

STAFF REPORT: AUGUST 13, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: B. SALIE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00418

ADDRESS: 1485 BURNS AVENUE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: INDIAN VILLAGE

APPLICANT: VICTOR HOME SOLUTIONS

PROPERTY OWNER: BRIAN HICKEY & BYRUM PATRICK

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 07/14/2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 07/24/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE STORM WINDOW WITH VINYL CASEMENT WINDOW



*Photo taken by staff on 07/24/2025 (Above)
Detroit Parcel Viewer (Below)*



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1910, this house was designed by architect, Bernard C. Wetzel for Jacob C. Danziger, Treasurer and General Manager of the Detroit Casting Company. The dwelling is a two and a half story house designed in the Tudor revival architectural style. The box bay still displays the original clay tile roof. The existing red asphalt shingle roof with its 12/12 pitch roofing matches the color of the tiles. Located in the middle of the block between St Paul and Agnes Street, the house retains its original wood windows, most of which are sub-divided with varying muntin patterns. The exterior walls are clad with smooth finish stucco and the smaller protruding gable walls which are directly above bay windows have a half timber design; all the windows and all the trim on the house is painted with a contrasting blueish gray. The front walkway leads to a raised open front porch that extends across the front of the house, and the entry door is recessed within an arched opening.



From a 1916 issue of Western Architect, shared by Historical Detroit Area Architecture group

PROPOSAL

The scope of work is as follows:

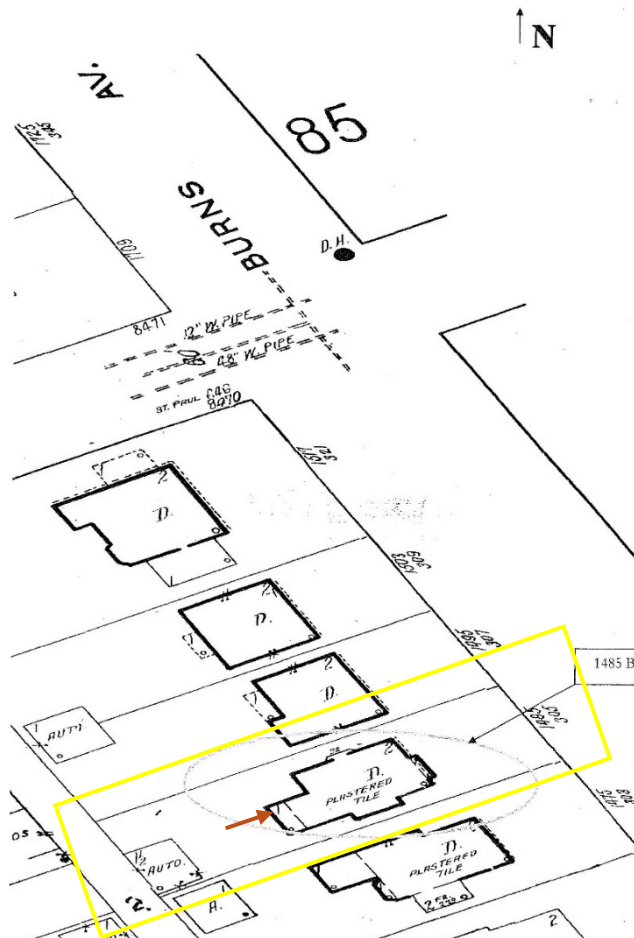
1. Replace the one (1) aluminum storm window with vinyl casement window on the rear side of the house
2. Paint the window trim black to match existing adjacent windows

Submitted by applicant, image shows 1485 Burns rear view with second floor windows (highlighted window which is being proposed for alteration)



STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Indian Village Historic District was established in 1971. In the districts Elements of Design, “wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim and is used in many examples for all trim.
- Prior to the current owner’s purchase of this home, the clay tile roof had been replaced with an asphalt shingle roof. That had been completed without HDC approval, the violation was resolved in 2012 per the applicant’s application (12-33).



The existing rear window and window frame are wood, which is a compatible material type within the historic district. Both the wood window and the existing aluminum storm window appear to be in good condition and are not deteriorated beyond repair.

- The vinyl casement window that is being proposed to replace the aluminum storm window is not compatible within the historic district for the following reasons:

- Vinyl windows and poly-products offer 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 "bright white" color/sheen.

The Sanborn Map offers context for the house in relation to the block. The arrow denotes the location of the window within the application.



Interior window photos provided by applicant

- The standard relationship of windows to walls is that windows are recessed within walls and therefore the addition of a vinyl casement window to the already existing window is not an appropriate design solution. The historically appropriate solution is to install a new aluminum or wood-framed storm window.
- The National Parks Service states that integrity of a building is determined by seven aspects: historic location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The rear windows with storms retain their historic relationship, and the house it is important has not undergone many visible exterior changes aside from the roof replacement and the removal of curtain awnings above the front facade, second-story windows. Therefore, this building retains a high level of integrity.
- Therefore, it is staff's opinion that the addition of the vinyl casement window is not an acceptable alteration for this house within the Indian Village Historic District.
- In an email from the applicant, "It appears that the window we plan to replace has exterior screens and the others do not. We plan to match the surrounding windows upon replacement."

ISSUES

- Vinyl is not a suitable material for replacing windows within a historic district.
- There is no historic precedent for installation of another full window outboard of an existing historic window. A compatible replacement storm window should be considered.



Photo taken by staff 06/14/2023

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 1 – Denial – Replace storm window with vinyl casement window

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

Standards #: 2

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.*

Elements of Design #: 7

For the following reasons:

- A vinyl casement window is not a compatible replacement for an aluminum storm window.
 - Vinyl windows and poly-products 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 "bright white" color/sheen.
- There is no historic precedent for installation of another full window outbound of an existing historic window. A compatible replacement storm window should be considered.