

**STAFF REPORT:** 04/10/2024 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** D. RIEDEN

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** HDC2024-00115

**ADDRESS:** 4093 CORTLAND

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** RUSSELLWOODS-SULLIVAN

**APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER:** KELVIN MCCREE, HIGHER GROUNDS ENTERPRISE LLC

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 03/25/2024

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISITS:** 03/15/2024, 03/26/2024

**SCOPE:** REPLACE ORIGINAL WINDOWS WITH VINYL WINDOWS, REMOVE AWNINGS

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected in 1939, the property at 4093 Cortland is a 2-story, single-family residence facing north at the southeast corner of Cortland and Petoskey with an alley behind the property. The side-gabled, asphalt-shingled roof features a center gable over the front door. The home is covered with red brick cladding. Brick sills under modest parings of 1/1 double-hung wood windows on either side of the entrance. The wood front door is outlined with stone masonry, which has been painted white since the time of designation. Modest metal railings top the concrete capped porch also clad with brick. Concrete steps descend from the porch to the concrete walk which symmetrically divides the foundation planted shrubs and lawn. Metal awnings overhang the windows to the west and south side of the house as well as the larger metal overhang over the rear porch, which are proposed for removal in this application. Both the garage and house roofs were recently re-shingled, and the fascia replaced, after initially receiving a violation and then reviewed by HDC staff for staff administrative approval.



*Site Photo 1, by Staff March 26, 2024: (North) front elevation showing original windows in place. The new shingled roof and fascia were installed prior to HDC staff approval.*



*Designation photo 1999: (northwest) front and side elevations, showing existing, original 1/1 windows and awnings.*

This property has the following Certificates of Appropriateness and prior violations on file for this property.

- 11/22/2005 COA #3065: Replace fire damaged window and exterior doors to match existing.
- 03/15/2024 Violation #845: Replacement of fascia and roof shingles (house and garage) without approval. CLEARED VIOLATION per COA HDC2024-00108.
- 03/19/2024 COA #HDC2024-00108: Replace existing asphalt shingle roof on garage and dwelling with new asphalt shingle roof and associated vents and flashing and replace deteriorated fascia board with new wood fascia board, per the submitted application materials and photographs.



Aerial#1 of Parcel # 14004531.



Site Photo 2, by Staff March 26, 2024: (West) side and rear elevation of the house showing existing awnings proposed for removal.

## PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove all metal awnings and replace all original wood windows with double-hung, white vinyl windows.

- Replacement of 17 windows: 16 from the house, 1 from the garage
  - Remove all coil stock from the window openings.
  - Original brick moulding shall remain.
  - Window count is as follows:
    - West Elevation (facing Petoskey) 5 windows
    - Rear (South Elevation) 1 window
    - Front (North Elevation) 4 windows
    - East Elevation 6 windows
    - Garage 1 window
  - Remove and dispose of all existing windows.
  - Install vinyl, 15 double hung windows (and 2 sliders) per attached window order. Please note the one of the sliders is for the garage window, the second is for the kitchen, west elevation window.
- Remove all window and porch awnings.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Russell Woods - Sullivan Historic District was established in 1999. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 25-2-131) provide the following guidance:
  - *“Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections...Another common arrangement, predominately at the eastern end of the district in the Sullivan Subdivision, is the open porch with metal awning frames overhead...”*
  - *“Relationship of materials...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...”*
  - *“Relationship of colors...Paint colors often relate to style. The buildings derived from classical precedents, particularly those of neoclassical styles, generally have woodwork painted white, cream, or in the range of those colors...Buildings or vernacular English Revival styles generally have painted woodwork and window frames of a dark brown or cream color...”*
  - *“Relationship of architectural details...Residential buildings derived from classical styles display modest detail, mostly in wood...”*
  - *“Degree of complexity within the facades. The facades within the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District range from very simple to quite complex, depending on style, but are*

*straightforward in its arrangement of elements and details; overall, there is a low degree of complexity.”*

- It is staff’s opinion that these original wood windows, their double-hung operation, and 1/1 formation are distinctive character-defining features. From the interior and exterior photos received, most original windows are still in repairable condition in staff’s opinion. Staff has not received a report that states the windows are beyond repair.
- Staff observed that one of the original windows of the house may have been previously replaced: an existing slider windows on the west side of the house. Staff observed that this property has previously received a COA for the replacement of a window and two doors due to a fire damage in 2005. Staff does not have records of exactly which window was replaced at that time, it is likely that this kitchen window may be the one that was replaced. It is staff’s opinion, however, that the proposed replacement of slider windows with a vinyl slider window, would not be appropriate. The National Park Service (NPS) Guidelines recommends that any new window at these locations must be *compatible* by reflecting materiality that is harmonious with the house, dimensions and scale that align with the building’s openings and respect the architectural expression of its historic style.



*Site Photo 3, by Staff, March 26, 2024 showing centrally located slider window, proposed awnings to be removed, and coil stock covers (arrow) around existing windows.*

- *“The appearance of the replacement windows must be consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period but need not replicate the missing historic window. In many cases, this may be accomplished using substitute materials...Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards”*  
<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/windows-replacement.htm>

- It is staff’s opinion, through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
  - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.



*Site Photo 4, by Applicant, showing interior garage door window slider with wood framing and metal sash, which is proposed for replacement with a vinyl slider.*

- Staff received confirmation that the proposal includes replacement of the garage window with a vinyl slider window. Staff observed that the metal framed slider inserted in the wood frame of this garage window is a replacement of the original wood window. Similar to the proposal to replace the kitchen slider window with a vinyl slider, it is staff’s opinion that replacement of this window with a slider window is not appropriate.

- Staff observed that many of the brickmoulds surrounding the windows have coil stock covers, which the applicant proposes to remove during replacement of the windows. It is staff's opinion that that removal of this non-historic feature is appropriate while maintaining the original windows and brick mould.
- It is staff's opinion that the awnings are not distinctive, historic character-defining features, and therefore their proposed removal is appropriate.

## ISSUES

- No documentation establishing that the original wood windows were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- It is staff's opinion that the removal of the original double-hung wood windows and with double-hung, white vinyl windows with unknown product detailing placement information, design and dimension detailing will greatly alter the original *scale, design, and materiality* which are incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property, and therefore does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and does not conform to the district's Elements of Design.
- Replacement of a formerly installed, non-historic slider window with a slider window does not conform with National Park Service (NPS) Guidelines, which recommends that any new window at these locations must be *compatible* by reflecting materiality that is harmonious with the house, dimensions and scale that align with the building's openings and respect the architectural expression of its historic style, and therefore does not meet the Standards.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

#### Recommendation 1: Replace Original Windows with Vinyl Windows

Staff finds that the replacement of the wood windows with vinyl windows does not meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for the following reasons:

- No documentation establishing that the original condition of the original windows were beyond repair was submitted or available.
- The removal of the original double-hung wood windows and with double-hung, white vinyl windows with unknown product detailing placement information, design and dimension detailing will greatly alter the original *scale, design, and materiality* which are incompatible and inappropriate for this historic property.
- The proposed vinyl windows are not historically appropriate materials as they do not conform to the District's Elements of Design.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the above work items, as they do not 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 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.*

#### Recommendation 2 - Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS- Remove Awnings and Coil Stock

It is staff's opinion that the removal of the awnings and coil stock is appropriate. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District Elements of Design.

*This COA is issued with following conditions:*

- All original windows and brick mould remain.