

APPLICATION NUMBER: 23-8698

ADDRESS: 2274 CHICAGO

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT: LONNELL GASKIN

PROPERTY OWNER: LONNELL GASKIN

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: MAY 22, 2023

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: MAY 30, 2023

SCOPE: REPLACE WOOD WINDOWS WITH VINYL WINDOWS, ~~INSTALL DOOR~~ (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

2418 Longfellow is a two-story, Tudor Revival house with a high, fenestrated attic story. It is clad with red-brown brick and features a steep roof with parapet gables and shed dormers. Additional noteworthy features include mullioned windows, often with tabbed stone surrounds, a projecting front semicircular bay window clad in stone, and a segmental-arched front entryway, also in stone. Original windows have been replaced without approval and are subject of this application. The house was built in 1923.



May 2023 photo by staff.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to replace historic wood windows with vinyl windows and to install a new front door. The proposed

windows (already installed and visible on the house) are vinyl windows with between-the-glass grilles (false muntins) providing a variety of configurations including four-over-four, six-over-six, and fixed multilight windows. Some are mullioned and employ what appears to be aluminum coil stock. It is unclear whether the windows are single hung or double hung. Both windows and surrounds are beige.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was established by resolution of the City Council in 1974. No Final Report was prepared for this district.
- The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-106) mention windows as “always subdivided” and “usually [further] subdivided by muntins;” “the most common window type is double hung.” The Elements of Design also note that “wood is almost universally used for window frames,” which presumably includes the mullions in this case, and windows on Tudor houses are typically “of a dark brown or cream color.”
- The applicant did not provide a scope of work, product name, or specifications for the proposed (already installed) windows; staff conducted its review based on a visual assessment from the public sidewalk.
- Staff also notes from the aforementioned photos that a previous nonhistoric door has been replaced with a newer, nonhistoric, galvanized steel door. The applicant stated they did not wish to include the door with this application. ~~At staff’s invitation, the applicant included the door within the application scope. In an email to staff dated June 9, 2023, the applicant stated the current front door “was installed back in 2010. The front door only had plywood hanging as a door.” Staff concurs that the historic door was missing, as shown in a 2000 staff photo. Likewise, the front door seen in the 1980 photo below does not appear, in staff’s estimation, to be an original or historic door.~~



1980 Historic Designation Advisory Board photo. (Note that a grey paint visible in this photo has largely peeled off to reveal the underlying

stone door and window surrounds.)

- In cases where a historic feature is missing, The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation state that “replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.” In the absence of such evidence, staff suggests that National Park Service guidelines on “replacement windows where no historic windows remain” applies, by analogy, to doors. (See *Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards*, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/windows-replacement-meet-standards.htm>.) An appropriate door would be one that is “compatible with the overall historic character of the building” and be “consistent with the general characteristics of a historic [door] of the type and period,” among other concerns.



May 2000 staff photo. Note thickness and depth of window sashes differs from current windows. Note also the non-historic door.

ISSUES

- Staff is unable to inspect the prior windows as they no longer exist. However, staff suggests that they were either (most likely) original to the building or (less likely) historically appropriate replacements. Further, they were present at the time the Boston-Edison Historic District was established, as seen in photos from that time. The Secretary of the Interior’ Standards for Rehabilitation, particularly Standard #2 (quoted below) direct that they be retained. If deteriorated beyond feasible repair, Standard #6 (also quoted below) directs that they be replaced with compatible windows.
- The applicant has not shown that the removed windows had deteriorated beyond feasible repair.
- The replacement windows are not compatible for the following reasons:

- The replacement windows do not match the three-dimensional qualities of the historic windows (Standard #6).
- The replacement windows do not match the materials of the historic windows (Standard #6).
- The replacement windows, through the use of between-the-glass grilles, add additional subdivisions beyond what is shown in photographic evidence or what would ordinarily be found on a house from its time period and architectural style, contrary to Standard #3 (quoted below).
- The addition of aluminum coil stock constitutes an “alteration of features and spaces that characterize the property” (Standard #2).
- ~~The proposed door appears to contain an oval window with a decorative came pattern; neither the oval shape nor the nature of the pattern reflect features found elsewhere on the building or within the Tudor Revival style as a whole. In addition, the door appears to be unpainted (primed) steel, which is likewise not appropriate for the particular building or the Tudor Revival style in general. Staff notes that the aforementioned National Park Service guidelines state that “substitute materials” are appropriate; potentially, a painted steel door with a rectangular window or no window could be minimally appropriate, depending on the design.~~



December 2022 staff photo comparing historic and new windows.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission

Staff concludes that the proposed window ~~and door replacement~~ does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- The wood windows proposed for removal are historic and distinctive materials and features that contribute to the character of the property.
- The windows proposed for removal have not been shown to be deteriorated beyond repair.
- The proposed new windows are not appropriate as they do not match the old windows in design (their dimensions are noticeably different, including thicker and more visible jambs, balances, and other trim) or materials (they appear to be vinyl).
- The proposed between-the-glass grilles introduce a conjectural element not previously found on the subject building.
- The proposed aluminum window surrounds constitute an alteration of the appearance of the historic window opening, which is a historic feature and space formerly employing wood casing.
- ~~The proposed unpainted, oval-glazed steel door replaces a missing feature but is neither documented by evidence nor reflective of the 1920s period and Tudor Revival style of the building.~~

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission issue a Denial as the proposed work fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular:

- 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.*
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 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 where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be documented by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*