



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

April 13, 2021

REQUEST: Retain vinyl windows installed at front façade without CHAP review/approval

ADDRESS: 105 Warren Avenue (Federal Hill Historic District)

APPLICANT/OWNER: Megan Nolan

STAFF: Walter W. Gallas, AICP

RECOMMENDATION: Disapproval with applicant to work with CHAP staff to develop a schedule of replacement of the windows with approvable windows within a reasonable timeline agreed upon with the owner.

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Area: The property is located in the Federal Hill Historic District on the south side of Warren Avenue in a block bounded by Light Street on the west, East Hamburg Street on the south, and William Street on the east. (*Images 1 & 2*). Comprising about 24 city blocks with street names retained from its original colonial settlement, Federal Hill is located just south of the Inner Harbor. At its northeast corner, Federal Hill Park rises steeply from Key Highway overlooking the downtown skyline. The neighborhood retains intact streets of largely residential properties reflecting the eras in which they were built and the economic status of their early residents.

Site Conditions: The existing property is a masonry two-story-with-attic house, one of a row of four to the west of Jesus Our Redeemer Church (*Images 3 & 4*). The windows and the door opening with transom have jack arches. The house shares a sallyport on the east side with the neighboring house. Two or three rows of brick line the edge for the roof which has a half-round metal gutter with round downspout shared with 107 Warren Avenue. The windows are vinyl with grilles between glass.

The house appears on the 1890 Sanborn map, in a row of thirteen 2 ½ story houses lining the south side of the block (*Image 5*). By 1914-1915, three of the houses in the middle of the block had been demolished for the construction of the Lee Street Memorial Church, a forerunner of today's congregation (*Image 6*).

BACKGROUND

This is the first application to CHAP for this property. In early February 2021, the existing vinyl windows at the front of the house were replaced with new vinyl windows. No application was submitted to CHAP for the work. The housing inspection system shows that a notice of the

violation was issued on March 1, 2021. A citation with a fine of \$500 and an abatement date of March 11, 2021, was subsequently issued. The owner of the property submitted an application for CHAP Authorization to Proceed on March 7, 2021, to “Replace windows in kind.” The application included a photo of the house from its real estate listing in 2014, when the current owner purchased the house (*Image 7*). The windows were vinyl windows in 2014. The application also included the specifications for Harvey brand Classic windows, a vinyl double hung window.

PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

This application is a request to retain the new vinyl windows installed without CHAP review or approval. (*Image 8*).

Staff applied the following guideline from the *Baltimore City Historic Preservation Design Guidelines*. The relevant bullet points for this application are italicized.

1.7.3 Window Replacement

Window replacement Guidelines apply when the Commission has determined:

1. An existing, historic window is deteriorated beyond repair;
 2. An existing, historic window is a lead-based paint hazard;
 3. *The existing window does not contribute or is detrimental to the historic character of the building;*
 4. A window is being installed in a historic window opening that was later in-filled with brick, concrete block, or another material that is not in keeping with the historic character of the building.
- *Replacement windows shall match the historic windows in size, type, configuration, form, detail, and overall appearance*
 - *Replicating the material of historic windows is always appropriate.*
 - *Replacement windows in an alternative material may be considered if it adequately replicates the overall size, glazing, operation, finish, exterior profiles, and arrangement of the historic window.*
 - *Replacement windows must fit properly within the original opening, and replicate the dimensions and profiles of the sash, frames and muntins. Do not reduce the size or change the shape of historic windows or window openings.*
 - Insulated glass and clear low-emissive (Low-E) coatings may generally be incorporated into the design of a replacement window.
 - Windows that were mass-produced, do not have distinguishing characteristics or that are easily replicable may be considered for replacement if they are deteriorated beyond repair or present a lead-based paint hazard on accessible, friction or impact surfaces.
 - Where sashes are deteriorated beyond repair, repair the frames and install new sashes within them. Eliminate any friction or impact surfaces that have tested positive for lead. Visibly match the amount of glazing area of the original window.
 - *Simulated divided light muntins may be allowed, so long as they:*
 1. *Match the historic window muntin in profile and depth on the exterior and interior side of the window to the greatest extent possible;*

2. *Include an interior spacer bar within the insulated unit that visually divides the interior and exterior grilles; and*
3. *Are integral to the window sash.*

- *Snap-on muntins, removable grilles, and grilles between the glass are not acceptable.*
- *CHAP may apply these standards strictly or leniently based on site conditions.*

The previously installed vinyl windows would not be considered by CHAP staff to be contributing to the historic character of the building, and so the replacement of the vinyl windows is permissible. Nevertheless, the replacements would need to match the detailing and overall appearance of the historic windows which this house contained at one time. The original material would have been wood. Acknowledging that alternative materials may be considered for windows, the Commission allows aluminum clad wood windows, because they can replicate the sash, frames and muntins of a historic window. In another acknowledgement of modern applications, the guidelines permit simulated divided lights by which the exterior muntin is integrated into the window sash and a spacer bar between the two layers of glass provided the appearance of a divided light. The guidelines do not permit grilles between glass.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Federal Hill Architectural Review supports the staff recommendation of disapproval.

ANALYSIS

The applicant purchased the house in 2014. The façade contained vinyl windows. Google street view shows that that house had vinyl windows for at least a dozen years. Federal Hill became a local historic district in December of 2017. The designation capped many years of effort by the Federal Hill Neighborhood Association and CHAP. The process included outreach to the residents and property owners by mail, neighborhood newsletters and email. With this designation came the requirement that any work affecting the exterior of a property in the district must be reviewed and approved by CHAP. The owner did not apply to CHAP because she says she did not know that her property was in a CHAP district. Had she applied, CHAP staff would have informed her that CHAP guidelines call for replacement windows at the façade to replicate historic windows, and that this can be achieved with wood windows or aluminum clad wood windows. Vinyl windows do not replicate historic windows.

RECOMMENDATION

Disapproval with applicant to work with CHAP staff to develop a schedule of replacement of the windows with approvable windows within a reasonable timeline agreed upon with the owner.



**Eric Holcomb,
Executive Director**

MAPS AND IMAGES

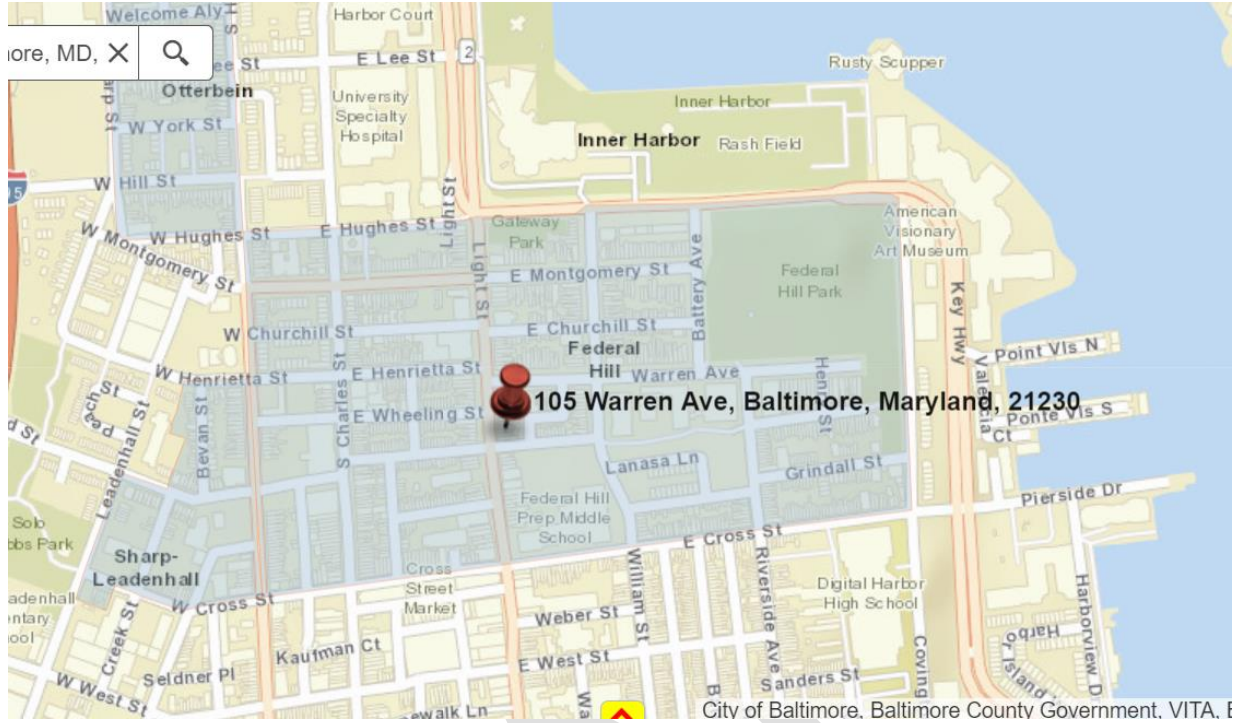


Image 1: 105 Warren Avenue in the Federal Hill Historic District.

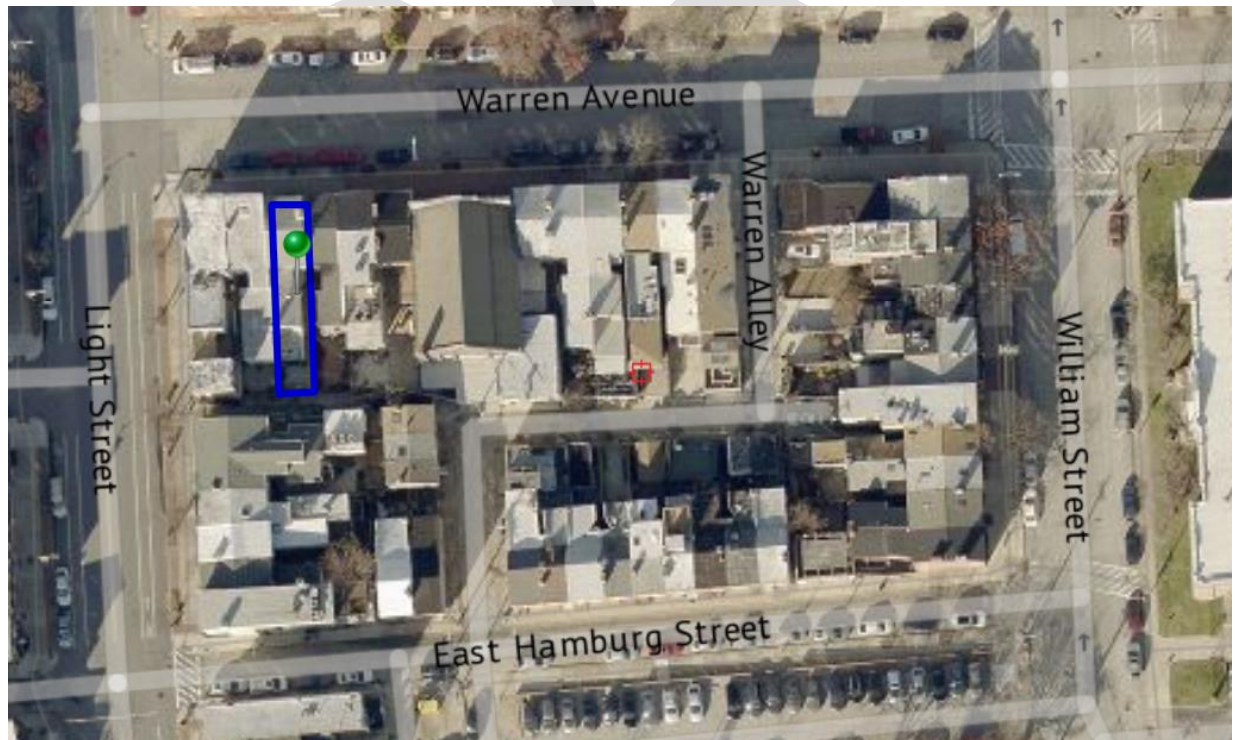


Image 2: Overhead view of 105 Warren Avenue (blue outline), December 11, 2019



Image 3: 105 Warren Avenue (arrow), Google Street View, November, 2020



Image 4: 105 Warren Avenue (arrow), April 2, 2021

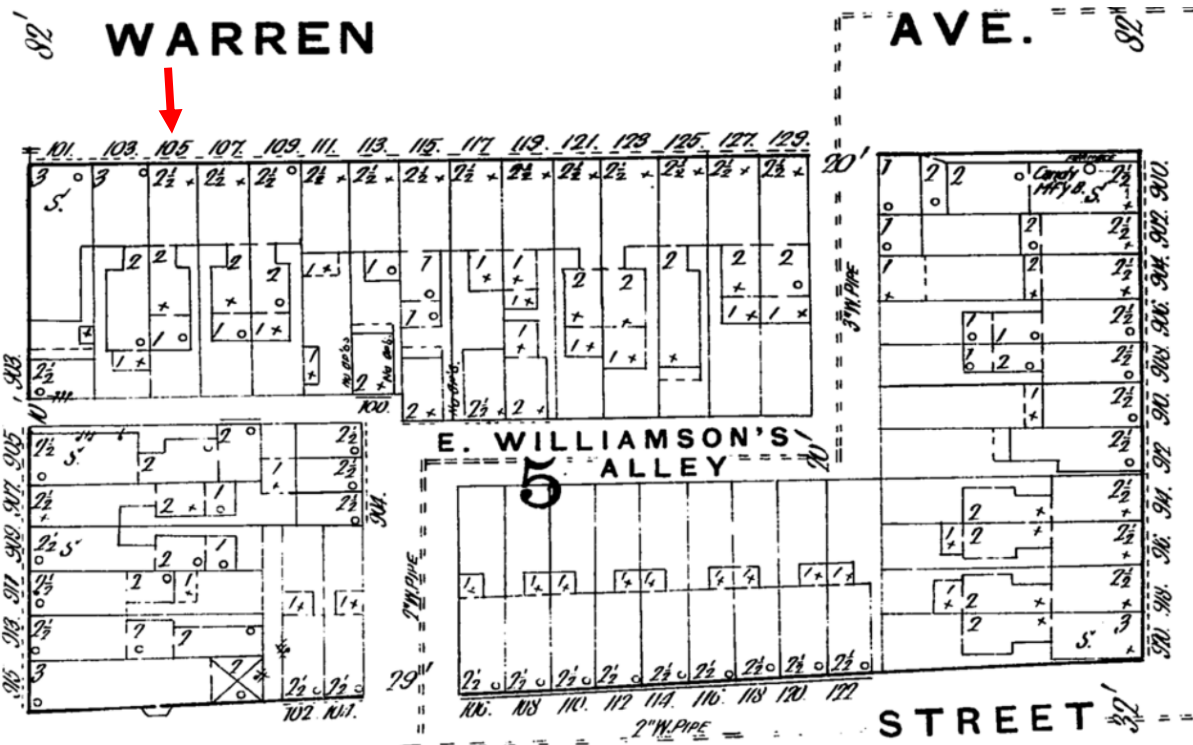


Image 5: 105 Warren Avenue, 1890 Sanborn map

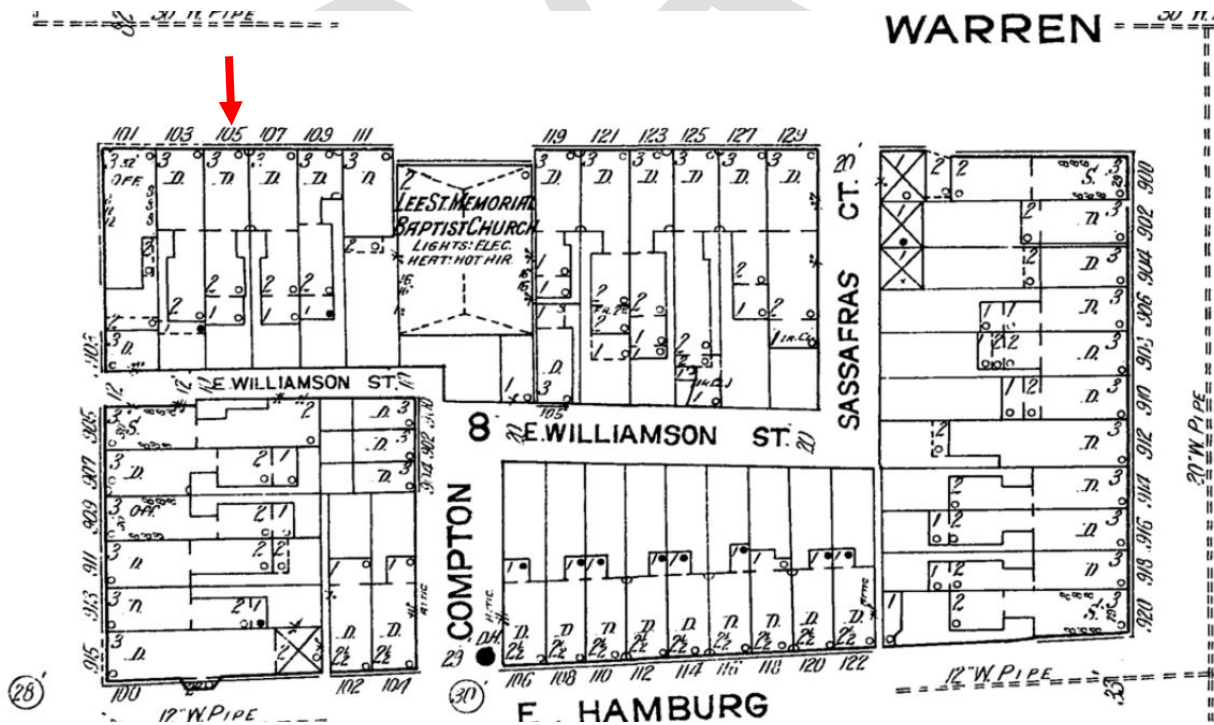


Image 6: 105 Warren Avenue (arrow), 1914-1915 Sanborn map

105 Warren Avenue (Federal Hill Historic District) – Retain vinyl windows at front façade installed without CHAP review/approval



Image 7: 104 Warren Avenue, 2014 image from real estate listing



Image 8: 105 Warren Avenue – Detail, newly installed vinyl window, April 2, 2021