

STAFF REPORT: 11/13/2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

ADDRESS: 1624 EDISON

APPLICATION NO: HDC2024-00434

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT: TARIK NAJIB/PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING COMPANY

OWNER: ABDUL CHIRRI

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 10/16/2024

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 10/15/2024

SCOPE: REHABILITATE DWELLING AND GARAGE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The parcel located at 1624 Edison includes a two-story, single-family dwelling that was erected ca. 1910. The building features a side-gabled main roof with front-gabled dormers. Asphalt shingles cover the building's roof. Synthetic stucco/an exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS) and cement fiber siding with a faux wood grain finish have recently been installed at the building's exterior walls. EIFS has also been added to the endwall chimney and the posts at the front façade porch. New, 6/1, aluminum-clad, double-hung windows have also been installed in the recent past.

The property also includes a detached garage in the rear yard which was erected ca. 2018. The garage has a hipped roof with is covered with asphalt shingles and exterior walls are clad with EIFS. Windows are vinyl units. A single steel overhead door is located at the building's front façade serves as the primary entrance.



Current condition. Staff photo taken 10/16/2024



Current condition at rear. Photo by applicant



Current condition of garage. Photo by applicant

PROPOSAL

The property has recently undergone an extensive exterior rehabilitation which was not approved by the Historic District Commission. The applicant is therefore seeking an “after the fact” approval of the recently completed work with the current submission. Specific work items included in the application include the following items:

Dwelling

- Replace historic wood 6/1 windows and wood casing/trim with new 6/1, aluminum clad wood double-hung windows and new trim
- Install EFIS and cement fiber siding (with a faux wood grain finish) at exterior walls, porch and chimney
- Install EFIS at exterior of chimney
- Install new concrete steps and deck at front porch
- Install new steel doors at rear, front, and side walls
- At rear wall entrance, install new handrails and steps (materials not specified)
- At roof, replace wood fascia with

Garage

- Install EIFS at exterior walls

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

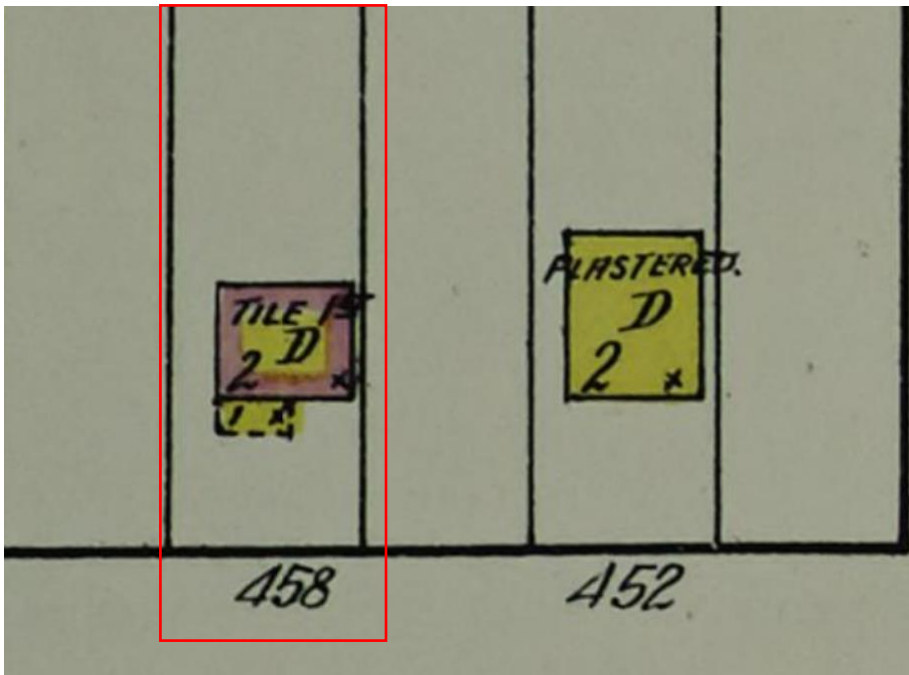
- The Boston-Edison Historic District was designated in 1973
- Please see the appearance of the house at the time of the district’s designation to note that exterior walls were clad with non-historic aluminum siding and PermaStone/synthetic stone.

The chimney, porch deck and columns were also clad with non-historic Permastone. However, note that the original 6/1 wood windows remained, and the roof's original wood fascia/soffits were present despite the presence of the non-historic siding.



Designation slide, taken in 1974. Source, Detroit HDAB

- See the below Sanborn Map from 1915, indicating that the house was constructed of structural clay tile at the first story:



Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1915. 1624 Edison (outlined in red) was addressed as 458 Edison in 1915 per the above.

- A review of records maintained by the Detroit Historic District Commission indicate the following:
 - A COA was issued on 4/26/2018 to replace the roof shingles, repair the fascia and soffit where necessary in kind, and install new gutters and downspouts
 - A COA was issued on 11/26/2018 to replace a dilapidated garage with a new garage to exactly replicate the existing to include lapped wood siding and replace existing concrete walkways in the front yard with new in the same footprint and material
 - A COA was issued on 1/28/2020 to install new asphalt shingles at the roof
- The following are photos showing the condition of the house in 2020. Note that the exterior materials, windows, roof fascia/soffit appear to be consistent with the 1974 conditions. However, staff does note minor fire damage at the rear, first story, revealing the original stucco cladding beneath. Also, staff observed small areas at the front and side where aluminum siding has fallen off.



Front façade, 2020 photo taken by previous applicant. Note area where Permastone has fallen off



Rear, photo taken in 2020 by previous applicant. Note apparent fire damage at first story. The area outlined in green shows original stucco finish at first story. Also, note that the fire has exposed the historic lapped wood siding at the hipped roof wing



Photo taken in 2020 by previous applicant. Note area where aluminum siding has fallen off, revealing synthetic shingle siding underneath.

- Google Streetview images indicate that the following conditions existed in 2022:
 - The aluminum siding had been removed without HDC approval revealing the synthetic shingle siding underneath.
 - New front porch steps had been installed without HDC approval
 - Original windows at the front dormer had been replaced with vinyl without HDC approval
 - Original windows and siding at the front two-story bay have been completely removed without HDC approval
 - A new asphalt shingle roof had been installed while retaining original wood fascia/soffits per HDC COA



Conditions in 2020, per Google Streetview



Conditions in 2020, per Google Streetview. Note where PermaStone has been removed to reveal original stucco finish at first story

- In January 2023, HDC staff was alerted that the following work had been undertaken without HDC approval:
 - All windows removed
 - All exterior cladding removed
 - Side wall, second story bay rebuilt
 - Original fascia and soffit at main roof and porch roof replaced
 - New driveway added

Staff therefore reported the work to the building department and requested that a stop work order be issued. The building department inspected the site in response to HDC staff request. The following photos illustrate conditions at that time:



Conditions on 1/24/2023. Photo by HDC staff



Conditions on 1/24/2023. Photo by HDC staff

- On December 12, 2023, HDC staff visited the site a second time to note ongoing unapproved work at the property. At this point, new EIFS siding had been added throughout and new fascia and soffit had been installed at the roof. HDC staff forwarded the report of unapproved work to the building department for enforcement that same day. The following photo illustrates conditions in December 2023.



Photo by HDC staff, taken on 12/12/2023

- On March 21, 2024, HDC staff visited the site for a third time, noting that construction continued unabated, to include the installation of cement fiber siding (with a faux grain finish) at the front façade. HDC staff reported the unapproved work to the building department that same day. In response, the building department visited the site on 3/26/2024 and issued a stop work order. Please see the below photos which recorded conditions on 3/21/2024:



Front façade. Photo taken by HDC staff on 3/21/2024



Front façade. Photo taken by HDC staff on 3/21/2024

- The photos which depict current conditions indicate that new wood aluminum-clad wood windows were added sometime after the 3/21/2024 HDC staff visit. With the current application, the property owner is seeking the Commission’s approval of all exterior work completed at the house without COA.
- Staff reviewed the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (provided above) and the building conditions as depicted in the 2020 Google Streetview images (provided above) and notes the following regarding the dwelling’s original exterior cladding:
 - The house’s first story was constructed of clay tile which was finished with stucco at the exterior
 - It is likely that the second story was built of wood framing which was clad on the exterior with wood clapboard/lapped wood siding.
- Staff has the following opinion regarding the dwelling’s appearance **prior to the unapproved work which was undertaken in 2023-2024:**
 - The house appeared to be in poor condition in 2022, with minor fire damage to the rear, first story
 - The house’s synthetic siding was incompatible to its historic appearance.
 - Despite the property’s poor condition and incompatible siding, it was erected within the district’s Period of Significance and did retain its original form, windows, and roof fascia/soffits. For these reasons, it is staff’s opinion that the house was contributing to the district prior to the current unapproved alterations.
 - Staff does support the removal of the inappropriate synthetic cladding from the dwelling’s exterior walls, chimney, and porch. However, it is staff’s opinion that a new siding which is compatible to the dwelling’s historic character in terms of durability, quality and material, such as a natural product (brick, wood clapboard,

- or true stucco), is appropriate for the exterior walls versus the current synthetic EIFS and cement fiber siding.
- The original fascia and soffits, wood windows, and window casing/trim should have been retained and repaired as they are more appropriate to the building's historic character versus the current EIFS clad fascia/soffits
- The PermaStone and aluminum siding at the front porch was incompatible with the building's historic character. Concrete, brick or stone is a more appropriate material for the front porch deck/floor and wood clapboard is a more compatible material for the gable end at the porch roof. Wood columns of a compatible design and dimension/scale installed at the porch would be an appropriate replacement for the incompatible PermaStone columns.
- The PermaStone at the endwall chimney was incompatible. A repair of the brick or a true cement parge would be an appropriate treatment for the chimney upon the removal of the PermaStone
- It is staff's opinion that the project as proposed/work as completed is inappropriate for the following reasons:
 - The wood windows and roof soffit/fascia that were removed without HDC approval do not appear to have been deteriorated beyond repair. Therefore, their removal does not meet the Standards
 - The new scored faux stucco siding presents a contemporary expression of stucco which is not appropriate to the current residential setting/historic character of the dwelling and its nearby surrounds. Also, please note that EIFS is prone to moisture infiltration and is highly susceptible to impact damage.
 - The new cement fiber siding displays a faux wood grain which does not provide an adequate replication of painted historic wood (which would display a smooth surface).
 - The current synthetic window trim EIFS clad fascia/soffits are wider and flatter than the historic wood window and roof trim.

The cumulative effect of the work, to include the installation wide/flat window and roof trim (soffit/fascia), the EIFS and cement fiber siding, the massive, boxy, EIFS clad columns at the front porch, and the EIFS clad chimney, results in a modern/suburban appearance which is wholly at odds with the property's historic character.

ISSUES

- It is staff's opinion that project as proposed/work as completed is incompatible with the property's historic character and therefore does not conform to the district's Elements of Design or meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings for the following reasons:
 - The wood windows and roof soffit/fascia that were removed without HDC approval do not appear to have been deteriorated beyond repair. Therefore, their removal does not meet the Standards
 - The new scored faux stucco siding presents a contemporary expression of stucco which is not appropriate to the current residential setting/historic character of the dwelling and its nearby surrounds. Also, please note that EIFS is prone to moisture infiltration and is highly susceptible to impact damage. A siding of a more durable nature is more appropriate for use at this historic property.
 - The new cement fiber siding displays a faux wood grain which does not provide an adequate replication of painted historic wood (which would display a smooth surface).
 - The current synthetic window trim EIFS clad fascia/soffits are wider and flatter than the historic wood window and roof trim.

- The cumulative effect of the work, to include the wide/flat window and roof trim (soffit/fascia), the EIFS and cement fiber siding, the massive, boxy, EIFS clad columns at the front porch, and the EIFS clad chimney, is a modern/suburban appearance which is wholly at odds with the property's historic character.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation - Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Denial

It is HDC staff's opinion that the proposed work is inappropriate for the following reasons:

- The wood windows and roof soffit/fascia that were removed without HDC approval do not appear to have been deteriorated beyond repair. Therefore, their removal does not meet the Standards
- The new scored EIFS/faux stucco siding presents an expression of stucco which is not appropriate to the current residential setting/historic character of the dwelling and its nearby surrounds. Also, please note that EIFS is prone to moisture infiltration and is highly susceptible to impact damage. A siding of a more durable nature is more appropriate for use at this historic property.
- The new cement fiber siding displays a faux wood grain which does not provide an adequate replication of painted historic wood (which would display a smooth surface).
- The current synthetic window trim EIFS clad fascia/soffits are wider and flatter than the historic wood window and roof trim.
- The cumulative effect of the work, to include the wide/flat window and roof trim (soffit/fascia), the EIFS and cement fiber siding, the massive, boxy, EIFS clad columns at the front porch, and the EIFS clad chimney, is a modern/suburban appearance which is wholly at odds with the property's historic character.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the project because it does not conform to the district's Elements of Design, nor does it meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically, 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*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic 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.*