

**STAFF REPORT: DECEMBER 10, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: B. SALIE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00725**

**ADDRESS: 4785 STURTEVANT**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN**

**APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: ARMEACE WILLIAMS**

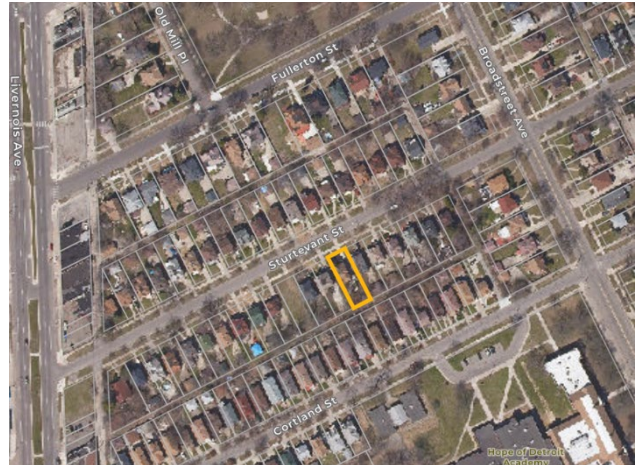
**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 11/17/2025**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 11/25/2025**

**SCOPE: REMOVE HISTORIC WOOD WINDOWS & INSTALL VINYL WINDOWS, REPLACE HISTORIC WOOD DOORS, AND DORMER SIDING**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Built in 1927, this two-and-a-half story, single-family residence is located within the Russell Woods-Sullivan historic district. The house sits on a 0.113-acre lot, in the middle of the block, between Livernois and Broadstreet Avenue. Designed in the English Tudor Style, the house is characterized by its red brick veneer and steeply pitched front facing gable and covered porch. The house has retained many of its original windows, doors, and front porch railing.



*Detroit Parcel Viewer*



*4785 Sturtevant. Photo taken by Staff on 11/24/2025.*





*Photos taken by staff on 11/24/2025*



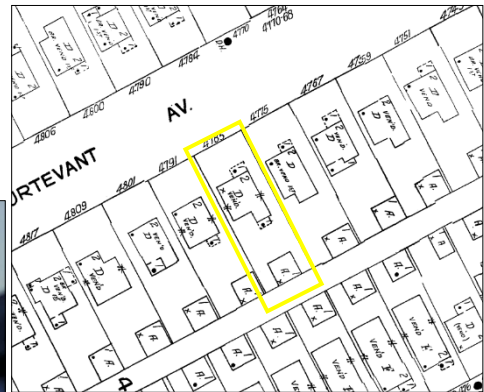
## PROPOSAL

The scope of work is as follows:

- Remove nineteen (19) historic double-hung wood windows at the sides and rear of the house
  - Replace with double-hung vinyl windows
- Remove four (4) historic-age doors
  - Install one (1) fiberglass door at front entrance
  - Install three (3) 36" x 80" steel doors at the sides and rear of the house
    - Add three (3) aluminum storm doors in front of the proposed steel doors
- Install aluminum dormer siding using aluminum trim coil

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS & RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999. It is staff's opinion that the house is a contributing resource to the historic district.



ABOVE: Sanborn Map. Highlighted  
4785 Sturtevant parcel

LEFT: Designation Photo 1999

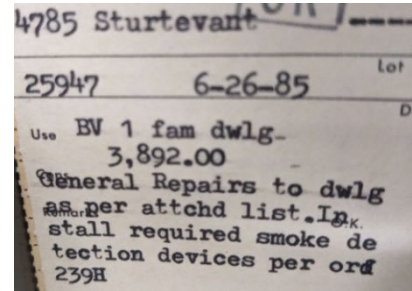
BELOW & RIGHT: Building Permit Cards

4785	
Sturtevant	535
34638-A	10-22-30
dwllg	DATE
brick ven	O.K.
CONS.	
REMARKS	brick basement&brick veneer rear add.

4785	
Sturtevant	535
28840	5-7-27
dwllg	DATE
USE	brk. ven
CONS.	
REMARKS	O.K.

4785	
Sturtevant	535
28840	5-7-27
garage	DATE
frame	O.K.

- Building cards show the house was built in 1927, nearly 70 years prior to the designation photo. The house underwent a series of general repairs noted in the Building Permit Cards from 1985.
  - Since its time of designation, the house has retained many of its original wood window units at the front as well as original wood doors, screen doors, and front porch railing.



## HISTORIC WOOD WINDOWS



*Photos provided by applicant, Historic aged windows to remain*

- The front facade predominantly features historic wood, leaded glass casements, and multi-lite windows in the dormer. The other elevations are comprised of mostly single-lite, double-hung wood windows with some additional leaded glass casements with aluminum storm windows.
- Although the double hung single pane wood windows do not have leaded glass, they are indeed historic. The wood windows are a distinctive, character-defining feature for this property.

- Although the submitted materials have mentioned storm windows, a product was not submitted despite staff request for additional information. Therefore, not being complete, it cannot be included in the proposed scope of work. Upon receipt of the requested information, staff may be able to review and approve the storm windows at a staff level.
- Photos provided with the application show additional, relatively minor deterioration, such as peeling paint and cracked glazing. Photos also show that some of the windows seem to have been painted over multiple times, a condition that may impair their operation. These conditions can be remedied with reasonable cost and effort
- Per the district's *Elements of Design* #7, wood and metal windows are the most common material within the district:

*(7) Relationship of materials. The majority of houses are faced with brick, often combined with wood, stone or stucco. Some houses on Glendale and Waverly Avenues in the Russell Woods Subdivision are entirely of wood; very few houses are entirely stucco. Stone trim is common, and wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim. **Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash.** Original metal awning shades and balustrades exist. Roofs on the majority of the buildings in the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District are now asphalt shingled, whereas many were likely originally shingled in wood. Only two apartment buildings on Broadstreet Boulevard and the Broadstreet Presbyterian Church retain their slate roofs.*

- Per The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

*(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.*

- However, it is staff's opinion that the historic-age wood windows are not beyond feasible repair.
- Additionally, should any windows be proven to be beyond repair, vinyl would not be an appropriate replacement window type for historic buildings, for the following reasons:
  - 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
  - Consumer-grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly and exhibit poor detailing and detracting "bright white" color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than higher quality materials, introducing condensation and other degradation to the insulated glass unit in a few years' time.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more than wood and steel during exposure to weather. This can result in discoloration and warping of the frames and failure of window elements.



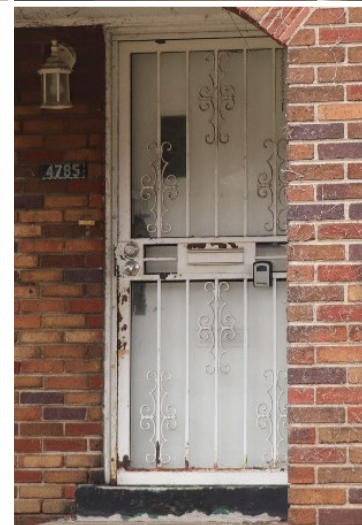
## HISTORIC-AGE DOORS

- 4785 Sturtevant has retained all of its original exterior wood doors. This includes the front entrance, Eastside entrance, and two doors at the rear of the house (one at the balcony).
- It is Staff's opinion that the removal of the historic-age wood doors will not be appropriate within the historic district as they are a character defining feature of the house, and their removal will compromise the house's historical integrity.



*Interior of doors, photos provided by applicant*

- Similar to the historic wood windows, the photos provided by the applicant show the historic aged doors have undergone relatively minor deterioration, such as chipped wood, peeling paint, faulty or missing knobs, and cracked glazing, which appear to have impaired their operation.
- It is Staff's opinion that these historic-age doors are not beyond feasible repair, as these conditions can similarly be remedied with reasonable cost and effort.
- It is especially important to retain and repair the original front door, since it is most commonly visible to public right of way and should maintain the historical integrity of the house.



*Front door, photo taken by staff*

- The proposed storm doors, in Staff's opinion, may be installed over the wood doors and may be compatible except for the color, as the bright white will not be appropriate. A color closer to beige or brown, to match the house, will be more appropriate for a house within the historic district.
- Should the Commission elect to approve the removal of the historic aged doors, the proposed steel doors will be a more appropriate door replacement type. The fiberglass door proposed for the front of the house is typically not an appropriate material within the historic district.

## DORMER SIDING

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- Wood siding is commonly found at dormers within the historic district. Since the dormers retain their historic wood siding, the proposed aluminum trim coil will not be an appropriate replacement material. Per SOI No. 6, in the instance that the wood siding has deteriorated beyond feasible repair, it must be replaced like for like (i.e wood siding for wood siding).



## ISSUES

- The historic age wood windows are not beyond feasible repair.
- If replacement windows were warranted (that is, if the historic windows were demonstrated to be beyond repair), the new windows would be required to “match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials” (Standard #6, quoted in full below).
- Vinyl windows are not good matches for historic prototypes, for the following several reasons:
  - 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
  - Consumer-grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly and exhibit poor detailing and detracting "bright white" color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than higher quality materials, introducing condensation and other degradation to the insulated glass unit in a few years' time.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more than wood and steel during exposure to weather. This can result in discoloration and warping of the frames and failure of window elements.
- The historic wood doors are a character-defining feature of the house and should be retained where possible.
- Aluminum trim coil is typically not an appropriate material type within the historic district. Wood siding is commonly found at dormers within the historic district.

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

### **Recommendation 1 of 2 – Denial – Replace non-historic wood windows with vinyl windows, remove historic wood doors, replace dormer siding with alumni trim coil**

Staff recommend 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 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*

For the following reasons:

- It is staff's opinion that the historic wood windows are not beyond feasible repair and should therefore be retained and repaired where possible.
- If proven to be beyond repair, vinyl windows are not an adequate match for historic prototypes, for the following reasons:
  - 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
  - Consumer-grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly and exhibit poor detailing and detracting "bright white" color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than higher quality materials, introducing condensation and other degradation to the insulated glass unit in a few years' time.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more than wood and steel during exposure to weather. This can result in discoloration and warping of the frames and failure of window elements.
- The historic wood doors are a character-defining feature of the house and should be retained where possible.
- Aluminum trim coil is typically not an appropriate material type within the historic district. Wood siding is commonly found at dormers within the historic district.

#### **Recommendation 2 of 2 – COA – Install aluminum storm doors at three locations**

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 condition that:

- The applicant will need to submit product specifications in color choice, subject to staff review, other than bright white.