

Case Number:	BOA-23-10300110
Applicant:	Shane Wohlrabe
Owner:	Shane Wohlrabe
Council District:	1
Location:	501 East Locust Street
Legal Description:	Lot 1, Block 10, NCB 1736
Zoning:	“MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Historic Tobin Hill Airport Hazard Overlay District
Case Manager:	Mirko Maravi, Principal Planner

Request

Appeal of the Historic Preservation Officer’s decision to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Executive Summary

April 5, 2023: The Historic and Design Review Commission referred the applicant’s request to replace 18 one-over-one wood windows with aluminum-clad wood windows to the Design Review Committee for a site visit with window inspection.

April 12, 2023: Members of the Design Review Committee, OHP staff, and the property owners met on site to review window conditions.

April 19, 2023: The Historic and Design Review Commission denied the applicant’s request to replace 18 one-over-one wood windows with aluminum-clad wood windows based on the DRC site visit, which found windows are in reparable condition and thus ineligible for replacement, per Historic Design Guidelines Chapter 2, Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations, Section 6, Architectural Features: Doors, Windows, and Screens.

Code Enforcement History

None

Permit History

No relevant permits.

Zoning History

The subject property was located in the original 36 square mile of the City of San Antonio and originally zoned Temporary “D” Apartment District. The property was rezoned by Ordinance 83331, dated December 14, 1995 to “R-3” Multiple-Family Residence District. Under the 2001 Unified Development Code, established by Ordinance 93881, dated May 03, 2001, the property zoned “R-3” Multiple-Family Residence District converted to the current “MF-33” Multi-Family District.

Subject Property Zoning/Land Use

Existing Zoning	Existing Use
“MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Historic Tobin Hill Airport Hazard Overlay District	Single-Family Residence

Surrounding Zoning/Land Use

Orientation	Existing Zoning District(s)	Existing Use
North	“MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Historic Tobin Hill Airport Hazard Overlay District	Single-Family Residence
South	“MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Historic Tobin Hill Airport Hazard Overlay District	Duplex
East	“MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Historic Tobin Hill Airport Hazard Overlay District	Single-Family Residence
West	“MF-33 H AHOD” Multi-Family Historic Tobin Hill Airport Hazard Overlay District	Duplex

Comprehensive Plan Consistency/Neighborhood Association

The subject property is in the Midtown Area Regional Center and is designated as “Urban Low Density Residential” in the future land use component of the plan. The subject property is located within the boundary of Tobin Hill Community Neighborhood Association, and they have been notified of the request.

Street Classification

East Locust Street is classified as a local road.

Findings:

- a. The property at 501 E Locust includes a single-story Craftsman-style residence and detached rear garage built c. 1924. Located on the northeast corner of E Locust and Gillespie, both structures are clad in wood waterfall siding. The home’s front door is centered on the primary elevation below a rounded gable with three ganged windows to the left and an enclosed porch to the right. The cross-gabled composition shingle roof has knee braces below the eaves. There is a chimney on the west elevation that protrudes through the roof. Windows are one-over-one and wood, with one-over-one wood screens on all elevations. The structure contributes to the Tobin Hill Historic District.
- b. DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE: On Wednesday, April 5, 2023, the HDRC referred the request to replace 18 windows to the Design Review Committee (DRC). On Wednesday, April 12, 2023, DRC members, OHP staff, and the owners met on site to review window conditions. Notes are included in this case file.
- c. WINDOW REPLACEMENT: EXISTING CONDITION: Staff conducted a site visit on March 24, 2023, to assess the condition of the existing windows and found that all 18 wood windows proposed for replacement are in repairable condition. Most require minimal repair and intervention such as scraping and repainting or replacing damaged sash cords.
- d. WINDOW REPLACEMENT: ENERGY EFFICIENCY: The applicant has expressed concern to staff regarding the need to improve the energy efficiency of the house. However, in most cases, windows only account for a fraction of heat gain/loss in a house. Improving the energy efficiency of historic windows should be considered only after other options have been explored such as improving attic and wall insulation. The original windows feature single-pane glass which is subject to radiant heat transfer. Products are available to reduce heat transfer such as window films, interior storm windows, and thermal shades. Additionally, air infiltration can be mitigated through weatherstripping or readjusting the window assembly within the frame, as assemblies can settle or shift over time. Over 112 million windows end up in landfills each year, and about half are under 20 years old. Historic wood windows were constructed to last 100+ years with old growth wood, which is substantially more durable than modern wood products, and original windows that are restored and maintained over time can last for

decades. Replacement window products have a much shorter lifespan, around 10-20 years, and cannot be repaired once they fail. On average, over the lifetime of an original wood window, replacement windows will need to be again replaced at least 4 times. The total lifecycle cost of replacement windows is also much more energy intensive than the restoration of existing windows, including material sourcing, manufacture, transportation, and installation. Finally, window repair and restoration utilizes the local labor of craftspeople. Staff generally encourages the repair and restoration of windows whenever possible.

- e. WINDOW REPLACEMENT: WASTE AND LIFESPAN: More than 112 million windows end up in landfills each year, and about half are under 20 years old. Historic wood windows were constructed to last 100+ years with old growth wood, which is substantially more durable than modern wood and clad products, and original windows that are restored and maintained over time can last for decades. Replacement window products have a much shorter lifespan, around 10-20 years, and cannot be repaired once they fail. On average, over the lifetime of an original wood window, replacement windows will need to be again replaced at least 4 times. The total lifecycle cost of replacement windows is also much more energy intensive than the restoration of existing windows, including material sourcing and the depletion of natural resources and forests, petroleum-heavy manufacturing methods, transportation, and installation. Finally, window repair and restoration utilizes the local labor and expertise of craftspeople versus off-the-shelf, non-custom composite products. Staff generally encourages the repair and restoration of original windows whenever possible.
- f. WINDOW REPLACEMENT: The applicant has proposed to replace 18 windows on the structure with Pella aluminum-clad wood windows. Guideline 6.B.iv for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations states that new windows should be installed to match the historic or existing windows in terms of size, type, configuration, material, form, appearance, and detail when original windows are deteriorated beyond repair. While the proposed replacement windows conform to Standard Specifications for Windows in Additions and New Construction, staff does not find the proposal to replace the original wood windows consistent with the Guidelines. According to the Historic Design Guidelines, wood windows should be repaired in place and restored whenever possible, unless there is substantial evidence that the windows are deteriorated beyond repair. If a window assembly is deemed irreparable, the window should be replaced in-kind in terms of materiality, configuration, inset, proportion, style, and detailing. As noted in finding v, staff finds that all original wood windows are in repairable condition. Staff does not find replacement of original wood windows consistent with the Guidelines.

OHP Staff Recommendation to the Board of Adjustment

Office of Historic Preservation staff does not recommend approval of the appeal. Staff recommends that the Board of Adjustment uphold the Historic and Design Review Commission's and the Historic Preservation Officer's denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of replace 18 one-over-one wood windows with aluminum-clad wood windows.