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Ann Arbor Historic District Commission
301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48107
(734)794.6265
hdc@a2gov.org
% Jill Thacher

Subject: Windows at 718 Lawrence St. - HDC December Meeting

Dear Ann Arbor Historic District Commission:

I am requesting the Commission accept the 17 windows that were installed in 2015 into this 1901 Old Fourth Ward house. I purchased the house in 1986. At the time it was designated as a complementary historic structure. I did quite a bit of work in the late eighties: stripped paint off of all interior trim on the first floor; refinished the oak and maple floors; built and replaced the double hung windows that were rotted and coated with lead paint; built and installed appropriate oak cabinets. All original doors, walls and trim were kept. My spouse, Wendy, and I lived there for 8 and 13 years respectively.

In 2015 I replaced the circa 1987 windows with Andersen 400 Series Woodwright windows. I did not seek approval of the HDC. That was a mistake. Please know that I believed the new windows I had chosen were appropriate, in part, since they had been used in other Ann Arbor historic districts. I know, now, that information was not complete. I further assumed that eliminating storm windows would be a big visual plus for the community but that turned out to not be the case.

I do find that the new windows are more functional and energy efficient in practice. While I respect that the definition of architectural beauty and appropriateness is in the hands of the HDC, in my personal opinion the windows present more original depth than a window that requires a storm. Also, they are made with butt joints rather than mitered; the edge at the glass is beveled similar to glazing; and I had begun to add exterior white oak trim that eliminates an inappropriate seam in the stock Andersen window.

Wendy and I have held onto the house due to sentimental value generated by the amount of work that's gone into it. We're proud to rent out an affordable, functional, beautiful, safe home to those who appreciate it. We do not rent it for profit but as a way to hold onto it.

While the HDC may not consider financial issues in its decisions I would like you to know the powerful impact of those decisions. The monthly rent for the whole house at 718 Lawrence is \$2,775*. A loan for \$35,000* to swap out the windows would be \$400/mo over 10 years. So we'd increase the rent to \$3,175/mo, a 15% increase, to fund them.

I had a professional landlord look at the house and she said other landlords would typically rent our house as-is for \$4,600/mo*. Therefore, the market could easily bear an increase in rent. It would just make the house less affordable. That would be unfortunate. We've been happy to provide a relatively affordable, nice, spacious place.

I have cared for this house since 1986. I sincerely regret that I did not seek preapproval for this work. I hope you will find these windows acceptable as replacements for non-original windows. In candor, I would also expect a fine for failure to comply with HDC regulations.

It has been my intent to serve those dwelling in the City of Ann Arbor well.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Palms". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew Palms

Attachments

* Documentation of these amounts has been provided separately.

Attachment 1 - House at 718 Lawrence Street



Attachment 2 - 1901 Original Window in the House Today with Storm Window



Attachment 3 - 2015 Window with Full Screen & Supplementary White Oak Trim

