

STAFF REPORT: 5/14/2025 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

ADDRESS: 2044 CHICAGO

APPLICATION NO: HDC2024-00199

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT/ARCHTECT: TIM FLINTOFF/4545 ARCHITECTURE

OWNER: VIVEK CIAL

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 04/25/2025

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION 04/21/2025

SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS AND REBUILD 2nd AND 3RD STORY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building located at 2044 Chicago is a 2 ½ -story, Tudor-revival style single-family dwelling that was erected ca. 1915. The building is topped with a hipped-roof central/main mass with a projecting front-gabled wing and a rear, two-story, hipped roof wing. Exterior walls are clad with brick and stucco with half timber detailing. The building's front façade features two entry doors and a monumental end wall chimney. Most windows and associated casing/brickmould have been removed and the opening have been covered with plywood. The only remaining windows are five wood leaded glass casement windows which are located at the west/side wall, first story.



Current appearance. Photo taken by staff, 11/25/2024

PROPOSAL

Per the submitted materials, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval for the following work items:

- At open portion of front porch, replace existing concrete slab with new slab. Install new ceramic tiles at floor to match existing. Repair failing brick at wingwalls with new to match existing as required. Tuckpoint where necessary. Replaced damaged steps with new concrete steps to match existing in dimension
- At interior porch, retain existing tiles. Repair damaged tile with new ceramic tile to match existing where necessary
- At front elevation, install a new wood door with leaded glass sidelites where missing. Retain and repair the existing historic, arched top front door
- Rebuild the fire damaged areas at 2nd and 3rd story per the current appearance (work completed)
- Remove remaining windows and associated trim/casing to rough opening with the exception of the five remaining historic windows at the east wall, first story (work completed)
- Install new aluminum-clad wood casement and double-hung windows with simulated divided lites and wood casement windows with lead coming per application
- At rear, first story door opening, install a set of French doors with sidelites per application
- At rear porch, remove screens at first story openings and replace wood shake at second story walls with new stucco panels

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was designated in 1974
- See the below photos of the building which indicates its condition in 1974, at the time of the district's designation and in 1980



Designation slide, 1974. Source, HDAB



Designation slide, 1980. Source, HDAB

- Staff notes that the front door had been removed without HDC approval sometime between 2013 and 2015 per the below Google Streetview images:



Google Streetview, 2013. Note that historic wood door with leaded glass sidelites are present



Google Streetview, 2015. Note that sidelites are extant, but the historic door has been removed

- A review of files maintained by the Historic District Commission indicated that the following approvals were issued by the Commission:
 - 1985 – Install 8 new vinyl windows
 - 2018 - Replace asphalt roof at house and garage and install new composite siding at garage
- Staff notes that the building suffered a major fire in 2018. Following that fire, the following exterior work was undertaken without HDC approval:
 - Rebuild a substantial portion of the second story and the attic/uppermost story to include the installation of new stucco and half timbering at the exterior walls
 - Replace wood shake siding at second story of rear, two-story hipped-roof wing and east façade dormer front wall
 - Infill one window opening at the west wall, second story with brick
 - Remove all windows and associated casing/trim to the rough opening with the exception of the five windows at the east elevation, first story.
 - Remove front door sidelites. Infill sidelite openings with plywood and install new metal door.

See the below photos which illustrate the exterior changes which have been undertaken at the building without HDC review/approval after the above-noted 2018 fire.



Photo taken in early 2018, prior to the fire. Note that all windows at the front are wood casement windows with leaded glass. The windows at the second story are covered by aluminum windows. Source, HDC files

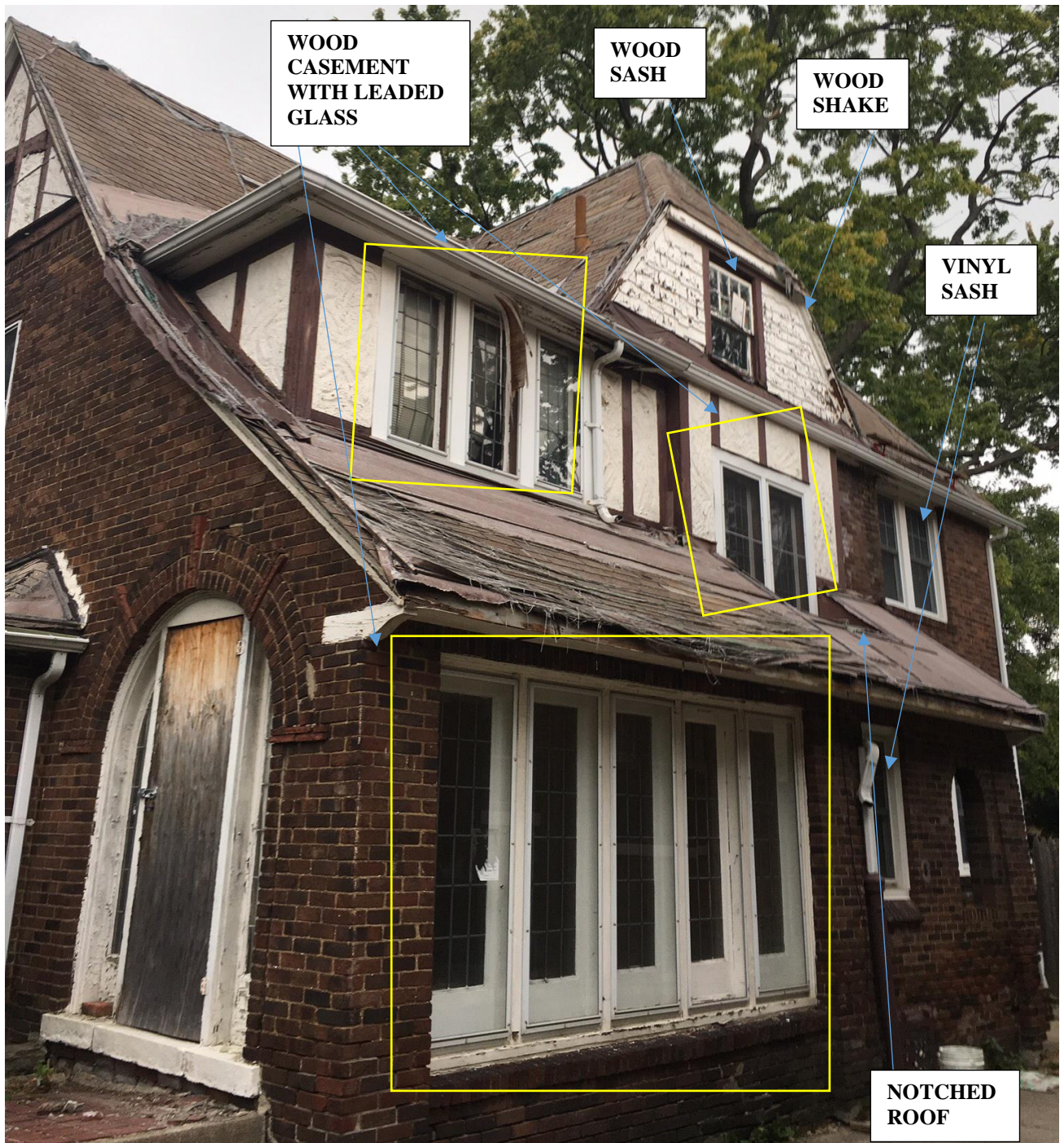


Photo taken in early 2018, prior to the fire. Note that all windows outlined in yellow are wood casement windows with leaded glass. The dormer has wood sash and the remaining visible windows at the second story are vinyl units. Also note the wood shake at the dormer and the notched roof. Source, HDC files.



Photo taken in early 2018, prior to the fire. Note that all windows outlined in yellow are wood casement windows with leaded glass and those outlined in red are wood, double hung units. Source, HDC files.



Photo taken in early 2018, prior to the fire. Wood sash casement windows outlined in red. Remaining windows are vinyl. Source, HDC files



Photo taken in early 2018, prior to the fire. Per the above, the Commission approved the installation of new composite siding at the garage in August 2018.



Rear wall, after the 2018 fire. Note that these windows are noncompatible, non-historic vinyl units which were approved for installation in 1985. Photo from applicant



These two windows appear to be destroyed

This window appears intact but heavily damaged

August 2018, after the fire. Note that the windows and associated casing/trim at the side wall and the front door sidelites appear to be intact. Two of the three casement window sash at the front façade, second story (outlined in orange) appear to be completely destroyed although the casing/trim remained. Source, Google Streetview



August 2018, after the fire. Note that most of the fire damage appears at the attic story and second story, west side. Windows sash and trim/casing at attic story outlined in orange appear completely destroyed. Two of the three casement window sash at the front façade, second story (outlined in orange) appear to be completely destroyed although the casing/trim remained. The rest appear to remain. The garage also appears not to have been fire damaged. Source. Google Streetview



August 2018, after the fire. Detail of fire damage at rooftop dormer, east side. Photo by applicant.



August 2018, after the fire. Window sash outlined in orange appear completely destroyed. The rest appear to remain. Source, Google Streetview



August 2018, after the fire. Window sash outlined in orange appear completely destroyed while their associated trim/casing/ remains. The rest of the windows also remain. Source, Google Streetview



Late 2018, after the fire. Note that the rebuilding of the attic story is underway and all windows and associated casing/trim have been removed at the second story without HDC approval. Source, HDC files



Late 2018, after the fire. Note that the attic story has been rebuilt without HDC approval. Source, HDC files



After the fire, 2019. Note that the second and attic story have been rebuilt, most windows and associated casing/brickmould have been removed to the rough opening, and front door sidelites have been removed. Garage siding has also been replaced per the 2018 COA. Source, Google Streetview



Current conditions. Note that the second and attic story have been rebuilt, most windows and associated casing/brickmould have been removed to the rough opening, and front door sidelites have been removed. Staff photo taken 4/25/2025



Current conditions. East wall showing only remaining original windows (wood casement with leaded glass), located at first story. Staff photo taken 4/25/2025



Current conditions at rear. Photo provided by applicant

- Per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard #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.

Furthermore, National Park Service guidance [Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards - Historic Preservation Tax Incentives \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#) regarding the installation of new windows where no historic units are extant states the following:

Replacement windows for missing or non-historic windows must be compatible with the historic appearance and character of the building. Although replacement windows may be based on physical or pictorial documentation, if available, recreation of the missing historic windows is not required to meet the Standards. Replacement of missing or non-historic windows must, however, always fill the original window openings and must be compatible with the overall historic character of the building...The appearance of the replacement windows must be consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period, but need not replicate the missing historic window. In many cases, this may be accomplished using substitute materials. There may be some additional flexibility with regard to the details of windows on secondary elevations that are not highly visible, consistent with the approach outlined for replacing existing historic windows. Replacing existing incompatible, non-historic windows with similarly incompatible new windows does not meet the Standards.”

It is staff’s contention that the Standards require that any damaged historic character-defining window sash and associated casing/trim which remained after the fire should have been retained and repaired **where possible**. If remaining but deteriorated beyond repair due to fire damage, they should be replicated in kind/to match existing. If the fire itself resulted in the **complete destruction** of any historic, character-defining window or if a non-historic window is proposed for removal, the new window need only to be **compatible** with the house’s historic character/need not to be a faithful reproduction. As most of the fire damaged sash, brickmould and mullions were removed without HDC review/approval in 2018/2019, staff must rely on the above photographic images to discern the level of damage to the windows caused by the fire. Also, staff must rely on the image to discern the material, operation, age and design of the windows prior to the fire.

- After a review of available images and photos (see above annotated photos), it is staff’s opinion that the fire completely destroyed all of the second and third story windows. Also, staff determined that the following non-historic, incompatible windows were extant prior to the fire. These were likely the eight vinyl windows that the Commission approved in 2018:
 - A pair of vinyl double hung windows at the east wall, second story
 - A single vinyl double hung windows at the east wall, first story
 - A pair of vinyl double hung windows at the rear, second story
 - A vinyl slider window at the first story, rear wall
 - A 1/1, single hung vinyl window at the first story, rear wall

Per the above cited National Park Service guidance, new windows proposed to replace any of the above referenced windows (historic window sash and trim that were **completely destroyed** by the fire or non-historic windows) do not need to replicate the originals. Rather, they need only to be **compatible** to the property’s historic character. Per the Standards, all other window sash that was removed without HDC approval in 2018/2019 must be replicated to match the originals that were removed without approval. Note that any historic window brickmould

casing and mullions which remained after the fire must also be replicated. Also, per the Standards, the five remaining wood casement windows with leaded glass at the first floor, east wall should be retained and repaired.

- Staff does note that the recent removal of the historic wood casement windows with lead coming and associated trim at the west wall, first story; the leaded glass windows at the first story, front façade; and the leaded glass sidelites at the front door, first story does not meet the Standards as they appear to have been in good condition. As such, the scope items related to their replacement are not appropriate as the Standards require the original units to have been retained and repaired in kind where necessary. However, as these elements are no longer extant and new units must be installed in these openings, staff notes the following regarding the current application:
 - The application is seeking to install new custom wood windows with lead coming at the first story, front elevation which would replicate those removed without approval. ***Should the Commission approve this work item, the applicant should provide a detailed description of the proposed new windows and trim (to include mullions) to staff so that they might ensure that the windows will provide an adequate replication of the original units***
 - The application is seeking to install new custom wood sidelites with lead coming at the first story, front elevation which would replicate those removed without approval. ***Should the Commission approve this work item, the applicant should provide a detailed description of the proposed new sidelites to staff so that they may ensure that the elements will provide an adequate replication of the original units***
 - The application is seeking to replace the former wood casement windows with lead coming at the west elevation, first story, with new aluminum-clad casement units. As this is not an exact replication in material, the item does not meet the Standards. ***Should the Commission approve this work item, staff recommends that the trim/mullions/brickmould be custom made of wood, rather than the factory trim provided by the window manufacturer. The applicant should provide a detailed description of the proposed new trim/mullions/brickmould to staff so that they may ensure that the elements will provide an adequate replication of the original.***
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed treatment for the building's remaining windows are in keeping with the Standards as it proposes to repair the existing historic windows and to replace fire damaged windows and non-historic vinyl windows with new compatible units
- It is staff's opinion that the work that has been completed in order to address the fire damaged 2nd and 3rd story as well as the fire damaged rear porch is compatible with the building's historic character and therefore meets the Standards
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed treatment of the front porch is largely in keeping with the Standards. However, the application does not include product cutsheets for the new tile flooring so that staff can ensure that it will provide an adequate replication of the existing.

ISSUES

- The removal of the historic wood casement windows with lead coming and associated trim at the west wall first story; the leaded glass windows at the first story, front façade; and the leaded glass sidelites at the front door, first story does not meet the Standards as they appear to have been in good condition. As such, the scope items related to their replacement are not appropriate as the Standards require the original units to have been retained and repaired in kind where necessary.
- The new windows proposed to replace the former wood casement windows with lead coming at the west elevation, first story, do not present an exact replication in material of these character-defining units which were removed without approval

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial: Replace original casement windows with new casement windows at front façade, first story and west façade, first story; replace historic leaded glass sidelites at front façade entrance with new leaded glass sidelites

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.

For the following reasons:

- The historic wood casement windows with lead coming and associated trim at the west wall, first story; the leaded glass windows at the first story, front façade; and the leaded glass sidelites at the front door, first story were distinctive, character-defining features of the property
- The current application did not include documentation that these elements were deteriorated beyond repair. Therefore, their removal does not meet the Standards as they appear to have been in good condition. As such, the scope items related to their replacement are not appropriate as the Standards require the original units to have been retained and repaired in kind where necessary
- The new windows proposed to replace the former wood casement windows with lead coming at the west elevation, first story, do not present an exact replication in material of these character-defining units which were removed without approval

Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Remaining scope 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 condition that:

- The new tile for the front porch floor shall exactly match the existing in material, texture, and dimension. The applicant shall provide the product cutsheet for the tiles to staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of the project's permit