

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 1317 Broadway Street, Application Number HDC22-1195

**DISTRICT:** Broadway Historic District

**REPORT DATE:** October 13, 2022

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Tuesday, October 11, 2022

	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>
<b>Name:</b>	Brent Robertson	Same
<b>Address:</b>	3369 Pontiac Trail Ann Arbor, MI 48105	
<b>Phone:</b>	(734) 355-4942	

**BACKGROUND:** The circa 1855 John Taylor House is a contributing structure in the Broadway Historic District. See Broadway Historic District resource documentation at the end of this staff report.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the northwest side of Broadway Street, two lots northeast of Jones Drive.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to install vinyl siding over existing asphalt siding.

### APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

#### Ann Arbor City Code Chapter 103 § 8:421(3)

When work has been done upon a resource without a permit, and the commission finds that the work does not qualify for a certificate of appropriateness, the commission may require an owner to restore the resource to the condition the resource was in before the inappropriate work or to modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness. If the owner does not comply with the restoration or modification requirement within a reasonable time, the commission may request for the city to seek an order from the circuit court to require the owner to restore the resource to its former condition or to modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness. If the owner does not comply or cannot comply with the order of the court, the commission may



request for the city to enter the property and conduct work necessary to restore the resource to its former condition or modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness in accordance with the court's order. The costs of the work shall be charged to the owner and may be levied by the city as a special assessment against the property. When acting pursuant to an order of the circuit court, the city may enter a property for purposes of this section.

**From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:**

- (1) A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- (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.
- (3) Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- (5) Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):**

**Building Site**

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character.

Not Recommended: Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the property so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

**From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other Guidelines may apply):**

**Synthetic Replacement Siding**

Appropriate: Identifying, retaining, and preserving wood features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and door-way pediments; and their paints, finishes, and colors.

Using replacement siding that exhibits a smooth texture.

*Not Appropriate*: Using vinyl siding to replace wood or cementitious siding.

Obscuring character-defining trim details, such as corners, window and door hoods, and ornamental shingles.

Removing any character-defining trim details.

Obscuring historic window and door trim with metal or other material.

Using replacement siding that has a textured finish, such as embossed wood grain.

## **STAFF FINDINGS:**

1. Staff was driving up Broadway for the September 6, 2022 Review Committee when they noticed a house having vinyl siding installed over asphalt faux-brick siding. Staff requested that the contractor stop working. The property owner contacted staff promptly the next morning, stating that the faux-brick siding is in poor condition, and submitted this HDC application shortly after. Any openings in asphalt siding will cause deterioration to materials beneath it, so staff applauds the property owner for wanting to address the problems with the current siding.
2. The vinyl siding is proposed to be installed over the faux-brick siding. The application says no fascia, eaves, or window trim on the house would be covered over with vinyl. The half-gable above the side door that has wood decorative shingles would be covered with white vinyl scallops, and the front gable would also have white vinyl scallops installed. The extent is not indicated, and it is unknown whether the front gable has historic decorative shingles under the asphalt siding.
3. The *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for Synthetic Replacement Siding state that it is not appropriate to use vinyl siding to replace wood or cementitious siding. This statement has been consistently interpreted by the HDC to mean that vinyl is not an appropriate substitute for wood or cementitious siding. In 16 years, only two applications for vinyl siding on historic buildings have been approved. It is also inappropriate to obscure the decorative shingles above the side door and to add decorative shingles in the front gable when it is unknown whether those were historically present. This work is conjectural and does not meet SOI Standard 3.
4. If the property owner had contacted staff ahead of contracting for this work, staff would have advised that vinyl is typically inappropriate and the most appropriate approach would be to remove the artificial siding and repair the underlying siding, selectively replacing it with matching materials in matching dimensions as necessary. Exploratory work looking under the asphalt siding would be a good starting place to figure out what this might entail. If there is no siding under the asphalt (unlikely), or if the siding is deteriorated beyond repair, staff could approve an appropriate replacement (wood or cementitious lap, for example). The other option would be to repair the faux-brick siding, which might not be possible since those materials are probably from the 1940s-1960s and are no longer manufactured in the same style. In any case, approval by staff or the HDC is required before work is begun.

5. As is typical of vinyl installed over other siding, the vinyl is installed with J-channels along all edges. This is the third layer of siding (historic, cellulose, vinyl) and staff has concerns about the thickness next to trim. Any cladding should not stand proud of the trim or it will make it look slightly recessed and not in keeping with historic appearances.
6. Staff believes that the proposed work is not appropriate and does not meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation*, and the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*.

**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 1317 Broadway Street, a contributing property in the Broadway Historic District, to install vinyl siding over existing asphalt siding, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2, 5, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for building site; and the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for synthetic replacement siding.

*If the motion fails:*

I move that the Commission finds that installing vinyl siding at 1317 Broadway Street does not qualify for a certificate of appropriateness, and that the property owner is ordered to remove the siding within 60 days and restore the resource to the condition the resource was in before the inappropriate work.

**MOTION WORKSHEET:**

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 1317 Broadway Street in the Broadway Historic District

\_\_\_\_\_ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

**ATTACHMENTS:** photos

*Broadway Historic District**Resource Documentation*

*Address:* 1317 Broadway  
*Historic Name:* John Taylor House

*Date:* ca. 1855  
*Level:* Contributing



2007 photo

*Description*

*Style:* Vernacular  
*# Stories:* 1.5  
*Material:* Asphalt brick  
*Windows:* Replacement?  
*Window Type:* Wood, Double-Hung  
*Pane Type:* 1/1

*Roof Shape:* Front Gable  
*Roof Material:* Asphalt  
*Plan Shape:* Rectangular  
*Porch Type:* Full Front  
*# Dormers:* N/A  
*Dormer Type:* N/A

*Character Defining Features:*

Wood frame house on cut stone block foundation; shall bay on south elevation has one large double-hung 1/1 window under small shed roof; front porch has shed roof with triangular eave supports with pointed shingles set into fascia; front porch has been extensively modified – porch supports are 4x4 over a concrete pad.

*History*

*First City Directory:* 1868  
*Original Use:* Residential  
*Current Use:* Residential  
*Occupation (First Dweller):* House mover.

*Context(s):* Architecture: Greek Revival, German-American  
*Architect:* Unknown  
*Builder:* Unknown

*Notes:* Taylor first worked in a paper mill, and then turned to house moving. House has a one-story, two-car garage at rear; garage has shiplap siding. George Kraut (tinsmith) resident at one time. One 2007 photograph.