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## D/DRC Case

1300 Summerville Avenue

**Cottontown/Bellevue Architectural Conservation District**

TMS: 09113-04-02



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**DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION  
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT  
HISTORIC AGENDA  
EVALUATION SHEET  
Case # 4**

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**ADDRESS:** 1300 Summerville Avenue

**APPLICANT:** Thad Moore, homeowner

**TAX MAP REFERENCE:** TMS#09113-04-02

**USE OF PROPERTY:** Residential

**REVIEW DISTRICT:** Cottontown Architectural Conservation District

**NATURE OF REQUEST:** Request Certificate of Design Approval for exterior changes, for a different front door

**FINDINGS/COMMENTS:**

This is a c. 1920 two-story, brick veneer residence. It appears on a Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1923. The owner started work on restoring their front door but during the process one of the door's muntins was damaged. The door also had a broken pane of glass and was separating slightly at a vertical seam at the base of the door. Staff did a site visit in August 2013 and the door appeared largely intact except for the broken pane and a crack in a vertical muntin. A second site visit in November 2013 showed that a vertical muntin had been damaged further. Staff described to the owner in detail the process for repairing the door, as it appeared to be sound and easily repairable by someone knowledgeable about historic doors. Staff issued a Certificate of Design Approval (CDA) for installation of a temporary door while the original door was being repaired. The owner is now requesting that the temporary door be the permanent door.

The applicant has questioned the fact that the door was original to the front of the house and has provided some information regarding that in an attached statement. Staff has identified three houses on the same 1300 block of Summerville Avenue with the exact same front door and would suggest that the applicant's information is not sufficient to prove that this is not the original front door (please see attached letter and images). The glass doorknob offered as proof of the building's original location in the interior is clearly not original to the door as there is the shadow of an escutcheon plate, and the gap around the door can be explained by wood shrinkage or changes to the door to accommodate weatherstripping that might have been removed. This can easily be remedied by adding a thin piece of wood to the door jamb to minimize the gap. Staff has noted a variety of thicknesses in exterior doors of historic buildings, so the measurement presented does not seem to exclude the possibility of this being an original exterior door.

**PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM GUIDELINES**

**Section 7-1:DOORS**

*Principles*

*Significant features such as doors and entrances should be preserved wherever possible. Changes to door size and configuration should be avoided. Replacement doors should either match the original or substitute new materials and designs sympathetic to the original.*

*Sometimes new entrances are required for practical reasons or to satisfy code requirements. Placement of new entrances on principal facades should be avoided. New entrances can result in loss of historic fabric and detailing and change the rhythm of bays. New entrances should be compatible with the building and be located on side or rear walls that are not readily visible from the public right-of-way. If a historic entrance cannot be incorporated into a contemporary use for the building, the opening and any significant detailing should, nevertheless, be retained.*

### **Guidelines**

*i. Install new openings so that they carry on the same rhythm of existing openings and are compatible in size, materials and design.*

Not applicable

*ii. Retain and repair historic door openings, doors, screen doors, trim, and details such as transom, sidelights, pediments, and hoods, where they contribute to the architectural character of the building.*

The door appeared to be very repairable when viewed by Staff. The owner has taken the door out to be repaired and has indicated that the door “fell apart.” The door was being used and appeared sturdy when viewed by staff, and a current photo supplied by the applicant shows that the stiles and rails are intact on the door, while the muntins and glass have been removed (please see attached). Repairing this door is possible and would meet the guideline; replacing the door does not meet this guideline.

*iii. Replace missing or deteriorated doors with doors that closely match the original, or that are of compatible contemporary design.*

The door is not missing or deteriorated beyond repair. The proposed door does not closely match the original, nor is it of a compatible contemporary design, as it is a half-glass instead of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  glass door, does not mimic any of the muntin detailing, and features multiple raised panels and carving, instead of the flat, plain bottom of the original door.

*iv. Place new entrances on secondary elevations away from the main elevation. Preserve non-functional entrances that are architecturally significant.*

Not applicable.

*v. Add simple or compatibly designed wooden screen doors when necessary.*

The applicant has cited safety and energy efficiency as concerns with the original door. Staff suggests the use of a storm door of full glass to provide a secondary air barrier and security barrier. Furthermore, the applicant could attach a secondary piece of glass or plexiglass to the interior of the original door around the glass area, attached with framing or screws (plexiglass) to provide more security and energy efficiency without compromising the exterior appearance of the door.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff finds that the door previously on the building is likely original and therefore the proposal does not meet Section 7-1 of the guidelines. Staff recommends that the request for a Certificate of Design Approval for a new door be denied and recommends a time frame within which the applicant shall repair and reinstall the original door.





Damaged muntin indicated by arrow

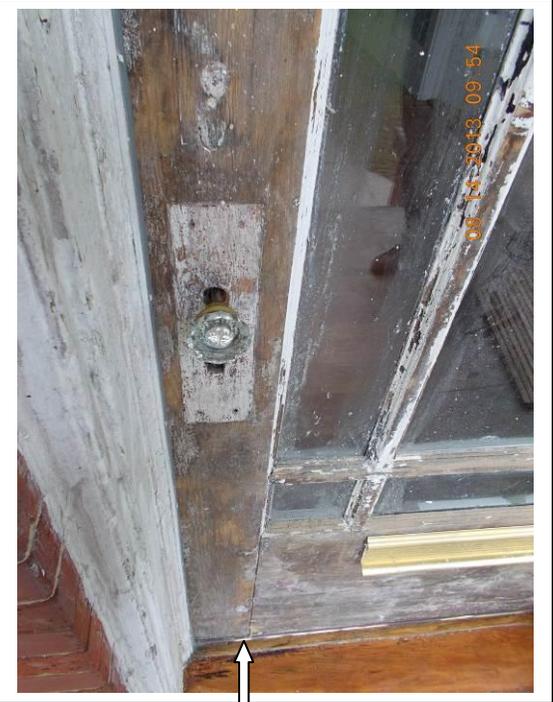
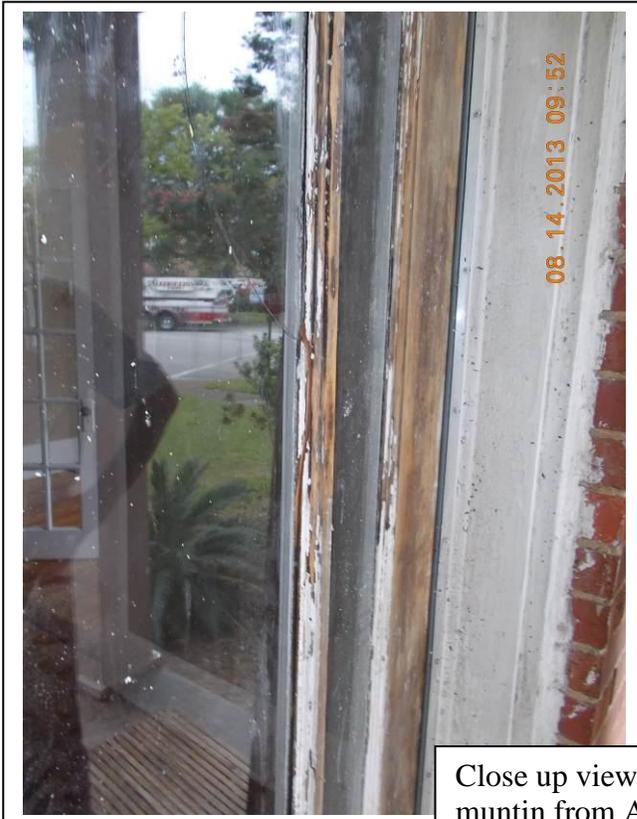


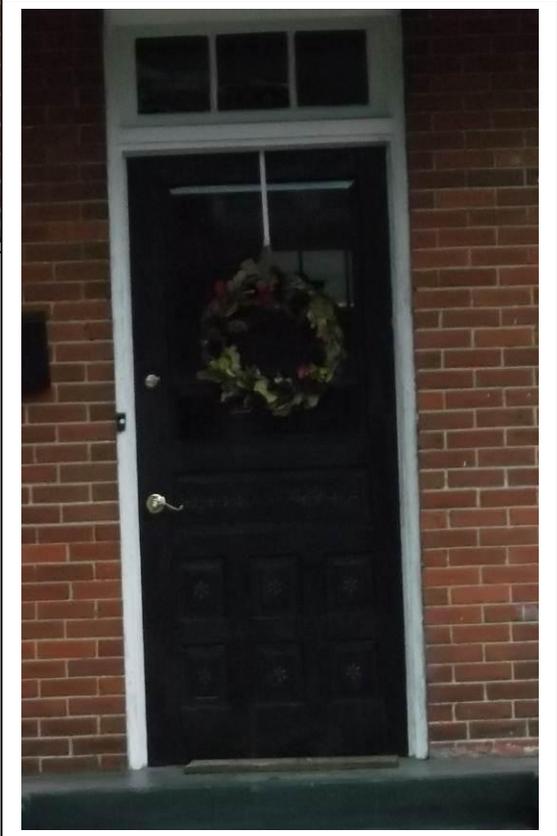
Image above from 2013 shows non-original doorknob and slight separation of vertical joint at the bottom of the door



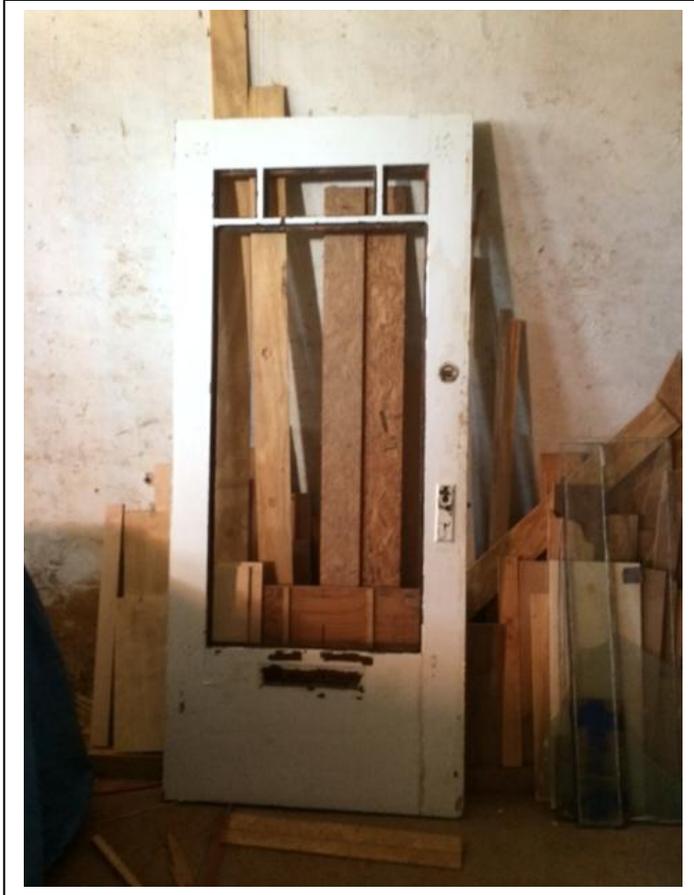
Close up views of damaged muntin from August 2013



Damaged muntin indicated by arrow, central pane is broken in upper right corner



New Door



**Left: Image by applicant showing current condition of the door**

**Below: Two of the three houses within the same block that have the same front door**



## Statement By Applicant

We are requesting to make permanent a temporary door we installed at 1300 Summerville Ave. after the previous door deteriorated substantially, creating a safety concern and aesthetic blemish in the Cottontown neighborhood.

We also believe the deteriorated door was not original to the front entrance. There was a fairly substantial (1/4-1/2") gap between the door and the frame, and it matches other interior doors in the house with a glass doorknob, overall style and craftsmanship, using nails and glue instead of tongue-and-groove construction.

When we bought the house, it was missing a door at the rear of the house that connected the kitchen to the mudroom. We think a previous owner likely pulled the door from there to replace the original, explaining the poor fit. That it wasn't intended to be exposed to the elements, we think, sped up the door's deterioration, leading to the problems that led us to remove it.

Among the issues: a catch that barely reached the frame, broken glass panes, an nonoperational deadbolt, an interior door lock and separating joints.

The previous door was 82 1/2" by 35 3/4" by 1 9/16". By comparison, the new door, which fits the frame much more closely, measures 83" by 36" by 1 3/4".

The replacement door (circa 1915-1925) came from a house in Florence County . It uses mortis-and-tenon construction and has beveled glass. It also has hand-carved features below a large window. County records show our house was built in 1925. Therefore, we believe the replacement door matches the Cottontown/Bellevue design guidelines: "Replace missing or deteriorated doors with doors that closely match the original, *or that are of compatible contemporary design*" (emphasis added).

We're asking to make this a permanent replacement because when a carpenter began disassembling it to make repairs, it fell apart. The cost of repairing it would outweigh the value of the door, and its original construction — even fully repaired — would raise concerns of safety, security and energy efficiency. To be returned to its original state, we would need to use 1/8" glass, not safety glass, which would make broken panes a safety concern and cause substantial heat loss.

Attached are photographs of the deteriorated door, an interior door that matches it, a separating joint, the gap between the door and frame and the new door.