

STAFF REPORT: 08/13/2025 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00391

ADDRESS: 2255 OAKMAN

HISTORIC DISTRICT: OAKMAN BOULEVARD

APPLICANT: BRETT MAHAFFEY, ANDERSON WINDOWS

PROPERTY OWNER: CHARLES AND BEVERLY SMITH

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: JULY 21, 2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: JULY 25, 2025

SCOPE: REPLACE VINYL WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The two-story house at 2255 Oakman Boulevard is on the south side of the street, mid-block, between Holmur and Dexter Avenue. The house is clad in light brown brick. The main body of the house has a hip roof, and a pyramidal hip roof covers the front extension; both are covered with red tiles. Revival details include brick quoining at the corners of the house; cast stone quoins were used as the front door surround. Stone sills at the second floor window openings interrupt the brick soldier course that wraps around the house; the window openings at the first floor also have stone headers. The deep overhanging roof is adorned with evenly-spaced flat brackets. The six-over-six patterned double-hung windows are vinyl and were in place at time of designation.



Staff photo, July 2025.

PROPOSAL

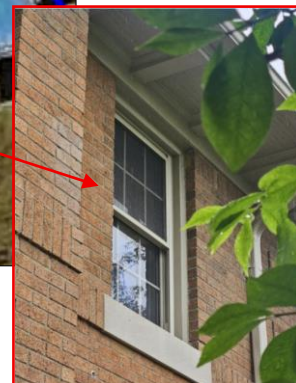
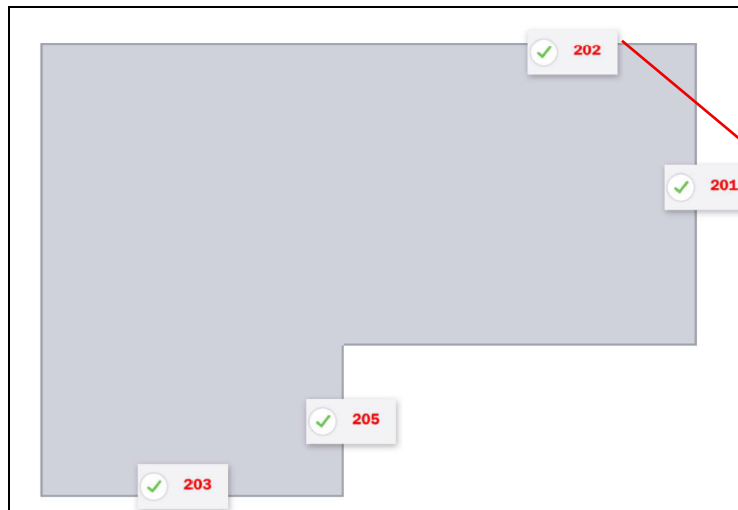
Replace five (5) vinyl windows with Renewal by Anderson Fibrex double-hung windows, six-over-six pattern.

Color: Canvas

Glass: Smart Sun Glass

Grids: Grilles-between-glass

Brick mould: Wicker coil



Applicant document and photos.



STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Oakman Boulevard Historic District was enacted on October 6, 1989.
- The building permit for the dwelling and garage were issued on September 11, 1929.



Left: BSEED permit card. Above: Designation photo, HDAB.

- Staff explained to the applicant, the window contractor, that staff has authority to approve the installation of the windows if they had simulated-divided lites, or “SDLs”. These are grilles/muntin bars that are applied to the exterior pane of glass. However, the property owner requested to keep the proposal for between-the-glass grilles so that the new windows will match the existing vinyl windows which have between-the-glass grilles.
- When historic windows are missing or non-historic windows are in place (but not as a violation), the National Park Service’s guidelines “[Replacement Windows that meet the Standards](#)” state:
 - *Replacement windows for non-historic windows must be compatible with the historic appearance and character 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.*
 - *Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards.*
- Between-the-glass grilles are flat and obscured by the sheen of the glass. They do not match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of true divided-light historic windows and are not “consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period” and are not “compatible with the overall historic character of the building”.
- The first set of replacement windows with simulated divided-light grilles will be different in appearance than the existing vinyl windows. However, as the remaining vinyl windows are replaced, the final result will be dimensional windows that are compatible with the dimensionality of the intact historic features on the house as well as with the other historic buildings within the district.
- Regarding the transparency of the selected SmartSun glass, staff isn’t clear on how transparent the selected product is relative to the Low E4 glass option. The applicant submitted completed projects from Detroit’s University District and Palmer Woods (not local historic districts), which he said had Fibrex windows with SmartSun glass installed. The examples offer different effects of transparency. Muirland appears to be a compatible option, while Wellsley, with dark brown frames/grilles (vs. the other house’s brighter tan frames and grilles) does not. Staff has requested glass samples for the Commission’s review at the meeting.



Before, Zillow photo.

18972 Muirland



After, applicant photo.



Before, Google street view.

1530 Wellsley



After, staff photo.

ISSUES

- Installing replacement windows with between-the-glass grilles, which have a flat profile and are obscured by the sheen of the outer glass, do not match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of true divided-light historic windows and are not consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period and are not compatible with the overall historic character of the building.
- The transparency of the selected SmartSun glass is in question. Samples of the LowE4 and SmartGlass products are needed.

RECOMMENDATION

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 Oakman Boulevard Historic District's Elements of Design, specifically:

Standard 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.

For the following reasons;

- Installing replacement windows with between-the-glass grilles, which have a flat profile and are obscured by the sheen of the outer glass, do not match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of true divided-light historic windows and are not consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period and are not compatible with the overall historic character of the building.
- The transparency of the selected SmartSun glass is in question. Samples of the LowE4 and SmartGlass products are needed.