

STAFF REPORT: MAY 10, 2023 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: 23-8330

ADDRESS: 85 CHICAGO

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT: BIBLIANA NARCISSA

PROPERTY OWNER: BIBLIANA NARCISSA

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: APRIL 18, 2023

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: APRIL 26, 2023

Revised on May 9, 2023; removed and added information is in red type.

SCOPE: ERECT FRONT YARD ~~FENCE~~ HEDGE, INSTALL ASPHALT SHINGLE ROOFING, REPLACE FRENCH DOORS WITH WINDOWS, ~~ERECT REAR YARD FENCE AND DRIVEWAY GATE (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)~~

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected circa 1915, the Italian Renaissance architectural styling of the two and one-half story structure offered a contrast from the heavily articulated English and Colonial revival architecture of the early 20th century. The unadorned stucco walls and deep overhanging boxed-out eaves contrast the highly ornamental arched and bracketed front entrance portico and continuous windows that wrap the box bay. The box bay and small bay window and two-story extension at the east/side elevation are emphasized by contrasting wood trim.

Double-hung windows at the front elevation second floor are six-over-one wood units, while the first floor windows are one-over-one vinyl units. A double casement opening is centered above the entry, under which is a metal flower box. The front entrance doors are replacement units: the front door is a solid unadorned wood door, and the wood French doors have a 15-glass panel design.



Staff photo, April 26, 2023

A straight concrete front walk leads to a raised entrance porch; the steps are flanked by low wing walls. The roof is currently wrapped and has been in place since mid-2021 (following the issuance of a permit for new underlayment). A single-story flat roof attached garage is located at the southwest end of the rear elevation.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes the following work items:

- Installation of a dimensional asphalt roof on the main body of the house: ~~GAF, Grand Canyon, Stonewood CertainTeed, Belmont II, Shenandoah.~~
- Planting of ~~3'-0" high iron/aluminum fence shrubs~~ at the perimeter of the front yard (planting height, approximately 2'-0"; full growth height, 3'-0"). A gate is to be installed at the front walk.
- ~~Removal of French doors and installation of custom double-hung windows to fill the door opening: Pella Reserve Traditional aluminum-clad wood windows; simulated divided lights with six-over-four pattern; color: brown.~~
- ~~Removal of French Doors on the front elevation and installation of a double casement window. The limestone sill will be reused, or a new stone sill will be installed. A wall will be constructed in the remaining opening and will be in plane with the existing wall. Stucco shall be applied to the exterior surface and finished to match adjacent stucco.~~

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was established in 1974.
- The 1974 designation photo confirms that most of the original features of this house were still intact, however it appears that the double-hung windows in the box bay had been replaced with casements (due to the flat appearance and lack of a meeting rail).
- The dimensionality, patterning, profile, and saturation of color of tile roofs make them character-defining features of a building. At this residence, the use of barrel tiles offered a dramatic contrast against the minimal ornamentation of the stucco walls. When comparing the circa 1920 photograph to the 1974 designation photo as well as with a 2023 photo, a gradual loss of architectural details is noticed and include the exposed rafters on the box bay, iron railings at the front entry and French doors, the gutter collector boxes and the six-over-six wood windows in the box bay. The dark paint/stain used on the wood trim and fascia boards added a depth to the house that has also been lost with the current monochromatic paint palette. The front yard doesn't have any trees and very little landscaping. Based on staff's research of the electronic and paper files, all the details listed here were likely removed/alterd without HDC approval.



Top: Designation photo, 1974, HDAB.

Bottom: Photo from "Beautiful Homes from Detroit and Vicinity, 1920.

ROOFING

- This applicant came before the Commission twice in 2021 for the removal of the tile roof (completed without HDC approval) and installation of a new roofing material, as well as the replacement of the wood fascia and soffits. Staff has listed a brief timeline below; the previous staff reports and decision letters are posted on the current property page.
 - *February 12, 2021:* HDC Staff was alerted to the tile roof being removed from the house. When staff arrived, the entire clay tile roof had been removed.
 - *March 10, 2021:* At the HDC meeting, the Commission denied the installation of the proposed Great American Shake Metal Roof Shingles, color: Weathered Cedar. The Commission approved the repair of the existing wood roof deck and installation of the roof underlayment. The applicant was asked to identify a roofing material more consistent with the character of the removed clay tiles, which were a distinctive, character-defining feature.
 - *April 14, 2021:* At the HDC meeting, the Commission approved:
 - Roofing
Isaiah Industries, Classic Metal Roofing System, GrandeTile
Color: Reviewed by staff
Tile will be installed on all the roof surfaces, including the front elevation shed roof, that offers a 3:12 or greater roof pitch.
 - Soffit and Fascia
The rebuilt soffits and fascia shall match the existing soffits and fascia in material (wood), dimension, design, profile.
An opaque stain finish will be used; the color will be submitted to staff for review/approval.
 - Gutters/Downspouts
Manufacturer: Quality Aluminum Products
Color: bronze
 - Collector boxes
K & M Sheet Metal, “The Federal”, each box is 13” wide, 8-7/8” deep, 9-1/2” – 10-1/2” high
Color: bronze



Photos of approved material, 4/14/21 HDC meeting

- The product proposed is **CertainTeed, Belmont asphalt shingles, color: Shenandoah. GAF, Grand Canyon (a line within the company’s “designer collection”) asphalt shingles, color: Stonewood.** The reason for the product change is due to estimated project cost.



- The applicant submitted the estimates she had obtained at different times of the re-roofing project.

○ Ludowici Tile	Clay tile	\$75, 800	2020
○ Isaiah Industries, GrandeTile	Metal tile	\$46,540	2021
○ GAF Grand Canyon	Asphalt	\$24, 527	2023

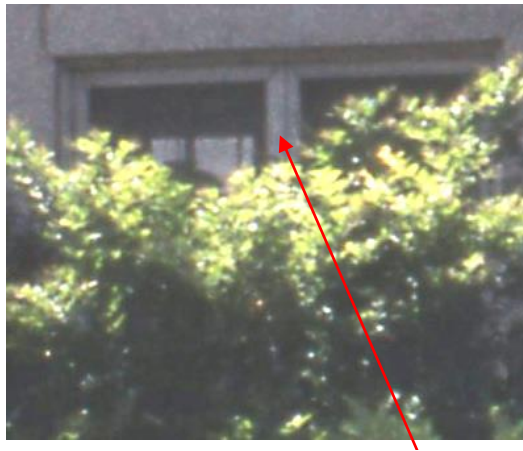
*Above: CertainTeed photos.
Left: Shenandoah color
Above: Installed Belmont shingles, color: Brownstone (staff couldn’t find a clear installed photo of Shenandoah).*

REPLACE FRENCH DOORS WITH WINDOWS

- Staff agrees with the homeowner’s assessment that the existing French doors are not original to the house. The historic photo clearly shows each door having a 2w x 5h glass pattern. It appears that these doors were intact at time of designation; the center muntin bar is visible in the left/eastern door in the 1974 photo. **However, the exterior framing of these glass units suggest they may have been full length casement windows with affixed screens as the exterior framing doesn’t show a wide mullion separating the units.** Staff didn’t find any HDC approval on file for their removal and replacement with the existing 3w x 5h panel wood doors, nor a date on when they were installed.



Circa 1920 photo



1974 designation photo. The exterior (screen?) framing is interesting and suggests a very thin mullion.



2023 staff photo

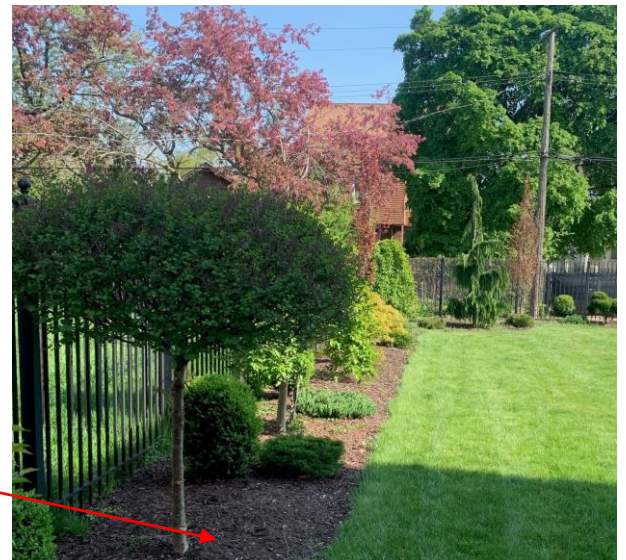
INSTALLATION OF BACKYARD FENCE AND DRIVEWAY GATE (COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

- The property owner confirmed the rear yard fence and driveway gate was installed without approval in 2008, because as a new owner, she wasn’t aware of being located within a local historic district.

Site plan and photos provided by applicant.

Fence appears to comply with the HDC’s Fence and Hedge Guidelines.

Location of fence and gate is at the side and rear yards.
Height is 6 feet.





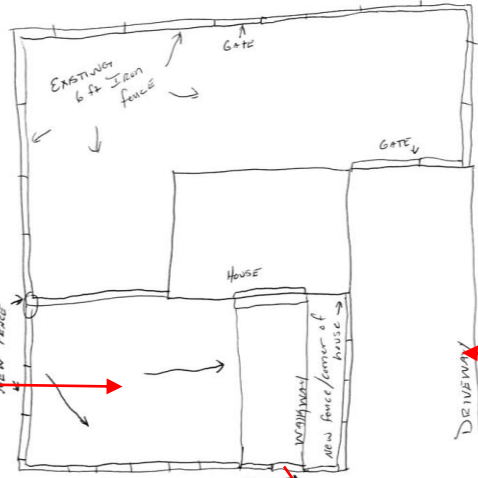
Gate meets southwest/rear corner of house.



Front-facing gate at side yard, meets northeast corner of house.
Applicant photos.

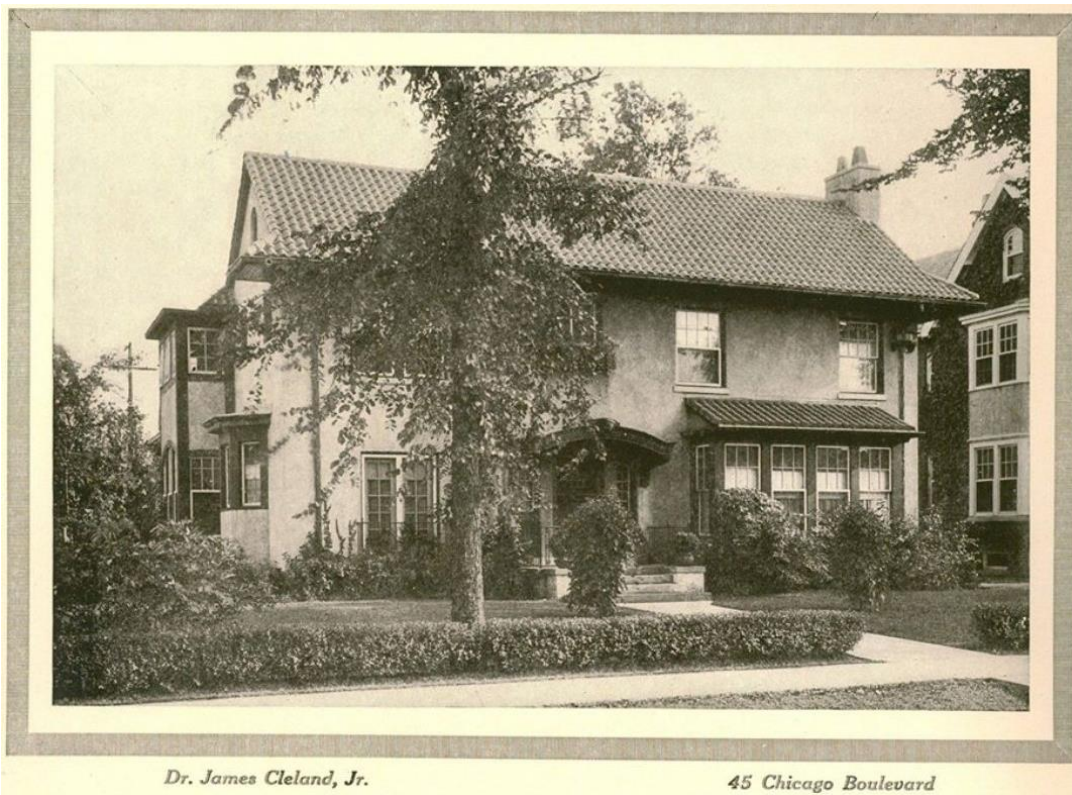
INSTALLATION OF FENCE-HEDGES AND GATE AT FRONT YARD

- The applicant revised the scope of work to include the installation of a continuous row of hedges (finished height 3' - 0") at the perimeter of the front yard, replacing the previously proposed fence. A gate at the front walkway is still proposed. Applicant submitted the two gate photos as design options.



Applicant photos and site plan.





Dr. James Cleland, Jr.

45 Chicago Boulevard

Image from Beautiful Homes of Detroit and Vicinity, circa 1920.

- The historic photo shows a hedge separating the front yard from the sidewalk. You also see a tree lawn was present, whereas it is now concrete (as shown in the following photographs).



Staff photo, April 26, 2023. Streetscape looking east towards Woodward.



Staff photo looking west. Here is the former, very narrow, tree lawn area.

- A hedge is a design feature that is in keeping with the district and the architectural style of the house; it was present in the historic photo. The selection of a metal gate, rather than wood, is an appropriate material for the architectural design of this house.
- There are only a few examples of front yard fences (e.g., 70 Boston, 90 Edison) within the Boston-Edison district that enclose the house, rather than enclosing a vacant lot. The remaining front yard enclosures are short hedge rows. The absence of front yard fencing allows the district to retain a comprehensive and unifying landscaped appearance.
- On Chicago, there is only one chain link fence that has been erected around an empty corner lot that includes most of the front yard and is adjacent to the house at 130 Chicago, located at the northeast corner of Chicago and Second.



Aerial view, Detroit Parcel Viewer. 130 Chicago is boxed in yellow; 85 Chicago is boxed in red.

- The district's Elements of Design #12 and #13 discuss streetscape and fencing:
 #12 - *Walls of continuity*. The major wall of continuity is created by the buildings with their uniform setbacks within the blocks... Minor walls of continuity are created where rows of trees have survived in sufficient numbers or new trees are planted in rows, and where hedges along front lot lines exist in numbers.
- #13 - *Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatments*. Hedges between properties and along front property lines are not uncommon. It is characteristic for corner lots to have hedges or fencing at side lot lines along the sidewalk. There is a wide range in the type of fencing. Fencing within the public view was generally designed to complement the style, design material, and date of the residence.



Google street view. Above is looking northwest towards Second, and below is looking north.



ISSUES

- Based on staff's recent research, there doesn't appear to be an asphalt roofing company that currently produces an asphalt shingle that attempts to mimic the heavy vertical and rounded angular look of clay tile.
- Should the Commission consider an asphalt shingle, staff believes it must offer predominant vertical and horizontal lines and consistent color like a tile roof. It is staff's opinion the current proposal meets these criteria; the dark brown color is an appropriate choice for the architectural style of the house.



Left: CertainTeed, Camelot. Barkwood is shown, which is lighter brown than selected color).

Below: photo of tile roof at 85 Chicago prior to removal.



REPLACEMENT OF FRENCH DOORS WITH WINDOWS

- It is staff's opinion that the French door opening is a distinctive character-defining feature of the house and property. The French door's sill and header match the height of those of the front door, and the elongated door opening counterbalances the verticality and openness of the windows in the box bay. **The applicant's current proposal is to retain the door opening and install two customized double-hung windows.** Staff believes this is an appropriate solution as it retains the historic opening, and a replacement product is already in place. However, the muntin pattern should be revised to six-over-six.



- The selected cladding color is brown. It is staff's opinion the dark color is not appropriate for the house as the frames would offer too much of a contrast against the stucco. Italian Renaissance houses typically have lighter colored window frames and trim, similar to the exterior wall material. As the stucco has been painted, staff isn't recommending the new windows match the existing stucco, rather a more neutral tone be selected for the window frames. Also, a factory mullied double window unit is proposed. Based on the historic photo of the exterior screen framing, staff believes a thin factory mullion is appropriate in this location.



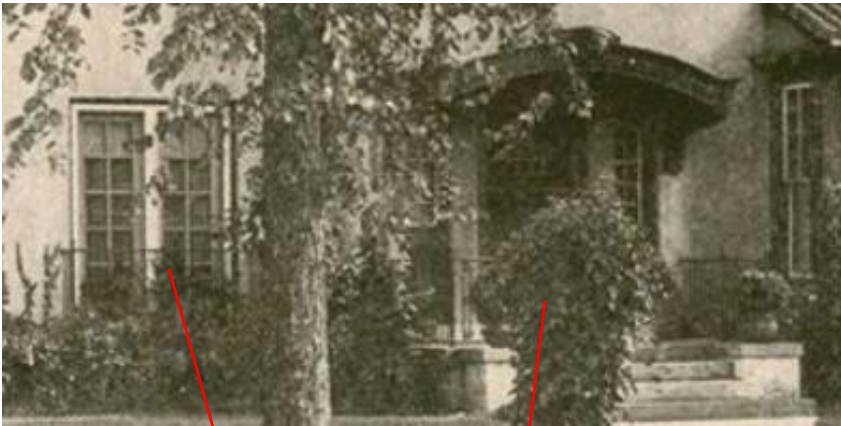
~~The removal of the doors and installation of a much shorter window opening would alter the features and proportions of the primary façade.~~

~~Another staff concern is with the potential quality of the infilled area, both in appearance (i.e., will the stucco mixture match the existing in texture, composition, and pattern) as well as long term maintenance (i.e., cracks, should there be any difference in wall composition and weathering pattern).~~

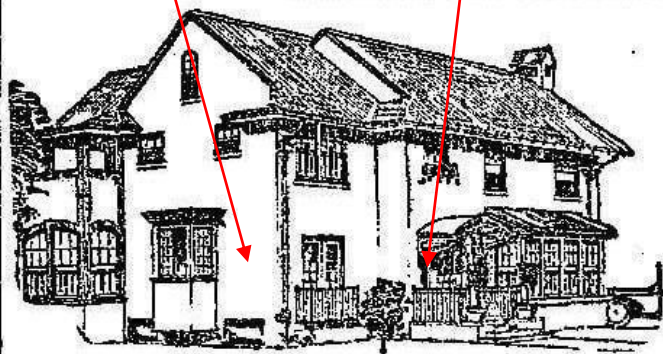
durability further with EnduraClad Plus protective finish, which meets the industry's highest exterior coating standard to defend against chalking and fading ²⁶



Above right: rendering from Pella window order. Above: exterior cladding colors from Pella brochure.



**RESIDENCE OF ITALIAN DESIGN
GOES ON CHICAGO BOULEVARD**



HOME FOR DR. JAMES CLELAND.

Walls of hollow tile with surface of gray stone, surmounted by green tile roof impart an artistic aspect to the home which is being erected for Dr. James Cleland on the south side of Chicago boulevard, near Woodward avenue. The house is an attractive adaptation of Italian architecture and is designed by Richard H. Harr. The interior finish throughout will be in mahogany and old ivory. The garage, with space for two cars, forms a part of the house and will show attractive exterior treatment in tile.



Staff photos, April 26, 2023.

Above Image – Pella rendering of proposed double-hung windows.

Below: Rendering from a 1914 issue of the Detroit Free Press shows iron railings at the front porch, as well as a Juliet balcony at the French doors.

Left: The 1920 photo, while blurry, shows metal/iron railings at these front elevation locations.

Below left: When comparing the massing and openings of the current condition to that of the 1914 rendering, the overall features of the house remain intact and can be returned through future projects for the house and yard, as reviewed and approved by the HDC.

Reminder: The Commission approved at its 4/14/21 meeting: new bronze colored collector boxes for the gutter system, as well as new wood fascia and soffits (stain to be approved by staff).

- As there is historical evidence of a Juliet balcony being in place at the French doors, staff recommends a new metal balcony would be appropriate to enclose the door opening. This will allow the applicant to obtain the safety that is desired, while reintroducing a previously removed design feature and thus not altering the façade of the house.
- Regarding the railing design, staff zoomed in on the 1974 designation photo to see what was in place at that time (which may have been the original railing). The end posts had balls and the interior posts were thinner with decorative scroll work and is appropriate to the architectural style of the house. Due to the individual placement of the balcony, it is staff's opinion a decorative railing with thin straight spindles (thinner than the end posts, if possible) or a design like what is shown here could be appropriate.



- Another distinctive character-defining feature of the house is the deep inset of the windows and doors within the stucco walls. It is critical this feature be identified so that it is retained should the Commission consider replacement components within these openings. The recessed dimension is most noticeable in single sash openings, as the operational upper sash of double-hung units need additional depth in an opening. The below photos show how impactful recessed openings are to the design and appearance of the house.



Staff photos



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

Recommendation One: Denial – Asphalt shingle roof

Staff finds that the proposal for the installation of asphalt roofing shingles does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The selected asphalt shingle roof does not emulate the profile, pattern, and singular color of the previously removed tile roof.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet the as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2, 5, 6, and 9:

- 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.*
- 9) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

Recommendation Two – COA – Installation of front yard hedge and gate, erection of Juliet balcony, replacement of non-historic French doors

Staff finds that the proposal for the remaining work items will not alter the features and spaces that characterize the property and district and therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed as it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Elements of Design for the district.

Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following condition:

- A revised site plan confirming hedges, and the type of hedge, will be planted at the perimeter of the front yard, and that the maximum height will not exceed 3'-0".
- A catalog cut of the iron or aluminum gate design will be submitted for staff review and approval prior to its installation.
- A catalog cut and/or measured drawing of the Juliet balcony that confirms its design, material, finish, and dimensions will be submitted for staff review/approval.
- The Pella windows will be revised to offer a six-over-six pattern, and a neutral cladding color will be selected. The revised order will be submitted for staff review/approval.