

**STAFF REPORT: JULY 10, 2024 MEETING**  
**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00229**  
**ADDRESS: 2310 EDISON**

**PREPARED BY: A. DYE**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON EDISON**  
**APPLICANT: JONATHAN TAYLOR**  
**PROPERTY OWNER: JONATHAN TAYLOR**  
**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: JUNE 18, 2024**  
**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: MAY 22, 2024**

**SCOPE: REPLACE WINDOWS (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The dwelling located at 2310 Edison is a single-family two-story house that is clad with orange-brown brick. The house features a side gabled roof form. In addition to a front-facing cross gable, shed roofs extend from the front and rear sloping roofs; all of which are accentuated by oversized brackets and rafter tails under the shed roof eaves.

On the façade, grouped windows are at the first and second floors and a diamond-shaped window fits within the crest of the gable. Brick masonry wing walls enclose the stairs leading to the full width raised front porch. Low walls run the perimeter of the porch and the front entrance is covered by a deep gabled roof. Arts and crafts details include exposed rafter tails, exceptionally wide tapered masonry columns (supporting the porch roof and a similarly designed pier at the southeast corner of the porch), sawtooth bargeboards. The front door and windows are replacement units.



*Façade, east-facing wall. Staff photo, May 22, 2024.*

## **PROPOSAL**

- Replace the wood windows at the house. This was done without Commission approval.

## **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

The Boston Edison Historic District was enacted on April 2, 1974.

The designation photo documents the original windows within the main bay of the facade. The grouped window opening at the first floor consisted of six narrow 18-lite (three-wide x six-high) casement units with leaded comes. The double-hung windows on the house had vertically divided multi-paned upper sash over single glass lower sash. The uniquely patterned windows on the house were common designs for arts and crafts-style houses and are identified as distinctive character-defining features.



*1974 designation photo, HDAB.*



The leaded glass windows on the façade were replaced without Commission approval between 2011 and 2013, based on Google street view images. The remaining windows on the house were replaced in April 2024. It is the 2024 window replacement that comprises the current application to the Commission.

On April 26, 2024, HDC staff was notified of the window replacement in progress via a SeeClickFix notification. Director Landsberg visited the property, spoke to the owner and work crew, took photographs of the empty openings and discarded wood windows. His report is below.

2310 Edison violation

Garrick Landsberg <landsbergg@detroitmi.gov>

Fri 4/26/2024 2:19 PM

To:HD Violations <HDviolations@detroitmi.gov>

Cc:Jennifer Ross <rossj@detroitmi.gov>;Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>

See link below for site photos. Report:

- Work crew finishing up last few windows at porch upon arrival to site, advised to stop work and restore wooden windows.
- Original historic wooden windows on all four elevations have been replaced with beige vinyl units, some of them with between-glass grids.
- Inspected historic wood sash stacked in front yard, all of which appeared to be in good repairable condition
- Crew's work trucks marked with "Robert's Installation" from Oxford and Troy, MI. Claimed to be a sub hired by contractor responsible for permitting.
- Advised property owner to retain historic sash for later reinstallation, they were placed in garage by contractor's workers
- Contractor (phoned by on-site crew chief) self-reported as Scott Kraiza ("My Quality Construction" of Warren, Michigan), stated he had applied for a permit, HDC staff found no record of application in Accela
- No record of application or communication with HDC
- Mr. Kraiza said he was unable to provide GC license number or permit application number
- Discussed HDC application process and deadlines for June/July meetings with owner and his attorney, who stated that they would contact hdc@detroitmi.gov to review application requirements
- BSEED had not yet arrived when HDC staff left site
- BSEED said they were on way for inspection but would not be able to post notice as stickers were in CAYMC office closed today



Façade



Rear wall

Staff photos, April 26, 2024  
Showing window replacement in progress.





*Staff photos, removed window sash.*







The application did not provide sufficient documentation outlining the deterioration of the original wood windows that were removed without approval. Based on staff's site assessment and the photographs of the removed windows, it is staff's opinion that the window sash were intact prior to removal and the wood frames and glass panes appeared to be in repairable condition.

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.*"

## ISSUES

As the windows were removed without Historic District Commission approval; based on the Standards, new windows should match all the details of the historic windows that were removed. In this instance, the wood windows that were removed should be repaired and reinstalled within their respective window openings.

It is staff's opinion, through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.

- Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
- Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
- The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
- Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
- Vinyl windows have "grids" between the glass, which means the dimensionality of historic windows, which have thick highly profiled muntin bars separating the panes of glass, is lost.
- The installation of the proposed vinyl windows does not follow NPS guidelines for new replacement windows, as the proposed windows are not "consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period", are not "compatible with the overall historic character of the building".





*This staff photo of the west-side wall shows the reflectivity of the replacement glass, as well as the loss of dimensional profiles within the windows, due to the between-the-glass grid/muntin placement. The windows are now flat surfaces and sit in contrast with the highly detailed and dimensioned wall surfaces and applied ornament. The removed windows offer a clear comparison of the dimensional profile of true divided-light windows and a clear comparison on how these replacement windows do not match the original/historic windows.*

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal for the replacement of the wood windows on the home altered the features of the property and does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

The Standards require that historic windows be repaired, and only when they are deteriorated beyond repair, can replacement windows be considered. Furthermore, replacement must match the details of the historic windows. In this instance, the wood windows that were removed are repairable and could be reinstalled within their respective window openings.

Regarding the installed replacement windows, it is staff's opinion, through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.

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- Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.
- The installation of the proposed vinyl windows does not follow NPS guidelines for new replacement windows, as the proposed windows are not "consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period", are not "compatible with the overall historic character of the building".

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, and 6:

- 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.*