

**STAFF REPORT: 05/14/2025 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: J. ROSS**

**ADDRESS: 305 ELIOT**

**APPLICATION NO: HDC2025-00126**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BRUSH PARK**

**APPLICANT/CONTRACTOR: VICTOR SMOLYANOV/ SMOLYANOV HOME  
IMPROVEMENT**

**OWNER: CHARLES SQUIRES**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 4/25/2025**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 4/21/2025**


**SCOPE: REMOVE SLATE SHINGLES FROM DORMERS (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT  
APPROVAL)**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Erected in 1899, the house located at 305 Eliot was designed by Donaldson & Meier for Martin A. Edwards. The dwelling features a two-story original/central mass with a rear, two-story wing that was added ca. 2000. Exterior walls are clad with brick with stone trim and a rusticated stone base at the original portion of the building and stucco at the rear addition. The building is topped by a prominent, steeply-pitched hipped roof with distinctive Flemish gabled dormers at the primary façade and hipped roof dormers at the east side roof surface. Original slate shingles have recently been Replaced with aphalt shingles at the dormer side walls at the front roof surface and the dormer front and sidewalls at the side roof. Windows are double-hung wood units.



**305 Eliot, current appearance. Staff photo taken on 4/25/2025**



**For Sale**

This Brick House,

**No. 111  
Eliot Street**

North side, just completed, with every modern improvement.  
Architects, Donaldson & Meier.

**ALSO**  
the adjacent Brick House just completed.

Apply at office.

**BRUSH ESTATE, No. 206 Randolph St.**

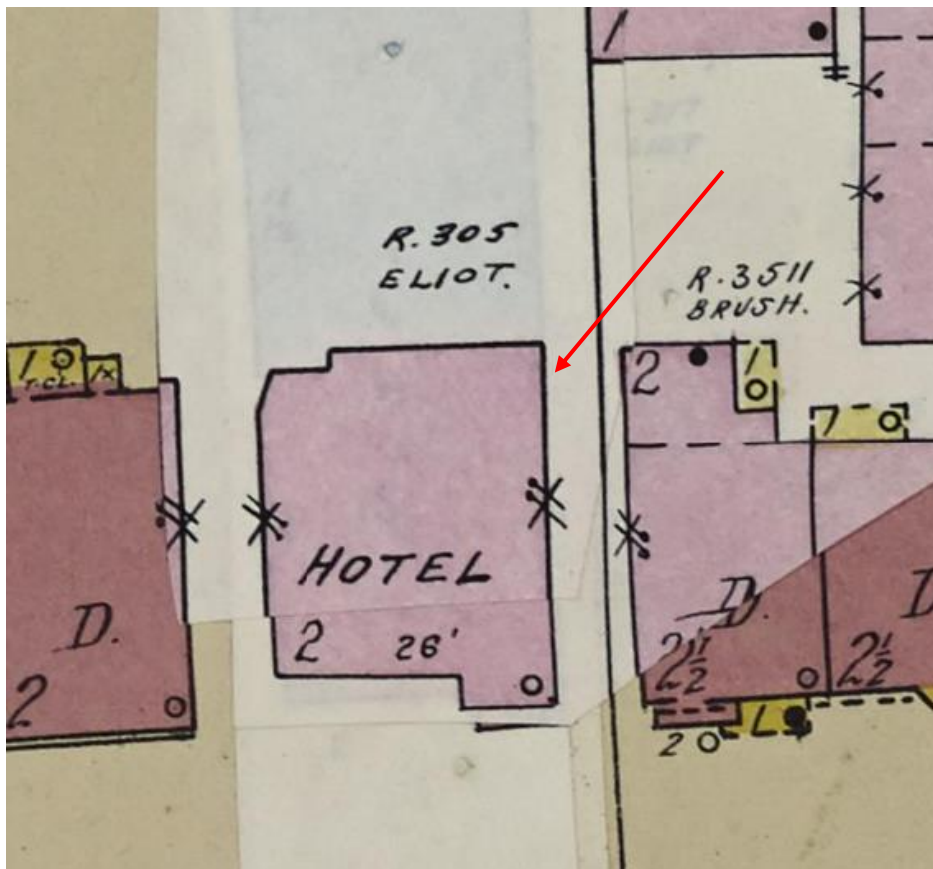
Advertisement, 1900. Note that the property was addressed as 111 Eliot Street at that time

## PROPOSAL

As previously noted, slate shingles at the roof's dormers were recently replaced with asphalt shingles without Historic District Commission approval. With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's "after the fact" approval of this work item.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Brush Park Historic District was designated in 1980
- Please see the below maps, which indicate that the property maintained its original footprint throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As noted above, the current rear addition was erected ca. 2000



305 Eliot, 1921 (indicated by red arrow). Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



305 Eliot, 1975 (indicated by red arrow). Sanborn Fire Insurance Map





**Detroit Parcel Viewer, 305 Eliot outlined in yellow.**

- Prior to the recent unapproved work, the building had asphalt shingles at the main roof and slate at the dormers. See the below Google Streetview images and photos, taken prior to the unapproved work:



**Google Streetview, 2022. Note that dormers are clad with slate while remaining roof is covered with asphalt shingles**





Google Streetview, 2022. Showing side dormers at east side wall with slate cladding (outlined in red)



Google Streetview, 2022. Showing dormers with slate cladding at front (indicated by yellow arrows)





Google Streetview, 2022. Showing dormers with slate cladding at front (indicated by yellow arrows)



Current appearance. Showing asphalt shingles at side dormers (outlined in yellow) and front dormer (indicated by red arrow). 4/25/2025 photo by staff





**Current appearance. Showing asphalt shingles at front dormers (indicated by red arrows). 4/25/2025 photo by staff**

- On December 10, 2024, HDC staff received a submission from the applicant to install asphalt shingles at the roof. Staff reviewed the proposal and responded to the applicant via email on December 13, 2024 with a request that they confirm that “...no changes to dormer wall covering will take place.” The applicant responded to that email on December 13, 2024, stating that “no changes to be made to existing dormer wall coverings.” Therefore, on December 14, 2024, staff issued a COA (HDC2024-00701) for the following work items:
  - *Installation of Atlas Pinnacle Pristine, Weathered Wood, asphalt shingles on the house, and replacement of two existing flat skylights per the submitted documents, product data and photographs.*
- On December 19, 2024, HDC staff received the permit application for the project from the Detroit Building Safety, Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) and, upon their review of the included documents, noted that a detailed scope had been included which specifically stated that the slate would be removed from the dormers. Staff flagged the work item and noted that it could not be administratively approved. The applicant subsequently revealed that the work had already been completed/that the slate had been removed from the dormers and replaced with asphalt shingles. Staff therefore docketed the project on the Commission’s May 14, 2025 regular meeting agenda for review.

- The Elements of Design for the district emphasize the significant role that masonry plays in providing textural contrast and articulation of architectural detailing. Specifically, see the following Elements of Designs:
  - (7) Relationship of materials. The walls of the building are solid masonry faced with limestone. The windows have wood frames and the main door is iron and glass. The historically significant reinforced concrete floor structures are not visible from the exterior.*
  - (8) Relationship of textures. The random-sized undressed limestone blocks provide a rough looking surface, in contrast to the smooth limestone ornament and dressed limestone window surrounds and stringcourses. The mortar joints are clearly articulated.*
  - (10) Relationship of architectural details. Carved limestone classical ornament surrounds the main entrance, a carved panel lies beneath the third story central bay window, and, other than the masonry balustrade above the cornice, the building is quite austere in its lack of detail.*
- The dormer sidewalls are highly visible as they crown the building and project vertically from the roof surface. The slate shingles, in staff's opinion, were a distinctive character-defining feature because they provided textural contrast and articulation of architectural detailing which is characteristic of the design of the home and the district more broadly. Therefore, the slate should have been retained and repaired in kind where necessary. If the shingles could not be repaired, they should have been replicated to match the existing. It is staff's opinion that the current asphalt shingles which have been installed at the dormers are flat and uniform in appearance and therefore do not provide an adequate replication of slate. Therefore, the project does not conform to the Elements and is not in keeping with the Standards.

## ISSUES

- The slate shingles which were removed without HDC approval were a distinctive character-defining feature of the property. The new asphalt shingles do not provide an adequate replication of the slate shingles that were removed, true slate remains reasonable available, is technically feasible, and is the recommended treatment. The work therefore does not meet the Standards and is not in keeping with the district's Elements of Design

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

### **Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial: Replace slate from dormers with new asphalt shingles**

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, number 7. 8, and 10

For the following reasons:

- The slate shingles were a distinctive character-defining feature because they provided textural contrast and articulation of architectural detailing which is characteristic of the design of the home and the district more broadly. Therefore, the slate should have been retained and repaired in kind where necessary. If the shingles could not be repaired, they should have been replaced to match the existing.
- The current asphalt shingles which have been installed at the dormers are flat and uniform in appearance and therefore do not provide an adequate replication of slate. The work therefore is not in keeping with the