

ADDRESS: 801 EDISON

APPLICATION NO: HDC2025-00037

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT/CONTRACTOR: BRENDAN MCGLINCH/MCGLINCH AND SONS

OWNER: AMANDA CONNOLLY & MICHAEL GIBB

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 2/25/2025

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 02/18/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS, GUTTERS, AND DOWNSPOUTS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building located at 801 Edison was erected as a single-family dwelling ca. 1915. The building is two stories in height and features a hipped roof with historic-age built-in/internal gutters, non-historic aluminum downspouts, and deep overhanging eaves with wood soffits. Hipped-roof dormers which are clad with asphalt shingles top the roof. The house's exterior walls are clad with brick. Windows are the original historic wood units at the building's main body, while non-historic wood units and jalousie windows are located at the building's north side porch, now enclosed. The windows are painted brown. All but two of the windows (the two jalousie windows at the side porch's north façade, second story have aluminum storm windows. A hipped-roof garage is located in the rear yard, to the south of the house. A brick wall at the east property line extends from the house's south wall to the garage's sidewalls.



801 Edison, current conditions. Photo by HDC staff, 2/25/2025.



801 Edison, current conditions. Photo by HDC staff, 2/25/2025. North side porch outlined in orange



801 Edison garage, current conditions. Photo by HDC staff, 3/6/2025.

PROPOSAL-

With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to undertake the following work items:

House

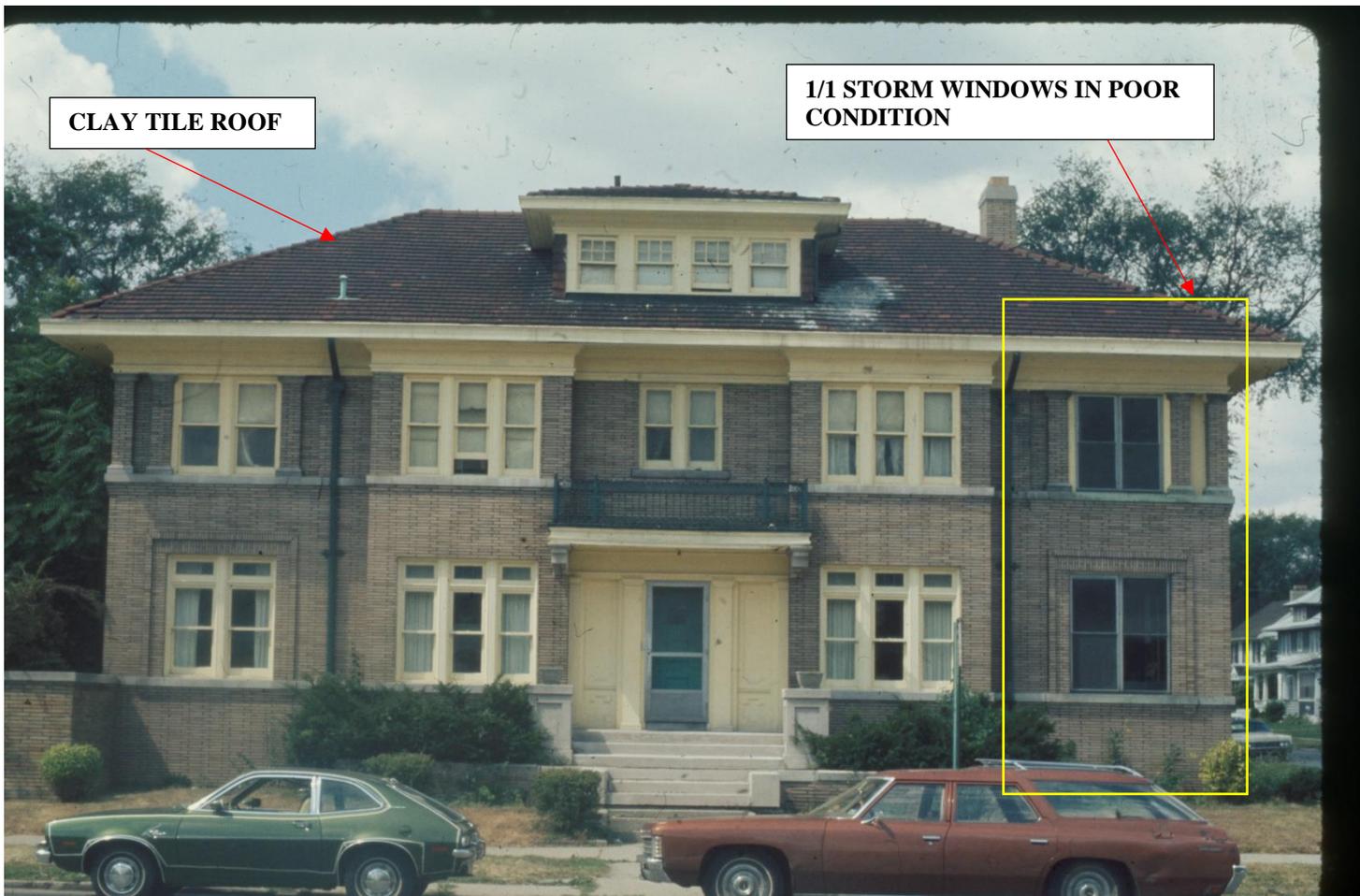
- Replace the existing non-historic asphalt shingles with new dimensional asphalt shingles. Asphalt shingles will be installed over existing built-in gutters.
- Install new aluminum, k-style hanging gutters and rectangular downspouts (color black)
- Where wood is damaged at the soffit, replace with new wood to match existing
- At the two-story north side porch remove the existing windows to the rough opening and install new aluminum clad wood windows. The cladding will be black

Garage

- Replace the existing non-historic asphalt shingles with new dimensional asphalt shingles.
- Install new aluminum, k-style hanging gutters and rectangular downspouts (color black)
- Where wood is damaged at the soffit, replace with new wood to match existing

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison historic district was designated in 1974
- See the below photos of the house which date from 1974 and 1980. Note that at the time of the district's designation, the house had a clay tile roof, and the porch windows appeared to be 1/1 storm windows and jalousie windows



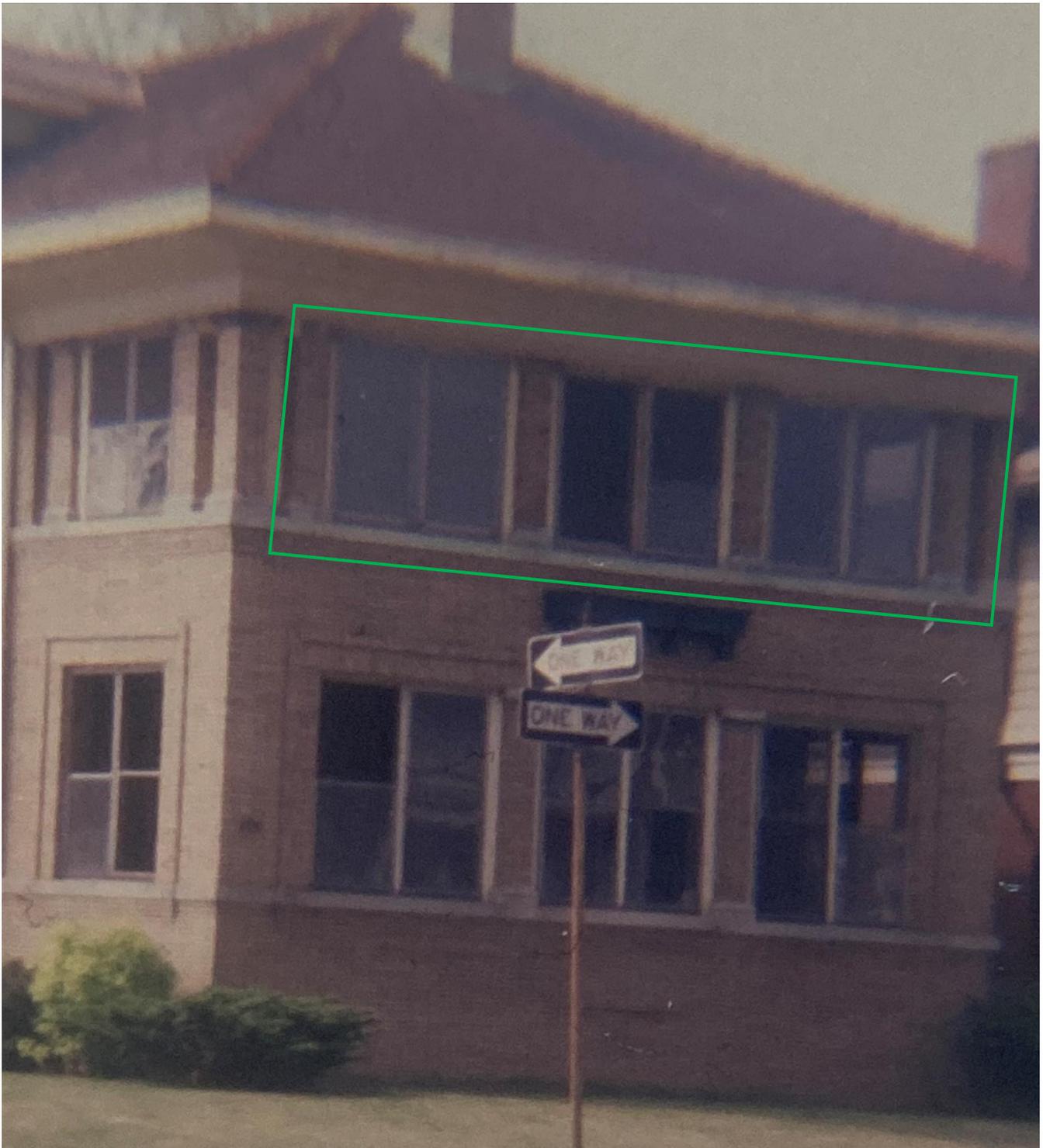
801 Edison, designation photo taken in 1974



801 Edison, photo taken in 1980. See the side porch wing. The windows at the porch outlined in green are jalousie windows. All other windows at the porch appear to be 1/1 storm windows



801 Edison, photo taken in 1980. See the side porch wing. The windows at the porch outlined in green are jalousie windows. All other windows at the porch appear to be 1/1 storm windows



801 Edison, photo taken in 1980 showing north side porch, the location of the proposed new windows. The windows outlined in green are jalousie windows. All other windows appear to be 1/1 storm windows

- It is staff's opinion that the windows that were present at the side porch at the time of the district's designation were not original to the property's date of construction. Specifically, the porch was likely open when the house was built, and the jalousie and storm windows were likely installed post 1950s. Also, in 1974, the storm windows at the side porch appeared to be in poor condition. It is therefore staff's opinion that the windows present at the porch in 1974, at the time of the district's designation, were not distinctive character-defining elements of the house.

- In 1980, the Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the following work items:
 - Replace the clay tile roof with asphalt singles at house and garage
 - Retain and repair the internal gutter system
- In 1982, the Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following work items:
 - Install 12 wood louvered vents in soffit
- In 1984, the Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following work items:
 - Install new aluminum storm windows (color brown)
- See the below undated/ca. 1984 photo to note the following:
 - The clay tile roof had been removed and replaced with asphalt shingles per the 1980 COA.
 - The window and front door trim were in the process of being painted brown
 - The aluminum storm windows which were approved by the 1984 COA had not yet been installed at the house's main body. Likely, the wood windows had to be painted brown prior to the installation of the storms
 - The owner had begun to install the current wood windows at the north side porch. Staff was unable to locate a COA for the replacement of the porch's storm windows. Nevertheless, as noted above, the windows which were present in 1974 and removed ca. 1984 were not distinctive character-defining features of the house, in staff's opinion.



Ca. 1984 photo. Note that the owner was in the process of replacing the side porch windows per the above note. See the below photos to note the window conditions in 1974 and 2025.



Above referenced porch window opening at front façade, first story, condition in 1974, prior to ca. 1984 replacement



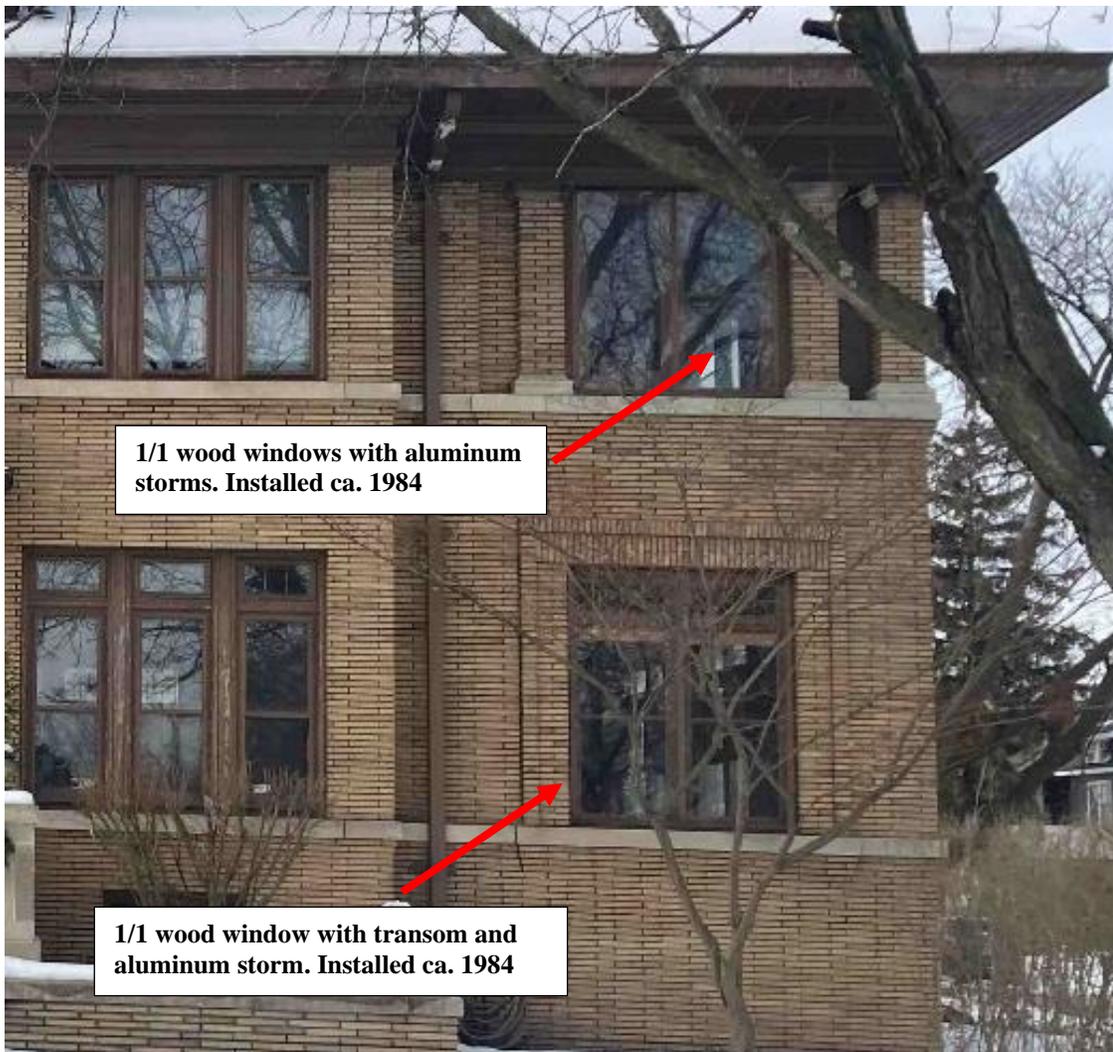
Above referenced porch window opening at front façade, first story, current condition. This window was installed ca. 1984



Window type that is present at the porch, front façade, first story. This window was installed ca. 1984. The window type is a wood 1/1 unit with what appears to be a fixed transom with metal casing

STAFF RESEARCH AND OBSERVATIONS

- See the below photos of the windows at the side two-story porch. A review of HDC records indicated that the current porch windows were likely installed in 1984. Note that the windows at the first story are 1/1 wood units and jalousie units. Each window at the first story is topped with a fixed transom with metal casing, consistent with the original wood windows at the house's main body, first floor. The porch's second story windows are 1/1 wood units and jalousie windows without transoms, which is consistent with the original wood windows at the house's main body, second floor. Aluminum storm windows, also added ca. 1984, are present at all of the porch windows with the exception of two jalousie windows at the porch's south façade, second story. Staff was unable to locate a COA for the existing wood porch windows. However, as noted above, the porch windows which were present in 1974/at the time of the district's designation which were replaced by the current windows were not original to the building's construction and were not character defining. Their removal in 1984 was therefore appropriate. However, staff would have recommended that any new windows proposed for installation at the side porch be simple 1/1 wood units with minimal casing/trim of a simple profile and clear/transparent, non-reflective glass as the openings at the porch would have originally been open/unenclosed. Staff therefore would have recommended against any proposal that the new windows include a transom.



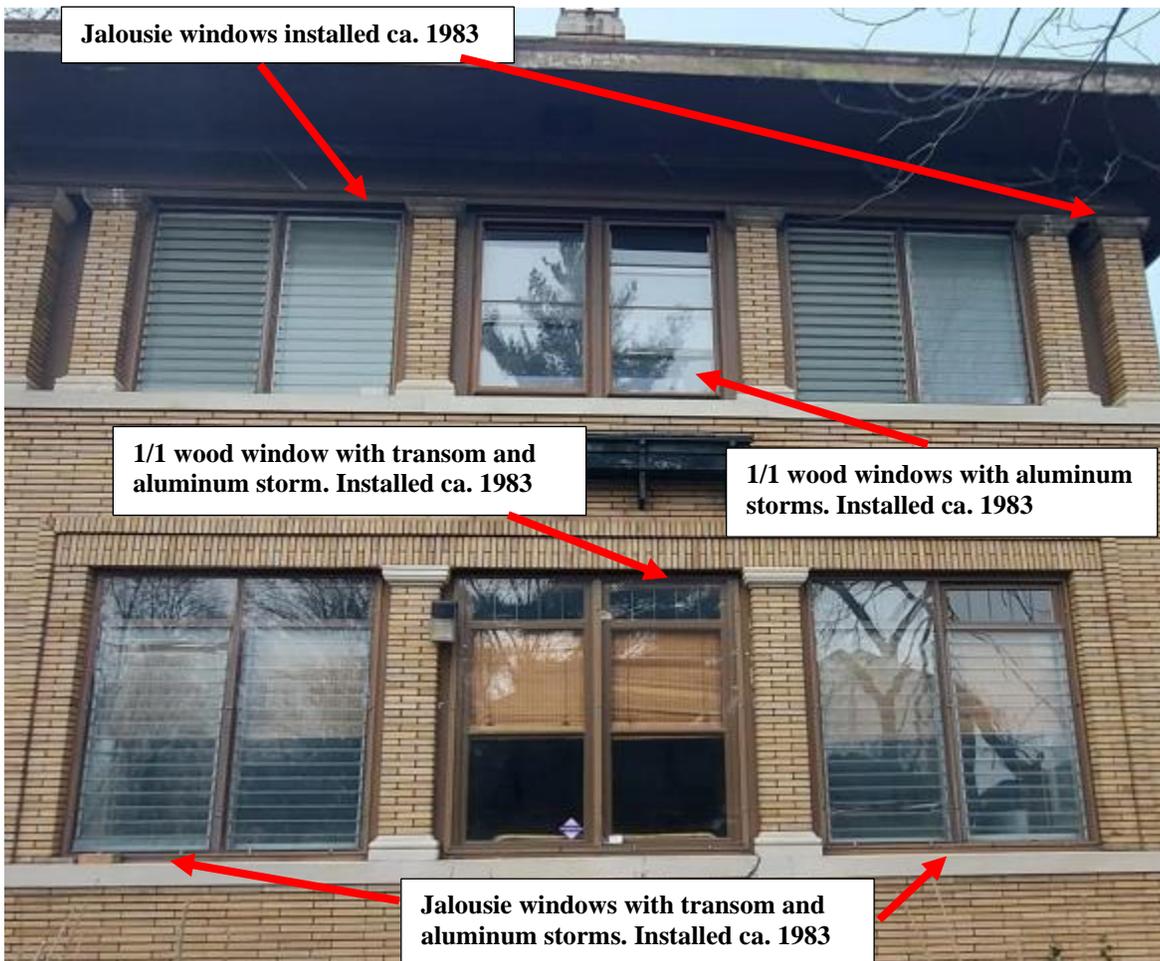
East/front façade, showing windows at porch which are proposed for replacement. Staff photo taken on 2/25/2025

1/1 wood windows with aluminum storms. Installed ca. 1983



1/1 wood windows with transoms and aluminum storms. Installed ca. 1983

West façade of porch, showing ca. 1983 window proposed for replacement. Photo by applicant



North/side façade, showing windows at porch which are proposed for replacement. Staff photo taken on 2/25/2025



Interior of porch, second story. Facing northwest, showing windows installed ca. 1983. Photo provided by applicant



Interior of porch, first story. Facing northwest, showing windows installed ca. 1983. Photo provided by applicant

- Staff supports the proposed removal of the existing porch windows as they are not historic-age, distinctive character defining features of the house.
- Staff is generally in favor of the proposed new window product as the windows are aluminum-clad wood, double-hung units which are compatible with the existing historic windows. The casing/trim will provide a minimal profile, and the glazing will be clear/transparent/non-reflective, which would align with the porch's original open, unenclosed character. Also, the installation of the new windows will allow for the removal of the current aluminum storm windows at the porch, which would further minimize the appearance of the fenestration within the porch's openings. However, staff does have the following issues with the proposed product:
 - The windows will have black screens which, when combined with the proposed black frames, will detract from the porch's original open character. Staff recommends that a less opaque screen be selected for this application
 - The windows which include transoms will detract from the porch's original open character. Staff recommends that all of the windows have a simple 1/1 light configuration.
- Staff also notes that the new windows which are proposed for installation at the porch will have a black finish, while the remaining original wood windows and aluminum storms at the house's main body are currently brown.
 - The owners have provided a narrative in which they note that they plan on painting the original wood windows and storms black to match the new windows proposed for installation at some time in the future.
 - Element of Design #9, *Relationship of colors*, states that "paint colors relate to style." It is not common for Prairie style houses within the district to display two different colors for windows.
 - Staff therefore has concerns because the use of two different colors for windows is incompatible with the building's historic character, and it is unclear how long the mismatched window colors/the condition will remain.

- Staff supports the replacement of the asphalt shingles at the house and roof with new asphalt shingles. However, staff does question if the asphalt shingle at the rooftop dormers will be removed and, if so, what treatment is planned for this location.
- The application proposes to shingle over the historic built-in gutters and install new k-style, aluminum hanging gutters at the roof's fascia. Staff notes that the roof's deep, overhanging eaves with its flat, unadorned fascia are a distinctive, character-defining feature of the house. The addition of hanging, k-style gutters to the fascia will alter the appearance of the house's eaves and therefore will detract from the building's historic character. It is staff's opinion that this scope item does not meet the Standards for this reason.
- Furthermore, Boston-Edison's Elements of Design describe the importance of historic architectural details and materials to the character of the district. Specifically, note the following:
 - Element of Design #7 *Relationship of materials*, states that "wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim and is used in many examples for all trim." The shingling over of the historic built-in gutters and installation of hanging gutters would introduce an incompatible metal element which would obscure the roof's character-defining wood trim elements/fascia and eaves, which does not conform to Element of Design #7
 - Element #10 *Relationship of architectural details*, states that "in general, the various styles are rich in architectural details." Note that the building's deep, overhanging wood eaves are characteristic of the Prairie style and the built-in gutters are an architectural detail which allow for a clean expression of the building's character-defining eaves/fascia. As noted previously, the addition of hanging gutters would alter the appearance/geometry of the character-defining eaves, which does not conform to Element of Design #10
- Note that the property owner states that they are seeking to replace the internal gutter system because their repair would "...require custom fabrication, extensive labor for removal and replacement, and potential structural repairs, with costs ranging from \$50 to \$150 per linear foot depending on the material and complexity. We were given estimates ranging from \$60k to \$80k." However, the submission did not include actual quotes from the roof repair contractors whom the owners consulted.

ISSUES

- While staff is generally in favor of the proposed new porch windows, staff notes the following issues with the product:
 - The windows will have black screens which, when combined with the proposed black frames, will detract from the porch's original open character. Staff recommends that a less opaque screen be selected for this application
 - The windows which include transoms will detract from the porch's original open character. Staff recommends that all the windows have a simple 1/1 light configuration.
 - The new windows will have a different colored finish (black) than the windows and storms (brown) at the house's main body
- The replacement of the built-in gutter system with hanging, k-style gutters does not meet the Standards or conform to the district's Elements of Design because the work will alter the appearance of the house's distinctive, character-defining eaves and therefore will detract from the building's historic character.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial: Replace internal gutter system at the house with new aluminum, k-style hanging gutters

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, specifically Standards #:

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.

- And Elements of Design 7, 9, 10

For the following reasons:

- The roof's deep, overhanging eaves with its flat, unadorned fascia are a distinctive, character-defining feature of the house. The addition of hanging, k-style gutters to the fascia will alter the appearance of the house's eaves and therefore will detract from the building's historic character.

Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Remaining work items

Staff recommends that the remaining work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston-Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, with the conditions that:

- The new porch windows shall not have black screens. A less opaque screen type/color shall be selected and submitted to staff for review and approval
- The new porch windows shall not include transoms. Rather, they shall have a simple 1/1 light configuration
- The windows at both the house's main body and two-story porch shall be one uniform color. Therefore:
 - The new porch windows shall be finished with brown color to match the color of the windows and storms at the house's main body

OR

 - The property owner shall submit an application to staff for the painting of the windows and storms at the house's main body black, to match the proposed finish color of the new porch windows. The application shall be submitted

prior to the issuance of the permit for the current project and shall provide a date/date range by which the painting will be initiated.