

STAFF REPORT: 5/10/2023 REGULAR MEETING
ADDRESS: 2027 & 2035 WEST BOSTON BOULEVARD
APPLICATION NO: #23-8345 & #23-8346
HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON EDISON
APPLICANT/OWNER: AKOSUA BARTHWELL EVANS
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 4/26/2023
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 4/20/2023

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

SCOPE: INSTALL SECURITY LIGHTING (WORK COMPLETED)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building located at 2027 West Boston is a two-story home that was erected ca. 1925. The hipped roof features hipped roof dormers with deep, overhanging eaves, and white vinyl soffits. Security lights with built-in motion sensors are located within the eaves at the front and rear elevations. Google Streetview images indicate that the security lighting at the front elevation eaves was present in 2009. Exterior walls are primarily clad with brick although aluminum siding is located at the side elevation bay windows, the dormer front and sidewalls, and the rear enclosed porch. Windows are wood sash units.

The building located at 2035 West Boston is located directly to the west of 2027 West Boston. The home is two stories in height and was erected ca. 1920. The home has a complex roof which features a side-gabled central mass with a projecting two-story clipped gabled wing at the front elevation. Pedimented, gabled roof dormers top the roof. The deep overhanging eaves retain their original wood soffits and decorative brackets. Security lights with built-in motion sensors are located within the eaves at the front and rear elevations. Exterior walls are primarily clad with brick with stone quoining detailing around windows. A rear enclosed porch features wood panel siding. Windows are the original wood units with lead caming. A partial width wood porch with round wood columns shelters the primary/front elevation entrance. The original brick, three car garage sits to the rear of the home.



2027 W. Boston (left) and 2035 W. Boston (right) current appearance facing southwest, photo taken by staff on 4/23/2023



2027 W. Boston current appearance, photo taken by staff on 4/23/2023



2035 W. Boston current appearance, photo taken by staff on 4/23/2023

PROPOSAL

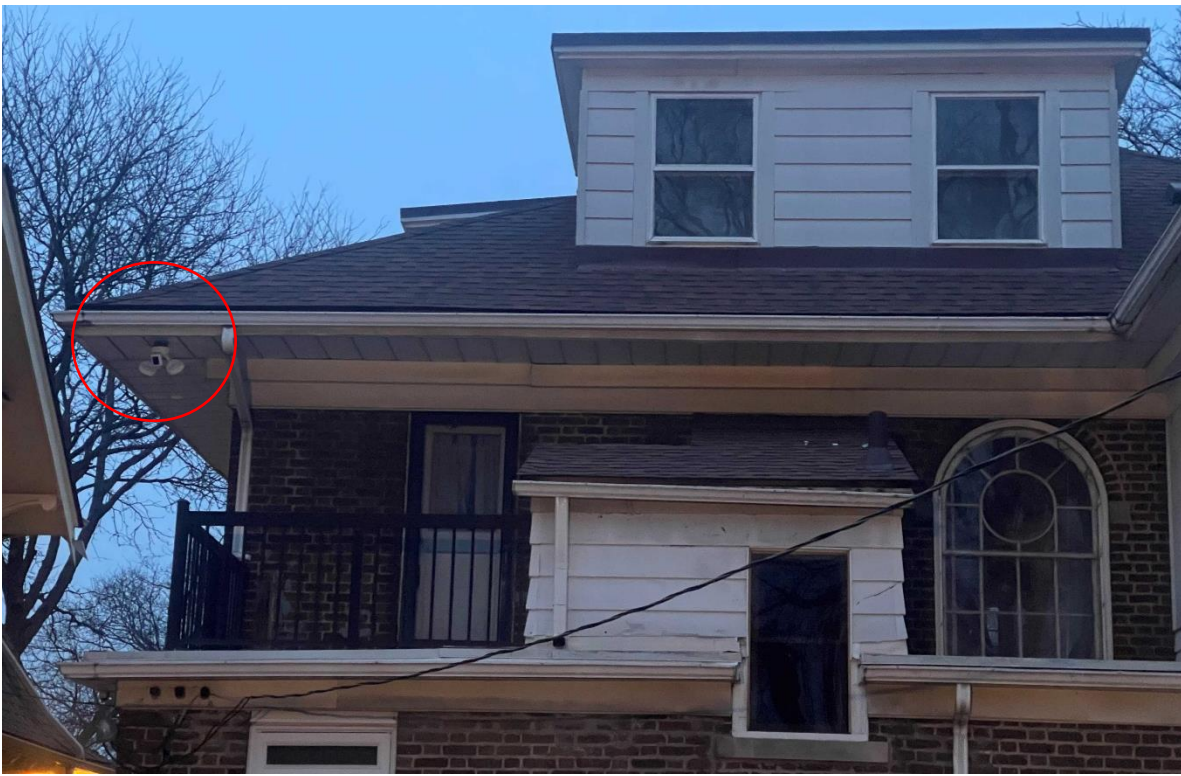
The applicant is seeking the HDC's approval to install security lighting/light fixtures with integrated motion sensors within the eaves at 2027 and 2035 W. Boston (see below photos). Please note that the work has already been completed/installed without HDC approval and/or permit. See the below to note the five security lights at 2027 W. Boston and the four security light at 2035 W. Boston for which the applicant is currently seeking the HDC's approval:



At 2027 W. Boston, two extant security lights at the at front within the eaves, 4/23/2023 staff photo



At 2027 W. Boston, two extant security light at the rear within the eaves, photo provided by applicant



At 2027 W. Boston, one extant security light at the rear within the eaves, photo provided by applicant



At 2035 W. Boston, two extant security lights at the at front within the eaves, 4/23/2023 staff photos



At 2035 W. Boston, detail extant security lights at the at front within the eaves, 4/23/2023 staff photos



At 2035 W. Boston, one extant security light at the rear within the eaves, photo provided by applicant



At 2035 W. Boston, one extant security light at the east elevation, towards the rear within the eaves, photo provided by applicant

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Please see the email submitted by the application (located on the website property page) which provides a narrative around the proposed lighting. Several letters from neighbors have also been submitted to staff and are available on the website for review.
- Please see the attached Detroit HDC Security Bar and Lighting Guidelines [Security Bar and Lighting Guidelines.pdf \(detroitmi.gov\)](#), which were located on the HDC's website at the time of the current installation. Note that the guidelines state that exterior lighting is a “..good course of action” for securing a home. Specifically, re: lighting, the guidelines recommend the following:
 - *Adequate lighting of the entranceway should be provided on the interior as well as the exterior. The best location for exterior lighting is under the eaves. If a person was to choose to install exterior lighting you should evaluate where the lighting is needed to illuminate dark areas or areas susceptible to break-ins. Motion activated lighting is popular and come in a variety of traditional designs which would be compatible to your historic home style or commercial building. Some motion activated lighting units also come equipped with an indoor audible alarm which will alert the homeowner of a would be perpetrator. When positioning lights, one should take care not to shine lights on surrounding properties or in surrounding houses. Other types of lighting can also focus on the ground level or walking paths.*

- Staff did view the fixtures at both properties in the daylight and found that they are minimally visible from the public right-of-way, they have been installed at locations which will not damage historic materials at either property, and they do not detract from the historic character of the properties. Specifically, note that staff observed the following:
 - The fixtures are relatively small in scale
 - The fixtures feature a simple design
 - The fixtures display an appropriate finish color/the finish color blends with the wall surface to which each fixture is affixed
 - The fixtures have been installed in the eaves with no visible conduit. When removed, returning the historic surfaces to their original condition will be relatively simple
 - The number of fixtures is minimal, to include two fixtures which are visible from the public right-of-way at each house
 - The light fixtures do not appear to be directed towards the side of the properties or towards the street.
- The proposed security lights do appear to be very bright at night. Please see the submitted photos from the applicant (attached to the end of this report). Note the HDC Security Bar and Lighting Guidelines do not speak to regulation of the actual quality (temperature, brightness, or color) of the light emitted from fixtures within local historic districts. Rather, the guidelines place an importance on the installation of the fixtures so that they will have a minimal negative impact on historically significant visual and material elements and that damage caused from any such work is reversible. Similarly, the district's Elements of Design do not reference the quality (temperature, brightness, or color) of the light which is emitted from fixtures within Boston Edison. Staff does not believe that intangible qualities such as light, noise, odors, etc. can be classified as "work" as defined by the historic ordinance and are therefore not in the Commission's jurisdiction. Such issues may or may not be regulated by other codes.
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed project is not demonstrable inappropriate/meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as it pertains to the following guidelines regarding new additions to historic properties:
 - 9.) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - 10.) *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

ISSUES

- None

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

It is staff's opinion that the proposed security light fixtures conform to the Elements of Design for the district and meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of appropriateness for the work as proposed.

