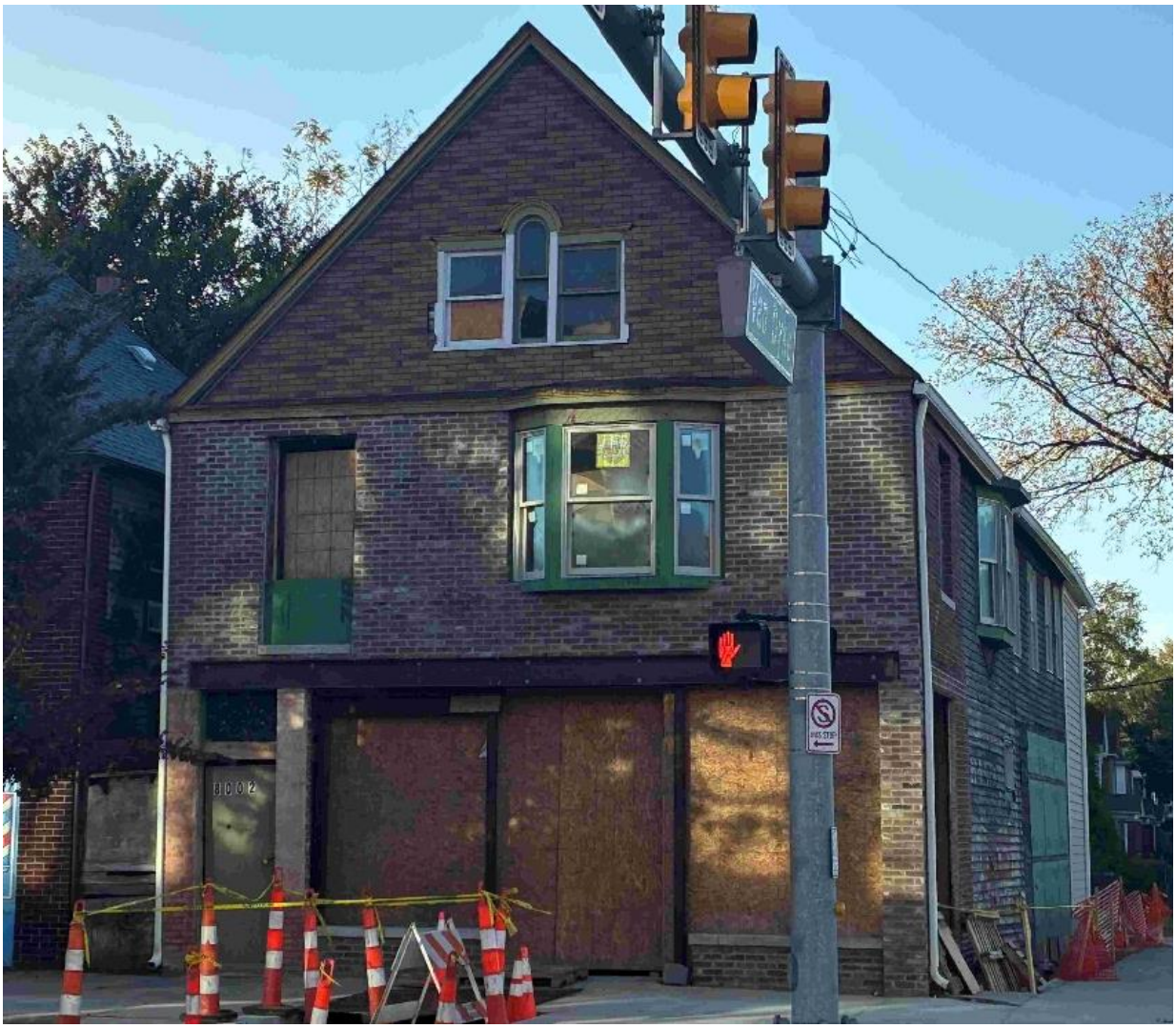
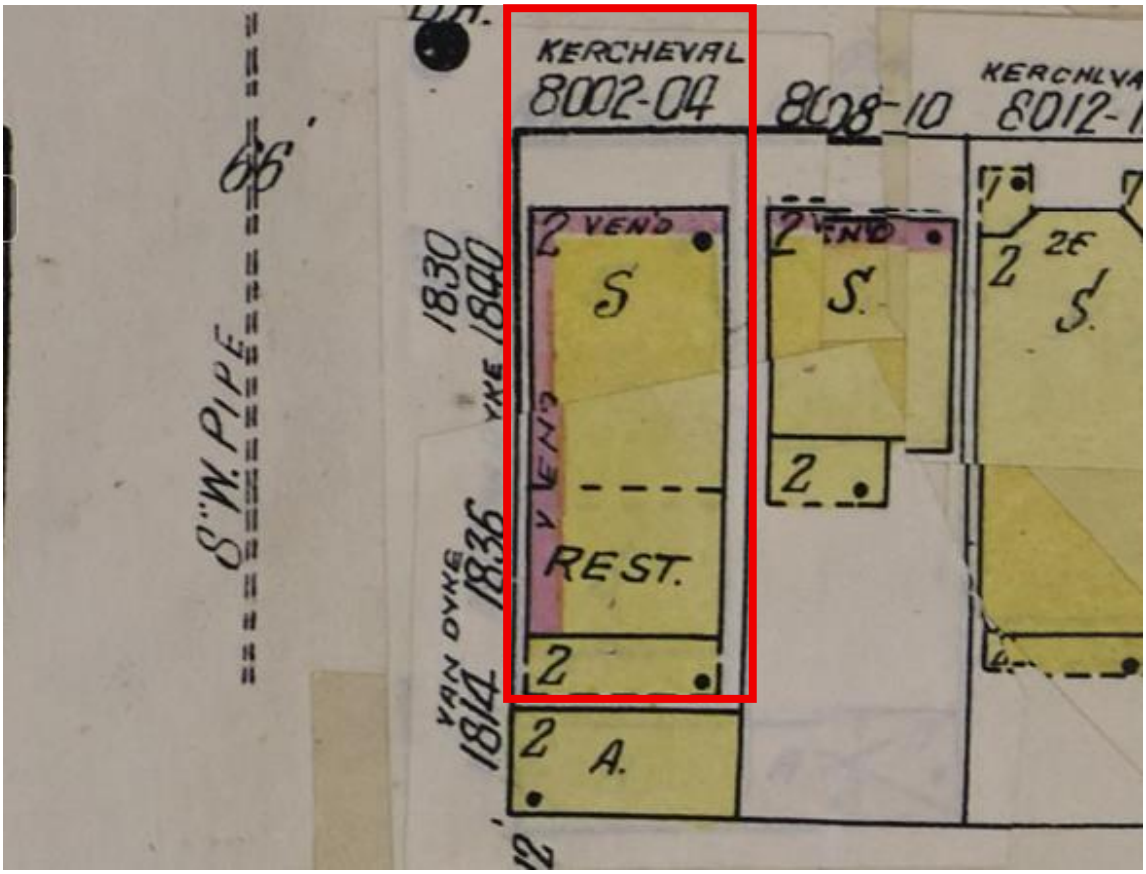
STAFF REPORT: 11/12/2025 MEETING **PREPARED BY**: J. ROSS
ADDRESS: 8002 KERCHEVAL
APPLICATION NO: HDC2025-00640
HISTORIC DISTRICT: WEST VILLAGE
APPLICANT: DAMEON GABRIEL/GABRIEL HALL
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 10/27/2025
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 10/20/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE SIDING WITH FIBER CEMENT SIDING

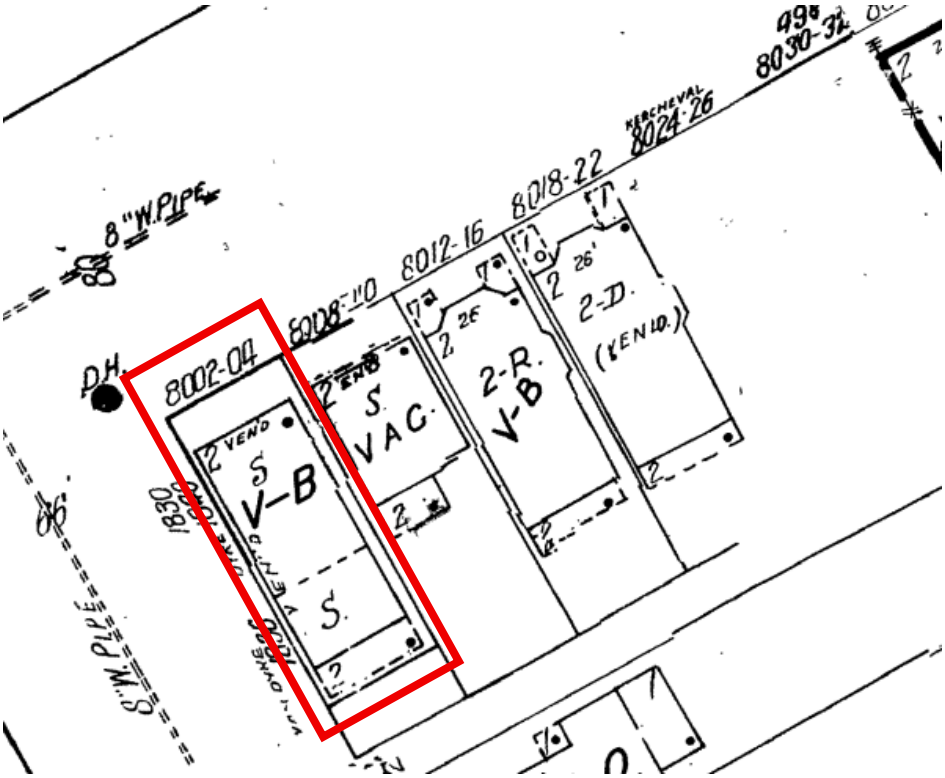
EXISTING CONDITIONS
The property located at 8002 Kercheval is a commercial building that was erected ca. 1915. The building is 2-1/2 stories in height and features a front-gabled roof. Exterior walls are clad with a number of materials, to include historic lapped wood siding (measuring approximately ¼″–½″ in thickness, with an overall board height of 5½″ and an exposure/reveal of 4½″) and recently installed ZIP system sheathing at the side elevations; composite/LP Smartside siding at the rear, ca. 2021 addition; brick veneer at the façade's first and second stories; and faux brick, asphalt "Insulbrick" siding at the façade's gable ends. Windows are recently installed, aluminum-clad wood units.



8002 Kercheval, current appearance. Photo by HDC staff on 10/27/2025



Sanborn Map 1915-1950. 8002 Kercheval, outlined in red. Note that the building is a wood-frame structure with brick veneer at the primary elevations. The abbreviation "S" means "store"



Sanborn Map 1969. 8002 Kercheval, outlined in red. The abbreviation "V-B" means "vacant and boarded"

PROPOSAL

With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to install fiber cement/James Hardie "HardiePlank" lap siding (smooth finish) at the front façade's third-story gable end and the east and west walls. The proposed siding has a 5/16″ thickness and a 4″ exposure/reveal. For clarity, the west wall is along/faces Van Dyke and highly-visible, while the east wall is mostly obscured by the building next door.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

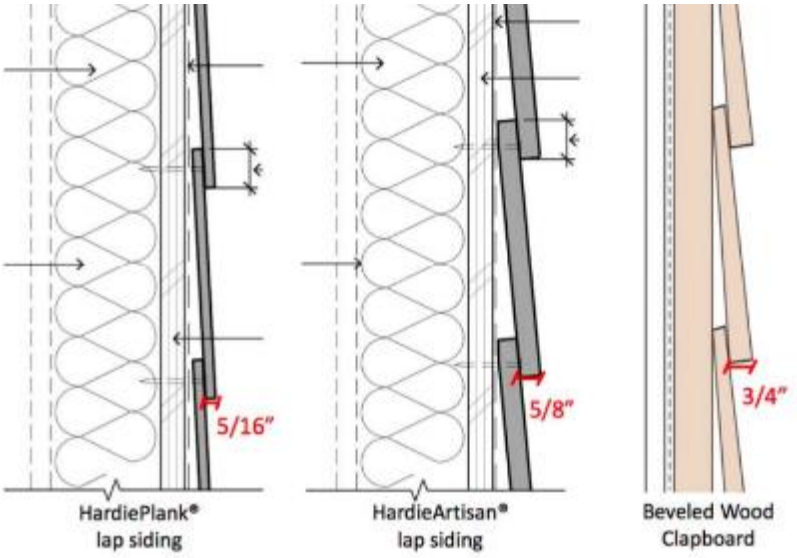
- West Village was designated as a local historic district in 1983
- Per the below photos, at the time of the district's designation/in 1983, the building's exterior walls were clad with the following materials:
    - Faux brick/asphalt siding (Insulbrick) at the front façade's third-story gable end, the east/side wall, and the rear hipped-roof wing
    - Brick veneer at the front façade and the west/side wall, at the first and second stories

Photo by HDAB, 1983. Showing north-facing front façade along Kercheval

Photo by HDAB, 1983, showing west wall along Van Dyke

- Staff notes that the current applicant initially attended the Commission's 12/13/2017 regular meeting and presented a proposal to rehabilitate the building, which included the erection of a two-story porch at the building's front façade and the erection of a rear addition. The Commission denied the proposal because they determined that the new front porch design was incompatible with the building's historic appearance.
- In 2018, the current applicant presented a second/revised rehabilitation proposal to the Commission. With respect to the building's exterior siding, the 2018 application presented the below items to the Commission for approval:
    - Cover the existing asphalt/Insulbrick siding at front façade, third story gable end and the east side wall with cement fiber lapped siding (smooth finish)
    - Retain and repair the brick veneer at the at the west/side wall and the front façade, first and second stories
    - Erect a new, two-story addition at the rear. Exterior walls to be clad with smooth cement fiber lapped siding (smooth finish)

  Staff notes that the 2018 application **did not** specify the brand or dimensions of the proposed cement fiber siding. The staff report therefore noted that the commonly available cement fiber siding product, manufactured by James Hardi, came in two lines, "HardiPlank" and "Artisan". Staff provided the following graphic (see below), which compared both lines and noted that the James Hardi's "Artisan" line provided a better match to traditional lapped wood siding in profile/thickness (at 5/8"), as opposed to James Hardi's "HardiPlank" line (at 5/16"), which was too thin to adequately match the profile of traditional beveled/lapped wood siding.



Note that the Hardi Artisan cement fiber siding provides a profile that better matches that of tradition lapped wood siding. This is an image from the 2018 staff report

See the attached COA to note that the Commission approved the installation of new cement fiber siding as proposed in the 2018 application. However, staff does note that the 2018 COA **did not** provide an approval for the removal of existing siding at the property. Rather, it allowed for the new cement fiber siding to be installed **over** the siding that was extant at that time.

- In 2019, the Detroit building department forwarded construction drawings to HDC staff for approval of the project's permit. Specifically, with respect to the building's siding, the submitted permit drawings proposed that the above referenced James Hardi "Artisan" cement fiber siding (with a **profile of 5/8" and an exposure of 2 ½" to 2 ¾")** be installed at the new rear addition, the front elevation's third-story gable end, and east/side wall. HDC staff approved the permit set.
- In 2021, HDC staff was alerted that the new rear addition had been erected, but had been clad with a siding that did not conform to the approved permit drawings and or 2018 COA. Specifically, the new addition had been clad with **Smartside LP lapped siding (an "engineered" composite siding made of wood strands and fiber resins) which has a thickness/profile of 5/16", a 5 ¾" exposure, and faux wood-grain finish** instead of the approved smooth-finish cement fiber siding which has a **thickness/profile of 5/8" and an exposure of 2 ½" to 2 ¾"**. The property owner therefore submitted a proposal to the Commission for review at their 9/22/2021 Special Meeting in an effort to address the violation/unapproved work and obtain an "after -the-fact approval" of the Smartside LP lapped siding that had been installed at the newly constructed rear addition. The 2021 application also proposed to replace the brick veneer at the west façade with Smartside LP lapped siding, as well as installing with Smartside LP lapped siding at the front façade's third story gable end and the east side wall. Per the attached COA, note that the Commission approved the following at the 9/22/2021 meeting with respect to applicant's proposal to install new siding at the building's exterior walls:
    - At the **rear elevation newly erected addition**, install Smartside lapped siding with a 5/16" thickness/profile and 5 ¾" exposure (work had already been completed)
    - At the **west/Van Dyke facing wall of the historic building**, remove the brick veneer and **install lapped siding which shall be composite (with a smooth finish)**

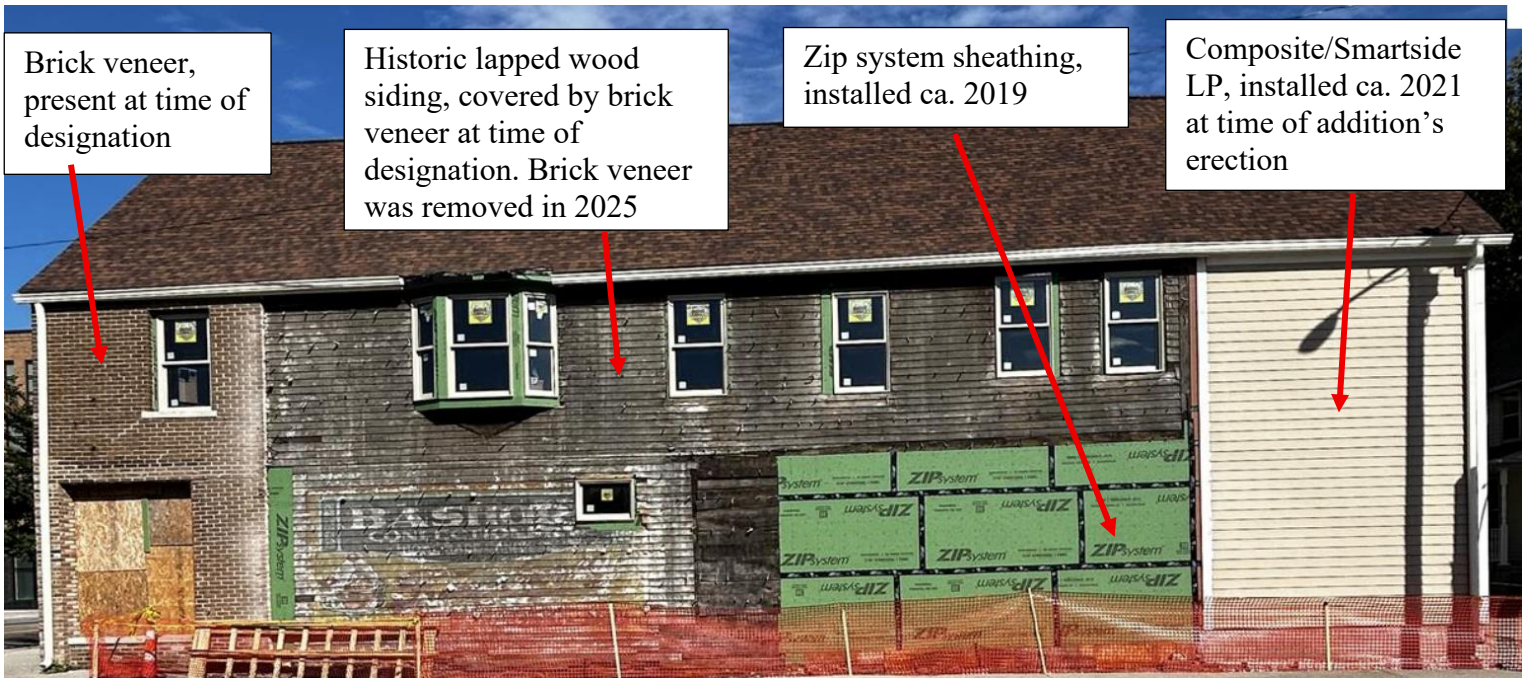
or wood, lapped, and display an exposure of no more than 4 ½" and a profile between ½" and 5/8. **The COA also required that this new siding be installed over the historic lapped wood siding that exists at this side, ie. That the historic siding must be retained**.

- At the **east (hidden) side of the historic building, install Smartside lapped siding which has a thickness/profile of 5/16". The Smartside siding must be installed over the historic lapped wood siding that exists at this elevation/the historic siding must be retained**
- At the **front facade, third-story gable end, remove the existing insulbrick/asphalt shingle siding and install lapped siding which shall be composite (with a smooth finish) or wood, lapped, and display an exposure of no more than 4 ½" and a profile between ½" and 5/8". The new siding must be installed over the historic lapped wood siding**

Staff notes, again, that the 2021 COA remained consistent with the original/2018 COA in that <u>it did not allow for the existing siding to be replaced, but allowed for it to be covered with new siding</u>. Also, as noted above, the 2021 COA allowed for new lapped siding to be installed at the primary facades (front, 3rd story gable end and west façade), as long as the new siding presented an appearance which closely matched traditional lapped wood siding, ie, displayed an exposure of no more than **4 ½" and a profile between ½" and 5/8" as opposed to the original wood siding which "** (note that the dimensions of the existing historic wood siding ranges from ¼″–½″ in thickness and has an exposure of 4½″)

- With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking to <u>remove</u> the existing siding at the front façade's third-story gable end and the side facades and install new cement fiber James Hardi "HardiPlank" lapped siding, which has a profile of 5/16" and a 4″ exposure. The current proposal is seeking a revision of the 2021 COA because, according to the applicant, he was unable to find a composite or fiber cement product with a thickness of 1/2" - 5/8" that was able to provide an exposure of 4½″ or less as required by the 2021 COA. The applicant further stated that the James Hardie "Artisan" line which does meet the required 5/8" profile can only provide an exposure of 6" at a minimum, which is an inch and a half above the 2021 COA requirement. Please note that staff did confirm that the James Hardie "Artisan" specifications provide for a 6" minimum exposure however, staff cannot confirm that no other composite or fiber cement siding product is commercially available that meets the conditions outlined in the 2021 COA. Also, true wood siding which meets the 2021 COA conditions is readily available.
- The applicant further notes that he wishes to remove the existing siding for the following reasons:
  - Portions of the wood siding are missing and he would have to build up material in the voided areas to apply the HardiePlank,
  - Removing the existing siding would ensure that the HardiePlank can be installed and perform as designed
  - The historic siding would not be visible once the new siding is installed.

  However, the applicant did state that he would be able to retain the existing side if required to do so
- See the below photos which provide an inventory of the material and condition of the building's existing exterior cladding:



8002 Kercheval, west/side elevation. Current condition. Photo by applicant, notes added by staff.

8002 Kercheval, west/side elevation. Showing historic wood siding and historic sign. Current condition. Photo by HDC staff, 10/27/205.

8002 Kercheval, east/side elevation. Showing historic wood siding (yellow arrow) which was revealed when Insulbrick/asphalt siding was removed ca. 2021; Zip sheathing, installed ca. 2021 (red arrow); and composite/Smartside LP siding installed ca. 2021 (green arrow) when rear addition was erected. Current condition. Photo by HDC staff, 10/27/2025.

Detail, showing extant historic lapped wood siding at east/side wall. Dimensions noted in red. Image by applicant.

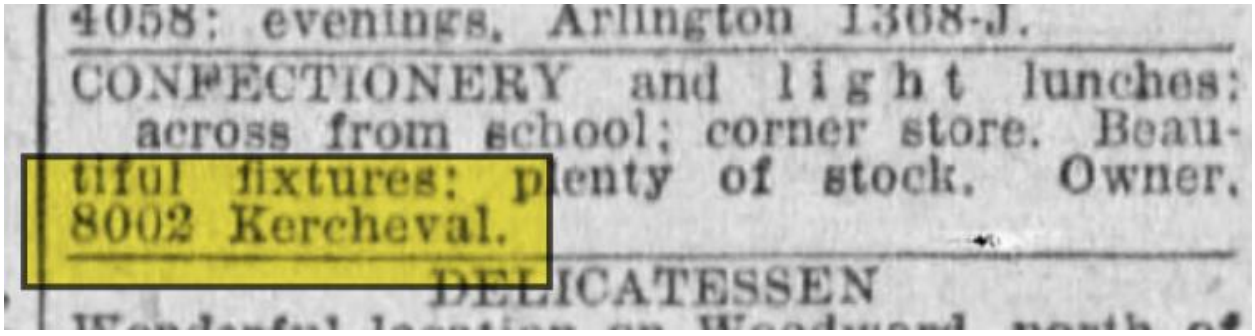
Rear addition, erected ca. 2021 showing extant composite/Smartside LP siding, installed in violation and latter approved by the Commission. Photo by applicant.

8002 Kercheval, front facade. Showing brick veneer at first and second stories. Asphalt/Insulbrick siding is present at the third-story gable end. Current condition. Photo by HDC staff, 10/27/2025.

- 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 th~ 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.
- 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.*

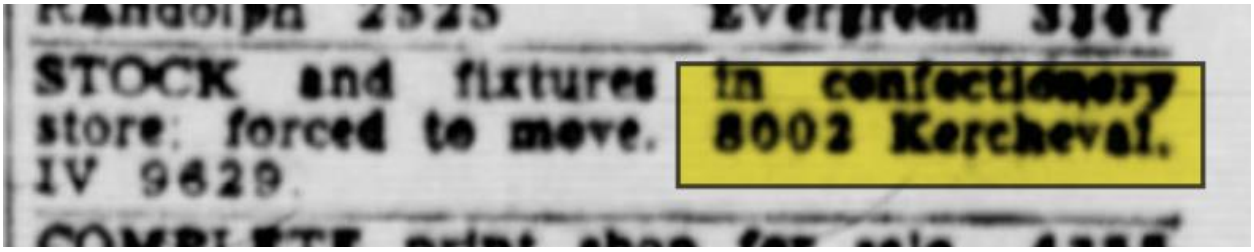
- It is therefore staff's opinion that the proposed removal of the existing historic wood siding at the east and west side walls and/or the existing siding at the front façade's third-story gable end is inappropriate for the following reasons:
    - The historic wood siding at the side elevations has only recently been revealed after the removal of the brick veneer and asphalt/Insulbrick siding. Staff was able to view the condition of the siding from the public right-of-way and did not find that it was deteriorated to an extent that merits its wholesale removal as proposed. Also, the application does not provide documentation that the historic wood siding is deteriorated beyond repair.
    - The application has not demonstrated that historic wood siding does not remain beneath the asphalt/Insulbrick at siding at the front façade's third-story gable end.
    - Staff notes that the presence of an historic sign for "Bashor Confectioner Homemade Candy" at the first story of the newly revealed wood siding at the building's west façade (see above photos). Historic District Commission's "Signs and Awning" guidelines Microsoft Word - Signs & Awning Guidelines FINAL recommend that property owners "preserve historic signage when possible." Similarly, the National Park Service recommends that historic signs be retained whenever possible, particularly when they are "significant as reflecting the history of the building…" Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs. Research of historic newspapers (see below) revealed that the building housed businesses related to confectionary/candy making as early as 1927 through the 1960s.


4058; evenings, Arlington 1308-J.

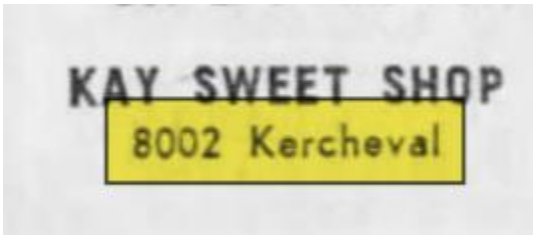
CONFECTIONERY and light lunches; across from school; corner store. Beautiful fixtures; plenty of stock. Owner, 8002 Kercheval.

DELICATESSEN

Detroit Free Press, May 15, 1927


STOCK and fixtures
store forced to move.
IV 9629
in confectionery
8002 Kercheval.

Detroit Free Press, December 2, 1945


KAY SWEET SHOP
8002 Kercheval

Detroit Free Press, April 9, 1965

- It is therefore staff's opinion that the proposed installation of James Hardi "HardiPlank" siding at the east and west side walls and at the front façade's third-story gable end is inappropriate for the following reasons:
    - The cement fiber James Hardi "HardiPlank" lapped siding proposed for installation at the building's front façade third-story gable end and the east and west side walls is incompatible with the building's historic appearance because its 5/16" profile is too thin. As previously stated by staff in 2018 and again in 2021, traditional beveled wood clapboard siding typically displays a profile/thickness dimension of ½" to ¾". Also, staff notes that the current historic wood siding displays a profile of ¼"–½", per the applicant. As such, the proposed siding provides an inadequate match to the building's historic wood siding. Staff need only to point to the 5/16"-thick Smartside LP siding which has been installed on the building's new rear addition to note that siding of that profile dimension does not provides the same shadow lines and depth of the building's historic wood siding.

- Staff concludes 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 will further restores historic character to the West Village Historic District.

ISSUES

- The current application has not provided evidence that the historic wood siding proposed for removal at the building's side walls is deteriorated beyond repair
- The application has not demonstrated that historic wood siding does not remain beneath the asphalt/Insulbrick at siding at the front façade's third-story gable end
- The proposed James Hardi "HardPlank" siding does not provide an adequate match to the existing historic wood siding and is therefore incompatible with the building's historic character.
- The painted sign at the building's west façade contributes to the building's historic character

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1 of 1 - Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Denial - Remove siding, install cement fiber 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 current application has not provided evidence that the historic wood siding proposed for removal at the building's side walls is deteriorated beyond repair
- The painted sign at the building's west façade speaks to its historic use and therefore contributes to its historic character
- The application has not demonstrated that historic wood siding does not remain beneath the asphalt/Insulbrick at siding at the front façade's third-story gable end.
- The proposed cement fiber is incompatible with the building's historic appearance because its 5/16" profile is too thin. Traditional beveled wood clapboard siding typically displays a profile/thickness dimension of ½" to ¾". The proposed cement fiber siding therefore does not provide the same shadow lines and depth of traditional/historic wood siding
- The current historic wood siding displays a profile of ¼″–½″. As such, the proposed 5/16" thick siding provides an inadequate match to the building's historic wood siding.
- Wood features, including siding and trim, are distinctively significant historic features of the district