

**STAFF REPORT 11-12-2020 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: J. ROSS**

**APPLICATION NUMBER 20-6947**

**ADDRESS: 2254 ATKINSON AVENUE**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: ATKINSON AVENUE**

**APPLICANT: FARIS FAKHOURI (CITY OF DETROIT/HOUSING REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT)**

**OWNER: TULIKA SHANT**

**DATE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION: 11/12/2020**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 11/12/2020**

**SCOPE: REPLACE EXISTING HISTORIC AGE/ORIGINAL WINDOWS WITH NEW WOOD, ALUMINUM-CLAD WINDOWS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Erected ca, 1925, the building located at 2254 Atkinson Avenue is a two-story, single-family, Dutch Colonial Revival-style home. The building's exterior walls are clad with brick at the first story and wood shake at the second story. The roof is side gabled and features a full-width, shed-roof dormer at the front elevation. This dormer is also covered with wood shake. Existing window types at the home include 15/15, wood-sash units with wood trim and lead coming/muntins; 9-lite, wood casement windows with wood trim and lead coming/muntins; 1/1 wood sash units with wood trim; 18/18, wood-sash units with wood trim and lead coming/muntins; and 12 lite fixed windows with wood trim and lead coming/muntins. The property also includes a side-gabled, 2-car brick garage with a 1/1, wood-sash window.





## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant represents the City of Detroit, housing Revitalization Department and is proposing to replace all of the historic windows at the home and garage under the City's Lead Remediation Program. Specifically, the applicant submitted the application to HDC staff in late October 2020. At that time, they revealed that they were seeking to replace the windows due to their lead content and that the windows were in poor condition. They further stated that an emergency situation existed at the home as one child was suffering from an extremely high level of lead poisoning to the extent that he was hospitalized and the family had to vacate the home. The child had been diagnosed with a high level of lead poisoning in early 2020 and the case had been referred to the City by the Detroit Health Department. However, the City was unable to address the case until the current time due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Please see the submitted documents which outline the project's history and lead testing results. The applicant has further stated that they did research the possibility of repair, but that the local contractors which have experience repairing such windows are booked well into the next couple of months, which poses an issue to the residents as they cannot move back to their property until the high lead levels at the home are abated. Also, it appears that the project's contractor has already purchased the new windows.

With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking this body's approval to replace the all of the existing historic-age window sash (wood sash with lead coming/muntins and wood sash) at the home and garage with new wood-sash windows as per the following:

- Remove the existing original sash at the house and garage, to include 15/15, wood-sash units with

wood trim and lead coming/muntins; 9-lite, wood casement windows with wood trim and lead coming/muntins; 1/1 wood sash units with wood trim; 18/18, wood-sash units with wood trim and lead coming/muntins; and 12 lite fixed windows with wood trim and lead coming/muntins.

- Retain **the existing historic trim/brick mould**; scrape and paint
- Install new wood, double-hung sash which will be clad with aluminum that will be finished a white color at the exterior. The new sash will be 1/1, 20/20, and 12/12 double-hung units. All muntins will be applied to the exterior surface of the glass/simulated divided lites.

## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- As previously noted, the applicant has noted that the project's contractors have already purchased the new window sash
- It is staff's opinion that the existing sash proposed for replacement are character-defining features.
- The applicant is seeking the Commission's consideration of their proposal under the Notice to Proceed. Specifically, under the following condition due to their stated need to replace the windows ASAP:
  - The resource constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or the occupants
- Note, that the project proposes to retain the existing wood trim/brickmould at the building's exterior and will solely result in the removal of the existing/original sash
- The applicant has provided a **window repair quote** for \$22,425
- The quote for the new windows is \$18,721
- RE: the light configuration and operation of the windows, it is not clear that the new will match the old sash
- Due to the quick turnaround for the submission of the application materials, the current proposal does not provide one-to-one dimensions around the existing windows vs the proposed. Specifically, since the trim will remain, the dimensions of the glass (width and height) and the dimensions at the meeting rail would have provided a useful measure for comparison

## **ISSUES**

- As noted above, it is staff's opinion that the existing sash are character-defining features at the home and they could be repaired (as evidenced by the repair quote). Therefore, their removal does not meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The new sash does not replicate the existing in light configuration, materiality, and operation
- The application does not include a one-to-one dimensions around the existing windows vs the proposed. Specifically, since the trim will remain, the dimensions of the glass (width and height) and the dimensions at the meeting rail would have provided a useful measure for comparison. It is not clear how closely in dimension the new will match the old.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Section 21-2-73, Certificate of Appropriateness**

It is staff's opinion that the proposal be denied a Certificate of Appropriateness. As noted above, it is staff's opinion that the existing sash are character-defining features at the home and they could be repaired (as evidenced by the repair quote). It is also not clear that the new windows are an exact replication of the existing. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission deny a COA for the proposed application, as it fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, 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.

Sec. 21-2-75, Issuance of Notice to Proceed

As previously noted, the applicant is seeking the Commission's review of this project under the Notice to Proceed. Specifically, the under the following condition due to their stated need to replace the windows ASAP:

- The resource constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or the occupants

Staff recommends that the Commission assess this project under the NTP.