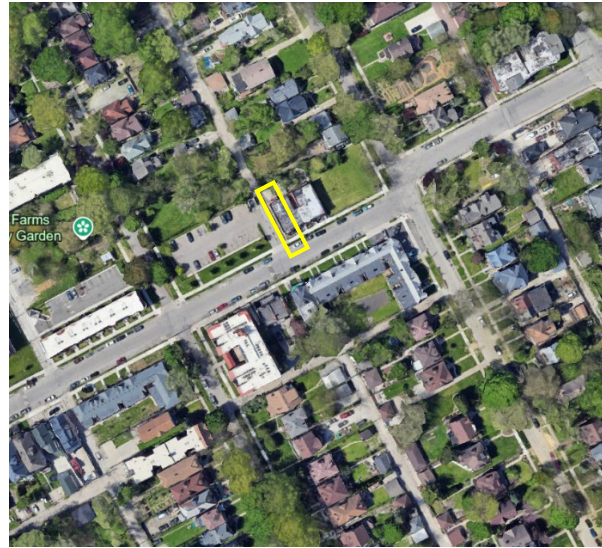
Erected ca. 1900, this parcel located at 3928 Porter Street is a two-story rowhouse, located between Vinewood Street and Hubbard Street, in the Hubbard Farms Historic District. The subject property is the western most unit of four attached townhouses, together referred to as the Victoria, designed in a Colonial Revival style with a dark red brick veneer. The subject property, 3928 Porter, retains its original historic wood windows, which are 9/1 double-hung in operation at the first and second floor bay windows and 1/1 double-hung units at the side. The wood windows are protected by older storm windows, which have recently been painted white. Aluminum coil stock has been added to window surround without HDC approval.



3916 Porter (RED) to the right, where work was meant to be done (without HDC approval). 3928 Porter (YELLOW) where the work was done without owners' permission and HDC approval. Photo taken by staff on 05/27/2025.



*Aerial View from Detroit Parcel View,
3928 Porter outlined in yellow*

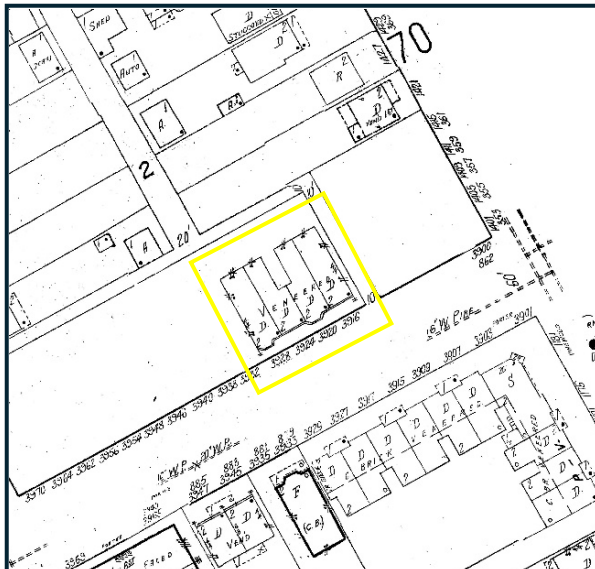


*Aerial View from Google Earth,
3928 Porter outlined in yellow*

PROPOSAL

- Remove seven (7) historic double-hung wood windows and trim to rough opening at front façade, and replace one (1) basement window.
- Install seven (7) Marvin Double Hung Windows
 - Aluminum Clad Wood Windows
- One (1) glass block window at basement level (diamond pattern glass block)

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH



- Per the Sanborn map, 3928 Porter Street is in relation to the Hubbard Farms Historic District.
- Hubbard Farms was established as a historic district in 1993.

- As stated by the applicant: *Due to the unauthorized exterior modifications to eight (8) windows at the front facade of townhouse which were modified by Tunesi Contracting LLC, who also performed exterior modifications to 3916 Porter, the townhouse at the east corner of our shared building known as "The Victoria." The owner of 3916 Porter Street, Motor City Oz Holdings LLC, hired Tunesi Contracting LLC to make exterior changes to their unit at 3916 Porter. Motor City Oz Holdings neglected to submit an Application for Work Approval (AWA) for their unit prior to hiring Tunesi Contracting LLC, and due to this negligence, Tunesi Contracting LLC not only damaged our original windows irreparably, but performed the same unauthorized work at 3916 Porter. We did not hire Tunesi Contracting LLC nor are we affiliated with the owner of 3916 Porter. Prior to unauthorized work, the original wood windows (dating 1900) had no aluminum trim, no caulking, and no nails on the wood.*
- The property owner of 3928 Porter self-reported the violation to the HDC staff and BSEED and were issued a STOP WORK notice on both 3928 and 3916 Porter within a few days.
- The applicant has provided an assessment of the wood windows for replacement, completed by contractor, Time and Tool:
 - *Polyurethane sealant/caulking was applied to the brick. Sealant applied to storm windows covering screws and access points for removal of storm windows. This has effectively rendered the windows inaccessible, as many storm windows are in a non-functional condition. Broken panes in multiple sashes are now inaccessible for repair without full removal of the sash from the interior. Simply cleaning the windows is now an impossible task for the homeowner.*
 - *Tub/Tile enamel has been applied to the windows. Old glazing on the panes and paint on the sashes were not repaired/prepped prior to painting, creating a prohibitively difficult process to restore the window without breaking the glass.*
 - *Excessive nails have been driven through the aluminum trim that was applied to all brick molding and exterior sills. Removal of this aluminum trim would likely damage the original wood beyond repair. Old wood rot was not remediated prior to applying aluminum, and the lack of air exposure caused by the application of aluminum will exacerbate rot issues.*
 - *Restoration of old windows is made easier by weathering. Over many years of weathering, glazing and paint are made weak by the elements. Stripping back layers and preparing glazing are the most important steps in historic window restoration. The previous contractor's failure to adhere to this procedure has created a much more expensive, difficult, and in many ways impossible restoration process for these windows.*



3916 Porter Street



HDC Staff Photos, May 2025

3928 Porter Street



Most recent photos from November 2022 Google Earth Street View. Images taken prior to unapproved work.

- Element of Design states that: *#(7) Relationship of Materials: **Wood trim is most commonly used for window, porch, and functional elements as well as decorative trim; some lintels and sills also exist.***
- As directed by the National Park Service (NPS), in the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:

When historic windows exist, they should be repaired when possible. When they are too deteriorated to repair, selection of the replacement windows must be guided by Standard 6. Design, visual qualities, and materials are specific criteria provided by the Standard that are pertinent to evaluating the match of a replacement window. Evaluating the adequacy of the match of the replacement window involves the consideration of multiple issues.

- The windows proposed for replacement are historic age and are distinctive character defining features of the property in staff's opinion.
- A review of the current conditions reveal that the caulk has potentially been added to the storms rather than the actual windows themselves.
- In staff's opinion, the windows are in repairable condition. Therefore, per the Elements of Design and SOI Standard #6, these windows should not be removed.
- Please refer to the below photo's for current window conditions.



Existing Condition of front façade windows



HDC Staff Photos, taken 05/27/2025



Existing Condition of Windows, view from sidewalk



HDC Staff Photos 04/11/2025



Basement Window Opening and Side of 3928 Porter



HDC Staff Photos 04/11/2025



Photos taken by applicant.

ISSUES

- The seven (7) historic wood windows at the buildings façade which are proposed for removal are distinctive character defining features and appear to be in repairable condition. Therefore, their removal does not meet the standards.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 1 – Denial – Replace historic wood windows

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

Standard #: 2, 5, and 6

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 historic 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.

And Elements of Design #:7

For the following reasons;

- The historic windows proposed for removal are still in well enough condition to be preserved and repaired.
- The historic windows proposed for removal are significant historic features that contribute to the character of the property and as they have been shown to be in repairable condition, should be retained.