

**STAFF REPORT: AUGUST 13, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: B. SALIE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00422**

**ADDRESS: 2200 CHICAGO BOULEVARD**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON**

**APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: MARIO MOORE**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 07/14/2025**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 07/24/2025**

**SCOPE: ERECT FENCE, INSTALL VINYL WINDOW (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)**



*Photo taken by staff on 07/24/2025*

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

On the corner of Chicago Boulevard and 14<sup>th</sup> Street, sits a two and a half story, Neo-Georgian style house, that is characterized by its red brick exterior and arched dormers on the roof. With its large stone sills above and below the first story window frames, the majority of windows are wood framed double hung windows with a 6/1 pattern. At the northeast corner of the house there is a wrought iron style fence separating the property from the rear alley. A 3' tall chain link fence runs from the house to the front corner of the garage currently obscured by shrubs (this fence will be replaced with the proposed fence). The property includes a three-car garage facing 14<sup>th</sup> street.



*Photo taken by staff on 07/24/2025*



*Detroit Parcel Viewer (below)*



## PROPOSAL

1. Install 6'-0" black wrought iron style aluminum fencing with a sliding gate for garage access
2. Install 4'-0" wooden cedar gate
3. Replace existing vinyl window with a compatible window type



*(Left) Google Earth  
Ariel View*

*(Below) Photo taken by  
staff 07/24/2025*



*Photo taken by staff on 07/24/2025*



Proposed wrought iron style aluminum fence type

Proposed 4' wood cedar gate type

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS & RESEARCH

- Boston Edison Historic District was established in 1974.
- A COA (HDC2024-00376) has already been issued for the rehabilitation of the front porch. This includes the replacement of deteriorated porch deck tiles, replacing column bases and capitals, replacing box beams, soffit, frieze, corbels, beadboard ceiling panels, at the porch roof, rebuilding the trench gutter, repainting porch surfaces, and replacing conduit and ceiling box at front porch light fixture. During a recent site visit, staff observed work being done to the front exterior of the house, including the center window above the porch which has been changed without HDC approval.
- As seen in the 1974 designation photos, the house retains a wrought iron style front porch railing, and is a character defining feature of the house.



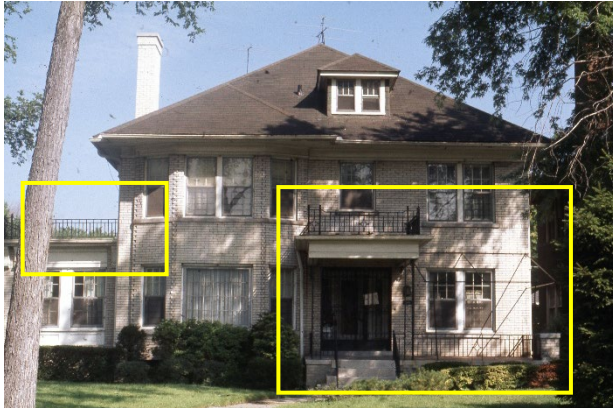
*Designation photos taken 1974 (above)*



There is an existing wrought iron style aluminum fence at the edge of the property between the garage and the alleyway. The neighboring property to the west/left of 2200 Chicago has a wrought iron style gate on their driveway. This addition will create a continuity between the existing conditions of both properties  
*Left: Neighbors gate (2214 Chicago)*  
*Right: Garage side fence*



- Similar to 2200 Chicago many houses within this district have wrought iron porch railings. Many houses in the neighborhood that share the Neo-Georgian architectural styles, have installed wrought iron style fencing.



2080 W. Chicago



Designation photos 1974

2340 W Chicago

- The Google Street View Image (*below*) from September 2023, shows 2200 Chicago in relation to its neighboring properties, both of which have wrought iron style elements. These elements are present on the front porch railing of 2214 Chicago and the wrought iron style gate in the driveway of 2224 Chicago.



- Per the Fence and Hedge Guidelines,
  - *Front yard and full perimeter fencing will be allowed only in districts where such fencing has been shown to be contextual in that district's Element of Design. Front yard fencing is allowed on corner lots along the walk adjacent to the side lot line from the front face of the house to the front corner.*
  - *New construction of fences or walls should be designed to minimize impact to the historic fabric and should be compatible with the site in setback, size and scale to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment*
  - *New fences or walls should be differentiated from the old and should be designed to complement the style, design, color and material of the historic building(s) and its features.*



- Though wood gates often appear in brick walls, it is atypical that wood gates occur or are placed with a transparent wrought iron style fence. Staff observed a plethora of wrought iron style railings and gates throughout the neighborhood, with the occasional wood or brick fence, but staff did not find an example of a wood gate/iron fencing components being used together.
- It is acceptable within the historic district for the front fence to differ from the back yard fence. However, because the backyard of the house where the fence is being proposed is entirely visible to the street, the contrast of the wood and aluminum materials will be more distinct to the feeling of the historic neighborhood.
- Per the *Elements of Design (13a)* It is characteristic for corner lots to have hedges or fencing at side lot lines along the sidewalk. There is a wide range in the type of fencing. Fencing within the public view was generally designed to complement the style, design material, and date of the residence.
- It is therefore staff's opinion that the incorporation of a wooden gate within a wrought-iron style fence is incompatible with the historic context, as such a juxtaposition is not supported by historic precedent. The gate should be revised to be of the same wrought-iron-style design as the fence.
- It is also staffs opinion that a wrought iron style fence and sliding gate will be appropriate for the historic district.

## WINDOW REPLACEMENT



2200 Chicago Google Street View Image from 2019.

Google Street View shows that the historic windows were replaced with a vinyl window sometime between 2019-2022, without HDC approval. According to the applicant, this work was completed by a previous owner.



Interior window photograph provided by the applicant.



- The original wood windows at the front of the house were a distinctive, character-defining feature for this property. The three original wood windows with mullions in the center of the second story were removed without HDC approval. The wood windows were replaced with a three-unit, factory-mulled, white vinyl window.
- As the windows were removed without HDC approval, the scope of work that would meet the requirements of the historic ordinance (Section 21-2-59(e)), is the fabrication and installation of new wood casement windows with structural mullions and simulated divided-lites; thereby matching the material, pattern, dimensionality and operation of the historic windows.
- Per the district's *Elements of Design*, wood windows are the most prevalent window material within the district: *(7) Relationship of materials...Wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim and is used in many examples for all trim.*
- Vinyl is not an appropriate replacement window type for historic buildings for the following reasons: installation in historic districts/on historic buildings.
- Per the National Parks Service (NPS) Document entitled [Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards - Historic Preservation Tax Incentives \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)
  - *Replacement windows on primary, street-facing or any highly visible elevations of buildings of three stories or less must match the historic windows in all their details and in material (wood for wood and metal for metal).*
- Between-the-glass grilles are flat and obscured by the sheen of the glass. They do not match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of true divided-light historic windows and are not "consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period" and are not "compatible with the overall historic character of the building".
- It is therefore staff's opinion that the vinyl replacement window is not compatible with the historic district standards and must be replaced with a window type that matches the original historic window.
- At a later site visit, staff observed other windows at the rear of the home that were altered between 2019-2022. The property owner will be notified (see picture)



## ISSUES

- The incorporation of a wooden gate within a wrought-iron style fence is incompatible with the historic context, as such a juxtaposition is not supported by historic precedent. The gate should be revised to be of the same wrought-iron-style design as the fence.
- The original wood window over the porch was a distinctive, character-defining feature and was replaced without documentation confirming that it was beyond feasible repair, as required by Secretary of the Interior Standards #5 and #6. As such, it should be restored to its pre-violation condition, that of a true wood window with true divided lites and dimensional, wide-mullions.
- Even if proved to be beyond feasible repair, the window, per NPS Standards (#6) and related Guidelines, may only be replaced by a window that "shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials." Vinyl windows are not good matches for historic prototypes, for the following several reasons:
  - Vinyl windows and poly-products offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood
  - Consumer-grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly and exhibit poor detailing and detracting "bright white" color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than higher quality materials, introducing condensation and other degradation to the insulated glass unit in a few years' time.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more than wood and steel during exposure

to weather. This can result in discoloration and warping of the frames and failure of window elements.

- Between-the-glass grids, as used in this instance, were not used in the historic era and are not compatible with or convincing matches for an authentic divided lite configuration. At a minimum, simulated divided lites should be specified to preserve the original historic expression.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

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

#### **Recommendation 1 of 2 – Denial – Install wood gate, install vinyl window**

Staff recommend 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, 5, 6, & 9

*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.*

*Elements of Design* #: 7

For the following reasons:

- The incorporation of a wooden gate within a wrought-iron style fence is incompatible with the historic context, as such a juxtaposition is not supported by historic precedent. The gate should be revised to be of the same wrought-iron-style design as the fence.
- The original wood windows over the porch were a distinctive, character-defining feature and were replaced without documentation confirming that they were beyond feasible repair, as required by Secretary of the Interior Standards #5 and #6. As such, it should be restored to its pre-violation condition, that of a true wood window with simulated (or true) divided lites.
- Even if proved to be beyond feasible repair, the window, per NPS Standards (#6) and related Guidelines, may only be replaced by a window that "shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials." Vinyl windows are not good matches for historic prototypes.
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  - Consumer-grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly and exhibit poor detailing and detracting "bright white" color/sheen.
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  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more than wood and steel during exposure to weather. This can result in discoloration and warping of the frames and failure of window elements.
  - Between-the-glass grids, as used in this instance, were not used in the historic era and are not

compatible with or convincing matches for an authentic divided lite configuration. At a minimum, simulated divided lites should be specified to preserve the original historic expression.

**Recommendation 2 of 2 – COA – Install wrought iron style aluminum fence**

Staff recommend that the remaining work items will be appropriate, according to the Secretary of Interior's standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston-Edison Historic District's Elements of Design.

With the condition that...

- A compatible wrought iron style gate will be selected instead of a wooden gate. A cut sheet confirming all details associated with the iron style gate will be submitted for staff review.