

AGENDA ITEM 2010-026H*

TO: Historic Preservation Advisory Board

THROUGH: Kevin Spath, AICP, Senior Planner

FROM: Guy R. Giersch, Historic Preservation Officer

SUBJECT: Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on the Request by Mr. Eric Ciskowski, for Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness Application to Install Wood Replacement Windows at 402 Parker Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff is not recommending approval of the installation of wood replacement windows.

Staff could recommend approval of storm windows installed over the existing wood windows since this would preserve the historic wood window while also providing the same or similar R-value as new replacement windows. Staff has discussed this option with the owner, but he has not indicated any interest in this option.

ITEM SUMMARY: The applicant is requesting approval to install wood replacement windows. The applicant has stated that the proposed replacement windows would be the exact same size as the original windows. The exterior trim would be maintained as well.

Because these proposed changes would conflict with the principles established by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Buildings as well as with the preservation priority rating of the home, Staff is not able to recommend approval of replacement wood windows for the house.

The proposed use of replacement windows would do the following:

- Replacement of the windows with low-E replacement wood windows would conceal or destroy the craftsmanship, materials, and possibly molding details that are critical to defining whether a house is historic or not historic.
- The loss of historic details on one home would have a negative affect on the entire district because it would reduce the historic visual integrity of the district.

The Zoning Ordinance states that the Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) has approval authority over Certificate of Appropriateness Applications in the Commercial Historic District and the "H" Overlay District. The subject property is located in the "H" Overlay District. The Zoning Ordinance states that the HPO

cannot deny a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and must forward all COA's that he/she is not able to approve to the HPAB for consideration and action. The applicant may request that the decision of the HPAB be forwarded to City Council for final consideration and action. To appeal HPAB's decision, the applicant must file a written application with the City Council through the Director of Planning within 21 days of receipt of the Board's written decision. The appeal application shall be set before the City Council at the first available City Council meeting.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL DATE: May 5, 2010

PRIORITY RATING: The property is listed as a medium priority building. Medium priority buildings contribute to local history or broader historical patterns, but alterations have diminished its integrity; is a good but typical example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; is a good but altered illustration of a common local building form, architectural style or type; is a modern or recent landmark not old enough to be judged in historic context.

BACKGROUND: The following is excerpted from the Secretary of the Interior's Brief # 9, *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*. Please see Exhibit D for the entire report.

"The windows on many historic buildings are an important aspect of the architectural character of those buildings. Their design, craftsmanship, or other qualities may make them worthy of preservation. This is self-evident for ornamental windows, but it can be equally true for warehouses or factories where the windows may be the most dominant visual element of an otherwise plain building. Evaluating the significance of these windows and planning for their repair or replacement can be a complex process involving both objective and subjective considerations. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the accompanying guidelines call for respecting the significance of original materials and features, repairing and retaining them wherever possible and when necessary, replacing them in kind."

"This Brief is based on the issues of significance and repair which are implicit in the standards, but the primary emphasis is on the technical issues of planning for the repair of windows including evaluation of their physical condition, techniques of repair, and design considerations when replacement is necessary."

The primary concern, therefore, in considering replacement windows on a historic building is the potential loss of aesthetic and material attributes that cannot be replaced by modern replacement windows. Replacing historic wood windows with new wood replacement windows could severely diminish these unique aspects of historic materials and craftsmanship. The inappropriate use of

substitute windows is especially dramatic where sufficient care is not taken by the owner or applicator where the original openings could change, casing width or molding profiles altered, resulting in the shadow reveals being reduced and architectural details being lost.

Another major concern is the difference in the reflective quality of the glass. Most low-E windows, because of various coatings, reflect light differently than single pane glass. Quite often, low-E glass will have a green or mirror-like reflectance to it.

While this discussion focuses primarily on the historic character of individual wood frame buildings, of equal importance is the context of buildings that comprise a historic district or neighborhood. Changes to the character-defining features of a building, such as distinctive wood windows, always have an impact on more than just that building; they also alter the historic visual relationship between the buildings in the district. If character-defining windows are replaced on a number of buildings in a historic district, the historic character of the entire district may be seriously damaged. Because of the potential impact some substitute materials have on the character of a neighborhood or district, many communities regulate their use through zoning ordinances and design review boards. These ordinances and review boards usually require review and approval of proposed alterations to a historic building that could potentially impact the historic character of the building or the district.

IMPACT ON SURROUNDING AREA: The structure is located in a neighborhood that is characterized by buildings with medium and high priority ratings. Staff's concern is that alterations that negatively influence the priority rating of a structure begin to lead to deterioration of the historic significance of the building. This distracts from the unique historic character of the area.

DECISION CRITERIA: The Zoning Ordinance states "The HPO shall not have the authority to disapprove the COA application and shall be required to refer any COA which he/she is not able to approve to the Historic Preservation Advisory Board for consideration and action." Because the HPO is not able to recommend approval of this item, the HPAB must consider and make a determination on the appropriateness of the project.

The HPO may approve the COA, approve the COA with conditions, or schedule the COA for the next available HPAB meeting. If the applicant is not in agreement with the decision of the HPAB, then the applicant may request that the COA be forwarded to the City Council for consideration and action. The decision of the City Council shall be final.

When reviewing COA applications, the HPAB may consider the following: the exterior features of a home such as materials, condition of building, are the materials original to the building, relationships of solids to voids, rhythm created

by openings, massing of a new addition in relation to the original structure, the roof pitch of a new addition, etc.

The types of things that the HPAB cannot consider in their decision would be the color of a home, setbacks of a new addition, other structures on the property, the interior space uses of the home, etc.

The Zoning Ordinance requires that the following criteria be used to determine the appropriateness of any Certificate of Appropriateness application:

- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Buildings (see attached Exhibit G)
- Checklist of design elements (see attached Exhibit I)
- Preservation Priority according to the Historic Survey

Checklist of Design Elements: The checklist is one of the tools used to determine the appropriateness of a project. The checklist provides typical architectural features that a historic home would have and the page numbers in parenthesis are the corresponding page numbers to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards that can be referenced. The checklist is not intended to be used as a point system or as a specific "check-off" for items, but rather it should be considered generally as a whole and how appropriate the project is based on the items listed on it.

Preservation Priority Rating: The priority rating of the home is based on the Historic Resource Survey. The priority ratings in the current survey include high, medium, low and non-contributing.

Proposed changes are evaluated based on their impact on the priority rating and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. As such, changes that negatively impact the priority rating or do not conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards would not be approved. Changes have a greater potential to negatively impact the priority rating of high and medium priority structures than a low priority structure. This effectively narrows the scope of changes that are acceptable for high and medium priority structures and widens the range of changes that may be allowed for a low priority structure.

ASSESSMENT: According to the 1985 Historic Resource Survey, the house is a medium preservation priority house built ca. 1920. The house is an excellent example of a Classical Revival house.

- Staff is concerned that the proposed use of wood replacement windows on the house would significantly change the architectural integrity of the house by introducing architectural elements visible from the public right-of-way which would not be appropriate to the house and would not conform to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Rehabilitation of Buildings. The HPO cannot approve these alterations for this medium priority home.

The following is a list of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards that the proposed project does not meet:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
 - In order to retain and preserve the character of a property, it is necessary to retain the historic materials and trims used to finish the exterior of the building. The proposed use of wood replacement windows would result in the loss of those features and would introduce new architectural elements that would significantly alter the historic character of the house as viewed from the public right-of-way.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
 - The use of low-E windows introduces a reflective quality that is different than that of single pane glass windows.

Principles 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 do not apply to this project.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW: The house is currently a one story Classical Revival style house. The proposed alterations would alter the reflective qualities of the windows and are not appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Buildings.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Certificate of Appropriateness Application
- Letter of Intent and Proposed Scope of Work
- Exhibit A – Photo of Window
- Exhibit B - Existing East Elevation
- Exhibit C - Existing South Elevation
- Exhibit D - Existing North Elevation
- Exhibit E - Preservation Brief # 9, *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*
- Exhibit F - *What Replacement Windows Can't Replace: The Real Cost of Removing Historic Windows*
- Exhibit G - Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
- Exhibit H - Sash and Pocket Replacement Double-hung Windows
- Exhibit I - Priority Checklist
- Locator Map