

**STAFF REPORT:** 08-12-2020 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 20-6760

**ADDRESS:** 1980 EDISON

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** BOSTON-EDISON

**APPLICANT:** RANDALL WALKER

**PROPERTY OWNER:** RANDALL WALKER

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 07/27/2020

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 07/31/2020

**SCOPE:** DEMOLISH GARAGE (WDWP); ERECT NEW GARAGE, REBUILD FRONT ENTRY PORTICO AND PORCH PLATFORM

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Constructed in 1921, this 2.5 story Colonial Revival house is faced with yellow brick in a running bond pattern. The symmetrical façade features grouped windows on the first and second floors with stone sills, which extend as a decorative band across the front elevation at the second floor, and keystone lintels. The horizontal lines of the front of the house, further extended by a deep overhang supported by large brackets, is intersected with a three-part central element, consisting of a portico with a segmental arch roof, a small arched window, and a hip roofed dormer. The mullioned semi-circular window within the front door, directly below the arched window with keystone, unifies the front elevation.



HDC Staff Photo, July 31, 2020.

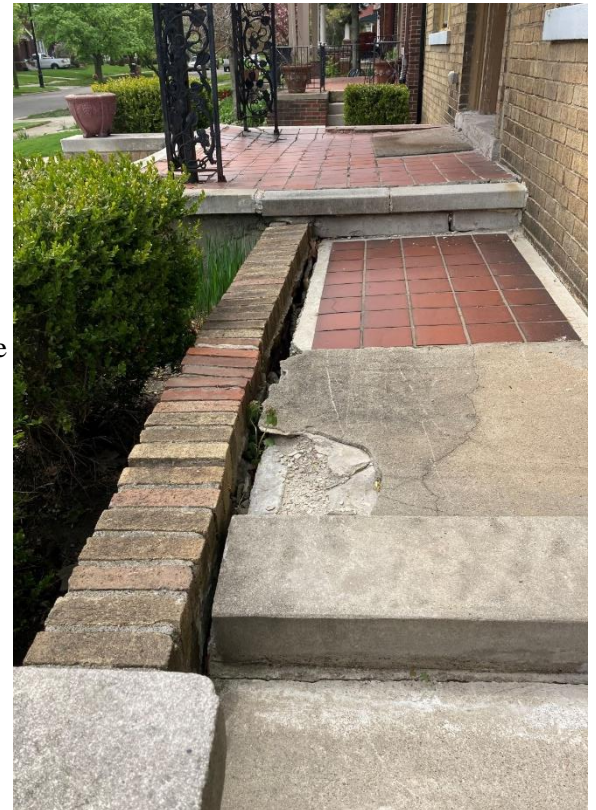


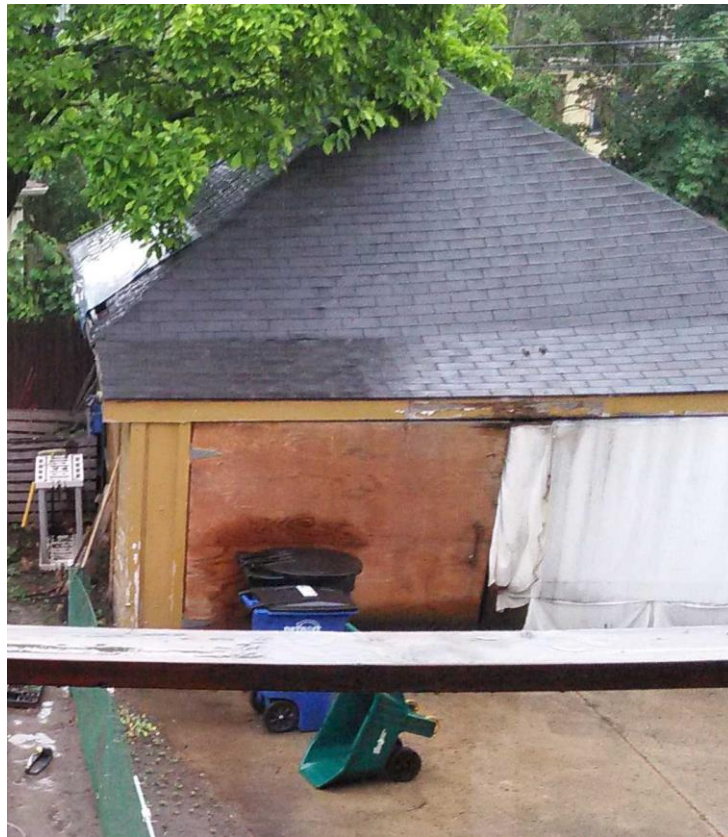
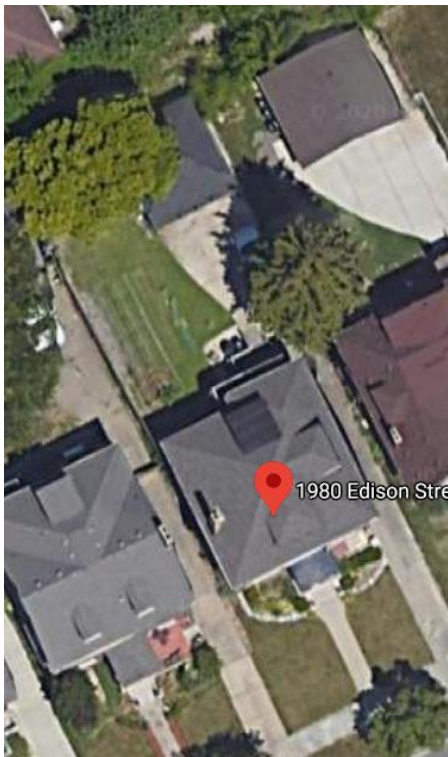


HDAB District Designation Photo, 1974

Prior to the district's designation, as evidenced in the above photo, the wood columns that would have supporting the portico had already been replaced with metal columns. The iron columns were still present until their recent removal by the applicant, as shown in the photo on the right. The matching metal ironwork obscuring the keystone lintels of the first floor windows is no longer present.

The centrally located front porch stairs retain the masonry wing walls with stone caps. An extension to the east, connecting the front entrance to the driveway, is a common feature within this neighborhood, and is faced with matching brick. Both platforms feature square clay tiles with a concrete border.





A detached garage was located at the northeast rear corner of the property. It was demolished in July 2018 by the property owner. The Google aerial image, as well as the photo supplied by the applicant, gives evidence to an almost-square garage with a hip roof and street-facing doors, which were large panels of wood on hinges.

## **PROPOSAL**

This review includes the following components and specifications, the below items are direct excerpts from the applicant's submittal:

### Garage Demolition

- The roof had a large hole which caused considerable wood rot to the roof joists, wall framing, soffits and exterior siding.
- Three layers of shingles over rotting wood caused collapse of roof sections and leaning of structure.
- Concrete slab was broken in several places due to freeze thaw which caused elevation changes between broken sections of 4 inches or more.
- Garage slab did not have any footings which contributed to the heaving noted above
- Unable to open garage doors (swing) due to heaving during winter
- Currently demolished and removed structure from the site.
- Removed concrete slab and driveway from front line of house to rear property line.

### New Garage

- Prep site and pour footers and slab
- Construct 22 x 24 wood frame garage with lap siding, brick face on front, asphalt shingle roof and 2 car garage door.

### Driveway

- Prep driveway bed following directions from TrueGrid from front of house to garage slab.
- Install TrueGrid permeable pavers
- Fill with soil and cover with sod
- Remove concrete driveway from front line of house to street and haul away

- Prep and pour concrete driveway using required coloring agents

#### Sidewalk

- Remove concrete sidewalk and walkway and haul away
- Prep and pour concrete sidewalk and walkways using required coloring agents

#### Front Porch

- Build support structure for porch roof in order to remove wrought iron posts. (This has been completed in order to preserve integrity of porch roof)
- Remove porch slab, walls, and steps saving any usable bricks and caps.
- Prep and pour new porch slab and steps
- Install brick facing on walls and build new brick pedestals where necessary with caps to match originals
- Install 8” round wood columns with caps and bases
- Repair porch roof to like new condition.
- Remove front entry door and sidelites
- Replace front entry door and sidelites with custom product of similar design and materials to original, with new wood or composite 36-0” door with 12” ½ lite sidelites.
- No railings are required per code as grade is 24” from finished porch elevation

### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The Boston Edison Historic District was established in 1974.
- The garage, pre-demolition, did not display character-defining features for this property beyond it being a detached structure near the side and rear lot lines, it’s almost square massing, and hip roof.
- The new garage design specifies a reverse gable roof. This offers the asphalt shingles to be the dominant view from the street and is sympathetic to the visual offered by the hip roof on the house.
- Due to the boxy design of the supports leading down from the portico roof, staff wonders if square columns were originally designed for this location.
- The sidelights flanking the front entry are exceptionally narrow. While the exposed sidelight shows it to contain leaded glass, this design detail is minimally visible from the sidewalk.
- The photographs submitted by the applicant of the current condition of the porch front entry and stairs show sinking platforms, the separation of the support walls from the platforms, and insensitive platform repairs (pouring of concrete where tiles had once been installed).
- According to the site plan, the footprint of the traditional concrete, new pour, will remain as-is and will extend from the street/apron to the front corner of the house. The new product to be installed from the corner of the house to the garage is a commercial-grade permeable paver. The open areas of the paving system will be filled with gravel, so the altered appearance of the driveway from the street will be minimal.
- The clay tiles that face the walking surface of the front porch platforms are a common design feature within the Boston-Edison neighborhood.

### **ISSUES**

- The garage drawings state the front elevation will either be faced in brick or cementitious lap siding. The applicant must clarify the material selection. Staff believes brick is the appropriate design choice as it will be seen from the right-of-way.
- The selected finish for the cementitious siding is textured, which is not in keeping with the aesthetic of historic wood siding. Additionally, the paint color has not been specified.
- A catalog cut for the lights flanking the garage door was not submitted.
- The applicant must confirm the asphalt shingles will match those on the house.
- The catalog cuts show a white finish for the garage vents and doors, while the gutters and downspouts are not specified.
- As there are no white finishes/elements on the house, it is staff’s opinion that the trim, gutters and doors should be neutral or darker colors that coordinate with Color System C.
- A physical and photo analysis confirming the front door and entry surround is beyond repair was not submitted.



- The narrative states the replacement front door will match the existing, however the catalog cut for the new front entry door specifies a fiberglass door with a solid panel design with an arch at the top. Staff spoke with the applicant on August 6, at which time he confirmed his intention to rebuild the existing door and sidelights.
- It is staff's opinion the semi-circular glass design in the existing front door is an integral feature to the front of the house as it relates directly to the second floor window. This door should be retained or replaced in-kind (wood door with divided lights and panel bottom, matching the current design).
- The remaining sidelight within the front entrance is leaded glass. The applicant confirmed the other leaded glass sidelight is missing; he intends to have a new window fabricated to match the other still in place.
- The material for the porch platform has not been specified.
- When comparing the historic designation photograph with the existing conditions, it appears the front elevations windows, which had a six-over-one pattern, were removed and replaced with windows with a one-over-one pattern. It is not clear to staff if the windows on the side and the rear of the house are replacement windows. Staff did not locate an approval for the window replacement within DPI, so further research on this issue is needed and is listed here for information purposes only.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### Garage Demolition and Erection of New Garage, Permeable Paver Driveway

The now-demolished garage did not display character-defining features beyond its massing and location. As the new garage closely matches the dimensions of the original garage, and retains its historic placement, staff believes the demolition of the old garage and construction of the new garage, as proposed, will not remove historic materials nor alter features or spaces that characterize the property. Therefore, HDC staff recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the previous garage and construction of the new garage as proposed as these projects meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

*However, staff recommends the COA be issued with the following conditions:*

- Brick shall be applied to the street-facing elevation, and shall match the brick on the house in color, dimension, pattern and finish. The mortar joints will also match the joints on the house in dimension, profile, color, and composition if historic brick is used.
- The cementitious lap-siding for the sides and rear elevation will be smooth finish. The paint color for the siding will be submitted for staff review.
- The roof shall be a hip roof, thereby keeping the historic massing relationship between the house and garage intact.
- The finish color for the garage doors, gutters/downspouts, and associated trim components will be revised to coordinate with Color System C and will be submitted for staff review.
- Catalog cuts for the lighting will be submitted.
- No decorative accessory pieces, such as the super spot parking markers, will be installed within the permeable paving system.

### Front Porch

The rebuilding of the front porch and pouring of a new concrete sidewalk, which will retain its existing footprints, as well as the height and design of the stairs and porch platforms, while reusing existing brick and stone where possible, and installing wood columns in place of the metal filigree columns, will overall be an improvement because the existing metal columns detract from the historic and architectural character of the house.

*However, staff recommends the COA be issued with the following conditions:*

- Should new face brick be needed, it shall match the historic brick in dimension, color, composition, pattern and profile. A historic mortar mix, matching that of the existing mortar, shall also be used. The existing stone caps, shall be reused, or new stone caps will be specified (no concrete caps).
- The existing front door shall be retained or, if the applicant can substantiate the existing door and surround are beyond repair, all components will be replaced in-kind. The paint color for the front door will be submitted for staff review.

- Square clay tiles or a manufactured product, matching the design, dimension, color and placement of the existing tile platform, will be installed as the walking surface on the entry porch and side extension. A catalog cut confirming the tile details will be submitted to staff for review.



Applicant Photo – Shows porch before columns were removed and temporary supports put in place





Applicant Photos







Applicant Photos







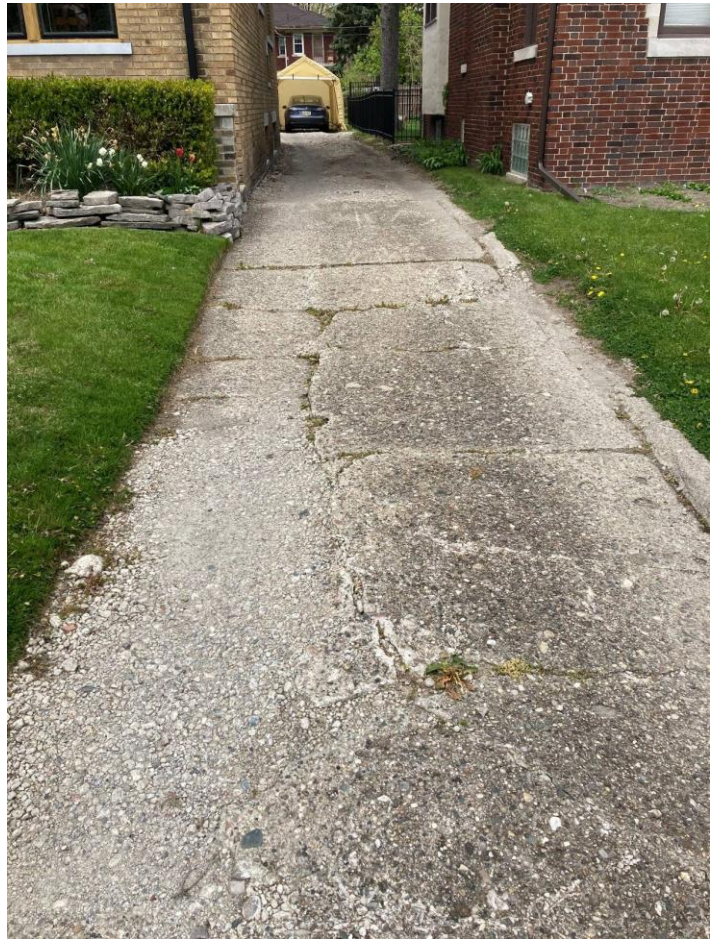
Applicant Photo





Applicant Photo





Applicant supplied photos





Applicant supplied photo - - yellow line indicates where the permeable system would start



Photo of paving system, copied from manufacturer's website  
The red markers are an accessory for use in commercial parking lots





Applicant Photo





Applicant Photo





Applicant Photo