

**STAFF REPORT:** 9/10/25 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** E. THACKERY

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** HDC2025-00297

**ADDRESS:** 4758 STURTEVANT

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN

**APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:** NADER AFSHAR AND BARDIA MADANI

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 8/4/2025

**DATES OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 8/26/25

**SCOPE:** REPLACE WINDOWS, REPLACE GUTTERS/DOWNSPOUTS, REPLACE/RESTORE DOORS, HOUSE/GARAGE ROOF, REBUILD PORCH\* (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL).

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

4758 Sturtevant is a property on the north side of Sturtevant Avenue between Broadstreet and Livernois. The house is a brick two-story Tudor home built in 1927. A detached garage was built at the same time, but that garage appears to have been replaced by a newer garage. The house suffered a fire at some point after July 2009, and it appears to have caused the garage some damage. The Detroit Land Bank Authority owned the house for a period and estimated the minimum repair costs at [\\$117,843 in 2018](#) . The property most recently sold in April 2025.



*Site Visit Photo 1, staff. August 26, 2025. Two second-story windows are missing. All five windows on this front façade are proposed for replacement with this application. The restored front door is to be installed. The front porch rebuild is also part of this application.*



*Applicant-provided photo from application of garage in current condition. Applicant states that the plan is to replace roof and repair and repaint wood siding, replacing in kind as needed. The garage door is not mentioned.*

In April 2024, HDC staff received a complaint that second-floor windows on the front facade were removed by the owner. The complaint also stated that a rehabilitation was in progress and no permits or a certificate of appropriateness were apparent. That complaint became Violation 24-866.

Some of the house's distinctive, character-defining features include the large, highly decorated chimney, the wood friezeboard trim and inlaid brick details in the gable, cut stone around the windows and door and stone accents laid in the masonry, bricks that vary in color and that project from the wall plane, the leaded glass windows, the shield/crest accents both on the chimney and in stone above the door, and the brick porch with its wing walls and stone caps. The iron railing details under the second-floor window and around the front porch were character-defining details that have been lost.

Currently, the windows on the house are in varying states. On the front of the house, two historic windows are missing and these apparently were double-hung windows with delicate lead muntins in the upper sash, creating a pattern of 20 panes in the upper sash over one pane in the lower sash. A window like these is still in place on the second floor. Two large historic casement windows are in place on the first floor and they feature lead muntins as well that are proportionally scaled for their size. (See photo above.) On the house's secondary elevations, most windows are missing, but it appears in the applicant's photos of these secondary elevations that a few windows remain in their openings, and a few historic leaded glass windows remain on the rear of the house. See the photos from the applicant's materials below.





*Applicant's photo from updated application materials, west elevation. Some windows are boarded, some may be missing, but these circled windows with mullions between may be present. Their conditions are not described in the applicant's materials.*



*Applicant's photo from application materials, east elevation. Glass block windows and the circled window remain in place, while others appear to be missing. A Craftsman-inspired door is proposed to be installed in the door opening.*



*Applicant's photo from updated application materials, rear elevation. Two windows in "Lower Level #111" are historic wood windows with leaded glass in the upper sash. "Upper Level 210 and 213" may be present. The restored back door is proposed to be installed here.*

Not many detailed photos showing current window conditions were submitted as part of the application materials, but a few were included. The first-floor casement windows were shown in detail in some of the submission materials, and the photos show some cracking paint and broken glass. The single remaining leaded glass window on the front of the house on the second floor was also documented from the interior as part of later application materials. The windows that comprise Window Lower Level 111 on the house's rear were also documented from the interior. (See applicant photos below.)





*Applicant's photo from their initial application. First-floor casement windows with leaded glass on the front façade. Cracked paint and some broken glass are visible.*



*Applicant's photo from updated application materials. One of the first-floor casement windows from the interior. Some broken panes of glass and some deteriorated paint are visible.*





*Applicant's photo, from updated application materials, of the second-floor window on the front of the house that retains its leaded glass. (The other two second-floor windows on the front of the house that looked like this in past photos have been removed.)*



*Applicant's photo from updated application materials that show the first-floor windows on the rear, labeled in the applicant's photo of the rear windows (above) as "Lower Level Window 111." The leaded glass remains in the upper sashes of two of the three windows.*

Not many other photos were submitted with the application materials that show conditions of the various types and state of windows that exist on the house.



TIMELINE OF HOUSE'S APPEARANCE:



*Photo of designation slide, 1999.*



*Google streetview, July 2009. Plantings are in good condition, house's historic features are intact, and the house is well maintained.*





*Google streetview, August 2011. Second-floor windows appear open and a board is leaning against the first-floor window, but the decorative railing below the second-floor window, the low decorative railing around the front porch, and the storm door are all intact. Shrub is overgrown.*

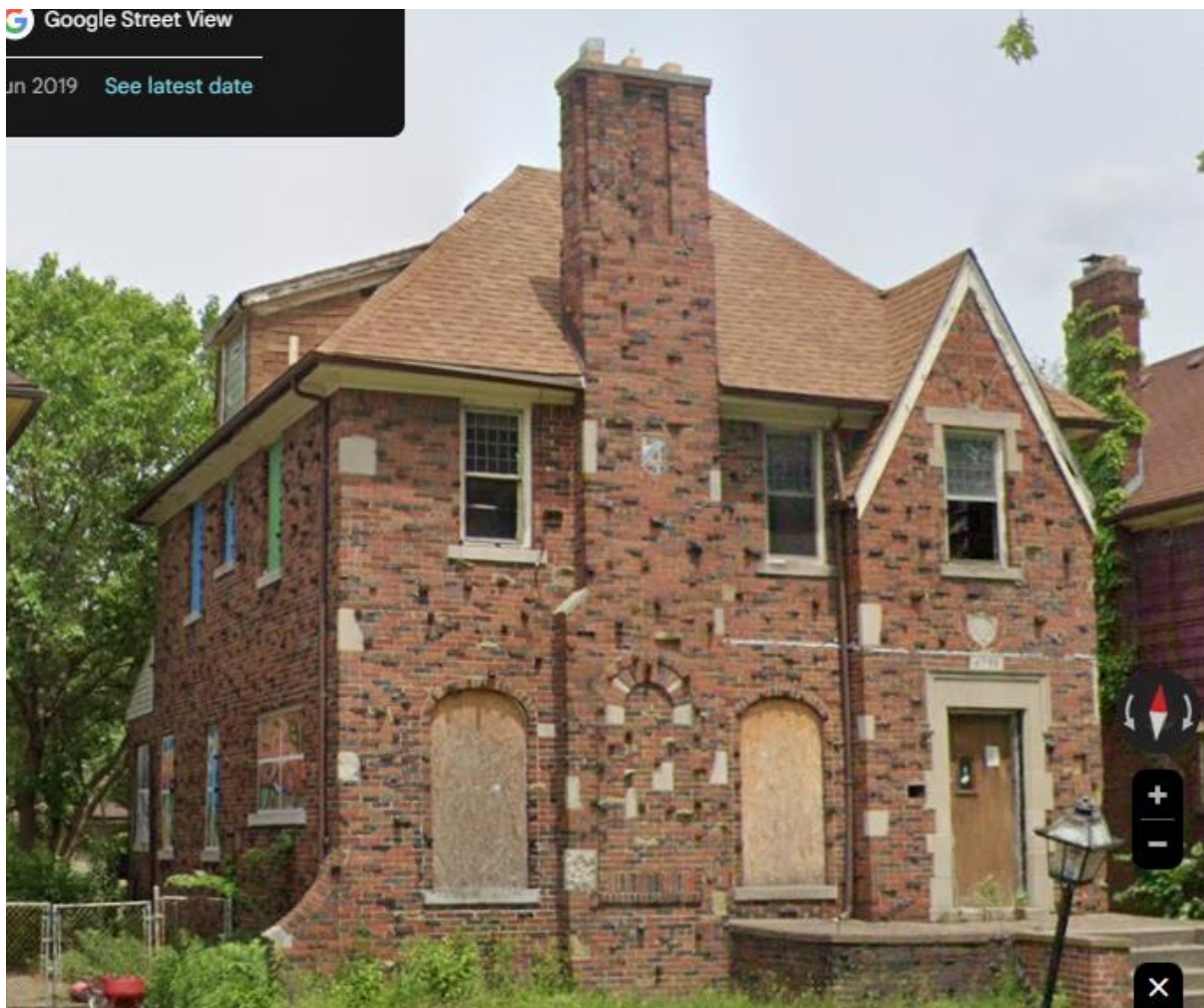


*Google streetview, August 2013. Second-floor windows are in the same position as in 2011. First-floor window is covered or boarded. Exterior storm door, second-floor decorative railing, and low porch railing are all gone. Shrub is overgrown.*



*Google streetview, August 2018. The overgrown bush on the lower left has been removed, the second-floor windows are in the same position as shown in the last photo, and the first-floor windows (as well as all the side windows) have been securely boarded.*





*Google streetview, June 2019. There appears to be no change in exterior conditions from August 2018.*

The 2024 photo that accompanied the violation complaint about rehab work being done without apparent permits or approvals showed the removal of the two second-story leaded glass windows on the left and one half of each of the arched leaded glass casements on the first floor. (Those first-story windows have since been re-installed and are no longer missing.)

**PROPOSAL:** Applicants seek approval for the following proposed work:

**A. Garage**

- a. Replacement roof: GAF asphalt in Williamsburg Slate
- b. Wood siding: repair and replace in kind as necessary (wood for wood in same siding profile) Painted white or beige.
- c. Garage windows: existing: two original wood windows with muntins. One is broken and has been removed. Plan: Preserve one still in place, side over other or replace it. Applicant needs to clarify plan here; repair and retention of removed garage window would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

**B. House**

- a. Replacement roof: GAF asphalt in Williamsburg Slate

- b. Replace all gutters and downspouts: Currently are dark brown, K-style gutters and same is proposed.
- c. Replace all fascia, soffits: Applicant mentions painting them to match existing.
- d. Friezeboards—Applicant mentions in 8/26/25 email to staff that the prominent friezeboard in front gable has been repaired in pieces over the years and needs full replacement.
- e. Restore front and back doors and reinstall.  
Install replacement side door: Jeld-Wen black fiberglass Craftsman-inspired paneled door; door may get painted to match restored doors. Steel security doors installed on top of all doors.
- f. Rebuild front porch (work completed without approval): concrete cap replaced, appears to staff as if bricks for the porch rebuild were salvaged and reused. For the wing walls, bricks are less of a close match, but the design and coping appear to match the original. The mortar used did not match that on the historic house.



*Applicant-supplied photos of the front porch work in progress. It has since been completed.*

- g. Replace all windows (NOTE: application initially mentions restoring some, but applicant has updated that to **replacing all**):
  - i. FRONT OF HOUSE:
    - existing first floor: 2 pairs leaded glass wood casement windows
    - proposed: wood double-hung windows with between-the-glass grilles installed to simulate muntins on top and bottom sashes
    - existing second floor: two have been removed but were wood with leaded glass in the upper sash, remaining window is wood with leaded glass in upper sash
    - proposed: wood double-hung windows with between-the-glass grilles installed to simulate muntins on top and bottom sashes
  - ii. SIDES AND REAR (windows are in various states and configurations):
    - existing: many missing windows on all sides



proposed: vinyl single-hung windows with installed grilles on top and bottom sashes to simulate muntins

existing: some windows on west side appear to be in place in a ribbon with mullions between; material and condition unknown.

proposed: vinyl single-hung windows with installed grilles on top and bottom sashes to simulate muntins

existing: glass block windows on east side

proposed: no change

existing: on rear, a second-floor double-hung window appears to be in place; material and condition unknown. A ribbon of three windows mulled together is on rear and two of these retain their leaded glass in the upper sashes.

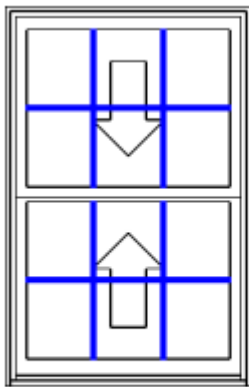
proposed: vinyl single-hung windows with installed grilles on top and bottom sashes to simulate muntins

existing: square, fixed windows like applicant's Window 103 on the west elevation and Window 210 on the rear

proposed: vinyl picture windows

As mentioned, the windows on the house are currently in varying states and configurations (some are missing, some are original, some are fixed in place, and materials and condition on many of these are unknown). Regardless of the varying states of the house's windows, two main window replacement solutions are proposed:

1. For the **front elevation**, all windows are proposed to be replaced with wood Jeld-Wen windows with between-the-glass grilles installed to simulate muntins:



**Viewed from Exterior.**

*Applicant's image from application materials. This is the proposed replacement for all primary elevation windows.*

2. For the house's **sides and rear**, most windows are proposed to be replaced with vinyl single-hung windows

with grilles added. (Glass block windows are to remain unchanged and fixed windows are to be replaced with vinyl fixed windows, regardless of their current material.) The application materials mention painting the vinyl beige or that the manufacturer makes the windows in beige.



*Grids will be added*

*Applicant's image from application materials. This is the proposed replacement window for most secondary elevation windows, in beige.*

## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999.
- This property has a window removal violation (24-866) for the removal of the two second-story front windows on file.
- This home is full of rich details like special bricks, leaded glass, and stone accents. It still retains many of those character-defining features and its historic character.

### **GARAGE**

- The proposed asphalt roof for asphalt roof is an in-kind replacement of a nonhistoric material. Staff finds such work to be appropriate.
- Preserving the siding, repairing it in kind (with the same material in the same size, dimension, and profile), and repainting it is good maintenance. The same is true for the window that will be preserved. Staff finds that these proposed repairs meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The applicant needs to propose a plan for the garage door and the window that was in place but has since been removed.

### **HOUSE**

- The proposed (1) asphalt roof for asphalt roof and (2) brown k-style aluminum gutters with downspouts for the same are both in-kind replacements of a nonhistoric material. Staff understands that the downspouts are to be located where they are currently, which is appropriate. If any downspouts must be moved, staff would need to approve their new locations.



- For fascia, soffits, and frieze boards, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation require that historic materials like these be repaired before being replaced. If their damage is such that they are beyond repair and must be replaced, the *"new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials."* As long as the replacement trim pieces are wood, of the same size, dimensions, and profile, installed the same, and are painted the same color as the existing, staff finds that the proposed trim work meets the Standards. The applicant mentions that all of these materials must be replaced and mentions painting them to match their previous appearance, but the application does not state that these materials will all be replaced exactly in kind.
- Restoring and reinstalling the historic front and rear doors meets the Standards. Where an entry door is missing, however, like the side door at this house, the Standards require that a compatible door must be proposed to replace the missing feature. The historic district's Elements of Design #10 (*"Relationship of architectural details"*) also state that *"The architectural elements and details of each structure generally relate to its style."* The proposed Craftsman-inspired fiberglass door for the side door is not, in staff's opinion, compatible with the architectural design of the structure. The rectangular window with evenly divided square, stacked lights give the proposed door its Craftsman appearance, so a door that had a different window and that is wood may achieve more compatibility with a Tudor-style house. If the commission agrees, a different side door could be proposed by the applicant and reviewed by staff.
- For the front porch rebuild, staff finds that the bricks proposed are generally compatible. The mortar joints, however, are much brighter and more obvious than they were before, changing the character of the porch.

Regarding the proposed **window replacement** at the house:

- According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Standard 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."* The leaded glass windows are distinctive, historic, character-defining features of the house at 4758 Sturtevant and, by the Standards, should be repaired and preserved whenever possible, wherever they exist. If any of them are beyond repair, the proposed replacement should match the historic in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. **Staff finds that the wood replacement windows with large-scale grids in both sashes proposed as replacements for the front of the house do not match the old windows.**
- Regarding the windows that no longer have historic sashes in them, because historic windows still exist at this house, the historic windows serve as a model for any necessary replacements. Again, the replacement windows should look more like the historic prototypes with the delicate muntins in the upper sash in wood windows. The National Park Service's publication "Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards," uploaded onto the webpage for reference and available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/windows-replacement-meet-standards.htm>, lends some additional guidance. It says that when replacements are necessary, replacement windows on the primary façade must match the historic windows in all their details and in material (wood for wood, with lead muntins that match the historic), but that windows on secondary elevations with limited visibility must match the historic windows in size, configuration, and general characteristics, though finer details may not need to be duplicated and substitute materials may be considered. So a substitute material for wood could be considered by the Standards for the windows on the house's sides and rear, as long as the windows are appropriately sized for the openings, and match the historic windows' configuration and general characteristics. **Staff finds that the vinyl replacement windows with grids in both sashes proposed as replacements for the sides and rear of the house do not retain wood windows' general characteristics with appropriate proportions, dimensionality, and trim details, even for secondary elevations.**
  - 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 than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.

## ISSUES

- The application mentions a garage window that was in place but has since been removed and the plan for that window needs to be clarified in order to assess its appropriateness and adherence to the Standards.
- The application materials mention that all of the fascia, soffits, and frieze boards must be replaced and mentions painting them to match their previous appearance, but the application does not state that these materials will all be replaced exactly in kind.
- If any downspouts must be moved from current locations (on house, and garage if applicable), staff would need to approve their new locations.
- The proposed Craftsman-inspired fiberglass door for the house's side door is not compatible with the architectural design of the house.
- For the completed front porch rebuild, the mortar joints are much brighter and more obvious than they were before, changing the character of the porch.
- Staff finds that the proposed front-of-house wood replacement windows with large-scale grids in both sashes do not match the historic windows.
- It is staff's opinion that through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.
- An independent assessment by a window restoration professional of the existing leaded windows and their reparability and costs could be useful to the commission. The applicant referred to an assessment in his 8/26/25 email to staff and staff requested the report, but the applicant stated that they received no written estimates for window repair.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

#### **Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial: Replace Original Leaded Wood Windows on Primary Elevation with Wood Windows; Install All Vinyl Windows on Sides and Rear of House; Install New Side Door; Rebuild Front Porch and Wing Walls Using Bright White Mortar (Porch work completed without approval)**

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District's 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.*
- *5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a 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 Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District's Elements of Design #10

For the following reasons:

- Where the historic wood windows with leaded glass muntins exist, the Standards and Guidelines require that they be repaired. When the historic features are beyond repair, the new feature is to “match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.” No documentation establishing that the original condition of the historic windows were beyond repair was included in the application. However, even if the historic wood windows with leaded glass are beyond repair, the proposed replacement is not a visual match. The pattern of the muntins dividing the panes, the profiles and proportions of the windows’ components, and in two cases, the change in operation of the windows from casements to double-hungs all support the conclusion that the proposed replacement windows do not match the historic.
- The windows on the sides and rear of the house are in various states: some windows are missing altogether, some are present but their materials and conditions are unknown, and some are original historic windows. To replace all of these with vinyl single-hung windows does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards because the remaining historic windows should be repaired and because vinyl windows do not match historic wood windows, due to limitations in fabrication and material.
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile, dimensionality, and appearance of historic wood windows.
  - 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 than wood. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
- The proposed side door is Craftsman-inspired and this house is Tudor style; as such, the proposed door is incompatible with the house’s architectural style.
- The bright white mortar used in the front porch’s reconstruction was not compatible with the historic house. The mortar on the historic house and on the porch before its reconstruction was muted, recessed, and almost invisible, and it likely had less cement than the bright white mixture used in the rebuilding. The bright white mortar on the new front porch changes the appearance of the porch.

**Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Remaining work items, including Replace House and Garage Roofs; Repair and Repaint Garage Siding and Window; Replace Gutters, Downspouts, Fascia Boards, Soffits, and Frieze Boards; Restore and Reinstall Front and Back Doors; and Install Security Doors**

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District’s Elements of Design, with the conditions that:

- The new trim, including soffits, fascia, and frieze boards, will be wood and will match the existing in dimensions and profiles and will be painted to match existing.
- If downspouts must be moved to new locations, applicants will submit plan to HDC staff for review and approval before work begins.
- Applicant will repair and retain removed garage window.