

Case # 2011-COA-342 B (CH)	INDIANAPOLIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT	Hearing Date OCT. 5, 2011
608 HIGHLAND AVE COTTAGE HOME		NEW CASE
Applicant: MARY CORBIN mailing address: 608 Highland Ave Indianapolis, IN 46202		Center Township Council District: 9 Jackie Nytes
Owner: same mailing address:		
CASE		
IHPC COA: 2011-COA-342 B (CH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install four new wood porch posts (work started) • Install wood porch rail (work started) • Install windows (vinyl) on house (work started) 	
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of a Certificate of Authorization with stipulations		

STAFF COMMENTS

Background of the Case

The house was historically a double that is currently being converted into a single-family home. The owner began work on the property without a COA. Staff informed her of the violation after receiving a complaint. Her contractor then met with IHPC staff and staff visited the site to inspect the work that had begun.

Wood Siding Repairs – Appropriate

Staff found that the wood siding repairs had been done correctly, so the owner submitted a COA application and staff granted a COA.

Other Work – Inappropriate

Staff could not grant approval for the new porch posts, railing and vinyl windows that had been installed because they are not consistent with the design guidelines. Instead, the owner decided to request a certificate of authorization from the Commission.

1. New Wood Porch Posts. The original porch posts were not replaced as they had disappeared long ago. The four new posts, although wood, contain a turned detail that is inconsistent with historic porch posts. However, staff does not believe that they deviate significantly enough to warrant replacing them. Also, it should be noted that the design of the original porch posts is unknown.
2. Wood Porch Railing (partial installation). The original porch railings were not replaced, and had disappeared long ago. The one wood porch railing section installed also has detailing that is not appropriate. Specifically, the spindles are too thin and the top and bottom rails are simple 1x's with no profiled shape. However, staff believes that a modification of the railing to have a more substantial top and bottom rail with a profiled detail and shorter spindles would significantly improve the appropriateness of the railing. The railing needs to be painted as well.
3. New Vinyl Windows (6 on the front, 3 on each side). Replacement of windows on rear elevations does not require approval in this Conservation District, so those windows are not in violation. The front and side windows that were replaced were not the originals. The windows installed are

extruded vinyl that does not mimic the profile and dimensions of typical historic wood windows and look significantly different.

The windows on the front elevation have a more significant effect on the character of the house than those on the sides because the neighboring houses are so close, preventing the side windows from being highly visible. The first floor windows on the front were installed in altered openings where the original opening size is still evident, which further exacerbates the inappropriateness of the windows. The window openings were altered before designation of Cottage Home.

Recommendation from the Cottage Home Plan:

Recommended

“If non-original windows are replaced, replacements should be compatible with the architectural design of the building without further altering the original opening.”

Not Recommended

“Replacement windows that exhibit any of the following characteristics:

- are dissimilar to the original in size, dimensions, shape, design and/or pattern; or*
- have a surface finish that is inconsistent with the original windows; or*
- exhibit profiles and/or shadow lines dissimilar to the original.”*

Staff Proposed Compromise – Restore Front Window Size

The two, first floor windows on the front elevation were reduced in size prior to designation. Therefore, the IHPC cannot require that they be re-opened to their original size. However, staff believes that restoring those two windows to their original size would do more to restore the original character of this house than any other action.

Recognizing that there will be considerable cost in replacing 6 side windows, staff suggests that money would be better spent restoring the two first floor windows on the front. Because of that, staff is suggesting that the IHPC permit the side windows, which add almost nothing to the character of the house as seen from the street, to be retained “as-they-are,” provided the owner agrees to the following:

1. to restore the two first floor window openings in the front to their original size,
2. install appropriately sized wood or vinyl-clad windows in all front façade windows, and
3. reinstall window trim on the two front first floor windows to match the original.

Staff believes that restoring the front window sizes along with slight modifications to the railing will significantly improve the overall appropriateness of the work begun.

Justification for Certificate of Authorization

Insubstantial Effect: If staff’s compromise is implemented, the effect of inappropriate windows on the hardly-visible side elevations will be insubstantial, compared with the vast improvement from correcting the window sizes on the front.

Owner’s Position

Staff has suggested the compromise to the owner, the owner’s contractor and the owner’s sister, who co-owns the property. They have not agreed to change their request, but wish to ask the IHPC to permit the work to be retained without any changes.

Alternative Recommendations

Unless the owner agrees to staff’s compromise solution, staff recommends that all front and side windows be replaced with appropriately sized new wood or vinyl-clad windows that properly fit the existing openings, along with the corrected railing design.

If the owner does not agree with making any corrections, then staff recommends denial and forwarding the case to the City Prosecutor.

STAFF RECOMMENDED MOTION

Case #2011-COA-352 B (CH):

To approve a Certificate of Authorization to:

1. Retain four new wood porch posts installed on the front porch without a COA.
2. Rebuild the wood porch rail on front porch and complete the installation of remaining railing sections in accordance with a design approved by staff.

Approved _____ *Date* _____

3. Retain six vinyl windows installed on north and south side elevations without a COA.
4. Replace 6 vinyl windows installed on the front elevation without a COA, with appropriately designed and sized wood or vinyl-clad double-hung windows:
 - a. 2nd Floor Windows: Windows must correctly fit the existing openings.
 - b. 1st Floor Windows: The window openings must be restored to their original size, the new windows must correctly fit into those openings, and window trim to replicate the original shall be installed.

as per submitted documentation and subject to the following stipulations:

1. New windows must be reviewed and approved by IHPC staff prior to installation and purchase. *Approved* _____ *Date* _____
2. A mock-up of the modified railing must be approved by IHPC staff prior to completion of work. *Approved* _____ *Date* _____

NOTE 1: The above stipulations must be satisfied prior to the issuance of any building permits.

NOTE 2: Violations shall be corrected no later than June 1, 2012. Failure to comply with the deadline will result in the case being forwarded to the City Prosecutor.

Staff Reviewer: Meg Purnsley





Above: Front Elevation
Below: Photo of space between houses





Above: Outline of original length of window seen in siding
Below: View of new porch posts (on left) View of typical porch post in Cottage Home





Above: View of porch railing installed
Below: View of extruded vinyl windows installed at second floor front elevation.

