

**STAFF REPORT: NOVEMBER 13, 2024 REGULAR MEETING      PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO**

**Revised with additional items in bold red type**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00609**

**ADDRESS: 932 EDISON**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON**

**APPLICANT: ANTHONY PARKER**

**PROPERTY OWNER: THE WALLACE ESTATES, LLC**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: OCTOBER 16, 2024**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISITS: OCTOBER 24, 2024; NOVEMBER 1, 2024; NOVEMBER 7, 2024**

**SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS (WORK STARTED WITHOUT APPROVAL), DOORS, REAR PORCH, AND SIDING, INSTALL POOL**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The house at 932 Edison was built in 1912 in the Arts and Crafts or Craftsman style. It consists of two full stories plus a fenestrated attic story. The first story is clad in red-brown brick with reddish mortar joints; the second story and attic story are clad in wood shakes; the lower few feet of the second story walls flare outwards. Windows (subject of this application) are largely six-over-one sash windows with a few casement windows or sash windows of other configurations. At least three windows have been removed without approval. Much of this building's distinctive, character-defining detail is at the roofline, with decorative beams and vergeboards on the front (south) elevation and exposed rafter ends on the sides (east and west elevations).



*November 7, 2023 photo by staff. Fascia board on east elevation (upper right of image) added pursuant to November 1, 2024, Certificate of Appropriateness. New work visible above front porch (left side of image) was performed without approval and observed by staff November 7, 2024.*

### **Window Removal (Begun Without Approval)**

In 2022, staff observed three windows missing from the front façade, second story. This work was not approved by the Historic District Commission.



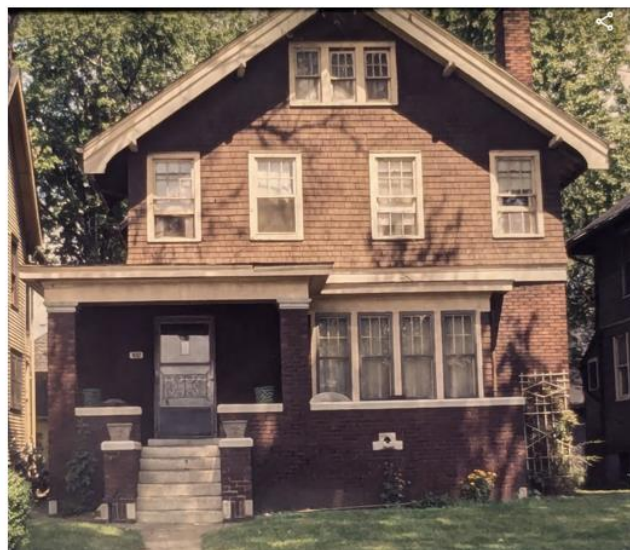
*August 29, 2022, staff photo showing window removal.*

### **November 1, 2024, Certificate of Appropriateness**

On November 1, 2024, staff issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of missing or deteriorated roofing, fascia board, gutters, and downspouts. This work is now in progress and presently visible on the building, consistent with the COA. Repointing and concrete repairs were also approved at this time.

### **Front Porch Alterations (Begun Without Approval)**

On November 7, 2024, staff observed porch alterations being made. The alterations appear to inappropriately increase the height of the porch frieze and roof but do not otherwise change the character of the porch. This work has not been approved by the Commission. On November 8, 2024, staff requested that the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department issue a Stop Work order. Staff also contacted the applicant by email and encouraged the applicant to submit an application (this work is not subject of the present application).



*Left: November 1, 2024, staff photo, taken prior to unapproved porch work. Right: 1974 photo by the Historic Designation Advisory Board.*

## PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes a comprehensive rehabilitation of the building exterior, including the following items:

### Window replacement

The applicant proposes to remove the existing, historic wood windows and install new replacement windows. ~~Though the application does not provide exact specifications, the image provided depicts a TAFCO single hung window with applied grids.~~ **The proposed window is a Pella Lifestyle, double-hung, six-over-one window, with between-the-glass grids, in “Classic White.”**



*Proposed window. Image from application.*

### Siding replacement

The application, as originally submitted, proposes to replace the original wood shake siding with NovikShake polymer siding in Coventry Gray color. The siding comes in 14.5” by 48.75” panels.



*Proposed siding. Image from application.*

However, a revision submitted by email on November 5, 2024, states: “We will repair all damaged siding using the original material to maintain the structure’s authenticity.”

### Soffits

New roofing, fascia boards, gutters, and downspouts have already been approved by staff. However, soffits were not approved (see “Staff Observations and Research” and “Issues,” below). The application proposes new soffit



boards.

### Rear (north) porch

The application proposes to demolish and rebuild the rear porch.

### Door replacement

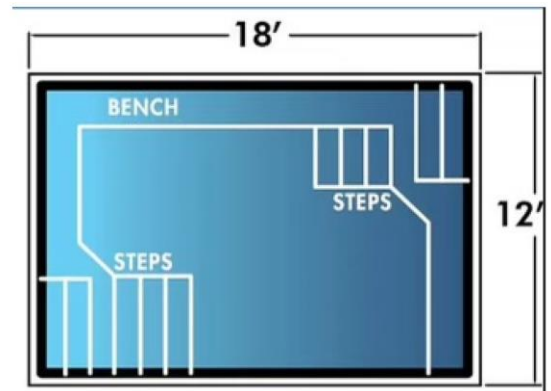
The applicant proposes to replace three exterior doors. Though the application does not provide exact specifications, the image provided depicts a Feather River molded fiberglass door with “chestnut mahogany” woodgrain appearance.



*Proposed door. Image from application.*

### Swimming pool

The application proposes to “shorten backyard pool,” altering the current pool to result in a 12’ by 18’ rectangular footprint.



*Left: Existing backyard. Right: Proposed pool. Images from application materials.*

### Withdrawn Scope Items

Two scope items mentioned in the application materials have since been withdrawn. Although the application materials briefly mention “extend front porch patio ... increase the footprint of the front porch” (page 26) and “new

garage” (including demolition of the existing garage; page 27), the applicant has since removed these items from the proposed scope (the applicant may apply for these items in the future).

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was established by resolution of the City Council in 1974. No Final Report was prepared for this district.
- The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-106) provide the following observations:
  - “Window openings are always subdivided. The most common window type is double-hung with sashes that are generally further subdivided by muntins or leaded glass.”
  - “Wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim and is used in many examples for all trim.”
  - “The most common relationship of textures in the district is that of a low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted with the smooth surface of wood or stone trim.”
  - “Natural brick colors, such as red, yellow, brown, and buff, predominate in wall surfaces. ... Paint colors often relate to style.”
  - “Buildings in other styles ... are generally asymmetric, but balanced, compositions.”

## Windows

- The three windows already removed without approval, and the existing windows proposed for replacement, are unambiguously character-defining as they are subdivided, as described in the Elements of Design, adding textural interest to the façade and serving as a prominent visual component of the building. Further, their six-over-one muntin pattern is consistent with the Arts and Crafts style of the building and is important to the overall character of the building and the district.
- The application materials appear to largely depict the missing windows, with few photos of the windows that remain. From the street, the existing windows appear, to staff, to be damaged but not beyond repair.
- ~~The applicant stated that a window schedule and specifications for the proposed new windows are forthcoming. This information has not yet been provided to staff.~~ **The proposed windows approximate the appearance of a historic double-hung wood sash windows; however, the between-the-glass grids and bright white color are not appropriate (simulated divided lites and an off-white color would be appropriate).**

## Siding

- Staff observes that over 50% of the existing wood shakes are missing, damaged or deteriorated. Staff opinion is that the siding is beyond repair, warranting replacement. However, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, namely Standard #6, direct that historic features that are beyond repair must be replaced with matching features. Wood shakes are commonly available at a reasonable cost and do not require special skills to install.
- The vinyl replacement product mentioned in the original application is clearly inappropriate, in staff opinion. Further, the panelized nature of the proposed siding may make it impossible to duplicate the flared, lower courses that are important to the character of the property.
- The November 5 revision expresses an intent to use replacement siding in “the original material.” This would be appropriate; however, detail is lacking. An appropriate installation would employ individual

wood shakes with the same dimensions and reveal (spacing) as the original material. It would also flare out at the lower courses, as presently seen on the building.

### Soffits

- The decorative beams and rafters beneath the eaves are distinctive features that are historically intended to be exposed. Their enclosure within soffit panels would not be appropriate, in staff opinion.



*Examples of other Boston-Edison houses showing exposed vergeboards, beams, and rafter ends. Obscuring these features with soffit panels would not be appropriate. The use of a narrow fascia board and gutters that do not obscure these features is appropriate. November 2024 photos by staff.*

### Rear porch

- Application photos show that the wooden porch elements are largely rotten or missing; staff is convinced that the rear porch is beyond feasible repair.
- The applicant stated “we are preparing a measured drawing to confirm that the new back porch dimensions align precisely with the original structure” (November 5, 2024, email to staff). However, staff has not yet received this information.



*Rear porch. Image from application materials.*

## Doors

- The front door had already been replaced by a non-historic, modern door at the time the Boston-Edison Historic District was established (see designation photo on Page 2). Its replacement with a compatible door is appropriate.

## Pool

- The current pool is approximately 16' by 27' and does not appear to be a historic feature. The proposed work would reduce the footprint of the pool. This would reduce the visual impact of the pool upon the property; the resulting work does not interrupt a character-defining open space or otherwise detract from the historic property and is appropriate, in staff opinion. **The applicant provided a site plan for the proposed pool on November 9, 2024.**

## ISSUES

- The windows are character-defining, historic features. The Secretary of the Interior' Standards for Rehabilitation, particularly Standard #2 (quoted below) direct that they be retained. If deteriorated beyond feasible repair, Standard #6 (also quoted below) directs that they be replaced with new windows that match the old in design and materials.
- The application lacks detail regarding the proposed siding installation. As the panelized and obviously synthetic appearance of the proposed siding would fail to duplicate the historic appearance, and as wood shakes are readily available and easy to install, this work would not be appropriate.
- The proposed soffits are not appropriate.
- Although the demolition of the rear porch is appropriate, in staff opinion, the application materials do not include a drawing or specifications for the proposed new porch.
- The side door appears to be a historic and character-defining feature, in staff opinion. It has not been shown to be beyond repair.
- The rear door is not visible in application photos as it is concealed behind a screen door.



Side (left image) and rear (right image) doors. Images from application materials.



- Specifications for proposed doors are not provided.
- ~~Pool installation frequently includes site work such as walkways or retaining walls, but this is not shown in the application.~~

## RECOMMENDATION

### Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission (Recommendation One: Denial)

Staff concludes that the proposed window replacement, soffit installation, and replacement of side and rear doors does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The windows proposed for removal are historic and distinctive materials and features that contribute to the character of the property.
- The windows proposed for removal have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair.
- ~~The proposed new windows do not match the material of the historic windows (they are vinyl).~~
- The proposed new windows do not match the three-dimensional qualities of the historic windows. They have a thinner and flatter profile, and further, as single hung windows, they have a different appearance in elevation (viewed from the front). They also use between-the-glass grids rather than true or simulated divided lites.
- ~~The proposed grids on the lower sash introduce a conjectural element not previously found on the building.~~
- The visible beams and rafters are intended to be exposed; they should not be enclosed with soffit panels.
- The side door is a historic feature that has not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair; a photo of the rear door has not been provided.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial as the proposed work fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

- 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.*
- ~~3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.~~
- 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 where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission (Recommendation Two: Certificate of Appropriateness)

Staff concludes that the remaining work items meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Elements of Design and recommends approval, subject to the following conditions



- The siding shall consist of wood shakes, subject to staff approval.
- The final siding installation shall be subject to staff approval.
- The new rear porch shall be made of wood and closely match the dimensions and appearance of the existing porch, subject to staff review.
- The new front door shall be subject to staff approval.
- ~~Any site work associated with the pool shall be subject to staff review.~~