

**STAFF REPORT:** 10/12/22 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** T. BOSCARINO

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 22-8047

**ADDRESS:** 1991 CHICAGO

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** BOSTON EDISON

**APPLICANT:** RAYMOND "DOC" HOLLIDAY, HOLLIDAY BUILDING INC.

**PROPERTY OWNER:** ANDREW COX

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** SEPTEMBER 26, 2022

**SCOPE:** REHABILITATE FRONT PORCH, RECONSTRUCT REAR PORCH

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1991 Chicago Boulevard is a two-and-a-half story, red brick, Colonial Revival house built in 1919. It faces north onto its street in the Boston-Edison Historic District. The house is comparable to the other houses in the district in age and scale. A prominent feature of the three-bay façade is a full-width front porch with poured concrete deck. The central bay contains a covered portico with paired columns, engaged pilasters, and a broad Classical entablature with a denticulated cornice. The entablature is matched on a bay window on the east elevation, and a box window on the west elevation. The lack of dentils on a cornice at the roofline suggests that these features may have been removed.



## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant submitted a proposal dated September 7, 2022, and revised with additional clarification in an email to staff dated October 6, 2022. The proposal consists of two work items:

## Rehabilitate Front Porch

The applicant proposes to “remove all crown moulding, dentil trim, fascia boards, frieze boards, and bottom plates” and replace them with new wood, custom milled to match the dimensional qualities of the removed elements. The columns are to be temporarily removed to facilitate the work, and to be evaluated and repaired if needed.



*One of several deteriorated front porch areas. Photo by applicant, cropped by staff.*

## Reconstruct Rear Porch and Adjacent Areas

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing porch deck and replace it with a new deck built from treated lumber with enclosed side walls. Concurrently, the applicant proposes to repair damaged fascia boards and two courses of wood siding.



*Rear porch. Photos by applicant.*

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston Edison Historic District was established by resolution of the City Council in 1974. No Final Report was prepared for this district. The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-106) mention porches in subsections on overall massing and on architectural detail. “Porches are commonly, though not always, treated [with architectural detail].” The Elements of Design also note that “porches are often placed at the side and, sometimes, at the rear of the building.” This suggests that both porches, and their architectural embellishments, should be evaluated as character-defining features. On the front porch, staff suggests that all visible elements are important and character-defining; on the rear porch, staff suggests that the square column, the shorter engaged pilaster, and the handrail are character-defining, as well as the entire upper portion (the upper portion is not proposed for repair or replacement, other than the fascia board).
- Staff observes, from site visits and from photos provided by the applicant, that some elements of both porches, as well as fascia board on the rear porch, are loose and detached and may be subject to water infiltration and rot.



*Fascia board on rear porch. Note area of missing material. Photo by applicant.*

- Staff suggests that repair or replacement of the damaged fascia board on the rear porch, described in the application and shown in photos provided with the application, constitutes “ordinary maintenance” (Sec. 25-2-2).

## ISSUES

- Although the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards allow for in-kind replacement of features that have deteriorated beyond repair (Standard #6), this does not appear to be the case with the large majority of

components of both porches. The Standards direct that “deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced” (Standard #6) and that “removal of historic materials ... shall be avoided.”

- The Standards are “are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.”<sup>1</sup> Replacement of damaged features may be acceptable, with respect to the Standards, in cases of infeasibility. However, this has not been demonstrated in this case.
- The applicant has not submitted drawings of the proposed rear porch deck; consequently, staff is unable to determine if the proposed design is compatible or appropriate.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **#1) Section 21-2-78: Determination of Historic District Commission**

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial of the proposed work as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

*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 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.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>