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Ann Arbor Historic District Commission  
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Subject: Windows at 718 Lawrence St.

Dear Ann Arbor Historic District Commission:

I'm requesting the Commission accept the 17 windows that were installed in 2015 at this house that is in the Old Fourth Ward. I'm providing background so you can make an informed, holistic decision.

I purchased this 1901 house in 1986. It had potential and as a duplex it provided enough revenue to enable me to afford it. A previous owner converted the house into a duplex but did not do a thoughtful job. The primary evidence of the conversion can be seen directly inside the vestibule. A first floor wall was moved to install a bathtub and a wall was installed to separate the two apartments. The separation was not constructed with a complementary design or care. I lived on the first floor, apartment 1, for 13 years and rented the rest of the house, apartment 2.

I've kept the house and I rent it out but not for the money. Apartment 1 has one bedroom in 760 sq. ft., is rented for \$975/mo and includes gas and electric utilities. Apartment 2 has three bedrooms in 1,260 sq. ft., and is rented for \$1,800/mo including gas. A typical landlord would rent apartment 1 for at least \$1,400/mo plus utilities and apartment 2 for at least \$3,000/mo plus utilities. Furthermore, landlords with a "beds are dollars" mode of operation would move and add interior walls to double the number of beds pushing total rent north of \$7,000/mo. plus utilities at \$250/mo. That's far above the \$2,775 that I charge.

My impression is that housing that is very close to campus is increasingly optimized to maximize rent and in turn some historic houses are becoming a cliché of an old western town where the facade may be beautiful but there is nothing much behind it. In contrast, my house continues to have architectural integrity inside and out.

I put significant work into the house and I'm proud to provide an affordable, functional, beautiful, safe home to those who appreciate it. Three of the people there today are U-M architecture

students. Today, I live in the country but it's hard to part with 718 Lawrence knowing what might happen to it if I sell it. It's possible I may move back into the house. I make changes to the house with that in mind. I welcome the Commission to come see it.



**1986 Condition of House** - Much of the house was solid. Most of the exterior clapboards were in good condition. The original interior trim, walls, doors and original lathe and plaster were also in good condition though all of it was covered with lead paint. A few walls and doors had been changed to transform it into a duplex but not much. The copper plumbing and steam heat were also in good condition. However, many of the individual spaces required substantial attention. For example, bathroom walls had been constructed with melamine using duct tape on the seams and many many coats of paint that covered up the rotted melamine.

**1986 Condition of Windows** - Many of the windows were rotted on the bottom rail of the upper and lower sashes while a few of the windows were in very good condition. My impression was that the rotting windows were the ones with wooden screen storms and were probably the ones more frequently used. The lower mortise and tenon joints were in such bad shape that the tenon was practically non-existent. I assumed all of the windows also had lead paint. These windows have been replaced twice in the last ~35 years. The windows in very good condition, however,

had wooden glass storms installed and were probably not opened/closed frequently and some were protected by an overhang. See attachments 1 & 2. These 1901 windows remain in place.

**First Renovation** - Throughout the house the ceilings, walls and trim were painted white. On the first floor all of the rooms were carpeted including the kitchen and bath. Living on the first floor I proceeded to restore all first floor trim. I stripped all the trim paint off to expose the original oak trim and remove the lead. I stripped all of the paint off of the interior doors and brick fireplace as well. I had the original egg and dart door hardware brass plated. See attachments 3&4. I performed the work while living in the basement. Six of the ten windows on the first floor were heavily rotted including both the upper and lower sashes. I assume these were originals. I saw no value in stripping the paint off of non-functional rotted windows.

**Replaced Rotted First Floor Windows Circa 1987** - With rotted windows, my desire to have all interior wood exposed and to remove the lead paint, I personally fabricated replacement windows. Circa 1987 I made windows from clear pine that were functionally similar to the ones made in 1901. My goal was to make them quickly and inexpensively. I did not plan for them to be a long term replacement. The stiles and rails were made with simple butt joints and screwed together. Counter balance weights were reused and most ropes were replaced with nylon. Original double hung windows that were in good condition were stripped of paint on the interior. Circa 1989, the old wood storm windows/screens on functioning double hung windows were replaced with aluminum units. The result of this project was that all interior wood was exposed and the primary source of possible lead poisoning was removed. Lead was a particular concern since I thought it possible I would raise children there.

**Replaced Most Second and Third Floor Windows Circa 1987** - Most double hung windows on the 2nd and 3rd floors were also rotted. I did not strip the paint off of the trim on these floors. However, since I was already making windows I made replacements for these sashes as well to restore their functionality and remove lead paint. One window in the 3rd floor bathroom was replaced with glass blocks. This window is part of the long wall in the bathroom shower. The glass block provides privacy and physically connects well to the ceramic tiles inside.

**Observed Use of Storm Windows** - I am the landlord of just this one house. Heat is provided via cast iron steam radiators in a single system that covers the whole house. There is no central air conditioning. Unfortunately I find that the glass in the storm window is often retracted regardless of the season. While each radiator has steam control, the tenants use the windows to control temperature year round. Therefore, while storm windows in theory make a house more energy efficient in practice they appear to have limited impact at least in my situation.

**Replaced Windows Made in 1987 with Double Pane Windows in 2015** - I viewed the Andersen 400 Series Woodwright Double-Hung Insert windows as a good choice for the house. The interior wood is similar to the original wood. The windows slide and lock easily. They do not have lead in them. As double pane windows they're energy efficient in rating and do not require a storm window and therefore they are efficient in practice as well. The frame is made of aluminum. The exterior is made of "fibrex" which is 40% wood and 60% PVC and therefore

maintenance free. The windows use butt joints like the original windows rather than mitered joints. Because they do not require a storm window they offer a depth to the look of the house that hasn't been there for decades.

Attachment 5 presents a photo of the house with a standard Anderson installation. It has a seam in it that I find telling that it is not wood. Attachment 6 presents a photo of one window that has the standard installation with supplementary wood trim I fabricated that covers this line. If it would please the Commission this trim could be added to all 2015 windows. Attachment 7 presents an interior photo of an Anderson window on the first floor.

By working with a licensed building contractor I ensured the windows were installed correctly. I installed them over a number of months as time, tenant schedules and weather permitted. The windows and materials cost \$13,500 in 2015 and the labor value was \$7,500. Today the project cost with the same windows is estimated to be \$25,500.

The technical specifications of the windows can be found at:

<https://awf.andersenwindows.com/windows-and-doors/windows/single-hung-and-double-hung-windows/400-series-woodwright-double-hung-window/#/tech-specs>

Find and download the *400 Series Product Guide For Professionals*. The information for these windows (as of this submission) can be found starting on page 69 of the document.

**In Closing** - I have cared for this house since 1986. The windows and trim are now much less of a lead hazard and now safer. The windows are much more energy efficient in practice. The windows are easy to use, highly functional, and low maintenance. I appreciate that I am not the judge but I believe the typical person would find the home to be beautiful in an historical context. Finally, I offer affordable housing by charging \$2,775 rent per month instead of a possible \$4,650 or higher.

I sincerely regret I had no idea the Historical Commissions' requirements were so specific. Ironically, I had thought I was exceeding any requirement, in part, because I was eliminating the storm window which I find unattractive. With a visit to this house I hope that you would find it to be much better than how I found it and that aesthetically it compares favorably to the heavily rented houses in the vicinity. In my humble opinion, I have served those dwelling in the City of Ann Arbor well. That has always been my intent.

Respectfully,



Andrew T. Palms

Attachments

**Attachment 1 - 1901 Original Window in the Home Today - Interior Trim Painted Brown**



**Attachment 2 - 1901 Original Window in the Home Today - Exterior with Aluminum Storm**



**Attachment 3 - Example First Floor Door**



**Attachment 4 - Example First Floor Door 2**



**Attachment 5 - New 2015 Window - Exterior with Half Screen**



**Attachment 6 - New 2015 Window - Exterior with Full Screen & Supplementary Trim**





Attachment Front - Front (North) Photo and Window Information



Window	Dimension	Existing Window Description	Comments
1 & 2 - Bedroom	29 ½" x 57 ¾"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
3 & 4 - Bedroom	39 ⅝" x 61 ¾"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
5 - Living Room	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original 1901 window</li> <li>• Double hung style</li> <li>• Upper sash leaded glass</li> <li>• Wood storm window</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Window is in excellent condition but does not open.</li> <li>• Interior window and trim paint stripped &amp; refinished.</li> <li>• Storm window is functional</li> </ul>

Attachment East - East Side Photo and Window Information



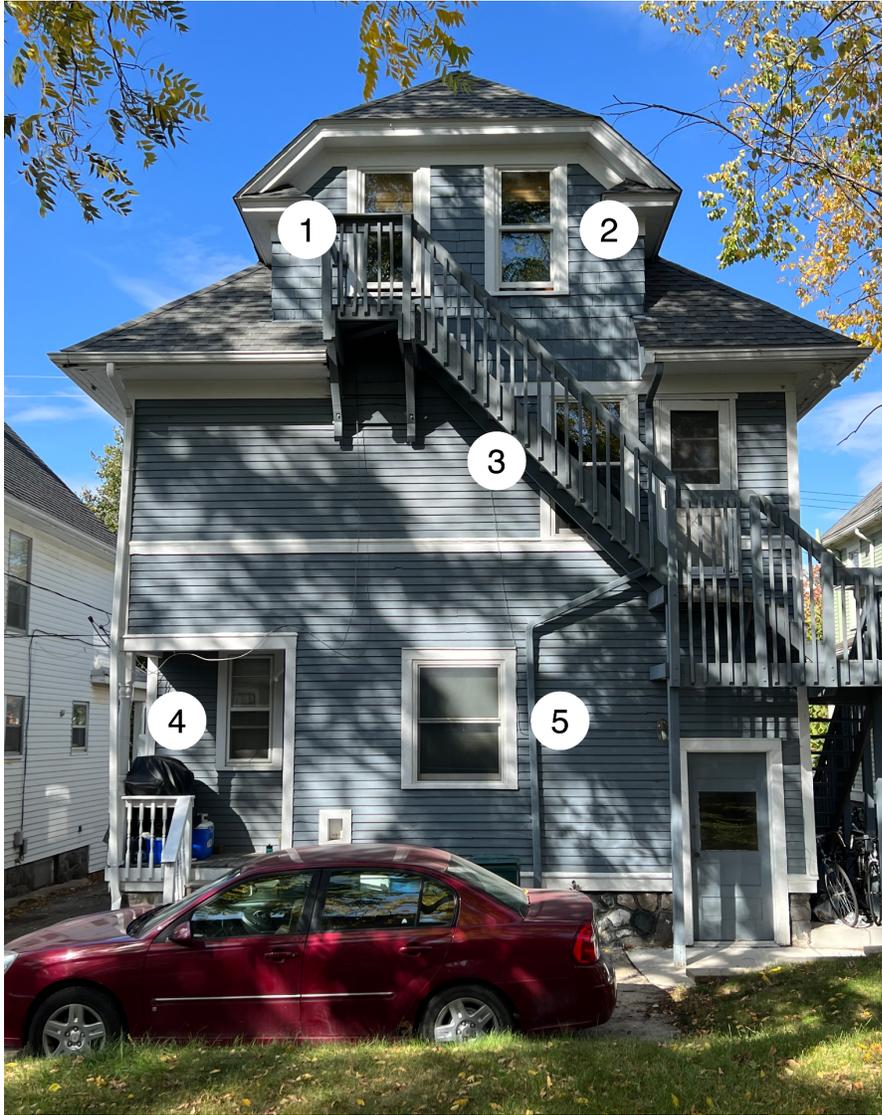
Window	Dimension	Existing Window Description	Comments
1 - Kitchen	35 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 63 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
2 - Bathroom	23 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 41 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
3 - Stairway	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original 1901 window</li> <li>• Fixed</li> <li>• Wood storm window</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good condition</li> <li>• Storm in good condition</li> </ul>
4 - Stairway	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original 1901 window</li> <li>• Double hung</li> <li>• Aluminum storm window</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All wood in very good condition</li> <li>• Painted trim and window</li> <li>• Sash ropes broken</li> <li>• Storm in good condition</li> </ul>
5 - Bedroom	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 66 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> <li>• Interior trim paint stripped &amp; refinished</li> </ul>
6 - Bathroom	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awning Window</li> <li>• Mid 1970s?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good condition</li> </ul>
7 - Vestibule	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original 1901 window</li> <li>• Fixed</li> <li>• Wood storm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good condition</li> <li>• Storm in good condition</li> </ul>

Attachment West - West Side Photo and Window Information



Window	Dimension	Existing Window Description	Comments
1 - Bathroom	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glass block installed 1980s</li> <li>• Aluminum storm</li> </ul>	Good condition
2 - Bedroom	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 61 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
3 - Bedroom	45 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 61 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
4 - Living Room	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 56 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> <li>• Interior trim paint stripped &amp; refinished</li> </ul>
5 & 7 - Living Room	27 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 56 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> <li>• Interior trim paint stripped off and refinished</li> </ul>
6 - Living Room	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 56 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> <li>• Interior trim paint stripped &amp; refinished</li> </ul>

**Attachment Back - Back (South) Photo and Window Information**



Window	Dimension	Existing Window Description	Comments
1 & 2 - Bedroom	27 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 57 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
3 - Kitchen	35 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 61 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> </ul>
4 - Pantry	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original 1901 window</li> <li>• Double hung</li> <li>• Aluminum storm window</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Window is in excellent condition</li> <li>• Interior trim and window paint stripped &amp; refinished.</li> <li>• Storm window in good condition</li> </ul>
5 - Kitchen	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> " x 52 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen 400 Series Woodwright installed 2015</li> <li>• Double hung</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent condition</li> <li>• Custom sized</li> <li>• Interior trim paint stripped &amp; refinished</li> </ul>