

STAFF REPORT: MAY 8, 2024, REGULAR MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00164
ADDRESS: 1032 VINEWOOD
HISTORIC DISTRICT: HUBBARD FARMS
APPLICANT: JOSHUA BRYAN RILEY
PROPERTY OWNER: JOSHUA BRYAN RILEY
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: APRIL 12, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: APRIL 26, 2024

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO

SCOPE: REPLACE WOOD WINDOWS WITH ALUMINUM-CLAD WOOD WINDOWS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

1032 Vinewood is a semi-detached—situated on its own parcel and described in City of Detroit records as a “half duplex”—house, consisting of the northern half of a two-unit building facing west onto the street. It was built in 1909 in the Arts and Crafts style. Character-defining features include a stone water table, sills, and lintels, brick porches with crenellated parapets, decorative eave brackets and rafter ends, and wood windows. The windows are one-over-one sash windows except on the dormers, which are three-over-two. All windows are surrounded by a decorative wood brickmould. Late-twentieth-century metal storm window frames have been attached to the brickmould and presently include sliding storm windows.



April 2024 photo by staff of the front (west) facade. 1032 Vinewood is the left (northern) half of the building shown.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to replace fifteen windows on the house, being most of the windows on the first and second

floors. The attic windows are not proposed for replacement. The proposed new windows are Pella Reserve (sometimes described as Architect Series Reserve) aluminum-clad wood windows with brown exterior finish. A detailed window schedule is included with the application documents.



Existing condition showing historic sash window, wood brickmould trim, and storm window track fastened to brickmould. Note: photo is of the 1028 Vinewood half of the building due to greater visibility, but the condition is the same. May 2024 Photo by staff.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Hubbard Farms Historic District was established by Ordinance 01-93 in 1993.
- The Final Report for the Hubbard Farms Historic District provides a Period of Significance of 1870 through 1930. Pertinent Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-157 [d]) are excerpted as follows:
 - “Wood trim is most commonly used for window, porch, and functional elements...” (*Relationship of Materials*)
 - “Wooden elements of bungalows and Arts and Crafts influenced buildings tend to be painted in earth tones.” (*Relationship of Colors*)
 - “Prairie and Arts and Crafts buildings tend to be simply stated, with architectural interest derived from the arrangement of elements and quality of design.” (*Relationship of Architectural Details*)
- Based on configuration, materials, and style, the existing windows appear to be original to the building.
- As stated by the property owner in the application, the reasons for seeking to replace the windows are as follows:
 - “Windows already have significance water damage and several of the panes have changed in size to where they will not fully close and lock. One of the windows has even started to cause water

- damage on the inside wall.”
 - “The storm windows do not properly keep water out and several no longer fit in their sockets...”
 - “We can constantly feel drafts coming from our windows...”
- According to specifications provided on the product website, the proposed Pella Reserve double hung window closely matches the profile and dimensions of a traditional wood window. It would likely be a compatible replacement for the windows on this building. Brown is also an appropriate color, as described in the Elements of Design and Color System E



Interior rendering of Pella Reserve Traditional double hung window in brown. Image from product website.

- The applicant has provided detailed photos of each window as evidence of deterioration; these have been shared with the Commission for review.
- Staff has suggested that the applicant request an assessment from a window repair professional.

ISSUES

- The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards require that historic materials and features be retained and preserved (Standard #2, quoted below). The Standards allow windows to be replaced with matching new windows if they are deteriorated beyond repair (Standard #6, quoted below). However, the existing windows do not appear, to staff, to be beyond repair.
- The shortcomings mentioned in the application can be addressed with maintenance and repair. The National Park Service provides helpful guidance, *Preservation Briefs 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*, describing how to repair these conditions. According to the National Park Service, this work is labor intensive but “uncomplicated” and “allows the do-it-yourselfer to save money” due to the far greater expense of new windows.¹
- Repair or replacement of storm windows would also likely be an appropriate intervention, meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation while also protecting the historic windows from the elements and reducing drafts.
- The application states that “the original window box will not be altered and measurements have already

been taken to make custom windows for each of our window boxes.” It is unclear how the windows would be installed. Replacement window units should be sized to fit the rough opening, not the original sash box, as the latter installation would effectively reduce the size of the glazed window opening, also contrary to Standard #2.



Example (from another property) of a window installed within a sash box, reducing the size of the opening. This is an inappropriate installation. May 2023 photo by staff.

- It is unclear if the existing brickmould would be retained. Although application states “the original window box will not be altered,” it is unclear if this is meant to include the brickmould. The application materials include a quote for 300 units of 12” aluminum wrap, suggesting that the existing brickmould and, possibly, other elements such as sills and lintels, would be concealed behind new material. This would contradict Standard #2 and interfering with the “arrangement of elements and quality of design” described by the Elements of Design referenced above.



Left: Example of aluminum wrap covering brickmould, an unappropriated installation. Right: example of historically appropriate brickmould. Photos by staff. The type of installation proposed is not clear from application materials.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Staff concludes that the proposed window replacement does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- All fifteen windows are historic, character-defining elements that have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair. Their removal would constitute a "removal of historic materials."
- It is unclear how the proposed new units are to be installed. Installation of new units within the existing sash boxes would reduce the size of the glazed area, constituting an "alteration of ... spaces that characterize [the] property."
- It appears that the proposed work would cover existing brickmould with aluminum wrap, constituting an "alteration of features ... that characterize [the] property."
- The existing windows appear to be repairable.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the proposed window replacement as the proposed work fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

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.*
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, other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-09-wood-windows.pdf>