



SR-2 – ADVISORY STAFF REPORT (05-08-2026)

This advisory report, prepared by staff, represents the opinion and advice of professional staff, and does not represent nor direct the separate review and decision of the Historic District Commission. This report serves as an addendum to SR-1, an objective staff summary of the proposal and property.

ADDRESS: 1616 CHICAGO

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

MEETING DATE: 05-13-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00139

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY J. ROSS

STAFF OBJECTIONS TO APPROVAL:

This first section describes itemized conclusions/concerns, which, in staff's professional opinion, would prevent the issue of an unconditional Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). "None" means staff has no objections and believes a COA is warranted, with no conditions. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

1. The roof form of the proposed new rear, two-story sunroom wing does not match the flat roof of the original, distinctive, historic character-defining wing
2. The application does not include details re: the eaves/soffit/fascia area of the roof for the proposed new rear, two-story sunroom wing. It is therefore unclear if these elements will match those which were present at the original, distinctive, historic character-defining wing
3. The application does not include specification for the proposed windows and associated trim/brickmould/mullions so it is unclear if these elements will match those which were present at the original, distinctive, historic character-defining wing
4. The application proposes to install two-lite transom windows at the first story the proposed new rear, two-story sunroom wing's rear wall. This does not match the 3-lite configuration of the match the conditions present at the original, distinctive, historic character-defining wing
5. The application does not include an elevation drawing of the first-story east wall of the proposed new wing. It is therefore unclear if this area of the wall will match the condition present at the original, distinctive, historic character-defining wing
6. The application does not specify what cladding/material will be installed at the west wall of the rear, one-story wing.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This second section expands on the reasoning and analysis leading to staff's conclusions given in the first section above. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.



1616 Chicago. Staff photo taken 2/19/2026. Facing northwest



1616 Chicago. Staff photo taken 2/19/2026. Facing northeast



1616 Chicago. Designation photo, taken in 1980 by HDAB

- Recent work completed at the building rear wall without HDC approval includes the following, per the below photo:
 - Removal of an historic-age, two-story wing
 - The installation of a vinyl siding and a vinyl 1/1 window at the location of the former historic-age, two-story wing
 - Removal of historic stucco cladding from the side and rear wall of the one-story wing
 - The removal of single doors at the first and second stories
 - Installation of a set of slider windows at the second story
 - The removal of a 1/1 window at the rear wall of the one-story wing



Rear, showing unapproved demolition of the two-story sunroom wing in progress. Photo by applicant



Current appearance of the rear wall after the unapproved work. Note that vinyl siding and a vinyl window has been installed at the wall surface/the location of the former two-story sunroom wing (red arrow). Also, the building footprint has been significantly reduced and the former substantial massing and projection of the wing has been lost. Also, note recently added slider windows (yellow arrow), unclad walls at one-story wing (green arrows), and boarded up window (blue arrow) & doors (white arrows). None of this work received a COA. Photo by applicant

Rear 2-story wing

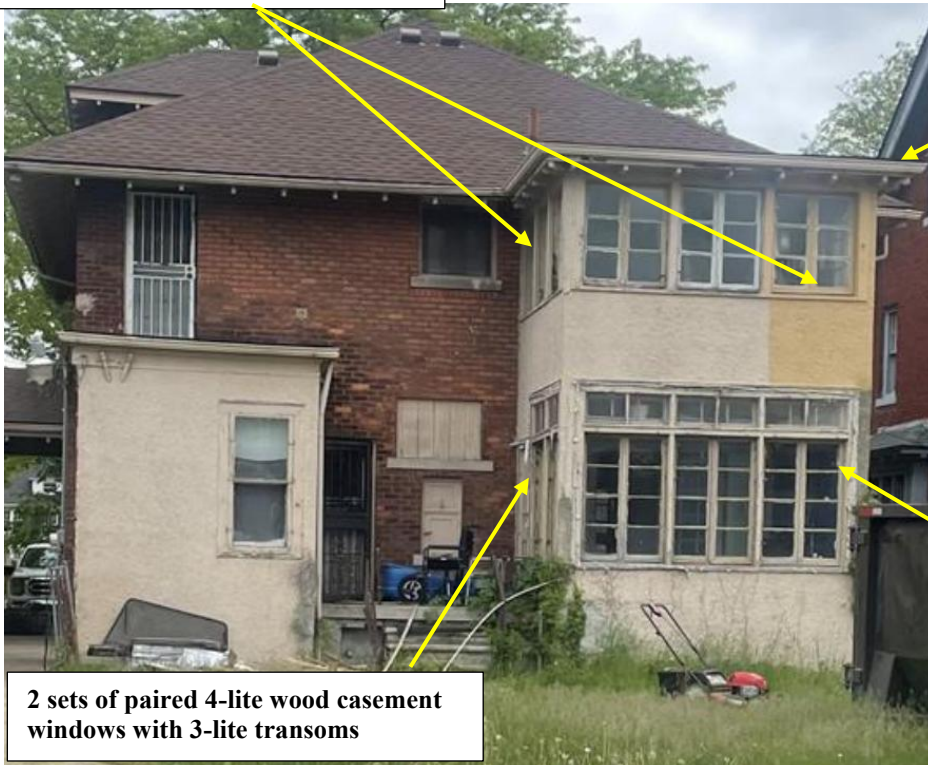
- Per the photo on page 6, the rear wing that was removed without HDC approval was two-stories in height and was clad with stucco. Windows at the first story were historic wood casement units with wood transoms while the second story windows were wood casement units. Consistent with the house’s main roof, the eaves at the wing’s flat roof displayed decorative rafter tails. The doors were the historic wood French doors. Also, the projection and massing of the original wing is lost in the truncated replacement. It is staff’s opinion that this wing was a distinctive, historic character-defining feature of the building.
- Note that the Michigan Local Historic District Act 169 of 1970 399.205, Section 5. (12) states the following:
 - *“When work has been done upon a resource without a permit, and the Commission finds that the work does not qualify for a certificate of appropriateness, the Commission may require an owner to restore the resource to the condition the resource was in before the inappropriate work or to modify the work so that it qualifies for a certificate of appropriateness”*
- As previously noted, at their March 2026 regular meeting, the Commission determined that the unpermitted removal of the historic, distinctive, character-defining two-story rear wing was inappropriate/did not qualify for COA because the work did not meet the applicable Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Elements of Design for the district. The applicant has therefore submitted the current application in an effort to seek the Commission’s approval “to rebuild the demolished two-story wing similar to its previous specifications. We want to try to duplicate it as much as possible while staying within the local building codes.” Furthermore, the submitted plan drawings refer to the proposed new wing as a “rebuilt sunroom.”

- In order to merit the receipt of a COA or restore the house to the condition it was in prior to the unapproved removal of the wing, it is staff's opinion that any proposed design for a new wing must, per SOI Standards# 2, 5, and 6:
 - Match the original spaces, form, and historic materials that characterized the original wing
 - Reflect the original wing's features, finishes, construction techniques and craftsmanship
 - Be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- The proposed wing will be two stories in height and will be clad with stucco. Windows are wood casement units and the roof is hipped. After a review of the submitted materials (see the below), staff notes the following re: the application's attempt to "duplicate" the historic wing:
 - The original wing had a flat roof while the proposed has a hipped roof
 - The original wing's roof had deep overhanging eaves with decorative wood brackets/rafter tails. Also, the soffit and fascia were wood. The new design proposal does not specify that these original conditions will be matched
 - At the original wing's first story, the transoms included 3 lites each. The proposed new design proposes 2-lite transom windows
 - The original windows were wood, with true divided lites. The proposed new windows are wood units, but the application materials do not specify if the windows will be simulated divided lite, true divided lites, or will have muntins between the glass.
 - The current application does not include a full elevation drawing of the proposed wing's east façade/does not depict its first story. Details are limited to the plan's indication that a single wood French door and two sets of wood windows will be installed at this location. However, the lite configuration, operation, presence of transom, etc. is not clear due to the lack of an elevation drawing.
 - The current application materials do not provide window specifications for the new wing's casement and/or transom windows, to include the sashes, brickmould, and mullions. It is therefore not clear how closely the windows will match those which were present at the wing that was demolished without HDC approval
 - The exact dimensions of the original rear wing are not clear because such information was not recorded prior to its unpermitted/unapproved demolition
- While the proposed design for the "rebuilt" rear sunroom wing generally appears to be moving in an appropriate direction, compared to the previous application, it is staff's opinion that the proposed new rear, two-story wing is not an full replication or "restoration" of the original element as the new roof form does not match the original and information is missing re: the detailing and materials at the eaves/soffit/fascia, the specifications for the windows, and the east façade's first story elevation. Staff therefore withholds a recommendation to approve this item until the missing information is supplied and assessed to ascertain how closely the eaves and windows will match the originals. Also, the proposed hipped roof and transom lite configuration at the first story should be revised to match those at the original wing that was demolished without HDC approval.



Photo detailing conditions at the main roof's eaves/soffit/fascia. Note that a similar detail photo of the eaves/soffit/fascia of the former rear 2-story sunroom wing do not exist as the element was demolished without such documentation. Photo by applicant

3 sets of paired 3-lite wood casement windows

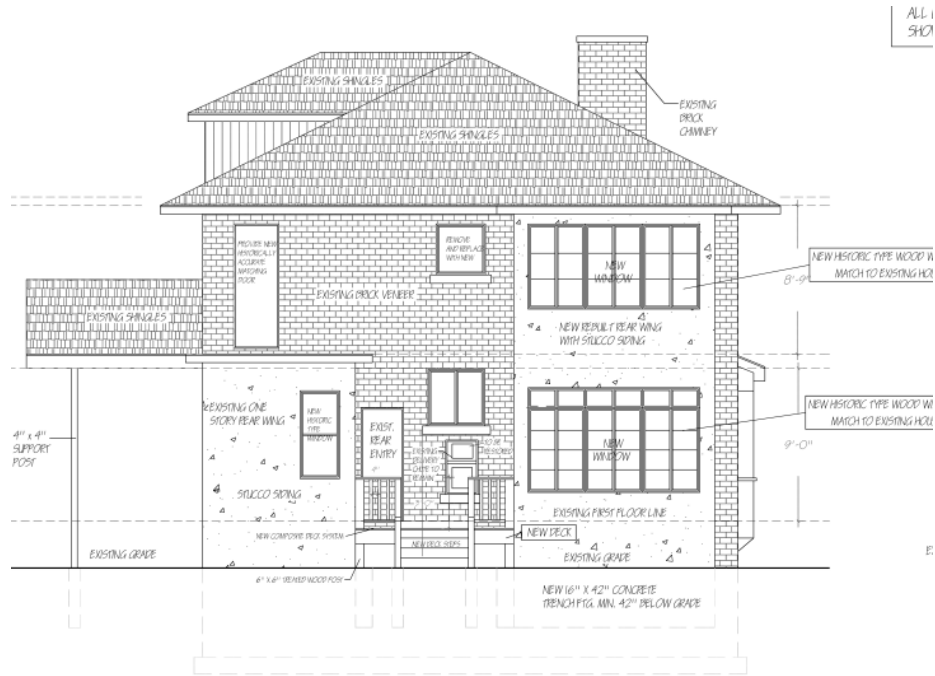


Flat roof w/rafter tails/brackets

3 sets of paired 4-lite wood casement windows with 3-lite transoms

2 sets of paired 4-lite wood casement windows with 3-lite transoms

Appearance prior to the unapproved removal of the two-story wing, second story window, and one-story wing's stucco cladding at the building's rear wall. While detail photos of its eaves/soffit/fascia do not exist, the area does appear to match main roof's the eaves/soffit/fascia, to include the presence of decorative brackets/rafter tails



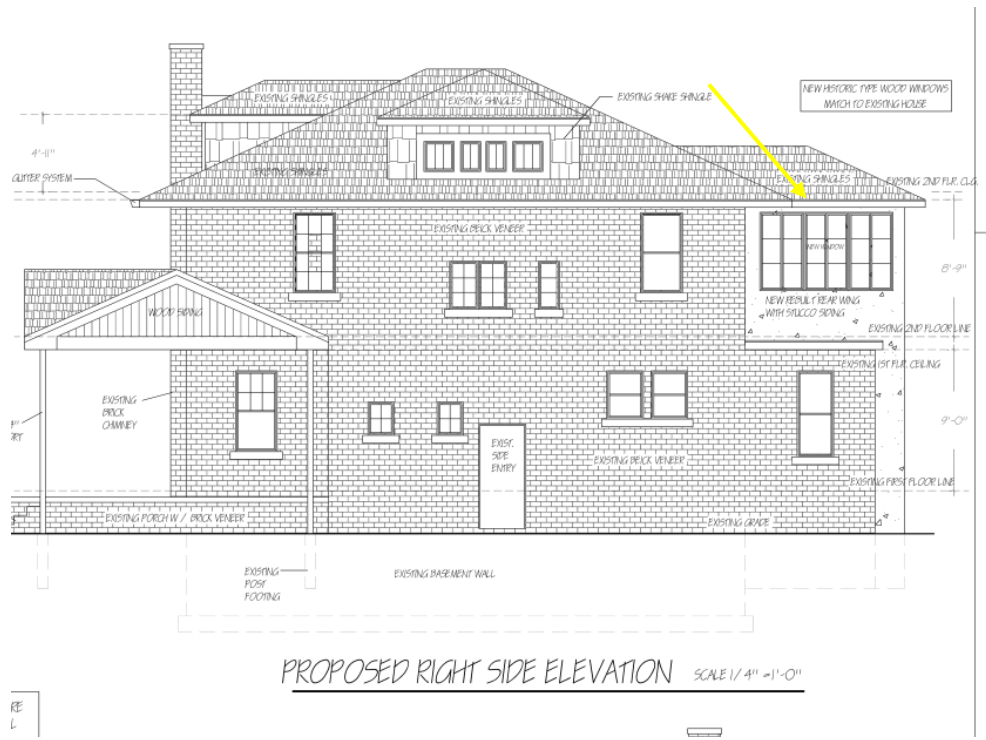
PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

Proposed new rear elevation

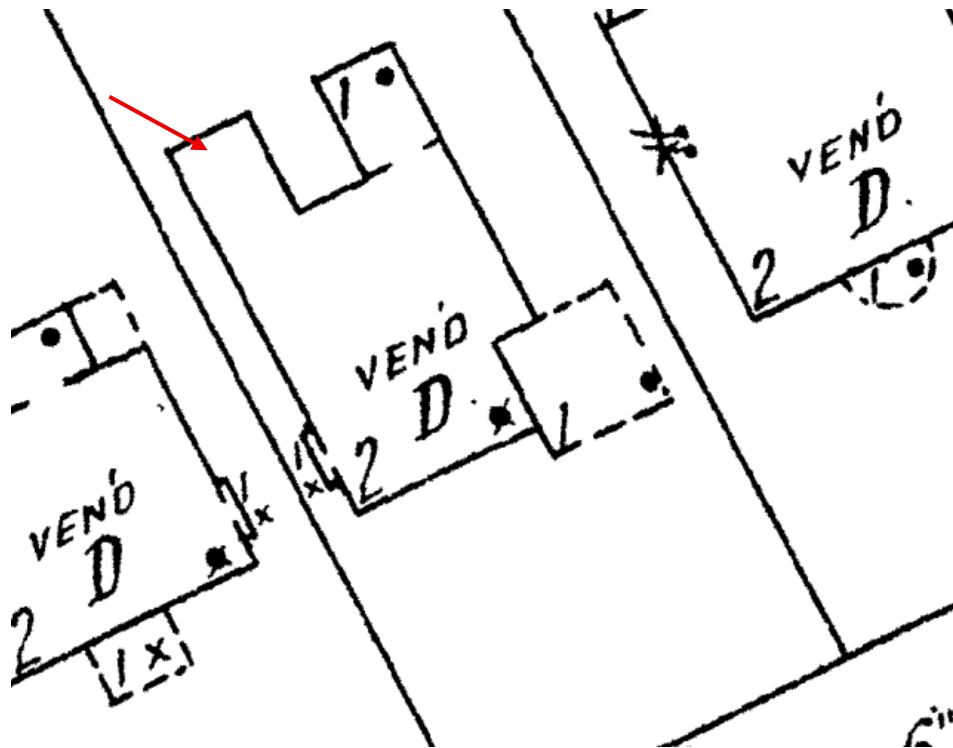


PROPOSED LEFT SIDE ELEVATION SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

Proposed west side elevation

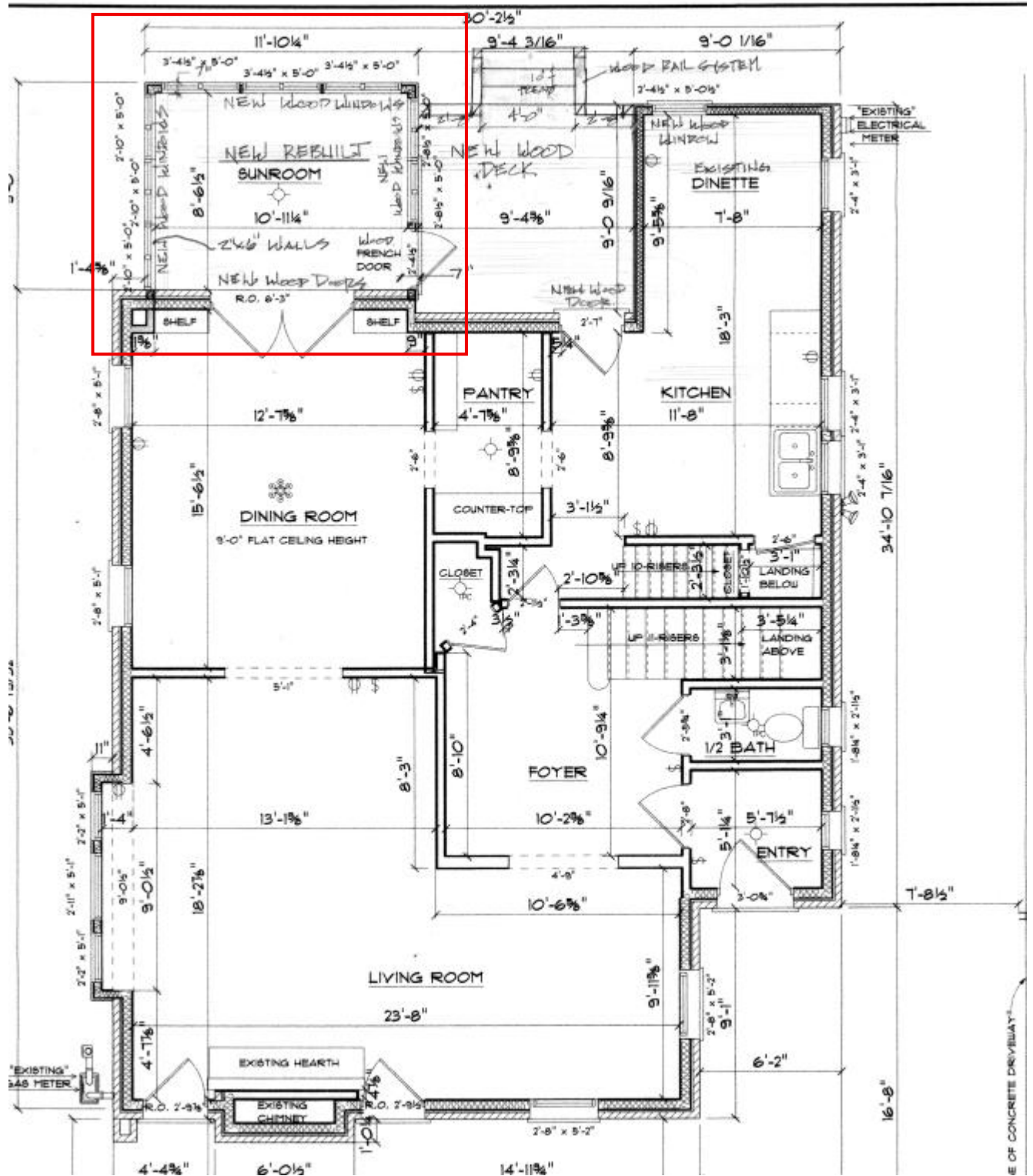


Proposed east side elevation. Note that this drawing only depicts the second story of the proposed “rebuilt” sunroom’s east façade (yellow arrow)/the submitted set of drawings does not provide a full elevation drawing of the proposed “rebuilt” sunroom wing’s east façade.

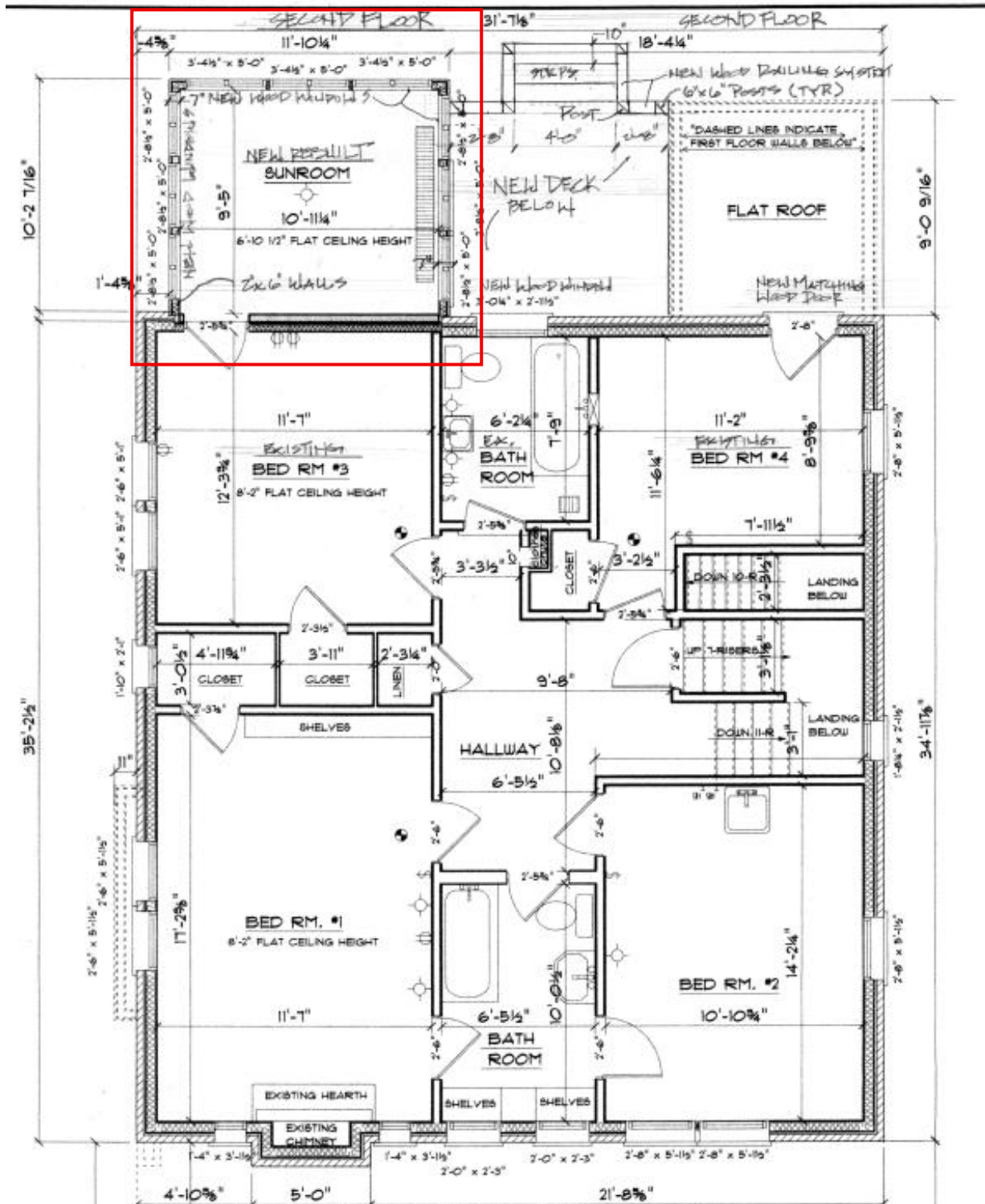


1991 Sanborn Map. Footprint of 1616 Chicago (red arrow) prior to unapproved removal on the two-story rear

wing.



Proposed floor plan of "rebuilt" rear two-story wing (outlined in red), first story



Proposed floor plan of "rebuild" rear two-story wing (outlined in red), second story

Rear 1-story wing

- Per the above narrative and photo of existing conditions, the cladding at the rear and west walls were removed without HDC approval. A photo of the wing prior to the unapproved siding removal indicates that the rear and west walls were clad with stucco. Staff notes that the siding at the opposite/east side wall is clad with a brick veneer.
- The current application proposes to install stucco at the wing’s rear wall, to match the cladding that was removed without HDC approval. Staff supports this work item. However, the application does not speak to the material that will be installed at the wing’s west wall. Staff recommends that stucco be installed at the wing’s east wall to match the historic cladding that was removed without HDC approval.



Rear, one-story wing, showing current brick veneer cladding (yellow arrow). Photo by applicant.



Rear, one-story wing, showing stucco cladding which was removed from west wall without HDC approval (yellow arrow). Photo by applicant.



Rear, one-story wing, showing current conditions after stucco was removed from rear and west walls without HDC approval (yellow arrows). Photo by applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This third and final section takes staff’s itemized “objections” identified in the first section, and presents them in the form of “conditions” in support of a proposed approval recommendation or “reasons” in support of a proposed denial recommendation, in the form required by Section 21-2-78 of the City Code. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

Section 21-2-78, Determinations of Historic District Commission

Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial – Erect a rear, two-story sunroom wing

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston-Edison Historic District’s Elements of Design, specifically:

- Standards #:
 - 2.) *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
 - 5.) *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
 - 6.) *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary,*

physical, or pictorial evidence.

- Elements of Design # 3,6,7, & 8

For the following reasons;

1. The rear, two-story sunroom wing was an historic distinctive character-defining feature of the building. The proposal to demolish it and not rebuild the feature to match will result in the removal of historic materials and the alteration of features and spaces that characterize the property as the roof form and lite configuration of the first story transom windows will not match the original.
2. With respect to the new rear, two-story sunroof wing, the application does not include specifications for the windows and associated trim/brickmoulds/mullions nor does it provide details for the eaves/soffit/fascia or an elevation drawing of the east wall's first story. It is therefore unclear if these elements will match those present at the historic distinctive character-defining rear, two-story wing that was demolished without HDC approval.

Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Remaining work items

Staff recommends that the remaining work items will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston-Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, with the condition that:

1. The west wall of the rear, one-story wing should be finished with true stucco to match the proposed cladding for the wing's rear wall. Staff shall be afforded the opportunity to review and approve this work item prior to the issuance of the project's permit.

REPORT PREPARED BY: JR