

**STAFF REPORT:** 07/12/2023 MEETING  
**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 23-8443  
**ADDRESS:** 2495 W. BOSTON  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** BOSTON-EDISON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
**APPLICANT:** MARK CLEMENTS  
**PROPERTY OWNER:** ROBERT DESNER  
**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 06/20/2023  
**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 06/27/2023

**PREPARED BY:** B. BUCKLEY

**SCOPE:** ALTER FRONT PORCH

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The building located at 2495 W. Boston is a two-and-a-half story, brick dwelling constructed ca. 1925. The Tudor Revival dwelling features projecting gabled bays on the eastern half of the façade and a hip roof with a shed dormer on the façade slope. Brick soldier courses are located at the cornice and water table levels of the building. The brick walls are accented by small limestone blocks. The windows consist of single and mulled double-hung units, as well as rounded arch windows at the façade and side elevations.



**Figure 1: Current view of 2495 W. Boston.**





**Figure 2: View of 2495 W. Boston in 1974, via HDAB**

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is seeking approval to alter the existing front porch. The porch footings and brick walls will be repaired. The existing concrete deck will remain and a brick knee wall with limestone coping will be constructed along the perimeter. New rectangular limestone stairs will replace the contemporary curved concrete steps. Two brick piers will be installed on the porch deck flanking the stairs, and a black aluminum handrail will be attached to the piers. All new construction will utilize brick that matches the existing brick on the house and porch.

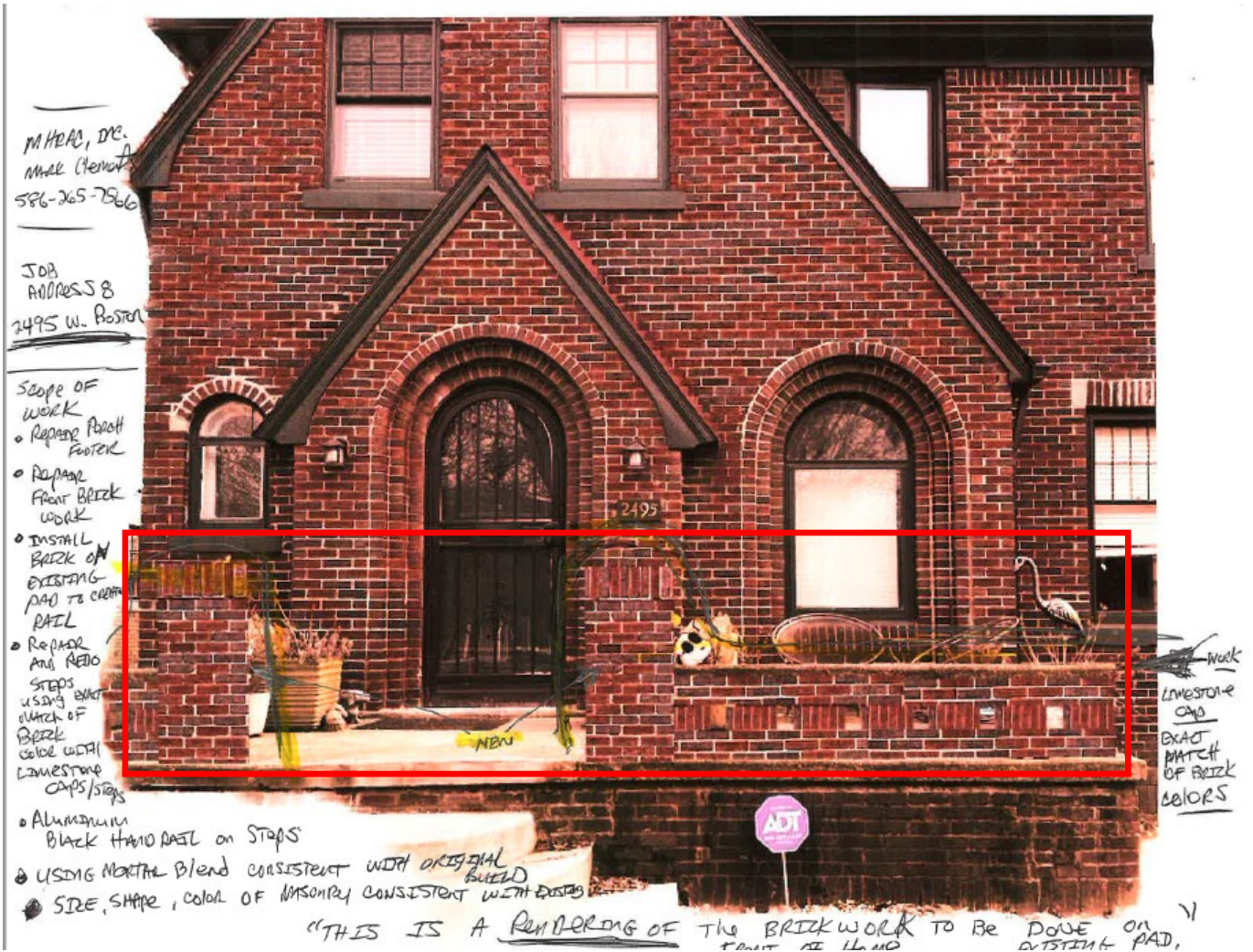


Figure 3: Annotated rendering of the brick porch additions provided by the applicant. Proposed new construction is outlined by the red rectangle.



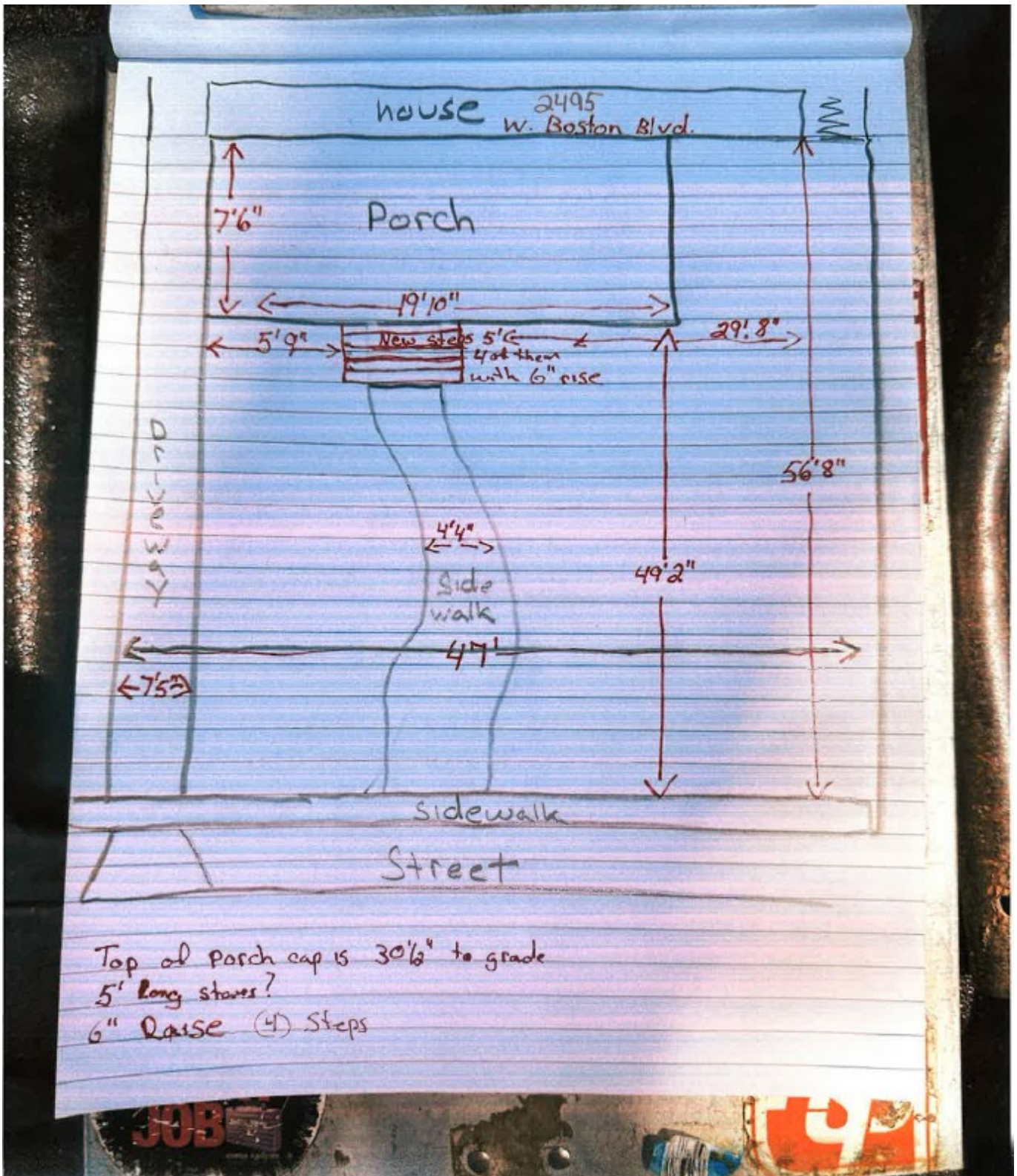


Figure 4: Site plan provided by the applicant.

**STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was established in 1973.
- It appears that windows at the dormer, as well as arched windows at the façade and side elevations were

replaced without HDC approval ca. 2012, prior to the current ownership. These windows are not part of the current application.

- The current owners received a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) in 2021 to repaint the trim, window sash, gutters, and remove existing paint from the limestone accents including the windowsills. The limestone sills were instead painted black in violation of the approved scope of work. This violation is not addressed in the current application.
- Historic photographs (see **Figure 2**) indicate the original porch featured a brick knee wall with what appears to be limestone coping, and rectangular concrete or limestone steps flanked by brick cheek walls with limestone coping.
- The knee walls on the porch deck, as well as the original steps and flanking cheek walls were removed by 1980. The steps were again replaced ca. 2017 without HDC review.
- The applicant received a COA from HDC staff to rebuild the porch as it appeared in the 1974 HDAB photograph on June 20, 2023. The scope of staff approved work includes both the knee walls and stairs.
- The applicant then submitted the current application on June 20, 2023. The additional work presented in the current application for Commission review includes the construction of brick piers on the porch deck flanking the approved limestone steps as well as the addition of black aluminum handrails.

## ISSUES

- It is staff's opinion that the proposed project constitutes an appropriate alteration to the subject property. The proposed rectangular limestone steps and brick knee wall on the porch deck (granted a COA by HDC on June 20, 2023) closely resemble the original configuration of the porch as observed in the 1974 photograph above. The brick piers and proposed black metal handrails appear to be of a material and scale that are appropriate for the architectural character of the building and will not have a detrimental visual effect on the dwelling or any of its character defining features.
- HDC staff requested dimensioned drawings of the final proposed porch improvements for HDC review that have not been received at the time of this report. These drawings are required to confirm the scale and materials of the project will be appropriate.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

It is staff's opinion the proposed project 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. Plan and elevation drawings with dimensions and materials callouts that include all aspects of the proposed project (piers, knee walls, stairs and railings) be provided for HDC staff approval before work commences.