



## D/DRC Case

4035 Ensor Avenue

Seminary Ridge Architectural Conservation District

TMS: 09211-10-03

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**DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION**  
**DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT**  
**HISTORIC AGENDA**  
**EVALUATION SHEET**  
**Case # 2**

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**ADDRESS:** 4035 Ensor Avenue

**APPLICANT:** Vermell Seibles, homeowner

**TAX MAP REFERENCE:** TMS#09211-10-03

**USE OF PROPERTY:** Residential

**REVIEW DISTRICT:** Seminary Ridge Architectural Conservation District

**NATURE OF REQUEST:** Request Certificate of Design Approval for exterior change, to replace all 19 original windows in the house with vinyl windows

**FINDINGS/COMMENTS:**

This is a c. 1950 single-family home with vernacular Minimal Traditional architecture. It is contributing to the Seminary Ridge Architectural Conservation District, and it is located on a corner lot, which lends visibility to all of the nineteen windows in the building. The owner has had some window panes on the side elevation broken by vandals throwing things into the house. The owner contracted with Sears to purchase replacement windows and when Sears came to pull a permit they were informed that the house was in a historic district and they relayed that information to the owner, who later contacted staff and allowed staff to review some of the windows in person. The owner is proposing to replace all 19 original wood windows with vinyl windows.

**PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM GUIDELINES**

**Section 7-3: WINDOWS**

***A. PRINCIPLES***

*Wonderful avenues for glimpses of the outside, for natural ventilation and for natural light, windows offer a lot of advantages for our homes. Historic windows offer even more benefits, they were built to complement the architecture of the house, they used old, slow growing wood with natural density and disease and rot resistance, and they were created to be almost infinitely repairable.*

*The windows in Seminary Ridge offer a lot of variety between houses, but for each home they were obviously carefully selected to match the architecture of the home. Created for just a few decades in the early 1900s, some of these styles have never been repeated. Modern materials attempt to replicate the details of these old windows, but they often fail to evoke the character and solidarity of the original windows. If sticking windows are a problem, or the windows simply won't open, the culprit is often the build up of many layers of paint. A simple hand tool can easily remedy this situation in just a few minutes. Consider your historic preservation staff with the City a resource for assessment of your windows and free tips for repair.*

### *Repair*

*Windows are a significant character-defining feature of any structure. Original windows were constructed so that individual components could be repaired instead of requiring wholesale replacement if one piece breaks or rots. This often means that an existing historical window will be cheaper to repair than to replace. Additionally, materials in historical windows tend to be of better quality than anything available today. The following qualities of the original window must be carefully considered and rigorously applied when repairing windows in order to maintain visual consistency between new and existing window components:*

*trim detail;*

*pane size, shape of frame, sash;*

*location of meeting rail;*

*reveal or set-back of window from wall plane;*

*materials, reflective qualities of glass;*

*glazing*

*muntin, mullion profiles, configuration.*

### *Replacement of a Window*

*If, after careful evaluation by city Staff, 50% or more of a window is deteriorated or missing, it should be replaced rather than repaired. Small differences between replacement and historical windows can make big differences in appearance and insulation. The qualities of the original window listed above should also be taken into consideration when replacing a window.*

### *Replacement of Multiple Windows*

*If more than 50% of the fenestration visible from the street is rotted or beyond repair, then replacement of all existing windows is permitted. However, to ensure visual consistency, it is suggested that if replacing more than 50% of existing windows, replacement windows and windows contiguous to them should reflect the same pattern, design, detailing, etc. If all of the existing windows are being replaced then they should reflect the details of the original windows or of windows from the same period of construction.*

## **B. GUIDELINES**

*1. When technically and economically feasible, repair of deteriorated or damaged windows shall be preferred over replacement.*

The damaged windows should be repaired to meet this guideline. Many windows appear to be painted shut, and some have peeling paint and deteriorated putty. These are regular maintenance items that are relatively minor and easy to repair. Some of the windows would require wood repairs along the bottom of the sashes where the wood has deteriorated or been damaged. These repairs are feasible.

*2. If replacement of a small number of units is deemed necessary after evaluating the sill, frame, sash, paint and wood surface, hardware, weather-stripping, stops, trim, operability, and glazing, replace with units that match the original in detailing, size, reflective quality, and materials.*

It does not appear necessary to replace the windows. The damage that is visible is broken glass, which is a very minor repair, and peeling paint and putty, with some areas of damage at the bottom of a few sashes. The proposed windows do attempt to match the configuration of the original, but as they are vinyl, they do not match the materials and will likely not match other details such as the width of the wood stiles and rails that make up the sashes. Vinyl windows also typically have wider and flatter muntins than those found on historic wood windows.

3. *If wholesale replacement is found to be necessary, either match the original unit or substitute a unit appropriate to the house's period of significance, maintaining the use of historical materials.*

Wholesale replacement is not necessary. The proposal for wholesale replacement does not meet this guideline as the vinyl windows are not appropriate to the house's original construction date and as they are not maintaining the use of wood, the historic material already found on the house.

4. *Improve the thermal performance of existing windows and doors through adding or replacing weather stripping and adding storm windows which are compatible with the character of the building and which do not damage window frames.*

Staff encourages the use of storm windows for added protection against breakage and for increased energy efficiency.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff finds that the proposal does not meet Section 7-3 of the guidelines and recommends denial.





