

STAFF REPORT 09-13-2017 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER 17-5340
ADDRESS: 2215 CHICAGO
HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON EDISON
APPLICANT: PIERRE BATON

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

PROPOSAL

Erected ca. 1920, the dwelling at 2215 Chicago is a 2 1/2 –story, single-family dwelling which is located in the Boston Edison Historic District. The exterior walls are clad with a buff brick with wood pilasters at the first and second story, primary elevation porches. The roof is side gabled with deep, overhanging eaves with decorative wood brackets. Front-gabled, classically-inspired dormers top the roof. The current windows appear to be the original, leaded glass wood units at the first story and vinyl windows at the second story and roof level. These vinyl windows were added illegally/without permit and/or HDC approval by Southwest Housing Solutions in May 2017.

Note that staff from Southwest Housing Solutions contacted HDC staff in May 2016 to discuss their unapproved window replacement. At that time, the representative of SW Housing Solutions noted that they had indeed replaced a number of wood windows with vinyl without permit and/or HDC approval. However, SW Housing Solutions had represented to staff that they were committed to positively addressing the violation by replacing the illegally installed vinyl windows with wood windows. In June 2017, the current applicant visited HDC staff offices to note that he desired to purchase the property from SW Housing Solutions. At this consultation, HDC staff appraised the applicant of the violation and specifically let him know that the violation remained on the property and therefore it would be his responsibility to address the violation if he purchased the home. Staff also let the applicant know that the vinyl windows did not meet the Standards, that Commission would not likely approve the retention of any vinyl windows for this reason, and therefore the possibility existed that the individual who purchased the home might be responsible for replacing the vinyl windows with wood units. Finally, note that SW Housing Solutions staff did tell HDC staff that they told the applicant about the vinyl window violation prior to the property sale.

Please see [the attached](#), which indicates that the applicant is proposing the following work items in order to address the current windows violation:

- Retain the vinyl windows at the side and rear elevations
- Replace the existing vinyl windows at the front elevations, second that attic story with wood sash windows to match the light configuration of the original windows

The application has also provided a narrative which outlines the trajectory of the project from his perspective.

APPLICABLE ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

- (6) *Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections.* In those examples derived from classical precedents, entrances and porches, if any, tend to be centered on the front facade. Other examples display more freedom with entrance and porch placement. Porches and permanently enclosed sun porches are often placed at the side and sometimes at the rear of the building.

- (7) *Relationship of materials.* The majority of houses are faced with brick, while many are partially or totally stucco. There are some stone buildings, sometimes combined with stucco; clapboard is rare, and is extremely rare as the sole material. Roofing includes slate, tile and asphalt shingles. Wood shingle roofs were once common and have generally been replaced with asphalt. Wood shake does not exist and there is no known evidence that it was ever used in the district. Stone trim is common. Wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim and is used in many examples for all trim.
- (8) *Relationship of textures.* The most common relationship of textures in the district is that of a low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted with the smooth surface of wood or stone trim. There are a few houses with rough or rusticated stone surfaces. The use of stucco or concrete, with or without half-timbering, as a contrast to brick surfaces, is not unusual. Tile, slate, or wood shingle roofs have particular textural values where they exist. Asphalt shingles generally have little textural interest, even in those types which purport to imitate some other variety.
- (10) *Relationship of architectural details.* Architectural details generally relate to style. Neo-georgian buildings display classic details, mostly in wood, and sometimes in stone. Porches, shutters, window frames, cornices, and dormer windows are commonly, although not always, treated. Details on "mediterranean" style or vernacular buildings including arched windows, door openings, and porches, are often done in stone, brick, tile, and sometimes in stucco. Buildings of medieval inspiration tend to have details in the form of carved wood or carved stone ornaments on window frames, door frames, and eaves. In general, the various styles are rich in architectural details.

RECOMMENDATION

It is staff's opinion that vinyl windows do not adequately replicate an historic wood divided light window. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission deny the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as described because it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior 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.*