

1819 West Blvd Windows
Peter and Micah Schmid – Property Owners

We would like you to agree with your city staff recommendation that we did consider all other alternatives when replacing the 4 windows of our existing home during our renovation.

Since the last City Council meeting we did meet with two members of Historic Preservation, council members Chapman, Gunderson-Olson, and Costello, and Karen Bulman. At this meeting we had the opportunity to explain what we did, when we did it, and what other options we considered. It was a very productive meeting.

Kitchen Window # 1 – main floor

Window is located on the south side of home, you have to look at it from St. Patrick. It is not visible from West Blvd.

The existing window was a casement (crank out) modern style window, not original to the home. The addition to the home is a dining room so we had to re-design the interior lay out of the kitchen to gain access to the dining room and provide better access to the basement stairs.

We needed to use that wall that the window was in for kitchen cabinets and a refrigerator. Moving the fridge will allow us to change the access to the basement and will make for a wider entry into the new dining room. We will also have to remove some cabinets against the west wall when we take it down to get access to dining room. We needed a new wall to place those cabinets against.

Basement stairs are narrow and almost don't even feel like part of the house. To make the basement more accessible required widening the stairs, which further necessitated moving the fridge against the wall.

We considered blocking up the window completely. We decided we would miss the light too much, and the exterior of the home would look goofy.

We considered different kitchen layouts but they would require losing too much cabinet and counter space.

The window is a single pane of glass. We can have vertical bars installed that will mimic divided light. These are much more efficient, less expensive, and readily available.

We needed an energy star rated window to qualify for the federal tax credits.

Bedroom Windows #1, #2, #3 – 2nd Floor

Window #1 is a bedroom window on the South side of the home. It has already been replaced so I will explain why we made the choice we did.

The width is identical. The top of the window is at the original height; the bottom of the window is 6 inches higher (as measured by a window dealer who is on Historic Preservation.)

The replaced window is a Pella Proline; wood window with a pre-finished white aluminum exterior cladding. It is a single pane of glass with simulated light dividers that will be applied to the exterior.

The size of this window is the same size as the windows used in the addition. Historic Preservation does not object to this size or style when used in the addition, only in the existing home.

We wanted to use the same size for a few reasons. The 6 inch height difference is slight, so we did not think the visual change to the exterior of the home was effected.

We thought that matching the window size with the addition out weighed the 6 inch height difference. We thought too many window sizes on one size of house would look odd.

The size we installed is a standard size. To get the original rough opening size would have been more expensive and taken longer.

The only way were able to upgrade our windows with high quality Pella's was to use standard size.

We choose simulated divided light versus actual divided light. When we called around for windows every salesman said the same thing; nobody installs those. They will be too expensive, not as efficient, and take too long to make.

The simulated light dividers are custom made to order and will be built for all windows in addition and the 4 replacement windows. We have not ordered them yet until our situation is resolved. All replacement windows in the Historic District are this way. Real divided light would never be installed in rear bedrooms.

Please see the picture of the patio door we installed in the addition. It has the factory applied cross bars similar to what will be installed on all the other windows.

Knecht's, who does a lot of windows in our neighborhood, said they haven't sold divided light windows to a home in the West Blvd Historic District.

The Historic Preservation group could not show me another home that has a new divided light window. I am sure someone in the neighborhood has done it, but we can't find them.

Windows are not a permanent change. The next time they need to be changed we will look at divided light and restore the original rough opening.

These bedroom windows do not face West Blvd. One can be seen from St. Patrick and 2 are seen by nobody. We did not feel it necessary to invest in custom windows when they will rarely be seen.

We have many before pictures if you would like to see what we started with. I think people forget how much we have improved the home and the lot in 2 years.

Bringing the window up another 6 inches from the floor of the home seemed safer with kids. The original window did seem very low to the ground. They could still crawl out but they would have to try a little harder.

We decided against repairing the original damaged windows for a few reasons. We could not find anyone who would do it. It would take a real craftsman to do it. The people we found who said they would try it said it would be “hundreds of dollars” per window and there was no guarantee that they would not leak.

Our window frame was leaking, which could not be fixed.

One reason we can afford to replace windows in the existing home is the 30% tax credit for Energy Star rated windows. We would not receive this if we repaired our old ones. Repairing the windows would mean less quality for more money; we couldn't bring our selves to do it for a bedroom.

We will tackle and restore the big divided light windows in the living room this fall. These windows are classified as “unique” on my home inventory sheet with the state.

Conclusion

We have spent every free minute and every last cent trying to take a dilapidated West Blvd home and make it function for a modern family. There are another hundred homes in the district that need a similar make-over.

Historic Preservation is a good thing, I truly believe that. Our home will continue to contribute the neighborhood long after I am gone. If in 50 years they want to restore the window size it will be easy to do.

If you still have doubts please err on the side of the property owner.

You are always welcome to stop by for a tour.

Peter and Micah Schmid