

September 17, 2014

1621 Summit Avenue - AHPC 14-2

Appeal of HPC File #14-030 by owners, Wendy and George Caucutt

On July 24, the HPC reviewed an application for window replacement at 1621 Summit Avenue.

The staff report recommended denial of the application based on ten findings.

The HPC adopted the staff recommendation on a 7 – 0 vote based on the findings, testimony and discussion at the public hearing.

The property owners appealed the HPC decision stating their disagreement with findings # 4, 7, and 10:

**4. Sec. 74.36 (a)(1) General principle No. 1 states that "the removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided." The original in-swing casement windows are considered a distinctive architectural feature of the property. The removal of the windows does not comply with the principle.**

The photos that were submitted for review did not demonstrate that the windows were in a condition that required replacement. A window schedule, which would identify the condition of the windows, was not provided. Window repair can be reviewed administratively. If the windows were shown to be in a condition that could not be repaired, HPC staff could review and approve new, in-swing replacement windows administratively so long as they match the original windows (in-kind replacement).

The in-swing casement windows are a distinct, original, highly visible feature on the front elevation of the residence. The HPC agrees that the current, non-original storm windows are not appropriate for the style for the residence. Staff could review and approve an application for appropriately detailed storm windows that would comply with the Summit West Historic District Guidelines and meet the owner's desire for energy efficiency.

**7. Sec. 74.36 (d)(1) The guideline states that "Existing window and door openings should be retained. ... Enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done....Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building. The proposal to install new, out-swing casement windows in the front part of the frame, where the storm windows are currently installed, would alter the historic relationship between the window openings and the windows. The operation of the proposed window (out-swing vs. in-swing) is a departure from the original design intent. The proposal does not comply with this guideline.**

The proposed out-swing replacement windows are not an in-kind replacement. The in-swing casements are sited at the interior edge of the window opening and allow for the installation of storm windows and screens at the outer portion of the opening where they are traditionally located. In-kind replacement would allow for the ability to install an appropriate storm or screen and restore the historic look that is

still evident in the transoms above the windows on the façade and several other openings at the property.

The out-swing casement windows would not be set in the same plane as the historic windows, nor would they be set in the plane of the storm window or screen. The proposed window would sit in the middle of the frame and would not leave space to install a flush storm window or screen, thus altering the look of the façade.

The appellant has cited the testimony from SARPA as support for their proposal. HPC staff received a letter from SARPA on September 16<sup>th</sup> (yesterday) that clarifies their position, as they believe their original letter was misinterpreted. The letter has been attached to the file and states the following...

**10. The proposal to replace nine pairs of original in-swing casement windows at the south (primary) elevation of the residence will have an adverse impact on the Program for the Preservation and architectural control of the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)).**

A design feature of the property is also the brick corbelling under the windows that historically supported flower boxes. If the in-swing windows are replaced with out-swing windows, the restoration of the flowerbox feature, now or in the future, will not be possible.

The appellant also included three arguments in their appeal letter that are not part of the HPC findings, but staff would like to address them:

1. Safety – in-swing casement windows are a traditional feature of sun and sleeping porches constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both staff and commissioners have suggested to the appellant that furniture placement could remedy their concern of their small children walking into the windows.
2. Security – there are options for window coverings for in-swing casement windows including curtains, shades, and blinds attached to the casement as well as curtains on swinging rods above the operable window. It is staff's opinion that changing the opening direction of the windows will not change the opportunity for someone to break into a home.
3. Energy efficiency – staff agrees with the applicant that the existing, non-original, storm windows/screens are a visual detractor from the house. New storm windows that fit the opening and comply with the applicable guidelines would help achieve the higher energy efficiency that the owners desire.