

STAFF REPORT: 02/08/2023 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: 23-8205
ADDRESS: 100 LONGFELLOW STREET
HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON HISTORIC DISTRICT
APPLICANT: RANDY WHITE
PROPERTY OWNER: BRANDI BROWN
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 12/20/2022
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 01/24/2023

PREPARED BY: B. BUCKLEY

SCOPE: RENOVATE FRONT PORCH AND WALKWAY, REPLACE LANDSCAPING, REPAINT EXTERIOR

EXISTING CONDITIONS

100 Longfellow Street was designed by the Detroit architecture firm Van Leyen and Schilling and constructed in 1909. The two-and-a-half story dwelling features a symmetrical façade with an arched entryway that is flanked by engaged two-story columns. The Mediterranean revival building has a hip roof with wide eaves supported by paired brackets.



Figure 1. View of 100 Longfellow looking northeast.



Figure 2. View of 100 Longfellow in 1974. HDAB



Figure 3. Drawing of 100 Longfellow from the Detroit Free Press, 1909.



Figure 4. Image of 100 Longfellow ca. 1981 during rehabilitation work.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes the following.

1. Replace the brick pavers at the deck and front walkway with new modular concrete pavers. The patio and walkway pavers will be of a similar dimension to traditional brick and laid in a herringbone pattern.
2. Replace the stairs leading from the sidewalk to the porch with 12'' by 12'' concrete pavers and add accent lighting under the stair nosing.
3. Repaint portions of the façade to match the existing white color.
4. Replace the landscaping that lined the front of the porch with similar plantings.
5. Reinstall the masonry balustrade that lined the edge of the porch.

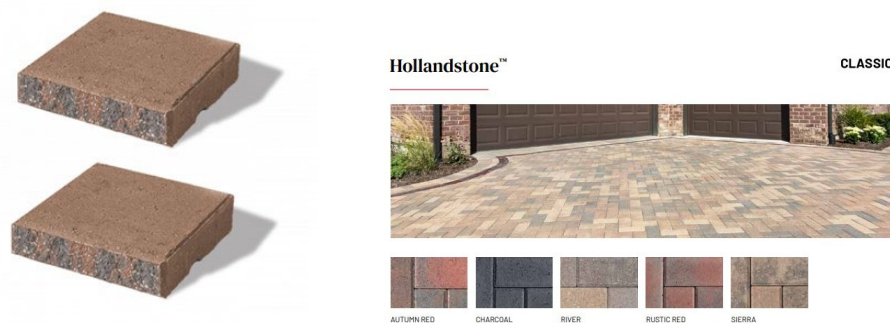
The applicant began work on the project without approval in the fall of 2022. A stop work order was issued in November of 2022. As of the date of this report, the landscaping has been removed, the brick walkway and porch pavers were replaced, and touchup painting on the façade was completed. The balustrade materials are on site for reinstallation.



Figures 5,6: Photographs of the brick walkway and porch deck prior to work commencing.



Figures 7,8: Current image of the porch deck and walkway.



Figures 9,10: Catalog images of the concrete pavers installed at the walkway and porch.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was established in 1973.
- HDC files indicate the property was subject to court proceedings related to a Demolition by Neglect case in 1979. The court documentation and contemporary photographs indicate the original porch deck was constructed of poured concrete. Photographs also show the walkway was originally constructed of poured concrete, which is consistent with the other dwellings on this block on Longfellow.
- In 1981, the HDC issued a certificate of appropriateness to rebuild the front porch and walkway. The scope of work included;
 - “Reconstruction of the front porch using stucco covered concrete block walls and brick red colored tiles on the porch slab.”
 - “Installation of a brick walkway and stairs which lead to the front porch. Paving bricks to be of a red-brown color typical of common brick.”
 - “Stucco covered masonry railing piers shall be reconstructed on their original foundations surrounding the front porch.”
 - The painting of the walls and trim, including the columns and door surrounds, a “semi-gloss traditional white”.
- Historic photographs indicate the walkway that was installed in 1981, as well as the recently completed walkway, lie in the same footprint of the original concrete walkway.
- The Elements of Design for the Boston Edison Historic District prescribe both brick and concrete walks.
- The lion figures installed on the piers were installed in the late 1980’s or 1990’s and are not a part of this application.

ISSUES

- The current paving material is tinted concrete, which differs significantly from the historically appropriate paving materials. The installed concrete pavers are darker in color and of a different texture and finish than the approved vitrified clay brick. A distinct gray accent course runs around the borders of the walkways and porch, while the historic paving schemes were uniform in color. Historic photographs show the original concrete stairs, as well as the 1981 brick stairs, were rectilinear in plan while the installed concrete pavers stairs are curved. Accent lighting on the stairs adds to the historic incompatibility. It is staff’s opinion that the current paving plan presents a decidedly contemporary aesthetic that is not compatible with the historic architecture of the property or the Boston-Edison Historic District.
- The painting and proposed landscape work appear to meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. The white paint color was approved by the HDC in 1981 and has been painted in a similar

scheme since the district was designated in 1973. However, more details are needed on the proposed planting plans to verify the landscape plantings will be appropriate.

- It is staff's opinion that replacing the concrete pavers with either a poured concrete (original material), or traditional red-brown common brick (as prescribed in the 1981 COA) paving scheme would meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Elements of Design for district.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation One - Certificate of Appropriateness - Landscape replacement and painting

It is staff's opinion the proposed painting and landscape replacement will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. Staff therefore recommends Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston-Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, with the condition that:

1. The applicant provides a planting plan for review and approval by HDC staff.

Recommendation Two – Denial – Walkway and porch paving

It is staff's opinion the proposed concrete pavers and accent lighting and will significantly alter the features and spaces that characterize the property. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed because it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Elements of Design for the district, 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.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

For the reason that: The proposed (installed) paving at the front porch and walkway is incompatible aesthetically and materially with the historic architecture of the dwelling and the Boston-Edison historic district.