

**ADDRESS:** 1667 EDISON

**APPLICATION NO:** #HDC-2024-00373

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** BOSTON-EDISON

**APPLICANT/OWNER:** WILLIAM BARBOUR-KEIR MATIAS ALANIZ

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 7/25/2024

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 7/23/2024

**SCOPE:** REPLACE WINDOWS, ALTER REAR PORCH, INSTALL VINYL SIDING

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The property at 1667 Edison includes a detached, single-family four square dwelling that was erected ca. 1915. The building features a hipped roof which is topped with four, hipped-roof dormers. The roof's historic/original wood soffits have recently been replaced with the current vinyl soffits. Black aluminum flashing has been installed at the front façade, above the porch's hipped roof. Exterior walls are mainly clad with brick, with vinyl siding (recently installed) existing at the front and sidewalls of the rooftop dormers. All original wood windows have also been recently replaced with vinyl units with aluminum coilstock trim. Aluminum coilstock wrap has also been added to the sills at the front façade's second story windows. Finally, wood decking, steps, railing at the rear porch have recently been removed and replaced. A vinyl soffit has also been added to the rear porch's eaves.

The property's original/historic age garage currently sits to the rear of the house. The building is rectangular in plan and is topped with a pyramidal, asphalt shingle roof. Vinyl siding has recently been added to the building's exterior wall.



**1667 Edison, current appearance. Photo taken by HDC staff on 7/25/2024**



1667 Edison, garage. Photo provided by applicant

**PROPOSAL**

Per the submitted project documents, the applicant is seeking the Commission’s approval of a number of exterior work items, all of which have been recently completed, to include the following items:

- Replace original/historic wood windows with new vinyl units, install aluminum colistock at window trim, and install aluminum coil stock at windows sills at front façade, second story windows. Install 4-lite grids at the top sash of all windows at the front facade
- Install vinyl siding at dormer front and side walls
- Install vinyl siding at garage walls
- Install vinyl at soffits in the eaves at the main roof, dormers, front and rear porch roofs, and the garage roof
- Install new white gutters and downspouts at house and garage
- At rear porch, replace existing wood skirting, columns, deck, steps, and railing per current condition
- Tuckpoint brick at front façade and, where necessary, replace deteriorated of brick with new to match existing

**STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was designated as a local historic district in 1973
- On June 24, 2024, staff was made aware of work being undertaken at the property. A review of records maintained by the HDC and the Detroit building department revealed that neither a COA nor a permit had been issued for the project. Staff therefore reported the work to the building department for enforcement and a Stop Work order was issued.

The owner has therefore submitted the current application to the Commission in an effort to acquire an “after the fact” approval of the exterior work which has been completed without a COA. See the below photos which indicate the condition of the house before and after the unapproved work.



1667 Edison, designation slide, taken by the HDAB in 1974



1667 Edison, designation slide taken by the HDAB in 1980. Note that the property has aluminum storm windows. However, all of the original/historic wood windows remained intact behind the storms

- Please see the below photos of the house and garage, taken prior to the current unapproved work to note historic, character-defining features which have been removed or covered:

**Dormer has stucco front and sidewalls, retains original 4-light casement windows, and has wood soffits**

**4/1 wood windows throughout**

**1/1 vinyl windows with aluminum trim throughout**

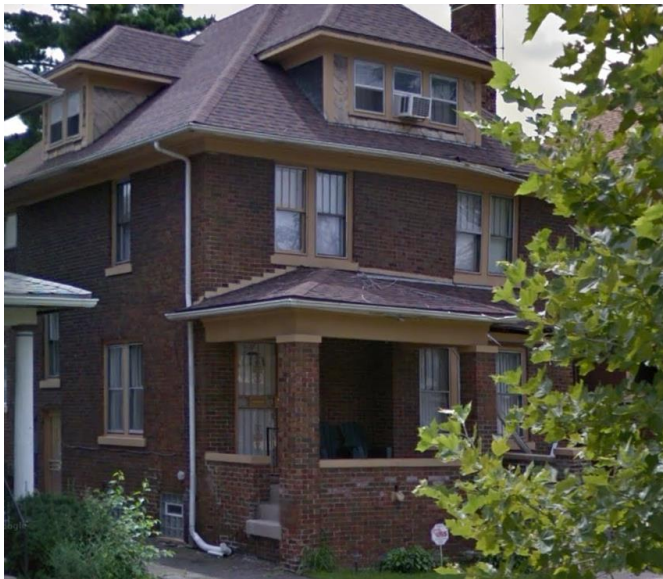
**Dormer now clad with vinyl, windows are 1/1 vinyl units with aluminum trim, and vinyl soffit has been added**

**Porch and main roof have wood soffits**

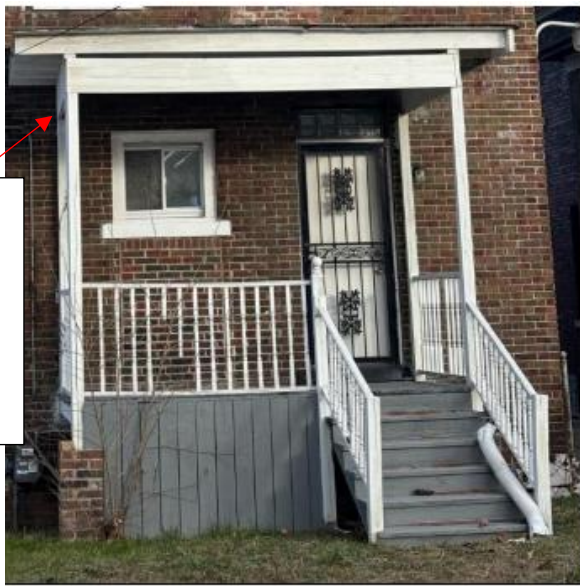
**Vinyl soffit added to porch roof and main roof**



Front façade, left photo taken in early 2024 by Realcomp (included in real estate listing) and right photo taken by staff showing current condition/appearance after the recent unapproved work



Google Streetview images, taken in 2016. Note that the attic/dormer 4-light wood windows are present but covered on the exterior by storm windows. Also, note that windows at the side elevation appear to be the same 4/1 type which were present at the front façade.



This porch was erected sometime after 1971 according to the below Sanborn Map



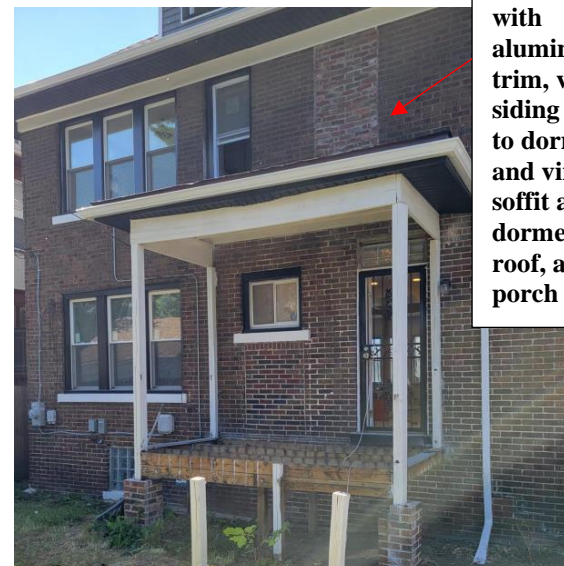
These columns should be reduced so that the height matches that of the balustrade's top rail

Rear porch, conditions prior to the current work on the left and after/current condition on the right. Photo provided by applicant.



Wood siding at dormer and wood soffits at dormer and main roof

4 original windows at dormer and first story. 5 vinyl windows have been installed and one door opening above the porch has been infilled



All windows are 1/1 vinyl with aluminum trim, vinyl siding added to dormer, and vinyl soffit added to dormer. Main roof, and porch roof

Rear wall conditions, prior to the current unapproved work on the left and after the unapproved work on the right. Photos provided by applicant



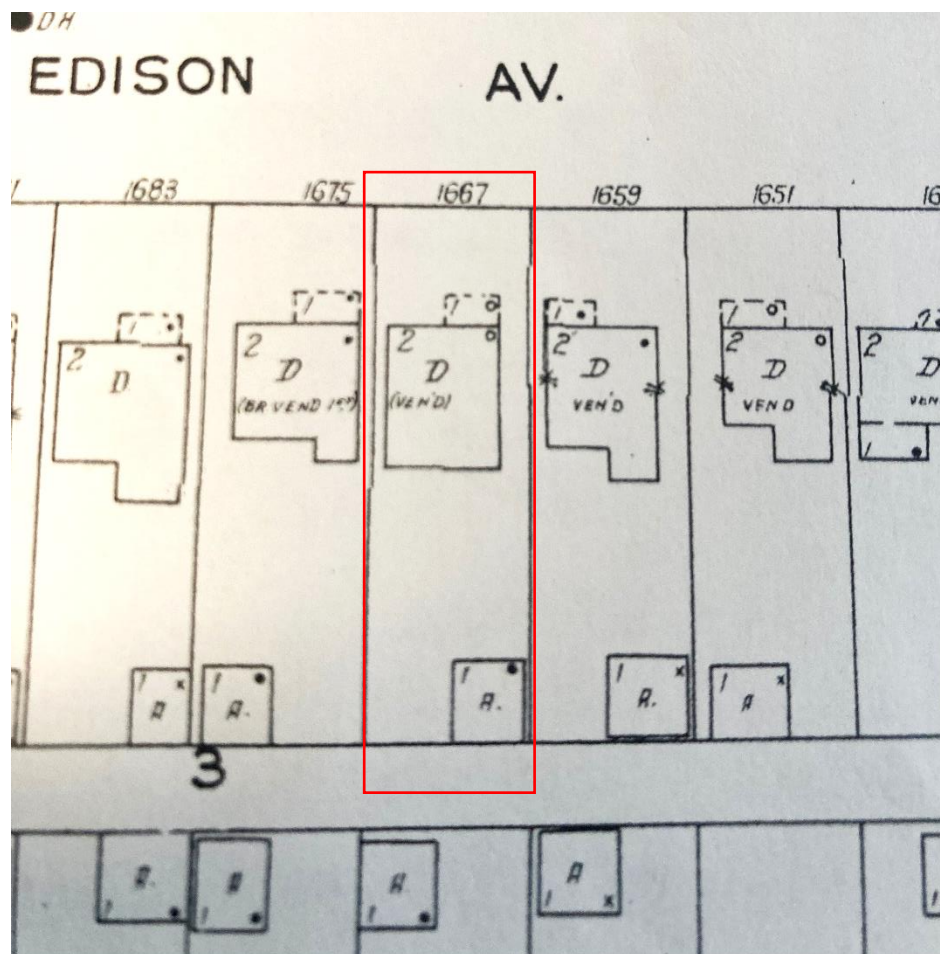
Lapped wood siding



Vinyl siding and soffit. A door and window have also been eliminated

Garage conditions, prior to the unapproved work on the left and after the unapproved work on the right. Photos by applicant

- A review of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicated that the rear porch that was removed without approval was not erected until after 1971. It was therefore not a character-defining feature. It is staff's opinion that the current rear porch is compatible with the building's historic appearance with the condition that the vinyl soffit be replaced with wood, the height of the southmost columns be reduced to a height that matches the top rail of the balustrade, and that it be painted or stained an appropriate color within one calendar year.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1971. 1667 Edison outlined in red. Note that it did not have a rear porch at that time. The porch which was recently removed without approval and/or permit was erected after the district's period of significance and therefore was not a character defining feature of the property.

- The installation of the existing gutters and downspouts did not result in the removal of historic elements. Staff therefore recommends approval of this scope item
- The application proposes to tuckpoint the brick at the front façade. Staff recommends that this scope item be approved with the condition that the new mortar matches historic in color, texture, and composition
- It is staff's opinion that the remaining work items are inappropriate to the building's historic character for the following reasons:
  - Regarding the vinyl windows and aluminum trim:
    - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
    - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.

- The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
- Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
- The original windows were distinctive 4/1 units. The applicant is proposing to add 4-lite grids to the top sash of the front façade windows. However, this does not account for the windows at the side and rear. Also, staff questions how long the grids would remain in place as this work would involve an after-market repair.
- The windows at the dormers are single or double hung and therefore do not match the operation of the original casement windows that were replaced without approval
- Regarding the vinyl siding at the dormers, house walls, and garage walls; the vinyl soffits installed at the main roof and the roofs of the porches, dormers, and garage:
  - Vinyl is not an appropriate replacement product for siding and/or soffits as it does not match the surface texture, reflectivity, finish, edge details, and at times width and reveal, of the original wood element.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a denial of these items because they do not conform to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

## ISSUES

- As noted above, it is staff’s opinion that the vinyl windows and aluminum trim, vinyl soffits installed at the house and garage, and the vinyl siding installed at the house and garage is not appropriate to the property’s historic character. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a denial for these scope items because they do not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation #1 - Section 21-2-78 -Certificate of Appropriateness – Erect a new rear porch, repair brick, and install aluminum gutters and downspouts porch**

It is staff’s opinion that above items are compatible with the subject property’s historic character, are in keeping the district’s Elements of Design, 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 with following conditions:

- At the new rear porch, the height of the southmost columns shall be reduced to a height that matches the top rail of the balustrade prior to the issuance of the project’s permit. It also shall be painted or stained an appropriate color within one calendar year.
- Regarding the proposed tuckpointing, the new mortar shall match the historic in color, texture, and composition/strength.

### **Recommendation #2 - Section 21-2-78 - Denial – Vinyl windows, aluminum trim, vinyl soffits at house and garage, vinyl siding at house (dormers) and garage**

It is staff’s opinion that above items are incompatible to the house’s historic character for the following reasons:

- Regarding the vinyl windows and aluminum trim:
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.

- Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
- The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
- Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
- The original windows were distinctive 4/1 units. The applicant is proposing to add 4-lite grids to the top sash of the front façade windows. However, this does not account for the windows at the side and rear. Also, staff questions how long the grids would remain in place as this work would involve an after-market repair.
- The windows at the dormers are single or double hung and therefore do not match the operation of the original casement windows that were replaced without approval
- Regarding the vinyl siding at the dormers, house walls, and garage walls; the vinyl soffits installed at the main roof and the roofs of the porches, dormers, and garage:
  - Vinyl is not an appropriate replacement product for siding and/or soffits as it does not match the surface texture, reflectivity, finish, edge details, and at times width and reveal, of the original wood elements.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a denial for the vinyl windows, aluminum trim, vinyl soffits at house and garage, vinyl siding at house (dormers) and garage because the work does not conform to the district's Elements of Design, nor does it meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular Standards number:

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.*