

**STAFF REPORT:** 9/10/25 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** E. THACKERY

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** HDC2025-00544

**ADDRESS:** 97 ARDEN PARK BOULEVARD

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** ARDEN PARK-EAST BOSTON

**APPLICANT:** 4545 ARCHITECTURE

**PROPERTY OWNER:** NPV INVESTMENT

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 8/19/25

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 8/26/25

**SCOPE:** PRIMARY ELEVATION WORK, REBUILD PORCHES AT FRONT, REAR, AND SIDE\* (WORK STARTED WITHOUT PERMIT), RESTORE/REPLACE WINDOWS, REPAIR/REPAINT TRIM, REPOINT MASONRY

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Colonial Revival-style brick house at 97 Arden Park was built in 1912. It is located on the north side of the street between Woodward and John R. It is 2.5 stories tall and features a side gable roof with a parapet, pedimented dormers, paired windows across the front except where there is a centered entrance with a portico, a porch on the west, and a bay with windows on the east. There is also a columned porch on the rear.



*Site visit, Photo 1, staff, August 2025. Front portico columns have been removed. Historically, they stood in front of the pilasters.*

Currently, the house has many of its original windows, but all of its columns have been removed. The architect stated that it is his understanding that there was termite damage. The west side porch entablature was also built.





*Site Visit, Photo 2, staff, August 2025. West porch columns have been removed and porch entablature has been rebuilt but also somewhat reinterpreted. See detail photo on page 4.*



*Site Visit, Photo 3, staff, August 2025. Front portico, columns have been removed.*





*Google streetview, August 2015. The columns in the portico and the windows in the east-side bay are all present here.*



*Site Visit, Photo 4, staff, August 2025. East bay with boards where windows were.*





*Applicant Photo, west elevation. Columns are missing. New brick base, concrete cap, and entablature has been built.*



*Applicant Photo, rear (north) elevation, current conditions. Rear porch columns are missing.*



*Applicant Photos, east elevation, missing windows behind the boards.*



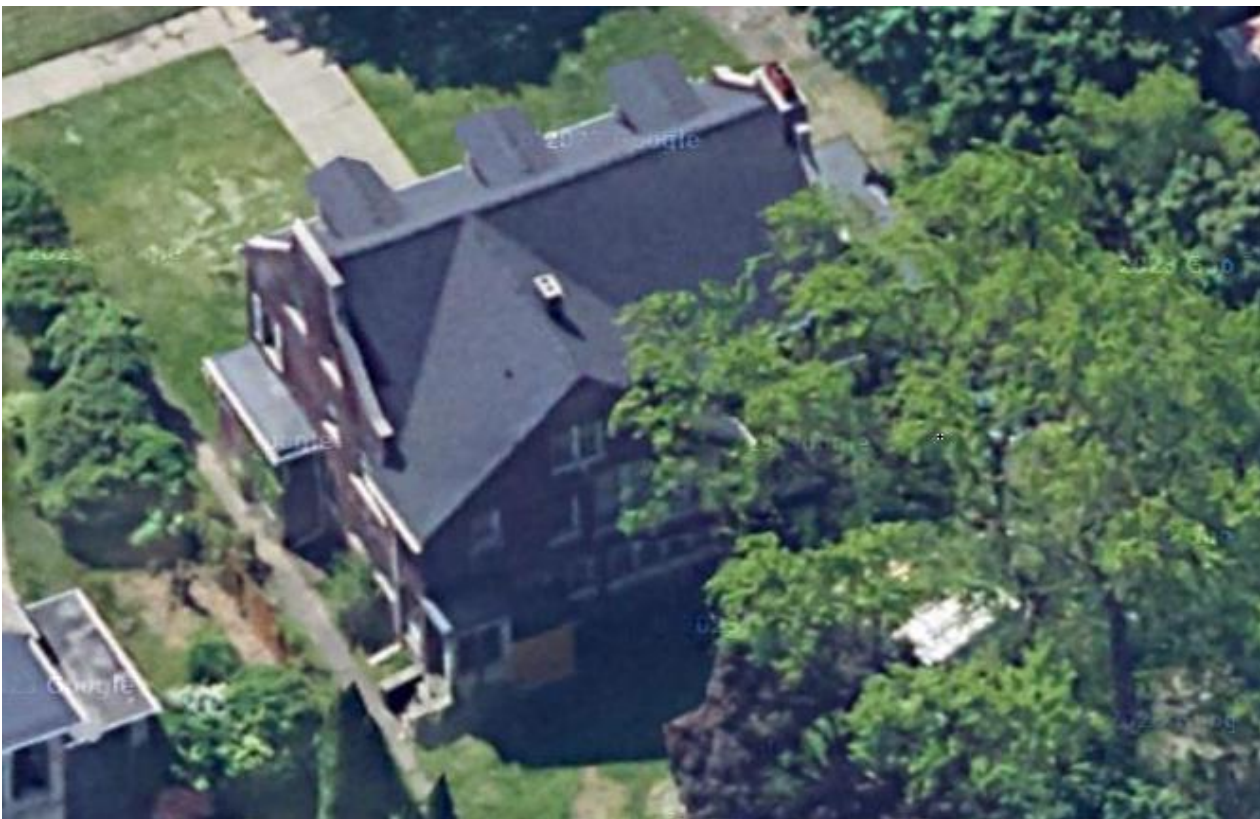


*Designation slide, 1981. Here, the importance of the west, front, and east entablatures all echoing and balancing each other is evident.*



*97 Arden Park outlined in yellow, Detroit Parcel Viewer.*





*Images from satsig.net of 97 Arden Park, front (south) at top and east and rear (north) at bottom, Map Data 2025.*

## **PROPOSAL**

Applicant seeks approval for several scope of work items. Some of these would be approvable at the staff level, but the extent of the total scope triggered the review by the Commission.

1. Whole house:
  - a. Repair and repaint all existing windows as needed; color to match existing; storms to be reinstalled
  - b. Repoint brick where needed
2. Front of house:
  - a. Repair and repaint (to match existing) wood elements as needed (trim, fascia, soffit, pilasters, etc.)
  - b. Repair/repaint front door
  - c. Replace 4 wood columns in wood as specified
  - d. Shutters—repair, repaint existing and install three (3) new pairs to match existing
  - e. Repair existing front walkway
3. East bay window:
  - a. Repair and repaint existing wood elements (trim, fascia, soffit, etc.) of east window bay as needed
  - b. replace missing windows with aluminum-clad wood replacement units
4. Rear porch:
  - a. New wood deck
  - b. Aluminum rail
  - c. New wing walls to match original
  - d. New steps
  - e. Repair and repaint (to match existing) wood elements as needed (trim, fascia, soffit, etc.)
  - f. 2 wood columns like front porch
5. Enclosed west side porch
  - a. Repair and repaint (to match existing) wood elements as needed (trim, fascia, soffit, etc.)
  - b. Repair/repaint pilasters; reconstruct missing wood pilaster bases
  - c. Construct new enclosed porch on existing (new) porch base
    1. 2 corner columns to be same style, size, and color as others
    2. Aluminum-clad wood windows to match others
  - d. Wood cladding below windows to match existing wood elements on house

## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

Staff found the below violation and past approval for this address:

- a. 2/28/23 asphalt shingle roof replaced with asphalt shingles. Fascia replaced with wood fascia; siding on dormers removed without approval.
- b. 2017 COA was issued for “Multiple items/ General Rehab”



The Arden Park-East Boston Historic District was established in 1985.

Staff asked the architect/applicant about the removal of historic columns and he stated that his understanding was that there was a termite issue and a lot of termite damage, and the owner now wishes to restore the missing features.

Historic district work must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the district's Elements of Design. Some aspects of the proposal are repairs and maintenance, some are restoration, and some appear to be rehabilitation, either because there is some interpretation involved or because the historic feature (like the rear porch) is not fully known to staff. Below, staff has classified the proposal items into those categories, with recommended conditions noted as necessary:

Maintenance & Repair	Any Staff-Recommended Conditions
Repair and repaint all existing windows as needed; color to match existing; storms to be reinstalled	
Repoint masonry where needed	Mortar must match existing in color and composition and be softer than the bricks, and joints must be carefully cleaned out and slightly recessed, all per National Park Service's <i>Preservation Brief 2</i> .
Repair and repaint (to match existing) wood elements as needed (trim, fascia, soffit, pilasters, etc.) on front portico, east bay window, rear porch, west side porch	
Repair and repaint front door and historic shutters	
Repair front walk as needed	Patching to match existing color and composition. If whole new path is needed, applicant will apply for that element for staff review and approval.
Repair/repaint pilasters	

Restoration	Any Staff-Recommended Conditions
Replace wood columns with wood columns on front portico (4 columns), west porch (2), and rear porch (2)	Wood Melton Classics Tuscan 200TN as specified replacement. Replacement columns must match old in size and proportion as well as material.
Shutters: install three (3) new pairs to match existing	Architect will share product specs with staff for review and approval before work begins
Rear porch: New wing walls	
West porch: New wood pilaster bases to match originals	
West porch: Reconstruct missing enclosed porch on existing (new) porch base	The entablatures on the west porch and the front portico must appear to an observer at the front of the house to be the same.

Rehabilitation	Any Staff-Recommended Conditions
Install missing windows on east bay	Applicant will clarify final muntin pattern and placement (upper sash only or both) for staff before work begins
Rear porch: New wood deck	Pressure-treated wood must be painted when cured.
Rear porch: Aluminum rail	The rail should be a traditional design in painted wood instead of black aluminum



Rear porch: New steps	Pressure-treated wood must be painted when cured
West porch: Aluminum-clad wood windows to match others	
West porch: Wood cladding below windows to match existing wood elements on house	

## ISSUES

- All columns were removed without approval and without documentation that their condition was beyond repair.
- West porch to be enclosed: The existing wood trim, soffit, and fascia elements of the west porch have been built but not to plan. The entablature has many layered cornices and the resulting proportions are not compatible with the historic house. The entablature should be rebuilt as per the submitted plan to match the entablature on the front portico. The west porch should not be more detailed than the historic front portico to avoid detracting from it.



*Applicant photo, current conditions, west elevation, entablature as it has been built. Colonial Revival houses were designed with Colonial houses in mind, and Colonial houses themselves looked to Italian Renaissance precedents. These precedents emphasized classical details. An important classical detail is the use of classical columns, each capped by an entablature composed of a cornice, frieze, and architrave. A classical cornice projects somewhat over a frieze and architrave that are approximately flush with each other in profile. In this design, a cornice projects over a slightly smaller cornice over a slightly smaller cornice, creating multiple layers of cornices stacking onto a frieze and architrave that appear very recessed.*





*1981 designation photo with entablatures circled. The same classical entablature above the classical column both on the west and on the front portico is important to this house's design, character, proportions, and balance.*





*Detail from applicant's materials. At top is the new entablature on the west porch that will rest on the column when installed. On bottom is the historic entablature on the front of the house. The detailing and proportions are different when they should be the same, based on the historic (front) feature.*

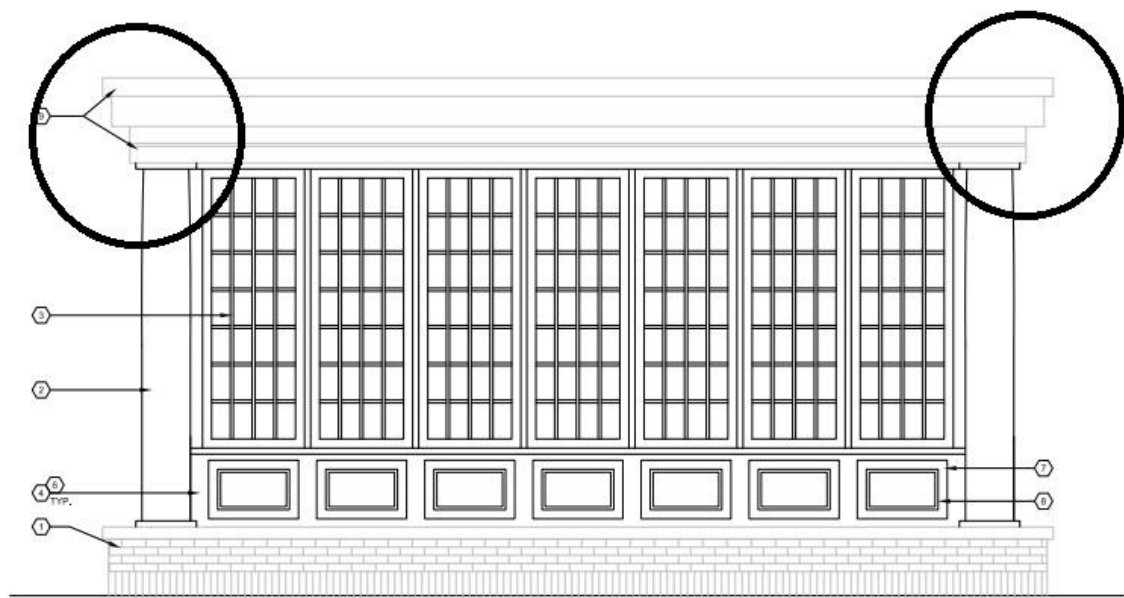


*Comparing the front historic feature (top) with the newly built feature on the west porch (bottom), using photos from the applicant's materials. The historic cornice projects out over the frieze and architrave. It seems that the modern construction stacks trim to progress from the frieze to the roof.*





*Detail from applicant's materials, west porch entablature and portion of front portico entablature. It appears to staff from this angle that it is intended for the west entablature to copy the front historic one, but to add a fascia above the cornice for a gutter. Even if this is the case, staff remains uncertain that the west and front entablatures will appear to an observer on the sidewalk to be the same as is necessary for this house's design, proportions, and balance.*



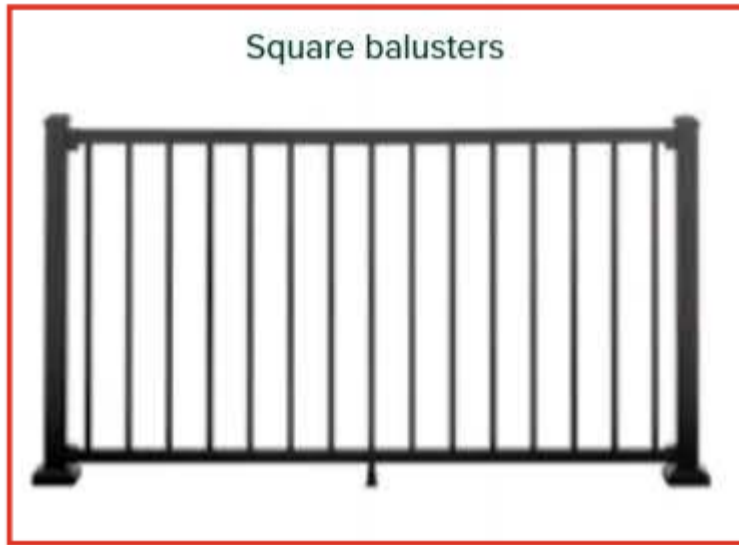
1 ENCLOSED PORCH WEST ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

*Applicant drawing, west elevation, entablature and rest of enclosed porch as proposed.*

### ISSUES (continued)

- Rear porch: Wood deck and stairs are proposed to be pressure-treated wood. Staff suggests the condition that all pressure-treated wood must be painted when cured. Unpainted/clear-coated wood is not a typical historic condition.
- Rear porch: A contemporary aluminum rail (see below) is proposed. In staff's opinion, using a black contemporary rail on the rear porch is incompatible with the house's historic character. It is staff's opinion that a simple wood railing painted to match the column on this small rear porch, perhaps lower than proposed and with a simple booster rail to increase the height for safety, would be more compatible with the historic house than the proposed rail. If a 36" black rail is desired in the hope that it disappears visually, perhaps a railing could be sourced that has a more traditional appearance and proportions than

the very contemporary and spindly rail proposed. Staff's recommendation is that the architect submit a rear porch railing to staff for final approval.



*From applicant's materials, proposed rear porch railing.*

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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

#### Recommendation 1 of 1, Certificate of Appropriateness :

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

- For the repointing, it will be limited in scope and only as necessary (not entire walls), mortar must match existing in color and composition and be softer than the bricks, and joints must be carefully cleaned out and slightly recessed, all per National Park Service's *Preservation Brief 2*.
- If a new front walkway is needed, applicant will apply for that element for staff review and approval.
- Replacement columns must match the old in size and proportion (as well as material); applicant will provide documentation to staff showing that the proposed columns are the same size as the historic.
- The west enclosed porch's entablature must match that of the front portico. Applicant will provide detailed drawings of the entablatures of both the historic front portico and the new proposed west porch to staff for review and approval.
- Because product specs for the proposed new shutters were not included in the proposal, architect will share product specs with staff for review and approval before work begins.
- For the east bay window replacement, applicant will submit final muntin pattern and placement (upper sash only or both sashes) for staff review and approval before work begins.
- On the rear porch, any pressure-treated wood used will be painted when cured.
- For the rear porch, a different rail will be submitted for staff review and approval.