

STAFF REPORT: 11/12/2025 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: L. SAINT JAMES

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00638

ADDRESS: 3751 LESLIE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN

APPLICANT / PROPERTY OWNER: KAYODE ADEKOYA

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 10/09/2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 10/24/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL) WITH ALUMINUM-CLAD WOOD WINDOWS

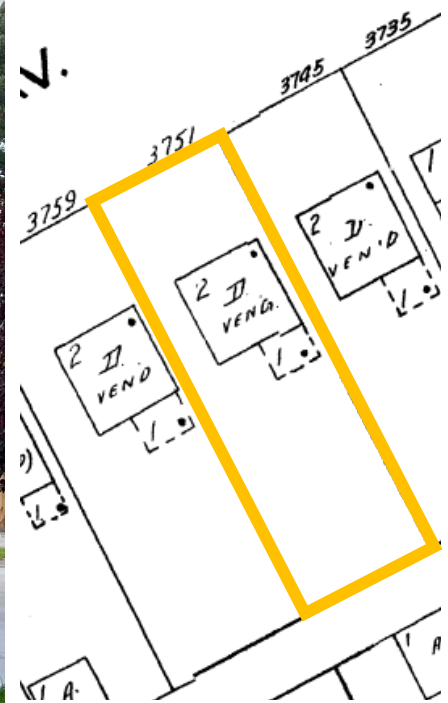
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The dwelling at 3751 Leslie is a 2-story house built in 1953, with influence from the Art Moderne style, but the simplicity of the contemporaneous International style. Although the hipped roof is not traditionally associated with modernistic houses, this localized style features horizontal grooves in the brick patterning, no decorative detailing at the doors or windows, and steel casement windows. Due to the simplistic design, the steel casement windows are a significant factor in distinguishing this style.

The installation of replacement vinyl windows were installed at the East and West elevations without the approval of the Historic District Commission, which has impacted the property's historic character.



Staff photo, 10/24/2025



Sanborn Map, 1970

PROPOSAL

- Replace three (8) steel windows with aluminum-clad wood windows at the East and West elevations
 - NOTE: the vinyl windows were installed without the approval of the HDC and received a Notice of Denial (NOD) from the 06/11/2025 HDC regular meeting
 - NOTE: the front façade windows were given approval to replace the violation vinyl windows with aluminum-clad wood windows at the 08/28/2025 HDC regular meeting

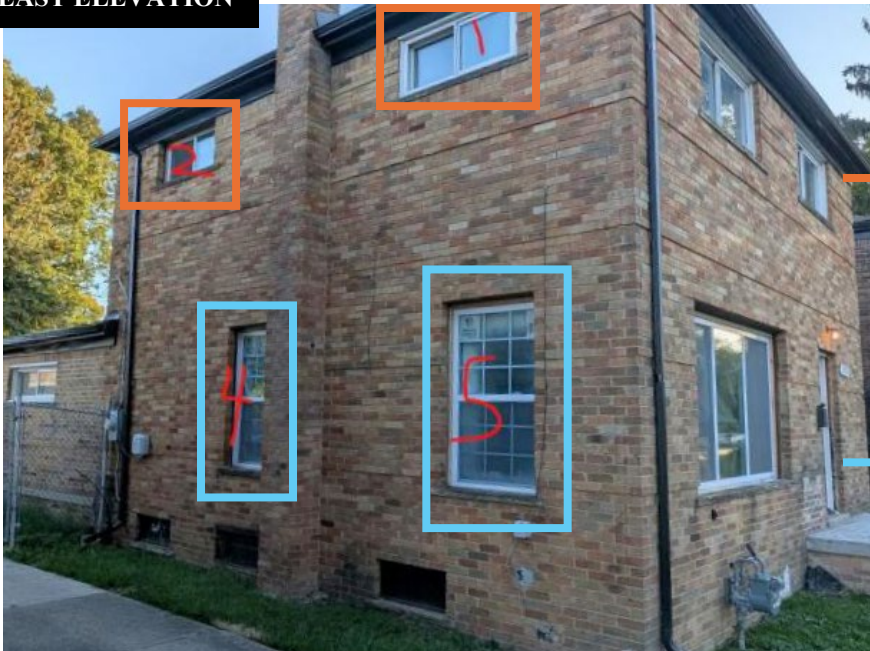
STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was enacted in 1999.
- The building permit for the erection of the dwelling was issued 08/14/1953.

Window Analysis

- The three (8) historic steel windows that were removed and replaced with vinyl windows were unambiguously character-defining as they were steel casement windows, and as described in the Elements of Design that “houses built later in the period of development sometimes have individual windows which are balanced or somewhat wider than tall; such a window is often the main opening of the first floor front façade.”

EAST ELEVATION

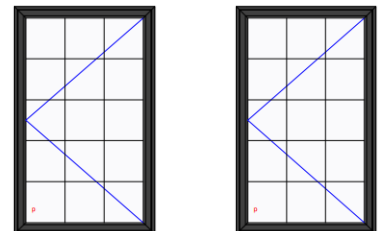


PROPOSED

Aluminum-clad wood windows in black with 7/8" simulated divided lite bars



- The historic steel windows were 3 panes across by 2 panes high



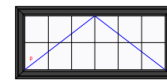
- The historic steel windows were likely 2 panes across by 5 panes high

WEST ELEVATION

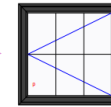
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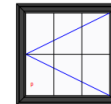
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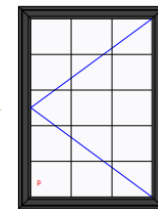
- The historic steel windows were likely 3 panes across by 2 panes high.



- The historic steel windows were likely 2 panes across by 2 to 3 panes high.



- The historic steel windows were likely 2 panes across by 5 panes high.



- The current application proposes installing aluminum-clad wood windows. Staff notes that, as the vinyl windows were installed without approval, **the Commission's review is to determine if the removal of the distinctive-character defining steel and installation of aluminum-clad wood windows meets the Standards; this application is not for the comparison of vinyl windows to aluminum-clad windows.**
- Staff considers the historic steel windows to be distinctive, character-defining features.
 - Steel casement windows were a popular material for window frames in the early 20th century. Their thin frames allowed for more expansive glass surface, creating a striking visual contrast to the monolithic materiality of masonry-clad walls. Additionally, the multi-operational window openings are a design feature found in only a few local historic districts. These features are identified within the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District's Elements of Design (emphasis by staff):
 - **(7) Relationship of materials.** Building materials common to exterior surfaces in the district are limestone, brick, granite and terra-cotta; modernizations tend to be in granite, glass and steel. Window frames are of wood, cast iron, and/or steel. The Central United Methodist Church and its church house exhibit slate roofs, copper flashing, dormer roofs, and trim. Monuments and fountains feature bronze statues and plaques, and granite or marble platforms or pedestals.
 - **(8) Relationship of textures.** The low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick, terra cotta or limestone juxtaposed with smooth masonry trim, where it exists, provides textural interest. Glazed brick, glazed terra cotta, polished granite and large glass surfaces are smooth in texture; carved or molded repetitive ornamental detail in terra cotta or masonry contrasts with the surface material,

providing a high degree of textural interest. Where they exist, subdivided windows, parapets, and cornices with repetitive detail are often areas of textural interest. The Central United Methodist Church and its church house have rock-faced ashlar surfaces that result in a rough, rustic appearance. Their slate roofs create a pattern complimentary to the façades. In general, the district is rich in textural relationships.

- As the windows were removed without HDC approval, the scope of work that would meet the requirements of the historic ordinance (Section 21-2-59(e)) and state statute (MCL 399.205(12)), is the fabrication and installation of new steel-framed windows with an identical pattern and operation with dimensions that match the historic windows.
 - If the Commission considers the installation of aluminum-clad wood windows, the dimensions and details of the selected replacement windows should be reviewed.
 - Due to the difference in strength of steel and wood, the dimensions of the aluminum-clad wood frames and muntins/grilles will likely not match the thinness of the historic width and profile of the steel window frames, muntins, and mullions.

ISSUES

- The steel casement windows were distinctive, character-defining features of the property. They were not documented to be beyond repair.
 - The thin frames of steel windows allowed for an expansive glass surface, creating a striking visual contrast to the solid materiality of the masonry-clad walls.
 - The multi-operational window openings are found in only a few local historic districts and offered a dimensionality and operation that was architecturally appropriate for the age and design of the house.
- As the windows were removed without HDC approval, the scope of work that would meet the requirements of the historic ordinance (Section 21-2-59(e)) and state statute (MCL 399.205(12)), is the fabrication and installation of new steel-framed windows with an identical pattern and operation with dimensions that match the historic windows (i.e. in-kind restoration of the missing feature).
- Architectural features/elements copied from incompatible ornamental styles (like the proposed door) are not appropriate here, and create a false sense of historic development, in direct contradiction to the NPS's Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard #3.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 1 – Denial – Replace historic steel windows with aluminum-clad wood windows

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.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

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.

Elements of Design #: 7, 8

For the following reasons:

- The historic steel windows were distinctive, character-defining features and not proven to be beyond repair.
- The proposed windows are not in-kind matches to the historic windows at this property, required to restore the pre-violation condition.