

**STAFF REPORT: NOVEMBER 13, 2024 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: A. DYE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00630**

**ADDRESS: 2310 EDISON**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON EDISON**

**APPLICANT: JOHN NOVA, NOVA CUSTOM HOMES**

**PROPERTY OWNER: JONATHAN TAYLOR**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: OCTOBER 21, 2024**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: OCTOBER 9 & NOVEMBER 4, 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 and dormer 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 vinyl windows with new wood windows. This application does not propose to reinstall the historic wood windows that were removed without HDC 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 by 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.



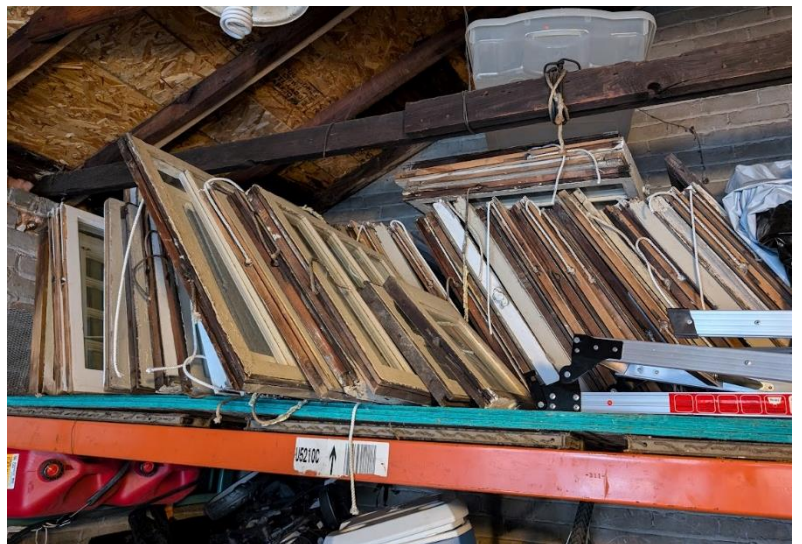
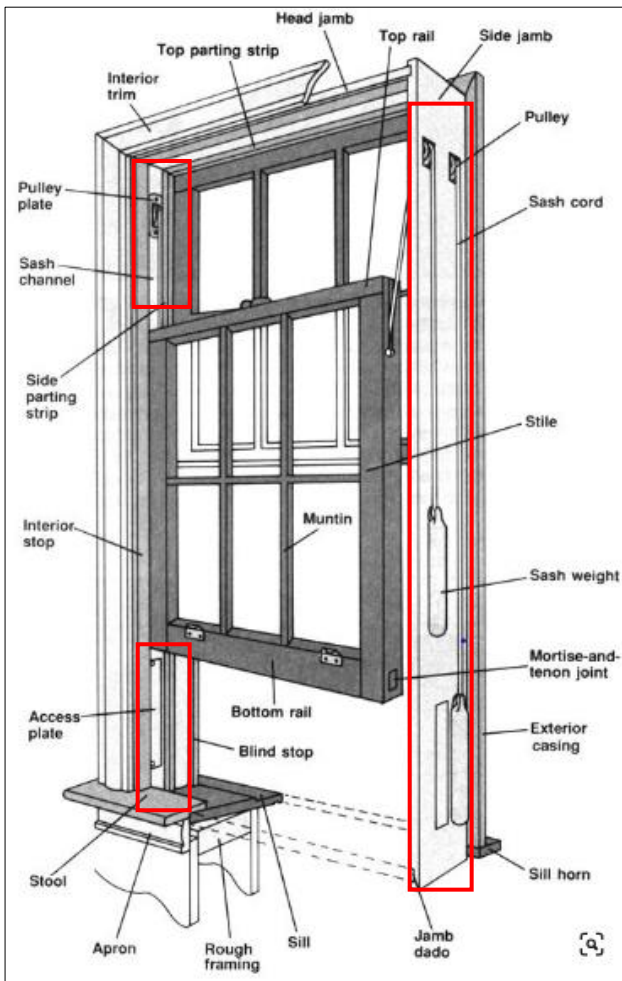
*1974 designation photo, HDAB.*

- The leaded glass windows on the façade at the first floor (visible in the above designation photo) 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.



- At the July 10, 2024, HDC meeting, the Commission reviewed an application for the approval of the installed vinyl windows. That proposal was denied, as the historic window sashes had been intact, and the deteriorated conditions explained by the owner were determined to be repairable. The Commission requested the applicant put forward a proposal to repair and reinstall the historic windows and to return to a future Commission meeting. The Commission stated it may consider a multi-year proposal to return the openings to their previous condition.
- The applicant is the contractor that has been hired by the owners to replace the vinyl windows. The applicant submitted two project cost estimates:
  - Estimate One -- \$90,408.96  
Rebuild window openings, repair and reinstall historic window sash\*. The aluminum coil stock will be removed from the brickmould and mullions. If some areas are too damaged from the previous windows' removal, in-kind replacement will be installed within a window opening.
  - Estimate Two -- \$73,207.20  
Rebuild window openings and install new (primed) wood replacement windows that will match the operation, design and dimensions of the historic windows that were removed\*. Simulated divided lights have been specified and the upper sash patterns will be matched. The aluminum coil stock will be removed from the brickmould and mullions. If some areas are too damaged from the previous windows' removal, in-kind replacement will be installed within a window opening.

*\*First floor façade window openings are proposed to be six undivided units, matching the window sash that was in place since 2013. The price to fabricate new leaded glass casement units was not obtained.*
- Both estimates outline the damage that was done to the historic window openings when the windows were removed, namely the interior components of the window frames in which the window sash sit and control the operation were removed and discarded. The only parts of the window openings that remain are the outer parts of the window openings, brickmould and the window sash. All interior components need to be specially fabricated and installed within the window frames and sashes, therefore this estimate is likely higher than a repair estimate would have been for the “before” condition of the historic windows (i.e., all components intact prior to the April 2024 removal).



*Left: All the interior components (boxed in red) that held and operated the window sash were removed and discarded. The window replacement contractor then sprayed foam in the open spaces left behind.*

*Above: The wood window sash remain at the property and are being stored on a shelf in the owner's garage. Staff photo, November 4, 2024.*



*HDC staff photos of in-progress replacement window installation, April 2024. These windows are at the rear northwest corner of the house.*



*This photo shows two openings that have the vinyl frames in place, but not the sash. The wood brickmould, central mullion and sill has been covered with aluminum coilstock.*



*This photo shows the vinyl frames and sash in place, and foam is being added in open areas prior to the wood brickmould, central mullion and sill being covered with aluminum coilstock.*

- Shortly after HDC staff conducted the April 2024 site visit, the project was stopped due to not having HDC approval nor a building permit. The following photos, taken by HDC staff on November 1, 2024 show the current conditions of some of the window openings. Additional photos are posted on the property page.





*This two-unit window opening is located on the east wall at the rear of the house. The replacement windows are in place and the spray foam applied, but the wood brickmould, central mullion and sill remain exposed.*



*This three-unit opening is located on the rear wall. The window replacement for this opening has been completed. Staff photos, October 9, 2024.*





*Basement window openings.*



*Left: east wall. Right: Rear/north wall.*

*HDC staff photos, October 9, 2024.*



*Façade window opening, first floor. These vinyl units replaced non-original, non-approved windows that were installed in 2013 and replaced the original leaded glass casement units. Staff photo, October 9, 2024.*

- Regarding the three submitted estimates, only one contractor (the applicant) put forward a cost to rebuild the openings so the historic windows could be reinstalled after the sash were repaired. The owners informed HDC staff, during a site visit on Monday, October 4, that Jim Turner had recently visited the property but did not provide an estimate as the scope of work goes beyond the repair services he provides.

- All of the windows were removed without HDC approval, therefore, the scope of work that would meet the requirements of the historic ordinance (Section 21-2-59(e), are the fabrication of new wood framed leaded glass windows (with an identical pattern) at the first floor of the facade, and the historic true-divided light wood window sash reinstalled in the reconstructed openings, including new pulley, rope and weight systems for proper operation.
- If the Commission considers not requiring leaded glass windows to be fabricated for the front elevation openings, it is staff's opinion that undivided glass windows that fit within the six individual openings would be the most compatible solution as any pattern using a simulated divided light "grille" would create a strong visual pattern that was not present with the leaded comes. Also, should the Commission consider a replacement window proposal for the remainder of the windows on the house, it is staff's opinion that either exterior primed wood or aluminum-clad wood windows that match the dimension, operation, pattern and profile of the historic windows could be a compatible solution.
- The property owners have committed to retaining the original sash at the property (for possible future reuse) even if replacement windows are approved. Staff recognized that the owners did go through the effort to retain these elements when informed the work was in violation.

## ISSUES

- As the windows were removed without Historic District Commission approval; based on the Standards, new windows should be installed that match all the details of the historic windows that were replaced. Those historic window sash that remain on site should be reinstalled within reconstructed window openings. However, staff acknowledges the technical challenge in reconstructing dozens of double-hung window frames, necessary for the salvaged sash to be operable.
- If the Commission considers the window replacement estimate, the following information must be submitted for staff review:
  - Dimensioned sections of the replacement window sash and dimensions of the historic window sash.
  - Profile of grilles and specification of simulated divided lights.
  - Specification of glass.
  - Once a replacement window manufacturer is approved, based on the above items, a final window order will be submitted for review.
  - All aluminum coil stock will be removed and the existing wood mullions and brickmould will be retained and repaired as needed. If any parts are missing, new components will be fabricated that match existing material, dimensions and profiles.
  - Confirmation of paint color (depending on the manufacturer selected) will be submitted.

## 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. All of the windows were removed without HDC approval, therefore, the only replacement windows that would meet the requirements of the historic ordinance, are new leaded glass windows (with an identical pattern) at the first floor of the facade, and the historic window sash reinstalled in the reconstructed openings.

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.*