

**STAFF REPORT: JUNE 14, 2023 MEETING**  
**APPLICATION NUMBER: 23-8388**  
**ADDRESS: 1186 EDISON**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON EDISON**  
**APPLICANT: LEON HUNTER, III**  
**PROPERTY OWNER: HB1 ALTERNATIVE HOLDINGS, LLC**  
**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: MAY 22, 2023**  
**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: MAY 30, 2023**

**PREPARED BY: A. DYE**

**SCOPE: DEMOLISH GARAGE, ERECT GARAGE, REPLACE WOOD WINDOWS**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The two-story dwelling at 1186 Edison was erected in 1916. The rectangular massing is accentuated by extensions and decorative details at every elevation. The front facade features a box bay window and a covered, raised front porch. The dark brown brick veneer is contrasted with stone sills and quoins at the upper level window openings, and thick square stone (or cast concrete) columns support the porch roof and dormer.

The triple window opening at the front porch are leaded glass casements (twelve light pattern), while the wood double-hung units feature four-over-four (sides of box bay), six-over-six and one eight-over-eight pattern.



*Staff photo, May 30, 2023*

Standing at the sidewalk and looking direct at the house, the only roof projection that is visible is the chimney at the west wall. The east elevation shed dormer is not visible until you walk past the driveway, which enters off Edison at the right side of the property. The detached garage is at the northeast corner of the rear yard.

The east elevation features a slight extension that is covered with stucco and vertical timbers (similar to the front entry gable); decorative leaded glass fills the three tall and narrow window openings. The shed dormer is covered with vinyl siding.



*View from sidewalk*



*View from alley*

*Staff photos*

On the west elevation, leaded glass windows flank the chimney at the first floor, and the chimney features stone and decorative brick work between the first and second floors. Another slight extension beyond the chimney has four narrow window openings which is covered by a small roof. Due to the light reflecting off the stucco wall at the rear of the house, the linear pattern of the wood covering the deep overhanging eaves is highly visible on this otherwise dark house.



*West elevation, staff photo*



*Staff photos – rear elevation*

The rear elevation is remarkably intact. The historic window and door openings, and exterior wall surfaces (except for the vinyl siding at the shed dormers), appear to be unaltered and in very good surface condition. Only a few window openings have what might be replacement units (with one window opening boarded up). The design and color of the non-historic rear door is not appropriate for the age and design of the house.



The two-story extension and one-story box bay are faced with stucco and straight boards, consistent with the pattern at the front and side of the house. Hip roofs add visual heft to these components and balance them against the massing of the main house.



*Left: Staff photo, looking northwest from sidewalk  
Above: Staff photo, looking southwest from alley.*

A two-car detached garage is located at the northeast corner of the rear yard.

### PROPOSAL

- Demolish existing garage.
- Erect 24' x 24' garage.
- Replace all windows in the house with Pella Lifestyle wood, aluminum-clad windows, black, ILT grilles (simulated divided lights)

### STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston Edison Local Historic District was enacted on April 2, 1974.
- 1186 Edison is three lots to the west of the John Lodge Freeway, on the north side of Edison. Scrolling through Google street view from 2009 – 2022, it appears that 1186 Edison is one of the last houses on this block that hasn't had extensive repairs made to the exterior of the structure.
- The original front door and leaded glass windows are still in place at the front elevation.



*Above: Detroit Parcel Viewer  
Left: Staff photo, leaded glass casement windows open to the porch*

- No building permit was found to confirm the construction date of the garage. However, its size, design, and stucco/timber wall surface, suggests it was likely erected in the 1920s, and was designed to complement the house.



*Staff photos, May 30, 2023*

The designation photo shows a reddish brown and beige stucco color palette, similar to the existing colors on the garage.



*1974 designation photo, HDAB.*

- There was a painter at the house on the day of my site visit; the current color palette is off-white stucco and black windows and trim. The repainting has not been submitted to HDC staff for review.

- The 1974 district designation photo shows an overgrown rear yard where a car is parked under the dense foliage (which is visible when zoomed into); a cleaned-up yard and garage are seen in a 1980 photo.



1974 designation photo for 1176 Edison



1980 photo for 1176 Edison

HDAB

- At some point in time, an extension to the garage was erected at the west wall, and the shed roof of the extension was tied into the garage's hip roof.
- During staff's May 2023 visit, the buckling of the roof where it sits over the extended area was evident; the main roof appeared intact. The leaning wall and severely cracking stucco were evident at the "newer" walls.



Above: Applicant photo

Left and below: Staff photos



- The photos below of the garage walls show a repeating pattern of stucco and timber, which echo the vertical patterns on the house. Oriented strand board fill the center openings on these walls. Staff isn't sure what this is covering (window openings?) or if it replaced some other decorative material.
- It is staff's opinion the overall design of the garage is directly linked to the main house, evident through the matching pitched hip roof and the stucco/timber walls, and is therefore, a distinctive character-defining feature of the property (with exception of the extension at the west wall).



*Staff photo - east and north elevations*



*Staff photo, north elevation facing alley – joint where wall was extended is visible.*

## ISSUES

### Garage

- Staff requested a detailed assessment of the garage and supportive photographs demonstrating that it is beyond repair. This information was not submitted. Based on the short description and submitted (mostly exterior) photographs, staff doesn't believe the garage is deteriorated beyond repair. Its demolition would alter the features and spaces that characterize the property.
- The applicant submitted a generic rendering and material list for the proposed garage. In response, staff requested a site plan and drawings so all details and elevations related to the new construction could be reviewed. This information was not submitted.
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed garage is not appropriate for the property as the overall form and materiality do not relate to the house and site.



*Applicant image, from Menard's website*

### Windows

- Based on the photos taken during the site visit, the historic wood windows are intact and, from the exterior, don't offer evidence of severe deterioration.
- The applicant, in responding to staff's request for comprehensive documentation on all the windows, submitted only a few interior photos of single window openings that are dark, far away, or partially covered. No full exterior elevation photos were submitted so staff doesn't know what each window looks like. Leaded glass windows are visible from the sidewalk, and it is possible there are more leaded glass windows on the home that are not visible for the public right-of-way. Photos on the following page offer visual aid as the locations of openings identified by staff, however the lead glass detailing of the stair windows is not visible.



*Staff photo*



*Staff photos. Leaded glass casement windows are adjacent the chimney, fill the opening at the stairwell, and open onto the front porch.*



- The windows are distinctive character-defining features of the property. Standard Six states *“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.”*
  - The applicant has not proven the existing windows are beyond repair.
  - Dimensions of the historic window sash were not submitted to determine how closely (or not) the Pella product will match the wood double-hung windows.
  - The Pella window order specifies that wood, aluminum-clad windows will be installed in each window opening. This means that leaded glass windows would be replaced with windows that do not match the dimension, texture, and visual qualities of the existing windows.

### **SECTION 21-2-78, DETERMINATION OF HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

Staff finds that the proposal for the demolition of the historic garage, erection of a new garage, and the replacement of the historic windows on the house do not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the following reasons:

- The current application did not provide sufficient documentation outlining the deterioration of the original windows, and the proposed replacement window is not an adequate match to the historic sash.
- The current application did not provide sufficient documentation outlining the deterioration of the historic garage, nor was adequate information submitted for the proposed design of the new garage.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2, 5, 6 and 9:

*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.*

*5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

*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.*

*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.*