

**STAFF REPORT 06-09-2021 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: G. LANDSBERG**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 21-7307**

**ADDRESS: 858 EDISON**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON**

**APPLICANT: CHARLES McCrARY, DESIGNER**

**OWNER: ISATOU AND CARLLISLE WHITFIELD**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 05-17-2021**

**SCOPE: NEW PROPOSAL TO REVISE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ADDITION, PER WORK COMPLETED\***

*Note: this staff report was revised on 6/9/21 at 1pm to reflect the correction that the as-built addition is built 6'-6" larger than what was approved, not 8'-6". This correction is visible on page 3, underlined.*

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Currently, the property has a mostly-built rear addition that differs from the approved drawings in several ways, which are outlined under staff observations.



*View of existing conditions at rear, view to the southwest. Applicant photo.*



*View of existing conditions at rear, view to the southeast. Applicant photo.*



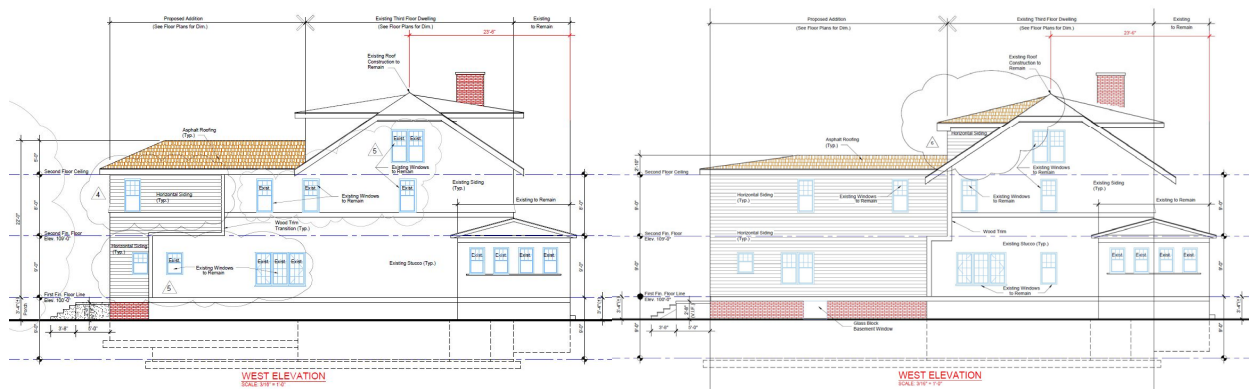
*View of existing conditions at rear, view to the south. Applicant photo.*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, in response to BSEED enforcement activity requested by HDC staff, is seeking approval of the as-built alterations to the design previously approved by the Commission, as described in the attached drawings and the staff observations below.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The applicant, BSEED, contractor, and HDC staff met to discuss the conditions on site and possible steps forward on May 13, 2021. The applicant chose to resubmit a revised “as-built” set of drawings for Commission review, in effect seeking legalization of the violating scope, rather than making the field changes necessary to conform to the approved drawings. HDC staff and BSEED agreed to suspend additional enforcement pending the Commission’s review, as a courtesy.
- HDC received a generally complete application prior to the deadline for the June meeting, though some discrepancies in the drawings were noted. Subsequent requests for additional photos were honored.
- In review of this latest set of drawings, staff notes the following issues, which are at variance with the Commission’s approval in several serious ways:
  - The addition was built fully **6’-6”** longer (i.e., deeper into the rear yard) than what was approved. Additionally, the “transition line” between the addition and the historic material was moved substantially closer to the rear of the historic house, destroying historic fabric at the side which was meant to be preserved in order to keep the addition subordinate to the main house. The combined effect of both a longer addition and the truncated original house created a far more prominent addition than approved. Also, windows actually installed at the addition are simple 1-over-1 sash instead of the multi-light windows as indicated on the elevations provided in both the approved and new submission.



APPROVED

AS-BUILT

- The rear dormer, an original historic feature of the home specifically identified for retention during the Commission’s second review of the project, was removed. A far larger opening, aligned with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor walls below, was created in the roof deck and a full-width rear-facing third floor was erected. This creates the effect of an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> story at the rear, rather than a true dormer, further destroying the character of the original house and amplifying the prominence of the addition.
- At the rear elevation, northeast corner, the inset alcove porch was not built as approved. Windows are different types and smaller.



## ISSUES

- The addition as erected and here proposed for approval is out of scale and character for the property.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

The proposed as-built revision to the previously approved addition destroys historic materials, is too large and prominent, lacks articulation that complements the property's architectural character, and destroys the essential form and integrity of the historic property.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission deny the proposal, as it fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Boston-Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, especially Standards:

- (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, and;
- (5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved, and;
- (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 quantities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence, and;
- (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, and;
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction, shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.