

STAFF REPORT: APRIL 9, 2025 MEETING **PREPARED BY:** D. RIEDEN, T. BOSCARINO AND A. DYE
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00626
ADDRESS: 1101 CHICAGO
HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON
APPLICANT: VICTOR SMOLYANOV, SMOLYANOV HOME IMPROVEMENT
PROPERTY OWNER: GRACIE BROWN
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: OCTOBER 22, 2024
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISITS: NOVEMBER 27, 2024; FEBRUARY 28, 2025; MARCH 25, 2025
SCOPE: REPLACE CLAY TILE ROOF WITH ASPHALT SHINGLE ROOF

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This 2-1/2 story dwelling, built in 1914, is centrally located on the lot which is located at the southwest corner of Chicago Boulevard and Hamilton. It presents its primary facade north to Chicago Boulevard and a secondary side east towards Chicago. The house walls are clad with brown brick stacked in a common bond pattern; however, the brick is also used with different coursing/stacking designs to create subtle detailing on each wall surface. The at-grade water table is defined by a soldier course of brick, single horizontal rowlock courses at the first and second floors and the top of the exterior masonry walls create continuous banding, and vertical rowlock courses (i.e., stack bond) accentuate each window opening at the second floor. Classical details on the dwelling include fluted square pilasters at the box bay, fluted round columns at the rear porch (not all of which have capitals) and widely spaced dentils at the boxed eaves. The continuous windows on the box bay (front) and ½ round extension (east-side) contrast the solidity of the main body of the house with its individually placed (or occasionally mullled) windows; and the unadorned walls contrast the highly ornamental tile roof and the tall and deep arched dormer that extends from each roof surface.

Subject of this application, the pyramidal hip roof of the house's primary mass, and the front/east box-bay half-hip roof are clad with green terra cotta tiles in a French-style design. The dormers' curved roofs are finished with standing-seam metal. A small conservatory, projecting to the east, is topped with glass. Porches on the rear (south) of the property have flat roofs covered in asphalt.



Above: The subject property viewed from Chicago Boulevard, facing south. Staff photo, November 2024.



Right: Looking northwest at the rear and east-side walls. Staff photo, March 2025.



Looking southeast at the west-side wall of the dwelling. Staff photo, November 2024.



Detroit Parcel Viewer image of the subject property.



1974 photo by the Historic Designation Advisory Board. Note the garage with hip roof covered with tile.



Garage viewed from Hamilton, facing northeast. November 2024 photo by staff.

Also present on the property is a garage (see photos above). At the time the Boston-Edison Historic District was established in 1974, the garage had a hip roof with green tile matching that of the house. The garage roof has since collapsed. There are no Historic District Commission approvals or other records associated with the garage.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to replace the tile roof. The new roofing would be Lifetime Pinnacle Pristine “architectural” asphalt shingles by Atlas Roof Shingles. The color is not specified.

The metal, glass, and flat (asphalt) portions of roofing are not proposed for replacement.

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. A related National Register report is typically referenced by staff and the Commission, which suggests a period of significance from 1900 to 1930.
- Staff’s opinion is that this house is a contributing resource.
- The Elements of Design for Boston-Edison provide the following relevant observations:
 - “Roofing includes slate, tile, and asphalt shingles.” (Element 7, Relationship of materials)
 - “Tile, slate, or wood shingle roofs have particular textural values where they exist.” (Element 8, Relationship of textures)
 - “Roofs are in natural colors (tile and slate colors, natural and stained wood colors), and asphalt shingles are predominantly within this same dark color range.” (Element 9, Relationship of colors)

- Tile roofs' dimensionality, patterning, profile, and saturation of color make them distinctive character-defining features of a building. Material and visual qualities of a tile roof are intrinsically tied to each other. Specialized tile roof components, such as ridge end caps, further accentuate the unique roof material and design.
- The concave design of the French tile offers a striking contrast of texture and shape with the bulbous ridge tiles. It is staff's opinion that the entire composition of this house was designed to showcase the roof.
- The submitted application includes photos of the roof. The photos show some missing and loose tiles, particularly at junctions with dormers and where pantiles (curved tiles) complete the seams of the hip roof. However, the photos were taken from ground level and do not clearly show the condition of the roof. There is no indication that the damaged areas are numerous or beyond repair. Further, the planar surfaces of the roof appear to be intact.
- The submitted application states "Existing roof on house is in bad condition, house has active leaks." However, it also states "shingles are cracked, brittle, losing granules," an inaccurate statement as the house does not have a shingle roof.



Photos, from application documents, showing loose tiles and patched areas. Flat green tiles clad the dormer walls.

- The submitted application includes a Dave Pomaville & Sons, Inc., repair estimate from 2022, as follows: the "leak at the northeast chimney" would be repaired for \$5846.00; the "leak at the southwest dormer" would be repaired for \$5547.00. This work would retain the original tile (replacing flashing and decking) for a total cost of \$11,393.00.
- A recent applicant response, dated March 27, 2025 stated:
The roof was difficult to access due to its steepness and the wet tiles. However, the inspection revealed multiple issues, including deteriorated flashings with heavy tar patching, numerous failing tiles (stress/age cracks, exposed nails, or severely chipped), and eroded mortar sealing the hip/ridge tiles. Overall, the roof is in poor condition with countless issues, including direct sightlines into the attic space.
The interior inspection revealed more than 10 areas damaged due to roof failure. The roof decking also showed damage in numerous spots, including complete rot, water staining, and discoloration. The scope of repairs is too extensive to be viable; the entire roof and any affected roof decking should be replaced. Photos of all accessible interior and exterior findings have been uploaded.
- The proposed asphalt shingle reroofing quote is \$43,000.00.
- In general, the removal of the clay tile roof is contrary to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (quoted in full below). Standard #2 directs that "the removal of historic materials ... shall be avoided." Standard #5 directs that "distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques ... shall be preserved." Standard #6 directs that "deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced."
- Standard #6 also allows for the replacement of features due to "severity of deterioration." However, as noted above, it has not been established that the existing roof is beyond repair. In prior cases where the Historic District Commission has approved the replacement of distinctive clay tile roofs, extensive deterioration¹ had been

¹ *Preservation Briefs 30: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs* (National Park Service, 1993) provides a general rule for replacement of a clay tile roof: "In most cases, unless matching replacements can be obtained, if more than about 30 percent of the roofing tiles are lost, broken, or irreparably damaged, it may be necessary to replace all of the historic tiles with new matching tiles."

documented through detailed photographs, with unreasonably high repair cost estimates from specialized contractors, or both. Neither is the case with this property. Rather, the spot repair estimates previously prepared for certain areas, maintaining the character-defining tiles, suggest that repair may be both feasible and reasonable.

- Further, Standard #6 also directs that, in cases of replacement, “the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials.” The proposed asphalt shingle roofing is not a close match for the unique and distinctive profile, raised texture, color, and sheen of the historic clay tile roof.
- Staff doesn’t dispute deteriorated sections of the roofing system have caused damage to interior areas of the house. Tiles, due to their low absorption rate, can efficiently shed water and direct it to particular paths of travel, namely the gutters and downspouts, valleys with flashing, etc. It is often these areas, along with the underlayment (the layer we don’t see) that are equally important to keep a house dry, but don’t have the same lifespan as roofing tiles.
- The photos staff took from the ground, coupled with the photos supplied by the applicant, show that large sections of the tiles appear to be in good condition; and the number of broken tiles is small. The photos also show the distinctive profiles, depth of material and saturation of color that make tile roofs distinctive character-defining features that can only be matched by the installation of new tiles.



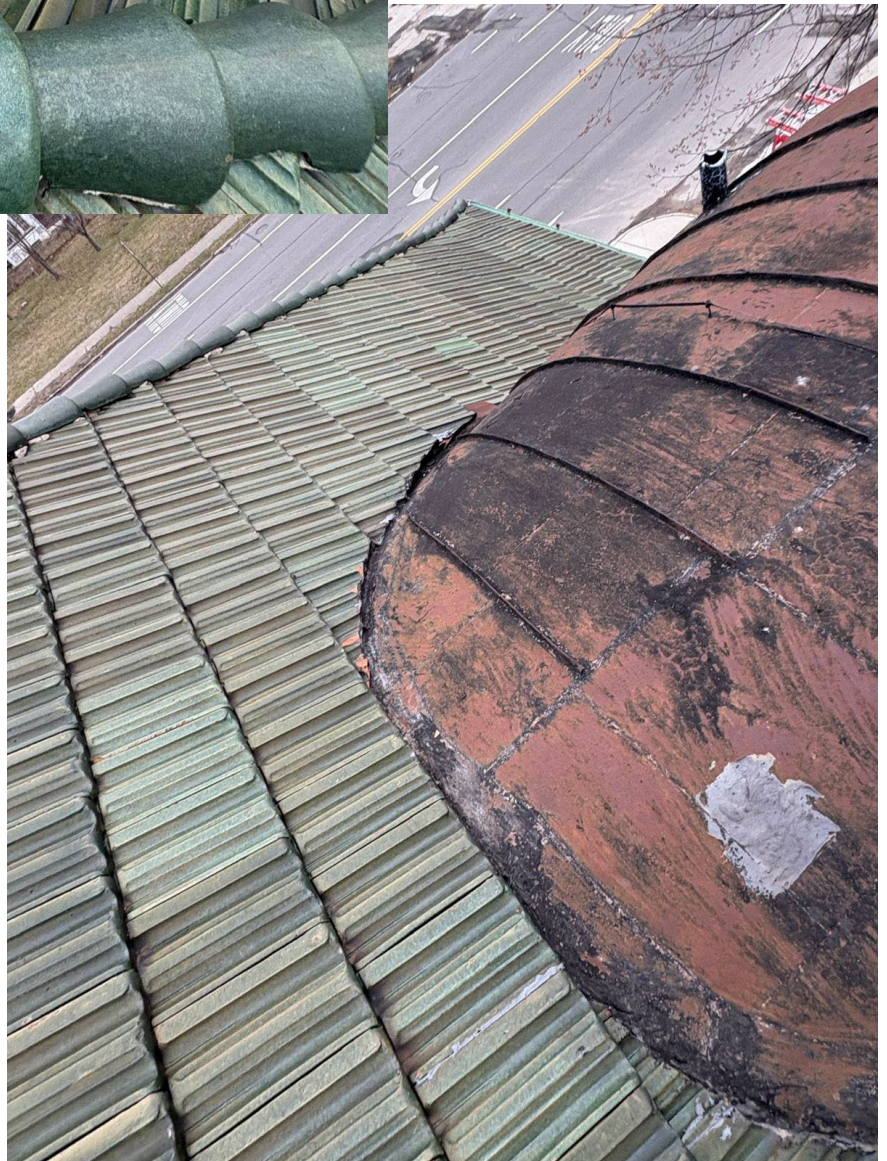
Applicant photos of cracked tiles.



Applicant photo, flat green tiles at dormer wall are visible. The flashing at the chimney appears to need replacement.



Applicant photo. View of east-facing roof, looking toward the Chicago and Hamilton intersection. The ridge and hip trim pieces appear to be in great shape.



Applicant photo. This view captures a portion of the rear/south roof, which is also shown on the following page. The surfaces in most need of repair are the areas where the dormer roofs meet the tiles, as well as the standing seam metal covering the dormers.



Rear roof; below is a close up of the eastern side of this roof. Staff photos, November 2024





Applicant photo. This view is looking west.



Staff photo of west side of roof, November 2024.



This is a view of the highly dimensional top of the roof. Within this expanse of tile, it appears there is one tile with a broken edge, and one ridge cap with a chipped finish.

ISSUES

- Tile roofs' dimensionality, patterning, profile, and saturation of color make them distinctive character-defining features of a building. Material and visual qualities of a tile roof are intrinsically tied to each other. Specialized tile roof components, such as ridge end caps, further accentuate the unique roof material and design.
- Photos show some missing and loose tiles, particularly at junctions, but there is no indication that the damaged areas are numerous or beyond repair. Further, the planar surfaces of the roof appear to be intact.
- Without a comprehensive quote from a roofing company that specializes in tile roofs, staff can't offer an opinion on whether the roof is beyond economic or technical feasible repair.
- Should any expanses of tile require replacement, the applicant has not explored the possibility of replacement with matching clay tiles (rather than non-matching asphalt shingles).

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial

Staff concludes that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston-Edison Historic District 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 where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

And element:

8. *Relationship of textures.*

For the following reasons:

- Tile roofs' dimensionality, patterning, profile, and saturation of color make them distinctive character-defining features of a building. Material and visual qualities of a tile roof are intrinsically tied to each other. Specialized tile roof components, such as ridge end caps, further accentuate the unique roof material and design.
- Photos show some missing and loose tiles, particularly at junctions, but there is no indication that the damaged areas are numerous or beyond repair. Further, the planar surfaces of the roof appear to be intact.
- Without a comprehensive quote from a roofing company that specializes in tile roofs, the economic or technical feasibility of repair is unknown.
- Should any expanses of tile require replacement, the applicant has not explored the possibility of replacement with matching clay tiles (rather than non-matching asphalt shingles).
- The proposed asphalt shingles do not closely match the appearance of the historic clay tiles.