

**STAFF REPORT: 10/08/2025 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: J. ROSS**

**ADDRESS: 1760 VAN DYKE**

**APPLICATION NO: HDC2025-00522**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE**

**APPLICANT: IRMA LOUISE AND QUINTEN HUNTER**

**OWNER: IRMA LOUISE HUNTER**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 9/22/2025**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 9/15/2025**

**SCOPE: INSTALL VINYL SIDING; INSTALL VINYL WINDOWS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The building located at 1760 Van Dyke is a 2-story home that was erected ca. 1905. The house features a hipped roof central/main mass with a projecting front-gabled wing at the primary elevation. Hipped-roof dormers with 1/1, double-hung wood windows top the roof. Windows are 1/1 wood and 1/1 vinyl, double-hung units (cream/light yellow finish color). Although the dwelling is clad with faux brick/asphalt siding, it does display a number of distinctive decorative details which are associated with the Queen Anne style to include the cutaway bay window with pendant brackets at the primary elevation's first story, the pedimented gable end at the front elevation second story, deep wood eaves with carved wood brackets at the main roof, and eve returns with carved wood brackets at the front porch roof. The foundation wall and front porch columns and wingwalls are brick.



**1760 Van Dyke. Staff photo taken on 9/22/2025**





1760 Van Dyke. Photo by applicant.

## PROPOSAL

Per the submitted materials, the applicant is seeking approval for the following:

- Remove four existing 1/1 double-hung, wood windows and trim/original woodwork to the rough opening, to include one at the north side second story; two at the front, second story, and one at the rear, second story
- Install four new 1/1 double-hung vinyl window units and associated trim (color, Beige-Almond)
- At front and side walls, remove the existing faux brick/asphalt siding and original lapped wood siding beneath; replace with new horizontal vinyl siding with a cedar-grain look

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The West Village Historic District was designated in 1983
- Please note that the applicant contracted with Hansons Windows to replace “approximately 10 wood windows with new vinyl windows at the home in 2017. A review of Detroit building department records indicates that a permit was issued for the work. However, the building department did not forward the application to the HDC for review and therefore the work did not receive a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the issuance of the permit. HDC staff therefore reached out to Detroit building department staff to inquire why a permit was issued for this work without HDC review and/or approval. Detroit building department staff noted that the 2017 vinyl window permit application “...was a Mail-In application that wasn't flagged as Historic, and it appears that the Permit was issued, however no inspections were performed so we can't verify whether the work was performed or completed. There wouldn't have been a referral to HDC through the Mail-In process at that time because we hadn't set it up for that, and I believe that's a strong contributing factor for why we abandoned the Mail-In without review process.” Note that these 10 vinyl windows **are not** included in the current scope of work which is under review.
- The applicant submitted a proposal to the Commission for review at the 12/14/2022 meeting to replace five original wood windows (to include the four which are targeted for removal with the current application) with new vinyl windows. Staff noted that the application did not provide the level of documentation necessary to determine if the windows were deteriorated to an extent that merited their replacement. Staff also noted that the home does retain a number of distinctive details despite its non-compatible asphalt cladding and vinyl windows and that any future window treatment should not contribute to a further diminution of the home's historic character. The Commission issued a denial of the application to replace the five wood windows with new vinyl units. A review of the recording of the 12/14/2022 meeting revealed that Commission had opined that the proposed vinyl windows were not appropriate to the building's historic appearance and that their installation would contribute to the diminution of the home's historic character as the existing vinyl windows detract from the home's character.
- The applicant attended the Commission's 12/13/2023 regular meeting and submitted a second application for the replacement of five original wood windows (to include the four which are targeted for removal with the current application) with 1/1 double-hung composite window units and associated trim (Renewal by Andersen). The Commission denied the 12/13/2023 application because they determined that it did not provide detailed specifications for the proposed new window product. It was therefore not clear to the Commission if the new windows presented an acceptable replication of the existing historic wood windows and trim if they had determined that the existing historic windows merited replacement
- The applicant attended the Commission's 10/9/2024 regular meeting to submit a third proposal for the replacement of seven historic wood windows (to include the four windows proposed for installation in the current submission). Specifically, the proposal included four potential replacement window types/materials to include:
  - Vinyl. 1/1, double-hung
  - Composite (Fibrex), 1/1, single-hung sash
  - Vinyl-clad wood, 1/1, double-hung sash (Anderson 200 Series)
  - Vinyl-clad wood, 1/1, double-hung sash (Andersen 400 Series)

The Commission approved the removal of the seven targeted original wood windows (to include the four windows proposed for installation in the current submission) and the installation of replacement windows ***with the condition that the new windows were wood which could be clad with either aluminum or vinyl***. Also, the installation and trim details for the new windows were required to be approved by HDC staff.

- While the 10/9/2024 decision did allow for the removal of the four original wood windows targeted by the current application, it did not allow them to be replaced with full vinyl units. Rather, as noted above, the Commission required that the new windows be made of wood, in keeping with the material of the original units.
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed new full, consumer-grade vinyl replacement windows are not appropriate to the building's historic appearance for the following reasons:
  - Full vinyl windows present a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
  - Full, 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.
  - Full vinyl windows also lack 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.

For the above-listed reasons, 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" which are proposed for replacement/would have been present when the building was originally constructed.

- As noted above, the building's original, lapped wood siding is covered with a non-original, siding that is composed of a tar paper underlayment and fiberboard sheathing which is coated with tar and a granular material. The surface of the siding has been stamped with a pattern which simulates brick. This siding, known by its industry tradename "Insulbrick", was typically applied over a house's original siding in an effort to modernize the building's appearance. The product initially appeared on the market in US in the 1930s and remained as the preferred choice for replacement siding until aluminum and vinyl siding became available in the late 1950s. Although the current faux brick/asphalt siding is likely of historic age (50 years or older) and was present at the time of the district's designation, it is not compatible with the building's historic character because it is not present a good match to the house's original lapped wood cladding, nor does it present a reasonable likeness to true brick. Staff therefore supports the removal of the current historically inappropriate faux brick/asphalt siding.
- As noted, the application also proposes to replace the current non-historic, incompatible asphalt/faux brick cladding **and** the historic wood siding that remains underneath with new vinyl siding at the front and rear walls. The applicant has noted that he wishes to follow this course for the following reasons:
  - The existing faux brick/asphalt cladding at the front and rear walls is in poor condition
  - The current exterior faux brick/asphalt cladding product is no longer available in the marketplace
  - "The wood under the faux brick is rotted; I do not think it is feasible to replace a rotted material with a similar material that will probably rot in a few years"

See the below pictures of the areas of the deteriorated faux brick/asphalt siding. Note the areas where the siding has fallen off completely, leaving the historic lapped wood siding fully visible, and the areas where the outermost surface of the siding has peeled away, leaving the fiberboard and or tarpaper beneath (the black and light brown areas) visible. Note that the black

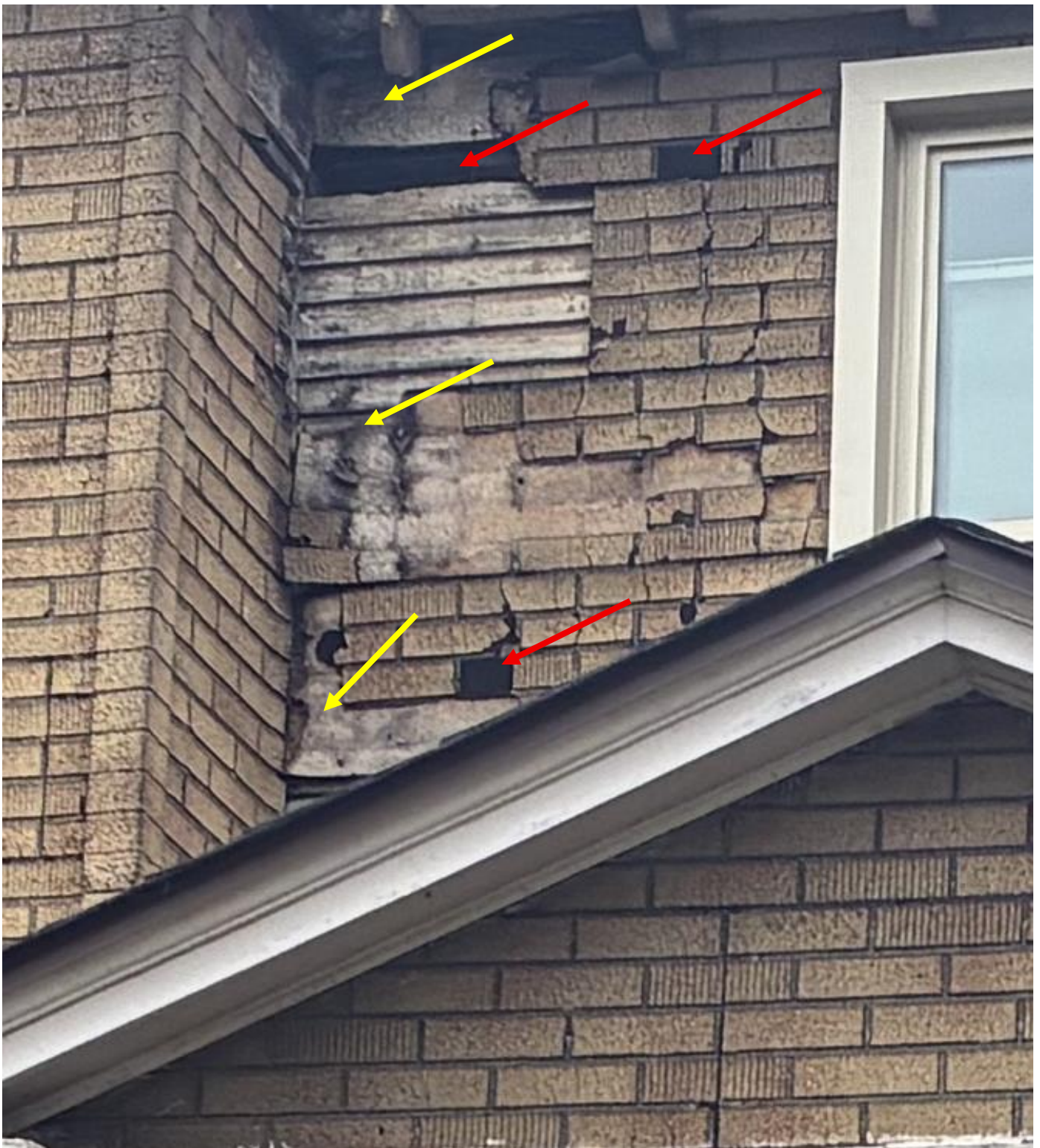


areas on the wall do not appear to be “holes” where the original wood siding has rotted away from the wall.



**Front façade. Areas outlined in red show deteriorated faux brick/asphalt siding Photo taken on 9/22/2025 by HDC staff**





Front façade, detail. Red arrows indicate area where the top “granular” layer has separated from the siding. The yellow arrows indicate the tarpaper beneath the stamped fiberboard, which has been directly applied to the wood. Photo taken on 9/22/2025 by HDC staff



**Rear façade. Areas outlined in red show deteriorated faux brick/asphalt siding Photo taken applicant.**

- It is noted that faux brick/asphalt/Insulbrick siding has successfully been removed from a number of buildings within local historic districts to include the following three examples within the West Village Historic District. See the below photos to note that all of the three cited examples feature the original lapped wood siding which was covered with faux brick/asphalt/Insulbrick siding that was retained and successfully repaired.





**715 Van Dyke (BEFORE), designation photo. Note faux brick/asphalt siding**



**715 Van Dyke, (AFTER) Google Streetview 2023. Note lapped wood siding.**





1773 Parker, Google Streetview 2019 (left), with faux brick/asphalt siding (BEFORE). Photo at right taken by HDC staff in 2024, showing original/repaired lapped wood siding (AFTER)



1417 Van Dyke (BEFORE), Google Streetview 2013. Note the presence of faux brick/asphalt siding (yellow arrow) underneath wood shake.





**1417 Van Dyke (AFTER), 2024 by HDC staff. Note original lapped wood siding is now revealed and restored**

- Please note that the current proposal has not provided evidence that the historic lapped wood siding that remains underneath the existing faux brick/asphalt/Insulbrick siding is deteriorated to an extent that merits its wholesale removal. Staff does have the authority to approve proposals for the removal of faux brick/asphalt/Insulbrick siding and repair the remaining historic siding underneath, so it is possible for the applicant to undertake a removal of the



existing non-original siding at the front and rear walls in order to provide an assessment of the condition of the original wood siding underneath. Also, please note that the National Park Service's [Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings](#) state following with respect to historic wood siding:

- **RECOMMENDED** - Identify, retain, and preserve Identifying, retaining, and preserving wood features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments; and their paints, finishes, and colors.
- **NOT RECOMMENDED** - Removing or radically changing wood features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.
- **RECOMMENDED** - Repairing wood features by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods. Repair may also include the limited replacement in kind-or with compatible substitute material of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of features where there are surviving prototypes such as brackets, molding, or sections of siding.
- **NOT RECOMMENDED** - Replacing an entire wood feature such as a cornice or wall when repair of the wood and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts are appropriate. Using substitute material for the replacement part that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the wood feature or that is physically or chemically incompatible.
- **RECOMMENDED** - Replacing in kind an entire wood feature that is too deteriorated to repair-if the overall form and detailing are still evident-using the physical evidence as a model to reproduce the feature. Examples of wood features include a cornice, entablature or balustrade. If using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered.
- **NOT RECOMMENDED** - Removing an entire wood feature that is unrepairable and not replacing it; or replacing it with a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance.

Finally, nor that that the district's Elements of Design speak to the prevalence of wood for use as exterior cladding and trim within the neighborhood:

- ***(7 )Relationship of materials. The majority of the buildings in West Village have either common or pressed brick or clapboard sheathing as their principal exterior material. Stucco wall surfaces also exist as a principal material; some later replacement siding exists in the district, but much of such siding changes the visual relationship of the siding to the building. Masonry is used on the first story only on some houses, and wood shingles exist on some second stories. Most buildings have wood trim; a few more substantial houses and apartment buildings have stone trim. There are some tile roofs; some slate roofs still exist; asphalt replacement roofs are common. Porches are built of brick or wood.***
- ***(8)Relationship of textures. The most common relationships of textures are the low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted to smooth wood trim and/or wood clapboard contrasted with smoother trim. Random ashlar used at the first-story level is contrasted with a wood-sheathed or shingled upper story in a few houses, as is a brick first story and a stuccoed second story. The smoother surface of glazed brick or painted brick is sometimes contrasted with stone or wood trim. Carved wooden detail and half-timbering provide textural interest. Slate and tile roofs provide textural interest whereas asphalt shingles usually do not.***

- *(10)Relationship of architectural details. Architectural details generally relate to style. Victorian architectural details appear on 1½- and 2½-story Victorian cottages; spindlework, fishscale shingles and patterned shingles are indicative of the Queen Anne style. Areas treated include porches, gables, window and door surrounds, and cornices. The buildings influenced by the Arts and Crafts or Medieval sometimes have details carved in wood on window frames, door frames and eaves and sometimes have half-timbering. The four-square buildings, mostly on the northern end of the district, have little architectural embellishments; the detail on the eaves, bays, dormers and porch are architectonic. Neo-Georgian or Colonial buildings have classical details in wood on porches, shutters, window frames and dormers. In general, various styles are rich in architectural detail.*

It is therefore staff's opinion that retaining and repairing the original siding, if possible, is the most appropriate treatment for the siding at this property, will greatly enhance the building's historic character, and further restore historic character to the West Village Historic District. If the wood siding beneath is deteriorated beyond repair, then new wood siding which matches the existing should be installed.

- As noted above, it is staff's opinion that the current faux brick siding is historically inappropriate and staff therefore supports the removal of the siding. However, it is staff's opinion that replacing the current exterior siding with an equally incompatible siding is not in keeping with the standards/that any siding treatment should be compatible with the building's overall historic character. It is staff's opinion that the proposed vinyl siding is not a compatible replacement product as it does not match the surface texture, reflectivity, finish, edge details, and at times width/profile and reveal, of historic wood clapboard siding. Additional typical details, such as vertical joints in the cladding and protrusion of the siding (either past or in-line with the window casings) further obliterates the siding's ability to "matching" look of wood siding and trim. Finally,

## ISSUES

- The current proposal has not provided evidence that the historic lapped wood siding that remains underneath the existing faux brick/asphalt/Insulbrick siding is deteriorated to an extent that merits its wholesale removal. Per the Standards and Guidelines, retaining and repairing the original siding, if possible, is the most appropriate treatment for the siding at this property. If the original wood siding is deteriorated beyond repair, then new wood siding matching the original should be installed
- The use of wood for exterior siding, trim, and decorative detailing is highlighted in the district's Elements of Design #s 7,8, and 10
- The proposed vinyl siding is not a compatible exterior cladding product.
- The proposed vinyl replacement windows are not appropriate to the building's historic appearance

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation 1 of 1 - Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Denial - install vinyl windows and install vinyl siding**

Staff recommends that work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the West Village 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 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*

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.*

#### And Elements of Design #7, 8, and 10

For the following reasons:

- The proposed vinyl replacement windows are not appropriate to the building's historic appearance because:
  - Vinyl windows present 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 windows also lack 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.
- Vinyl siding is not a compatible replacement product as it does not match the surface texture, reflectivity, finish, edge details, and at times width/profile and reveal, of historic wood clapboard siding. Additional typical details, such as vertical joints in the cladding and protrusion of the siding (either past or in-line with the window casings) further obliterates the siding's ability to "matching" look of wood siding and trim. Replacing the current exterior siding with an equally incompatible siding is not in keeping with the standards/that any siding treatment should be compatible with the building's overall historic character.
- The current proposal has not provided evidence that the historic lapped wood siding that remains underneath the existing faux brick/asphalt/Insulbrick siding is deteriorated to an extent that merits its wholesale removal. It is staff's opinion that retaining and repairing the original siding, if possible, is the most appropriate treatment for the siding at this property.
- Wood features, including siding and trim, are distinctively significant historic features of the district

