



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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SR-2 – ADVISORY STAFF REPORT (03-06-2026)

This advisory report, prepared by staff, represents the opinion and advice of professional staff, and does not represent nor direct the separate review and decision of the Historic District Commission. This report serves as an addendum to SR-1, an objective staff summary of the proposal and property.

ADDRESS: 1656 W BOSTON BOULEVARD

MEETING DATE: 03-11-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00006

SCOPE: ENCLOSE REAR PORCH (WORK COMPLETED), PARTIALLY DEMOLISH REAR PORCH ENCLOSURE, INSTALL DECK

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY: E. THACKERY

STAFF OBJECTIONS TO APPROVAL:

This first section describes itemized conclusions/concerns, which, in staff's professional opinion, would prevent the issue of an unconditional Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). "None" means staff has no objections and believes a COA is warranted, with no conditions. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

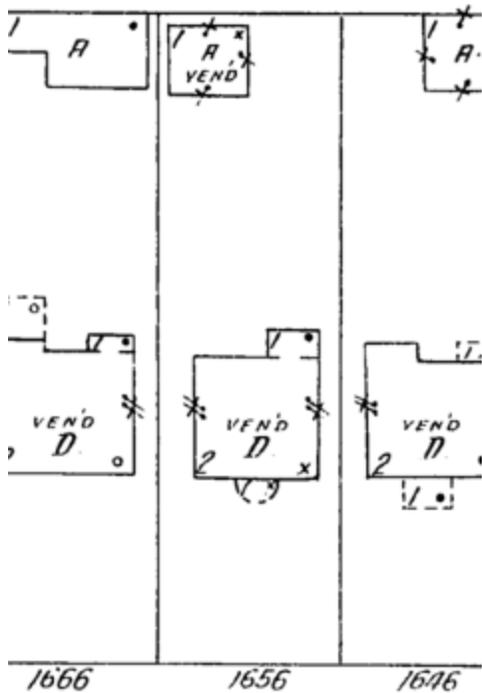
1. The proposed color on the proposed wood siding on the rear addition is included in the approved Color System C for a Colonial Revival-style house for shutters, but not as a trim or body color.
2. Slider windows are incompatible with the house and district.
3. The material for the proposed skirt is not provided.
4. The vertical arrangement of the solid boards proposed for skirting is not compatible with the historic house.
5. The deck and skirt will need to be stained or painted.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This second section expands on the reasoning and analysis leading to staff's conclusions given in the first section above. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

The proposed work is on the rear of the house.

- **The first proposed scope item is the retroactive approval for an enclosure of a rear porch.**
- The rear porch is centered on the rear of the house, and it is not known when it was built or when it was enclosed. (BSEED records do not document either event.)
- The 1925 Sanborn map for Boston-Edison shows no center addition/porch on the house's rear.



Sanborn map, 1925. 1656 W Boston Blvd is shown with the one-story rear wing at the house's northeast corner, but the centered rear porch is not shown.

- PDD's files include a c. 1990s Sanborn map and it also does not show a center rear addition, but it should be noted that the later black-and-white Sanborn maps are not as reliable as older, color versions.



From application materials. The one-story brick wing with a guardrail above is shown to the left of this image. This is the one-story rear wing shown on the Sanborn at the northeast corner of the house. Also visible here is the centered enclosed porch addition, which is a focus of this proposal. The centered addition does not appear on the Sanborns and the date of its construction and enclosure is unknown, but it does appear as an open porch in 2005-2006 satellite images.



1656 W Boston, ConnectExplorer image, dated November 2005-April 2006, rear (north side) of the house. The centered, rear one-story open porch with white posts and railing is visible next to the one-story brick wing with guardrail above.



In this ConnectExplorer image taken between April and May 2016, the centered open porch has been enclosed. Staff added the yellow arrow to indicate a window visible through tree branches.

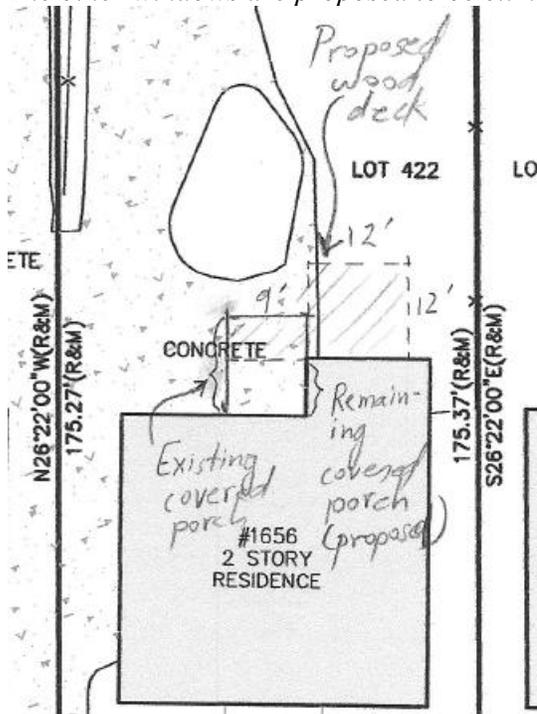


This ConnectExplorer image from March-April 2018 clearly shows that the centered porch has been enclosed. The guardrail on top of the one-story brick wing is visible as well.

- In summary, it appears that the rear porch was enclosed by 2016 without HDC approval. The enclosure included wood siding, an aluminum storm door, and aluminum slider windows.
- The rear porch does not seem to have been historic or character defining.
- In general, staff finds that the enclosed nonhistoric porch meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Standard 9 states, “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.” Staff finds that the massing, size, and scale of the added porch is compatible with the historic house and that the wood siding is an appropriate material for the enclosure.
- Regarding color, the open porch had been painted white to match the trim on the historic house. That trim color, as long as it was a yellowish white, follows Color System C for this house. Once the porch was enclosed with siding, that siding was painted B11 Grayish Olive Green. That color is approved in Color System C for shutters, but not for body or trim.
- Regarding the windows and door on the rear enclosed porch, staff does not think the windows on the rear enclosure are compatible with the historic house because the windows on the house are vertically oriented, sash-style windows, whereas the enclosed porch has horizontally oriented sliders. The proportion of these newer windows is not compatible with the house. Staff does not find the aluminum storm door to the enclosed porch incompatible.
- **The second scope item is to demolish part of this now-enclosed porch.**
- Staff does not find this rear enclosed porch historic or character defining. As such, the Standards don’t compel preservation of the nonhistoric addition.

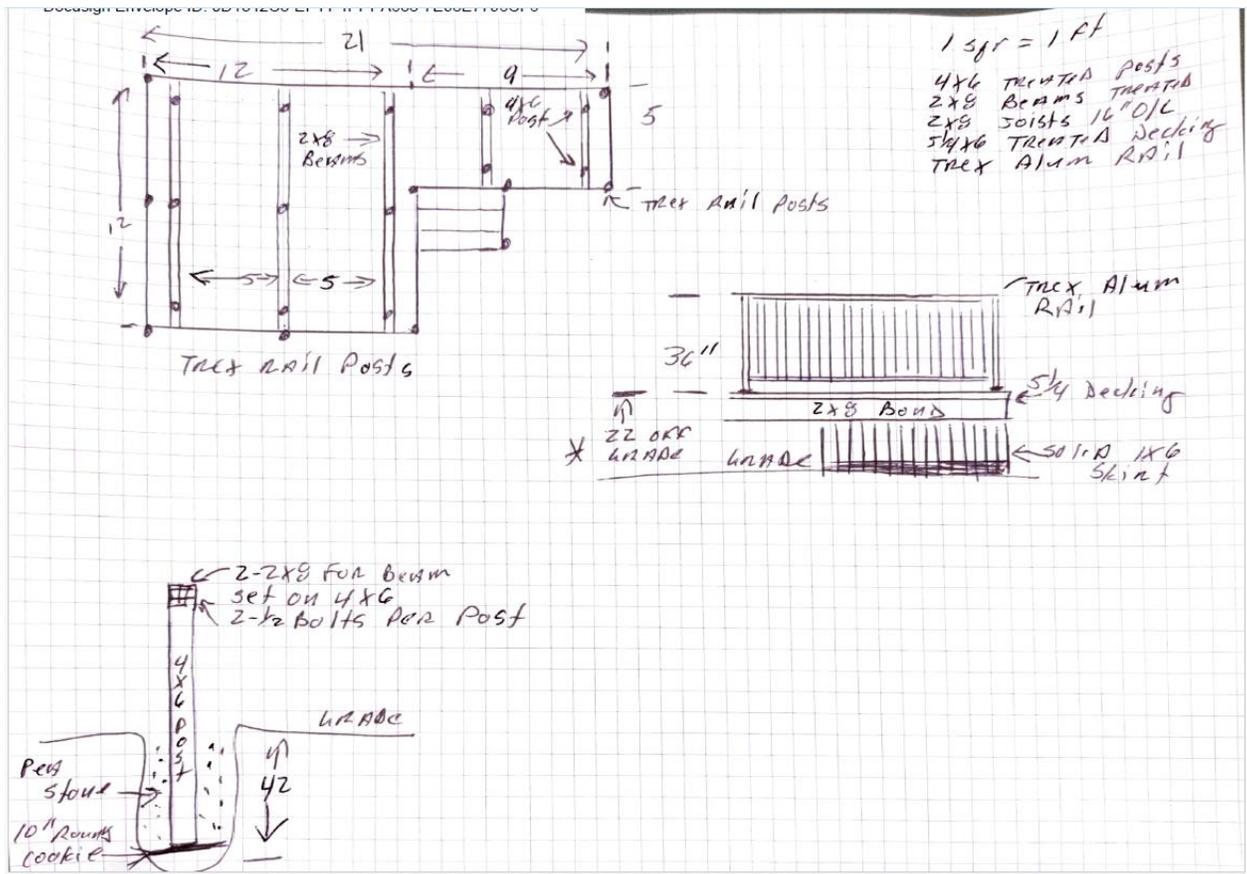


From applicant materials, with staff mark-up. The portion of the enclosed porch outlined in red is proposed to be demolished. Afterward, the remaining enclosure will generally align with the concrete foundation wall seen here and the rear wall of the brick wing. The brick wing and sided porch enclosure are proposed to be flush with each other once the work is complete. The resulting rear addition would only have one window, next to the exterior door. The other windows are proposed to be eliminated.



Plan view of proposal. The existing enclosed porch will be partially demolished and reduced in size. Then, a new proposed wood deck (shown in stripes) would be built. (From applicant's materials)

- The third scope item is to build a rear wood deck.



From applicant's materials. The smaller, rectangular portion of the deck is proposed to be the same size as the demolished part of the enclosed porch. The altered enclosed porch and the smaller portion of the deck would have the same footprint as the former enclosed porch. Additionally, a larger section of the deck would be built that would span across most of the brick rear wing as well, so the entire deck would span from the center of the rear wall almost to the eastern wall of the house.

- Staff finds the proposed deck compatible with the house in size, scale, and massing. Staff believes that the proposed black aluminum guardrail will be compatible with the historic house and the deck, and that the wood components of the deck structure should be stained or painted. The proposed skirting material was not provided and needs to be confirmed. It should be painted or stained wood. Staff believes that the proposed treatment composed of vertical boards forming a solid skirt under the deck is a contemporary treatment and would not be compatible with the historic house.
- Staff has authority to approve administratively “Rear decks, patios, garden structures, benches, hot tubs/spas, and outdoor kitchens not substantially visible from the street.” Because this new deck is part of the bigger proposal that requires Commission review, the proposed deck is before the Commission for review and approval, but if the deck project were more straightforward, staff could approve it administratively.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This third and final section takes staff's itemized "objections" identified in the first section, and presents them in the form of "conditions" in support of a proposed approval recommendation or "reasons" in support of a proposed denial recommendation, in the form required by Section 21-2-78 of the City Code. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

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 Boston-Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, with the conditions that:

1. The color to be used on the siding on the rear enclosed porch addition must be reviewed and approved by staff.
2. Because slider windows are incompatible with the house and district, a window that is more vertically oriented and is a sash-style window must be substituted for the window on the rear enclosed porch and must be reviewed and approved by staff.
3. The skirt material must be reviewed and approved by staff.
4. The design of the skirting below the deck must be revised to be compatible with the house and must be reviewed and approved by staff.
5. The paint or stain for the deck and skirting must be reviewed and approved by staff.