



02/04/2021

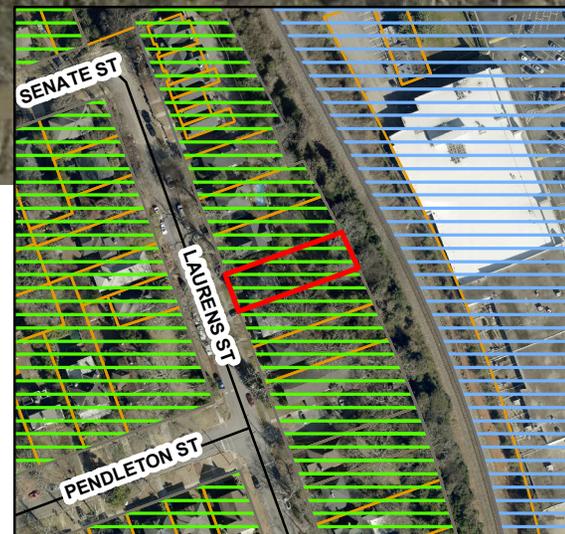


## D/DRC Case

1008 Laurens Street

University Hill Architectural Conservation District

TMS# 11405-11-19



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**DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION**  
**DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT**  
**HISTORIC REGULAR AGENDA**  
**EVALUATION SHEET**  
**Case #3**

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**ADDRESS:** 1008 Laurens Street

**APPLICANT:** Justin Schlachterman, agent

**TAX MAP REFERENCE:** TMS# 11405-11-19

**USE OF PROPERTY:** Residential

**REVIEW DISTRICT:** University Hill Architectural Conservation District, -DP

**NATURE OF REQUEST:** Appeal to staff decision regarding exterior changes

**FINDINGS/COMMENTS:**

This house is a classic clapboard, two-story, foursquare structure with a hip roof, most likely built somewhere between the 1920s-1930s, based upon its architecture. It features an off-center entry with a single door and sidelights covered by a small gable roof. The façade features 5/1 paired wood windows; this configuration is found on the single windows on the side elevations as well.

The house was cited for paint violations in April 2021. Consequently, a contractor started work, removing compromised siding from the house but without pulling the necessary permits; he was subsequently issued a stop work order by an inspector in May 2021. Preservation staff was notified and followed up, allowing for siding to be removed from the back of the house, which is not visible from the public right-of-way. The intent was to use viable siding from the rear to replace the rotten siding removed from the front (still in progress) and rotten siding found on the sides (highly visible and therefore reviewed). Since the back of the house is not visible, staff informed the owner that he could side that elevation with vinyl if he wished. The plan at that point was to do any necessary repairs to the siding on the remaining three sides and then paint those sides of the house.

The contractor is now reporting a problem with getting paint to adhere, citing the age of the wood and the layers of paint as the most likely problem. The current request is to cover the side and rear elevations with vinyl siding, leaving the façade with its original wood. Since this is not permitted per the guidelines, staff did not approve the request; hence the appeal to the DDRC.

Paint: Regarding the issue of getting paint to stick, staff agrees that the multiple layers of paint are probably an issue. One sees this frequently with older structures. Up close photos show the many layers of paint which have been applied; it appears that care has not been taken to spot sand as needed over the years to maintain an even base coat upon which to re-paint, an unfortunate practice which is not uncommon. The contractor has said they have

tried sandblasting (not recommended for historic structures) and using a metal grinder to remove paint without success; and of course painting on top of these layers of paint will not be successful. One generally has to sand down to a smooth surface to prime and repaint for a coat that will hold or else remove paint to get down to the wood. This has to be done carefully and with the right tools so that the wood is not damaged. There are some tools recommended by preservation specialists for removing layers of paint; these tools are recommended as fairly quick-acting and effective and do not employ metal grinders or sandblasters. Staff has not seen any evidence that the underlying wood is causing an issue; however, if stripping down to the bare wood is desired, that is an excellent time to apply linseed oil to nourish the wood which would also extend the life of the paint job. Older wood such as this is so dense that it will repel insects and moisture if kept protected. Adequate care can ensure another 100 years for this siding.

**Precedent: Staff has researched files in University Hill Architectural Conservation District for like requests and, out of dozens of requests for repair/maintenance, has found no cases where vinyl siding/products have been approved for either new construction or exterior repairs.**

**PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY HILL GUIDELINES:**

**SECTION VIII MAINTENANCE & REHABILITATION**

**A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

*Rehabilitation* is a practical approach to historic preservation. It is the process of repairing or altering a historical building while retaining its historical features. It represents a compromise between remodeling, which offers no sensitivity to the historical features of a building, and restoration, which is a more accurate but costly approach to repair, replacement, and maintenance.

Original materials *should* be preserved, not only for their historical value, but also because they are usually of better quality and last longer than materials obtainable today. Rehabilitation guidelines are limited to the review of exterior elements visible from the public right-of-way. The priority of the guidelines is to ensure the preservation of a building's character-defining features while accommodating an efficient modern use.

**6. EXTERIOR SIDING**

**b. Principles • Wood**

Where original wood siding exists on a structure, it *should* be retained. If it becomes necessary to replace deteriorated boards, match the replacements to the characteristics of the original. Important characteristics of wood siding that *should* be considered in its repair or replacement are board size, width of exposure, length, and trim detail such as corner boards.

One of the greatest threats to wood siding is the application of non-historical surface coverings such as aluminum and vinyl siding, or stucco. Application of non-historical exterior finishes results in either the removal or covering of historical materials and details. Decorative trim around doors, windows, and under rooflines is frequently removed. Detailing of the wood itself, such as beveling or beading, is also lost. Board width, length, and exposure are generally changed, thus altering the scale and appearance of the building. Artificial siding also frequently damages the fabric underneath. It can

trap moisture and encourage decay and insect infestation.

In cases where artificial siding is already in place, its removal is not necessary under the guidelines. An owner may retain the material or remove it, but it need not be replaced if only minor repairs are necessary. If, however, more than a third of the material needs to be repaired or removed, it must be replaced with historically *appropriate* materials.

In the case of original asbestos or masonite siding, if its removal is required, masonry, wood, or cement fiberboard siding is an *appropriate* replacement.

### **c. Guidelines**

- 1. Masonry features that are important to defining the overall historical character of the building such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, door pediments, steps, and columns, as well as joint and unit size, tooling, and bonding patterns, coatings, and color should be identified, retained and preserved.*
- 2. Masonry surfaces should be cleaned by the gentlest method possible, such as water and detergents and natural bristle brushes. Sandblasting is prohibited.*
- 3. Wooden materials and features to be retained include siding, cornices, brackets, soffits, fascia, window architrave, and doorway pediments. These are essential components of a building's appearance and architectural style which should not be obscured or otherwise covered.*

This is a house that relies heavily upon its massing, materials, and simple details for its integrity. As can be seen in the pictures included in the evaluation, the window trim, sills, and so on, have a very shallow profile against the wood trim. Installing vinyl over the wood siding would effectively make these features disappear. Covering them over or removing them completely is in violation of the guidelines as well.

- 4. Repair or replacement of deteriorated material must duplicate the original in size, shape, and texture as closely as possible. Original characteristics such as board width, length, exposure, and trim detailing when selecting a replacement material should be considered.*

On this house some deteriorated wood has been replaced on the front of the structure with similarly profiled original wood from the back of the house; this meets the guideline. From a visual inspection of the front and sides, there does not seem to be a great deal of rot otherwise. Replacing or covering wood that is largely in good condition is not compatible with this guideline as the material is not deteriorated. Vinyl siding is also not an appropriate replacement material as it does not have the same reveal and width that one finds on original wood siding and where permitted (in other districts), is easily differentiated from wood when viewed from the public right-of-way.

- 5. Artificial replacement siding over wood or brick is not permitted.*

Vinyl siding would not be permitted per this guideline.

- 6. Where a structure has asbestos or masonite as original siding, it may be replaced with wood, brick, or cement fiberboard.*

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff finds that the proposal to cover wood siding with vinyl siding at 1008 Laurens Street does not meet the University Hill Architectural Conservation District Guidelines, Section 8, Item 6, and recommends denial of the proposal.





