

STAFF REPORT: JULY 10, 2024 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00266
ADDRESS: 1651 EDISON
HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON
APPLICANT: MERISA LEWIS
PROPERTY OWNER: MERISA LEWIS
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: JUNE 18, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: JUNE 21, 2024

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS, ALTER EXTERIOR (WORK DONE WITHOUT APPROVAL)
7/10 – Revised report in red; in response to recent submittal of additional information by applicant.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The dwelling located at 1651 Edison is a single-family two-story house that is clad with light brown brick. The house features a side gabled roof form with boxed eaves. The asphalt shingle covered roof is punctuated by a central gable-roofed dormer with a three unit window opening.

The façade is a three-bay wide design with grouped windows and one central small window at the second floor; the stone sills have been painted. The historic wood window units remain in the window openings on each side of the structure. The dominant window pattern is a vertically oriented multi-light upper sash (3, 4, or 5 wide) over a single-light bottom sash; however, the rear two-story extension has one-over-one sash.

Partially intact brick masonry wing walls enclose the stairs leading to the half-width raised, covered front porch. Low walls run the perimeter of the porch. A non-historic door front door is not visible in staff's photos due to it being open during the site visit.



Façade, north-facing wall. Staff photo, June 21, 2024.

The east and west side walls feature a small extension, each of which includes two mullied double-hung windows, sloping roofs and stucco wall finish.



East-side wall. Staff photo, June 21, 2024.



West-side wall. Staff photo, June 21, 2024.

At the rear, a two-story extension fills the eastern half of the wall. Grouped one-over-one double-hung windows are set within the three walls of the structure. The exterior cladding is missing.

Single door openings at the first and second floor of the masonry-clad structure are enclosed with plywood panels. One single window opening with raised sill is also enclosed with plywood.

Remnants of a two-story open porch (including a ghost image of the upper deck's wood railing) offer physical evidence of its original footprint. The first floor porch is partially enclosed and covered with T-11 siding and one small non-historic window. Prefabricated concrete steps remain in place adjacent the first floor door, but the wood entry platform/deck has deteriorated to the point of collapse.



PROPOSAL

After reviewing the application, narrative, and drawings, staff determines the work items include the following:

- **Installation of asphalt shingle roof; *completed without approval by prior owner.***
- Retain front porch roof structure; replace wood support post with masonry column. *Work completed without approval.*
- Replace wood windows on all walls. Install Anderson 200 series windows. Operation of some windows to change to sliders.
- Replace non-historic front door with a 2-panel, 6-light fiberglass door; install full glass storm door. Color: TBD.
- Replace gutters/downspouts. Color: TBD.
- Repair, replace if rotted, wood fascia.
- Replace wood soffit with Hardie soffit – Artic white.
- Install aluminum around the porch fascia, windows and doors.
- Install three (3) new entry doors – one at side, two at rear.
- Masonry repair on house walls as needed. Front porch wing walls will be repaired, adding missing bricks and caps.
- Repair 2-story extension - install Hardie board siding. Color: Cobblestone. Window openings resized and operation changed. **Alternate proposal: stucco applied to walls.**
- Remove the deteriorated rear entrance platform and concrete steps. Erect new wood platform/deck ~~and railing~~. **Install white vinyl railing.**
- Erect second floor deck at rear with **white vinyl** railing. Paint color: TBD
- Install six-foot wood panel privacy fence at rear yard. Paint color: TBD.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

The Boston Edison Historic District was enacted on April 2, 1974.



1974 designation photo, HDAB.

Front Porch

Proposed: Retain roof structure, replace wood post with masonry column.

The designation photo shows the original design of the entry porch which is a distinctive character-defining feature. The minimally visible shallow-pitch roof and overhanging eaves allow the tall and profiled fascia to be a dominate detail which accentuates the wide expanse between corner columns, creating a strong horizontal massing to the porch.

According to Google street view, the roof structure was removed between June 2019 and July 2022, and was done without HDC approval. The dimensions and overall profile of the new structure is similar to the historic design. However, the roof appears to be sagging in the middle, thus a wood support post was placed on the brick pier. The wing walls were partially dismantled, and the stone caps have disappeared.



Staff photo, June 2024.

Windows

Proposed: Replace the wood windows on all sides. Install Anderson 200 series (wood frame with vinyl exterior) windows. According to the narrative and drawings, the size of some windows openings are to change, as well as the operation (picture window, slider).

Appended to this report are photos submitted by the applicant that show the condition of the existing windows. It is staff’s opinion, based on the photos and the applicant’s comments on the condition that the windows are repairable, as the deterioration is mostly comprised of broken/missing glass, missing ropes and other hardware, and generalized aging/peeling paint. It appears there are only two openings that do not have windows, and two-three openings that only have one (upper or bottom) sash.

Staff identified the existing windows as distinctive character-defining features and assessed that they have not deteriorated beyond repair. Therefore, a review of the proposed new windows (Anderson 200 series) was not completed as replacement units should not to be considered at this time, per Standard Six.

New front door

Proposed: Replace a non-historic front door with a 2-panel, 6-light fiberglass door; install full glass storm door. Color: TBD.

The existing “non-historic Victorian” door has contemporary Victorian styling and is not an appropriate design for this early 20th century house that has Prairie influences. The minimally detailed selected door offers compatible proportions to the architectural style of the house.



Google street view.



Applicant photos-existing and proposed door.

Gutters/downspouts

Five-inch aluminum gutters are proposed; as are new downspouts. Color: TBD.

The house has non-historic gutters and downspouts (some of which are missing) so replacement with a similar design is appropriate.

Fascia

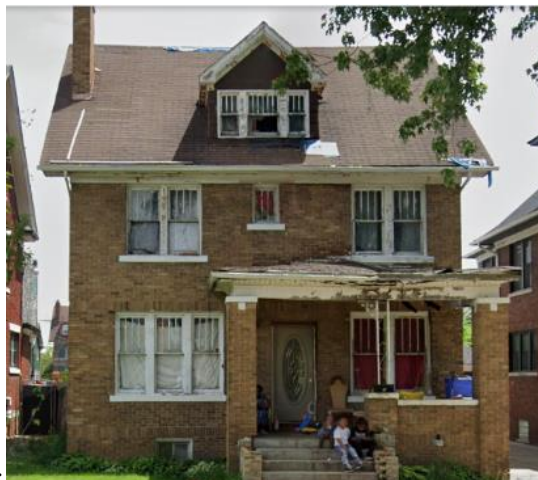
The applicant states the fascia will be repaired. If areas are deteriorated, the rotted wood will be replaced.

Staff considers this ordinary maintenance, per Section 21-2-4, and therefore doesn’t require review by the Commission.

Roof

The applicant added the existing asphalt shingle roof to the application.

The existing roof was installed by a previous owner without HDC approval. It replaced an existing asphalt shingle roof.



Google street view image, June 2019.

Soffit

The applicant proposes to install Hardie soffit.

The existing eaves and soffits are character-defining features of the dwelling. Their condition consists of peeling paint and the occasional deteriorated or missing wood board, and therefore are in repairable condition. The installation of a manufactured product would remove the profile and surface texture of the wood soffits, altering the appearance and architectural proportions of the house. Wood is commonly available, reasonable, and a typical repair treatment for these locations.



Staff photo, June 2024.



Close-up views are applicant photos.

Masonry – Front porch wing walls

Existing masonry will be repaired and tuckpointed, “as required using in-kind materials”. Front porch wing walls will be repaired and includes adding missing bricks and installing caps. Replace 4 x 4 wood post with matching bricks.



Staff photo, June 2024.



Designation photo, 1974.

The applicant states the wing walls will be repaired and caps installed. The brick used on this house has a special vertical cut texture so brick purchased for any repair/replacement must match the existing bricks in color, texture, finish and dimension. New mortar must also be a historic composition so that it isn't harder than the existing mortar and bricks. Contemporary mortar mixes have different ingredients than early 20th century mortar and are therefore much stronger, which is problematic when used with/around older mortar and bricks.



The applicant proposes to replace the wood post that is sitting on the masonry pier with bricks.

Aluminum Wrap

Install aluminum around the porch fascia, windows and doors.

The profiles of the brick mould (windows and doors) and porch fascia are character-defining features of the house and must be retained and repaired. Wrapping these areas is not appropriate or compatible as the detailed profiles will be lost.

New side and rear doors

Install 6-panel fiberglass doors at (1) side and (2) rear door openings. Color: TBD.

The door on the west-side wall at the first floor is a historic-age wood panel and glass door. ~~It appears to be in repairable condition but might require new glass in the area that is boarded up.~~ The unique panel design should be noted, with one narrow panel above the glass opening, and three narrow panels below. The horizontal design of the panels echoes the horizontal massing of the house and porch, and is a small, yet impactful detail on this wall that should be retained.



Top left: Staff photo, June 2024, identifying location and visibility of door.
Top middle: Applicant drawing.
Top: Applicant exterior photo, partial view, of door.
Remaining photos provided by applicant.

Left – red box identifies cracked frame.
Above: orange box and arrows to adjacent photo show dimensional views of missing sections of door frame.
Bottom left: additional section of missing door frame.



Additional photos submitted by the applicant show there is a crack through the frame directly above the deadbolt, as well as adjacent deeper sections of missing wood, all of which can compromise the strength and security of the door. Therefore, it is staff's opinion this door can be replaced with a new door that matches the horizontal design of the existing historic panel wood door.

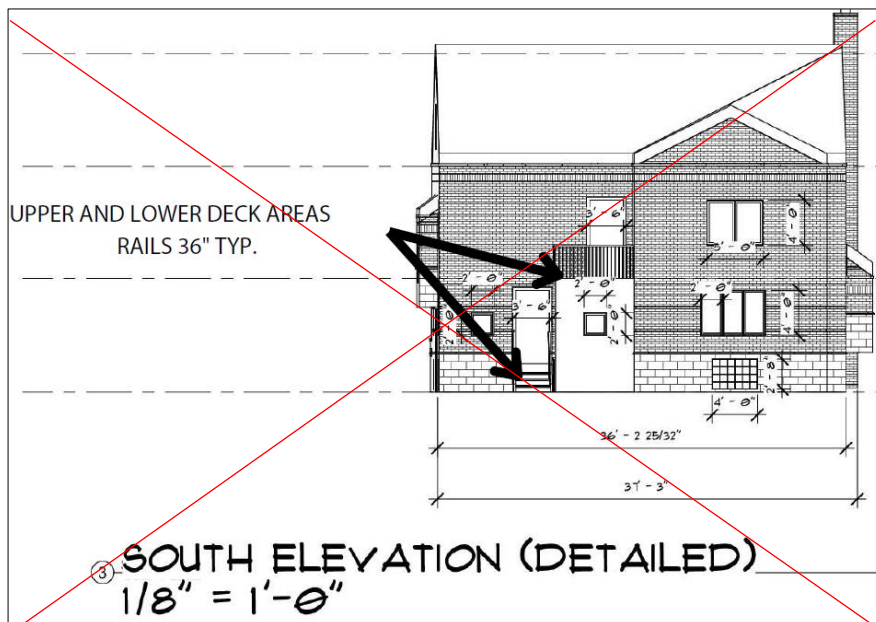
On the south-rear wall the door openings at the first and second floors are missing and currently enclosed by paneling. The selected six-panel fiberglass door is minimal in styling and compatible for its rear elevation location.



“South wall”/two-story extension

Repair “south wall” (staff identifies this part of the dwelling as the two-story extension). Install Hardie board siding. Color: Cobblestone.

~~The window opening at the second floor is to be resized and operation changed from double hung to slider. The windows at the first floor are proposed to be replacement double hung but are not drawn that way. The lack of details to the elevation drawings and renderings suggest brick on all surfaces with concrete block at grade, a change from a hip to gable roof, and the windows are not detailed according to operation (double hung units are proposed at the first floor) and suggested grid patterns. Staff requested that the drawings be revised to clearly show the proposed work items. However, the revised drawing set only had a note added to identify the rear porch railings.~~



Applicant drawing.

The applicant submitted revised rear wall drawings to correctly reflect the house's massing/roof lines, cladding materials (existing and proposed), retention of existing window openings on the extension, delineation of Hardie siding and stucco cladding options, as well new porch landing at first floor and porch railings (both floors). However the trim band at the top of the second floor, directly below the roof isn't shown.



Applicant drawing, option one. Hardie siding.



Applicant drawing, option two. Stucco siding.

The stucco finish would visually connect the two-story extension to the side elevation extensions that retain their historic stucco finish.

Staff photos of side extensions, June 2024.

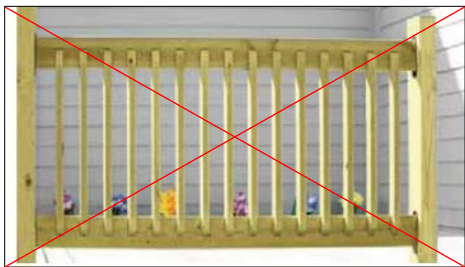


“South addition”/porch enclosure

Repair addition, upper deck, add railing, replace glass in window.

Due to its rear location, staff doesn't know when this section of the porch was enclosed, and it is possible that this enclosure was present at the time of designation. The way staff reads the narrative and drawings, this enclosed space is to retain the existing T1-11 siding, as well as the non-historic window (the narrative states glass will be installed in the sashes).

Due to the stabilization and repair of the enclosure, the applicant proposes to install a perimeter railing at the upper porch and submitted a photo of a suggested railing design. ~~This design is used on contemporary decks and is not compatible for use as a porch railing on an early 20th-century dwelling.~~ A perimeter railing with end posts, top and bottom rails and balusters would be similar in construction details to the original railing and a compatible design.

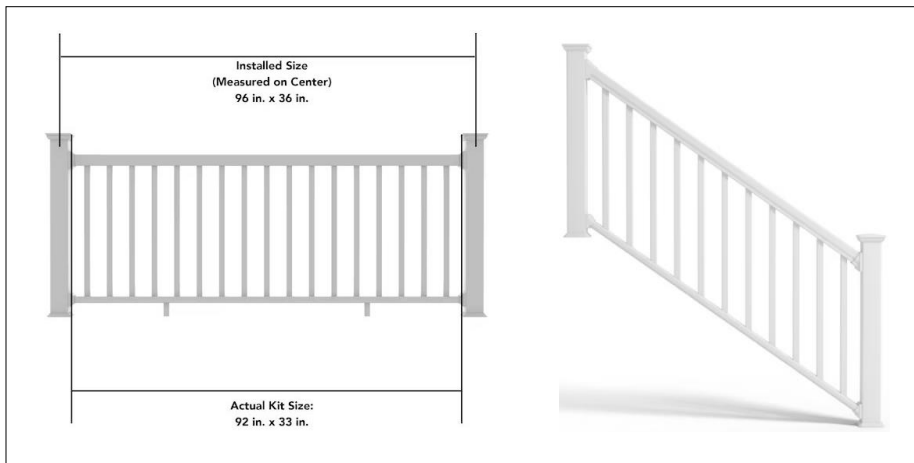


Top right: Applicant photo.

~~*Above: photo submitted by applicant for suggested railing design.*~~

Above right: Google image of a compatible railing design for an early 20th century house, as typically approved by the Commission.

The applicant submitted photos of a different railing design, which includes the defined components discussed above, and is similar to the Google image. However, the railing material appears to be vinyl, rather than wood.

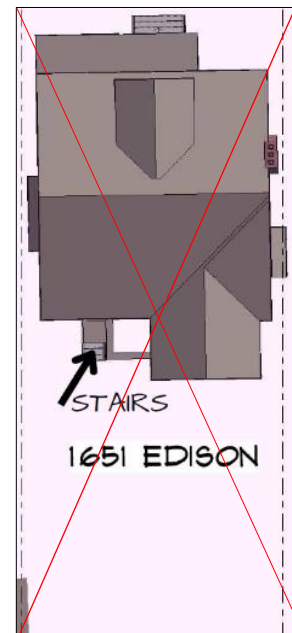
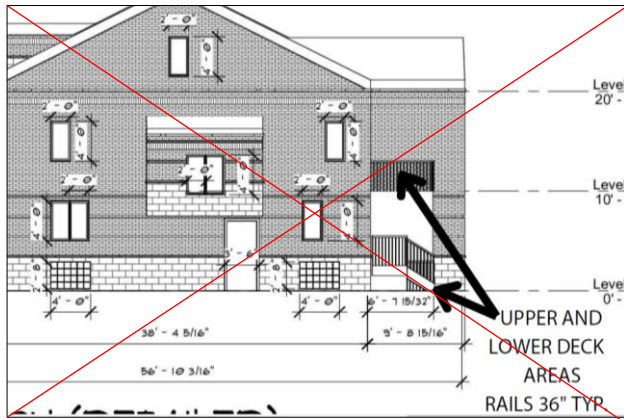


Applicant photos.

Remaining south wall / rear entrance platform and stairs

Erect new rear entry wood platform deck and stairs.

Staff requested additional details for the design and size of the rear entry platform, and that it be dimensioned on a site plan. **The below drawings are what was submitted.**



These revised drawings remain not adequately detailed to confirm the dimensions and design of this construction.

The revised drawing submitted by the applicant on July 9, shows a clear representation of the proposed upper porch and railing, as well as the lower porch platform, railing and stairs. The proposed design does not replicate the original footprint (as shown by the ghost image of the railing and support post). It is staff's opinion, that due to the later partial porch enclosure (which the applicant proposed to retain), the proposed footprint/design is compatible with the current rear wall design and its massing.



Applicant drawing. Remaining paint line adjacent first floor door opening and ghost image of upper porch railing offer evidence of the original two-story porch footprint (enclosure covered with T1-11 siding was originally part of the open porch).

Fence

Install six-foot wood panel privacy fence at rear yard. Paint color: TBD.



Applicant Photos.

The design and location of the wood fence complies with the Commission’s *Fence and Hedge Guidelines*.

ISSUES

General

The submitted drawings do not accurately reflect existing conditions, the applicant’s narrative/proposal nor selected materials. Corrected drawings, or portions thereof (i.e., porch areas), must also be drawn at a larger scale so applied details and trim can be included and clearly delineated. Elevations of projects of this complexity are typically submitted at 1/4”-scale or better. **The applicant submitted one modified elevation; the remaining elevations are needed.**

Staff has included the colored elevations of three sides of the house* and photos of existing conditions to explain the problems with the submitted drawing package. Due to the small scale used for all the drawings, the elevations are too difficult to read for this comparison exercise.

*The east wall is excluded due to the close proximity of the neighboring house making it difficult to get a comprehensive photo of the full wall for comparison to the rendering.

North wall



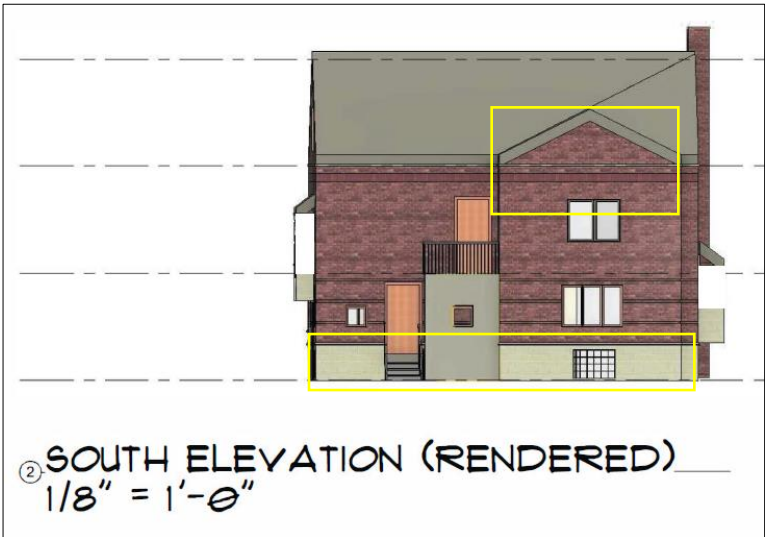
The scale/massing of the house in the rendering makes it appear wider than tall, the dimensions of the dormer are off, and the locations and sizes of the windows openings are not accurate (which includes operation and no muntin/grid patterns shown).

West wall



Similar to the front wall, the dimensions are out of scale (such as roof pitch) and building components are not drawn nor placed correctly on the wall. This elevation also suggests inappropriate replacement of the front step wing walls with narrow railings.

South Wall



A quick comparison shows that the overhanging eaves are gone, the head height of the windows at the second floor are much lower, and the pattern and coloring of the wall material depicts masonry on all walls, with concrete block (rather than the existing brick) at grade (colored beige). The hip roof is not delineated and appears as though a gable roof will be erected.

The applicant's submitted a revised elevation drawing for this wall.

Windows

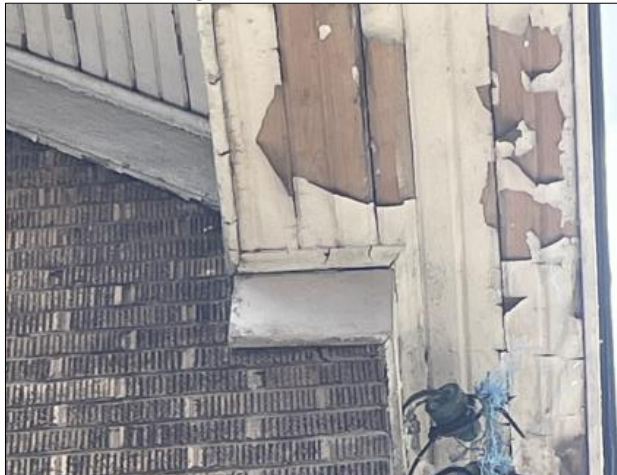
Staff identifies the existing windows as distinctive character-defining features and determined that the windows are in repairable condition, as the deterioration is mostly comprised of broken/missing glass, missing ropes and other hardware, and generalized aging/peeling paint. Standard Six states, "Deteriorated 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.”

It appears there are only a handful of openings out of the 45 openings (excluding basement window openings) within the house that are missing entirely or partially missing a top or bottom sash. New wood windows and upper or lower frames can be fabricated to address the missing or partially missing units and would allow the new windows to closely match the historic windows in operation, dimension, profile, material and finish, as well as placement within the window openings.

Soffit

The existing eaves and soffits are character-defining features and in repairable condition, with peeling paint and the occasional deteriorated/missing board. The installation of a manufactured product such as the proposed Hardie Soffit, would alter the profile and surface texture/beadboard expression of the soffits, altering the appearance and architectural design of the house.



Applicant photo



James Hardie website.

Masonry – Front Porch

The front porch is a distinctive character-defining feature. The shallow-pitch roof and overhanging eaves allow the tall, profiled fascia to be a dominate detail and accentuates the wide expanse between the corner columns, creating a strong horizontal massing to the porch.

The historic roof structure was removed between June 2019 and July 2022. The Standards require that this component be rebuilt to match the historic feature that was removed without HDC approval. The massing and profile of the newly built roof structure is similar to the historic design, but it appears to be sagging. Installing a wood post (current condition) or erecting a masonry column (proposed condition) is not an appropriate solution.

The applicant must submit a detailed scope of work and dimensioned drawings to staff for review that rectify the following conditions: the sagging roof, to show how the fascia will be modified (or rebuilt) to match the historic condition, and that the existing wing walls will be repaired to their historic height by adding courses of brick that were lost as well as cast concrete caps.

Aluminum Wrap

The profiles of the brick mould at the window and door openings and porch fascia are character-defining features of the house and must be retained and repaired. Wrapping these areas is not appropriate or compatible as the detailed profiles will be lost.

New side door

The door on the west-side wall at the first floor is a historic-age wood door. The horizontal design of the panels echoes the horizontal massing of the house, and is a small, yet impactful detail to the side wall. A repair estimate

wasn't submitted, ~~and the photographs provided by the applicant show the door to be in repairable condition.~~ The additional photos submitted by the applicant changed staff's opinion on the door's condition. Therefore, it is staff's opinion that the door can be replaced with a similar horizontal patterned door.

“South wall”/two-story extension

The exterior wall material was removed from this extension without HDC approval and staff does not know when this work occurred. While there is no visual confirmation on the material that was removed, the wood lath suggests it was likely stucco. Therefore, the compatibility standard will be used in reviewing the proposed wall material. The applicant selected Hardie lap siding with a raised grain finish. Staff agrees that siding is compatible at this rear location, however, neither an artificial cementitious finish nor the raised grain finish is appropriate for this historic location. True wood siding, or returning to the original stucco, would be historically appropriate.

The newly submitted rear wall drawings show the applicant offering two siding options: Hardie lap siding and stucco.

South wall

The proposed perimeter rail at the second story deck and first story rear entrance deck and stairs is a design used on contemporary decks and is not compatible for use as a porch railing on an early 20th century dwelling. A new railing that is compatible with the overall historic character of the building and era of construction includes end posts, top and bottom rails and balusters, and would be fully painted to integrate into the trim and finish of the house. A dimensioned drawing of a new railing design, including material and finishes, must be submitted.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation One - Denial

Staff finds that the replacement of the historic wood windows, replacement of the wood soffit, retention of the existing porch roof as-is and erection of one masonry column, installation of aluminum wrap applied to window and door brick mould and porch fascia, replacement of historic-age wood door with proposed fiberglass door, installation of Hardie siding to the historic rear extension walls, and erection of proposed ~~wood-vinyl~~ perimeter railing at upper and lower rear porches do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- Staff identifies the existing windows as distinctive character-defining features and determined that the windows are in repairable condition, as the deterioration is mostly comprised of broken/missing glass, missing ropes and other hardware, and generalized aging/peeling paint. It appears there are only a handful of openings out of the 45 openings (excluding basement window openings) within the house that are entirely missing or missing a top or bottom sash. New wood windows and upper or lower frames can be fabricated to address the missing or partially missing units and would allow the new windows to closely match the historic windows in operation, dimension, profile, material and finish, as well as placement within the window openings.
- The existing wooden beadboard eaves and soffits are character-defining features and in repairable condition, with peeling paint and the occasional deteriorated/missing board. The installation of a manufactured product such as the proposed Hardie Soffit, would alter the profile and surface texture of the soffits, altering the appearance and architectural design of the house.
- The front porch is a distinctive character-defining feature. The shallow-pitch roof and overhanging eaves allow the tall, profiled fascia to be a dominate detail and accentuates the wide expanse between the corner columns, creating a strong horizontal massing to the porch. The historic front porch roof structure was removed between June 2019 and July 2022. The Standards require that this component be rebuilt to match the historic feature that was removed without HDC approval. The massing and profile of the newly built roof structure is similar to the historic design, but it appears to be sagging. Installing a wood post (current condition) or erecting a masonry column (proposed condition) is not an appropriate solution.
- The applicant must submit a detailed scope of work and dimensioned drawings to staff for review that rectify the following front porch conditions: the sagging roof, to show how the fascia will be modified (or rebuilt) to match the historic condition, and that the existing wing walls will be repaired to their historic height by adding courses of brick that were lost as well as cast concrete caps.

- The profiles of the brick mould at the window and door openings and porch fascia are character-defining features of the house and must be retained and repaired. Wrapping and therefore covering these areas is not appropriate as the detailed profiles will be lost.
- True wood siding or stucco will be specified for the walls of the historic-age extension as an artificial cementitious finish nor raised grain finish are appropriate for this historic location.
- ~~The proposed perimeter rail at the second story deck and first story rear entrance deck and stairs is a design used on contemporary decks and is not compatible for use as a porch railing on an early 20th century dwelling. A new railing that is compatible with the overall historic character of the building and era of construction includes end posts, top and bottom rails, balusters and a painted finish. A dimensioned drawing of a new railing design, including material and finishes, must be submitted.~~
The submitted vinyl railing for the rear porches is not compatible with an early 20th century dwelling.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet 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 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: Asphalt roof, front entry door, masonry repair on sides of house and repair/rebuilding front porch masonry wing walls, gutters/downspouts, fascia, side entry door, rear doors, stucco finish on two-story rear extension, rear porch railings, rear entry platform/stairs, painting, and rear yard fence

Staff finds that the remaining work items will not alter the features and spaces that characterize the property, and therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness as the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

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

- Exterior color palette will be submitted for staff review and shall include: paint color for wood components on house, including side door; finish color(s) for the entry and rear doors; gutters/downspouts; and paint color for rear yard fence.
- Bricks needed for masonry repair and replacement must have a similar vertical cut texture, color, finish and dimension. New mortar joints will match the existing mortar composition (no pre-mixed off the shelf mortar shall be used), dimension, and joint profile. The front porch wing walls will be rebuilt to match the historic height and cast stone caps will be used to top the rebuilt wing walls.
- ~~A dimensioned plan for the platform and stairs at the first floor rear door will be submitted for review. A dimensioned elevation drawing of a railing design for the rear entry platform and upper porch will be submitted for review that incorporates end posts, top and bottom rails and balusters, as well as noting paint color.~~
- A wood railing that is compatible with the overall historic character of the building and era of construction, similar to the submitted photos of a vinyl railing, will be selected. A dimensioned drawing of a new railing design that includes specification of wood and painted finish (incl. color) material and finishes, must be

submitted for staff review.

- The door on the west-side wall at the first floor is a historic-age wood door. The horizontal design of the panels echoes the horizontal massing of the house, and is a small, yet impactful detail to the side wall. ~~A repair estimate wasn't submitted, and the photographs provided by the applicant show the door to be in repairable condition and therefore must be retained in this opening.~~ The additional photos submitted by the applicant substantiate the deteriorated condition of the door is beyond repair. Therefore, the existing door can be replaced with a similar horizontal patterned door. A cut-sheet will be submitted for staff review.
- The rear extension will have an applied stucco finish, per the recently submitted drawing. Finish pattern and color must match the stucco on the existing historic extensions on the east and west sides of the house.
- All future drawings must accurately reflect existing conditions, the applicant's proposed scope of work and selected materials and drawn correctly at a larger scale so applied details and trim can be included and clearly delineated.

Façade-north Wall

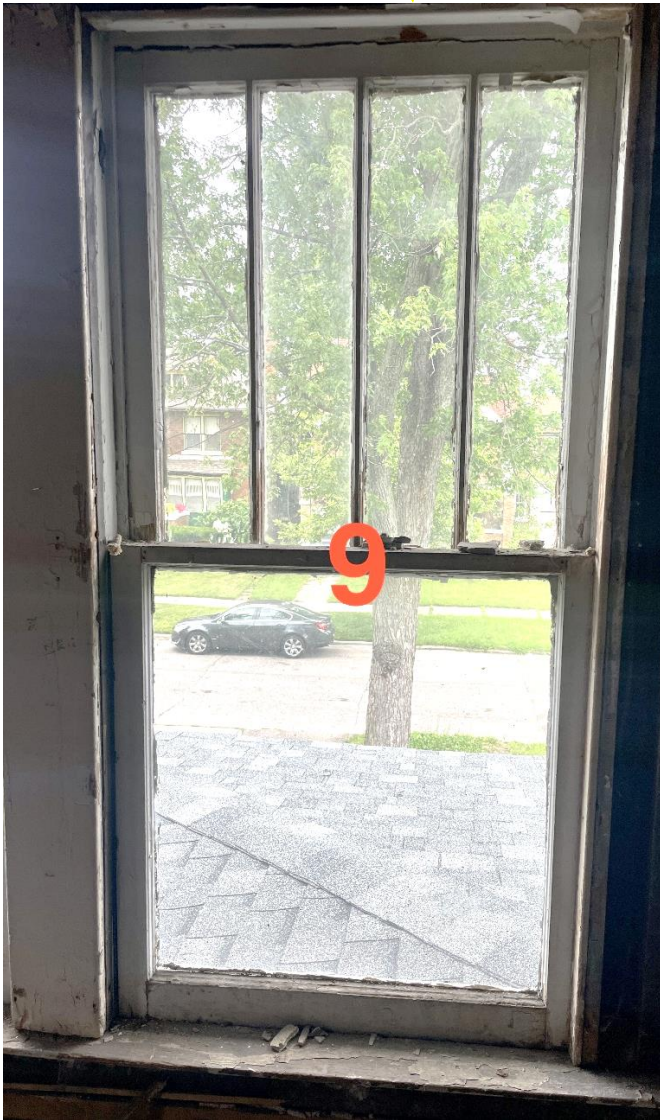


On the following pages, staff compiled the interior and exterior photos sent by the applicant for easy reference. To better assess the condition of windows, please open the full size individual photos on the property page under “Applicant Materials”. The number at the beginning of the file name corresponds to the opening numbers shown on the full wall photos. Staff comments are in italicized type below the photographs.





The glass in the bottom sash (6) may need to be replaced and new glass is needed for (7).

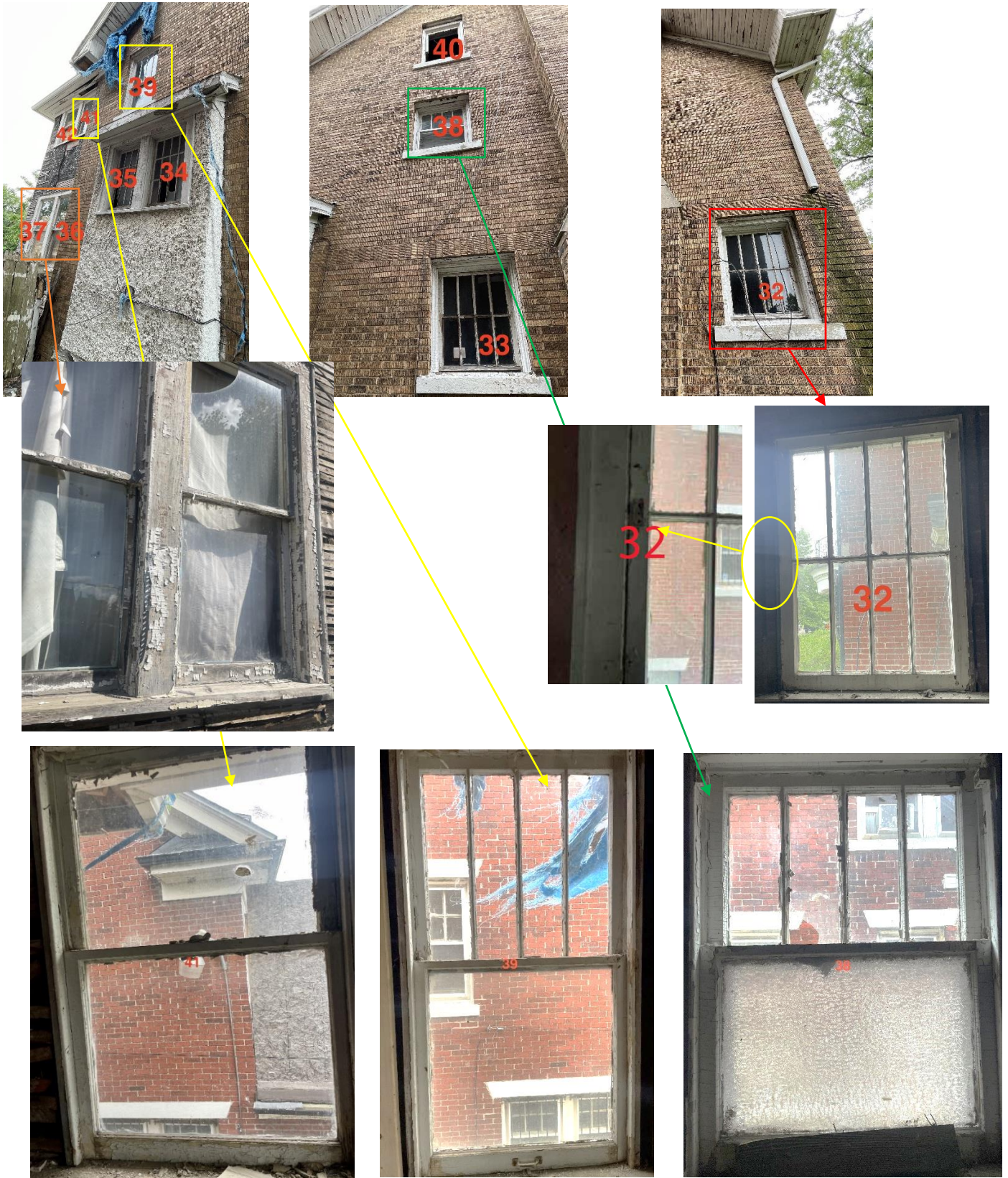




Missing lower sash (11, 12); new bottom sashes can be fabricated.

As evidenced in the muntin pattern, the middle window is wider than the flanking windows.

East-side Wall



It appears there is no window in the third floor window (40), so a new unit in this location will be needed.

West-side Wall

The applicant didn't submit a numbered exterior photo for the west wall. The exterior photo was taken by staff, and staff is identifying the interior photos for this wall location.

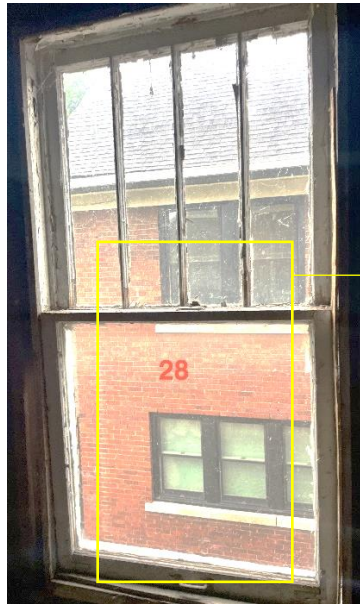


Rear-south Wall



#23 is a non-historic window in a non-historic wall.

#28 is numbered wrong, as all the windows in the rear extension have one-over-one windows, and it appears this window looks towards 1659 Edison (to the west).



Rear-south Wall

