

STAFF REPORT: DECEMBER 11, 2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00570

ADDRESS: 751 CHICAGO BOULEVARD

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT: JOHN MCCARTER, JOHN MCCARTER CONSTRUCTION

PROPERTY OWNER: NERISSA SESSION

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: NOVEMBER 18, 2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: NOVEMBER 21, 2024

SCOPE: REPLACE FRONT DOOR AND TRANSOM

EXISTING CONDITIONS

751 Chicago Boulevard is located on the southeastern corner of Chicago and Third and includes a 2-1/2 story single-family dwelling that was erected in 1914. The symmetrical design of the façade features large single window openings with historic-age wood double-hung sash with a six-over-six pattern. The side gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles and is punctuated by three dormers with arched tops. The walls are clad with smooth-faced red brick with narrow mortar joints. Masonry details include a Flemish cross bond pattern, quoining at the corners, and flat arched lintels with contrasting elongated keystones. A heavily bracketed soffit and stone water table wrap around the front and side walls. At the western end of the house is a large open porch. Ionic columns with smooth shafts support the flat roof, and a low, historic-age wood perimeter railing encloses the porch to the front and side yards.

A brick walkway bisects the front lawn and features multiple steps at varying points that lead to a wide concrete landing. Fluted pilasters flank the French door and leaded glass transom. Missing from the façade is the projecting entry surround. The entablature is evidenced by ghost lines on the masonry wall and extending stone bases hold remnants of round wood columns.



Façade facing Chicago Boulevard.

Staff photos, November 21, 2024.



Close view of remaining front entry details.

The rear of the house contrasts the mostly flat-fronted façade with large projecting elements. At the first floor, an enclosed porch spans the distance between the open side porch and another small open porch that leads to the driveway. Square Ionic columns and grouped windows sitting on low walls span both sides of the enclosed porch. Directly above, a smaller, but similarly designed porch extends from the rear wall of the house. A two-story masonry wing with hip roof has a small raised and covered entrance that leads to the backyard that is enclosed by masonry walls.



Above: Rear of house, looking northeast from Third Avenue sidewalk.

Right: Rear of house and carriage house, looking northwest from alley.

Below: North/front and west/side walls of carriage house.

Staff photos, November 21, 2024.

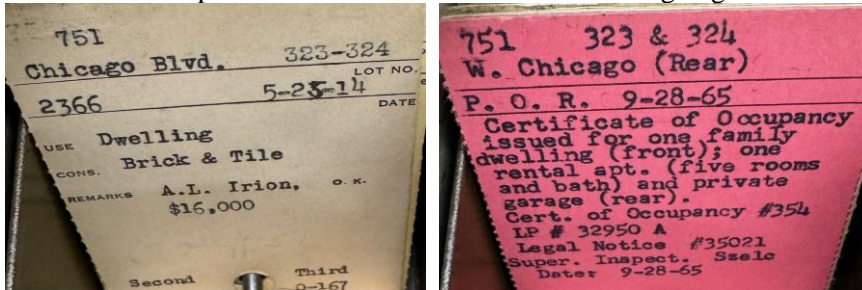


PROPOSAL

- Replace French door and leaded glass transom at front entrance with new wood French doors and undivided glass transom.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was enacted on April 2, 1974.
- The building permit to erect the dwelling was issued on May 23, 1914. In 1965, a permit was issued for the creation of a rental apartment which included the use of the garage.



BSEED building permit cards.

- The 1974 designation photos show architectural components that are now missing, including the entry portico with iron railing at second floor, window shutters, and downspout collector boxes. According to staff's research, these components were removed without Historic District Commission approval and are violations that must be addressed in a future application.



Designation photos, 1974, HDAB.



- The 1980 photo shows the evergreen trees at the side porch (visible in the side view 1974 designation photo on the preceding page) have grown to fully enclose the porch from public view.



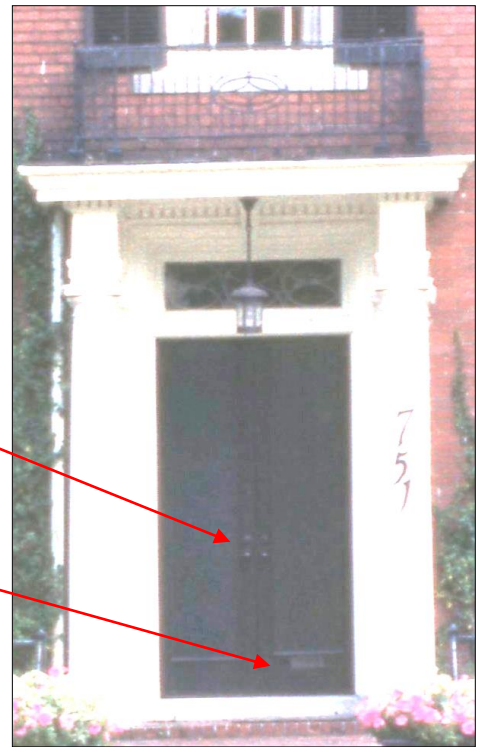
*Above: Looking southeast from Chicago Boulevard and Third Avenue, 1980. HDAB
Right: Façade, 1988. HDAB*



This 2009 Google street view image shows the evergreen trees dwarfing the house. Their proximity to the house coupled with deferred maintenance, exacerbated deterioration to some portions of the façade's eaves, soffits and brackets.

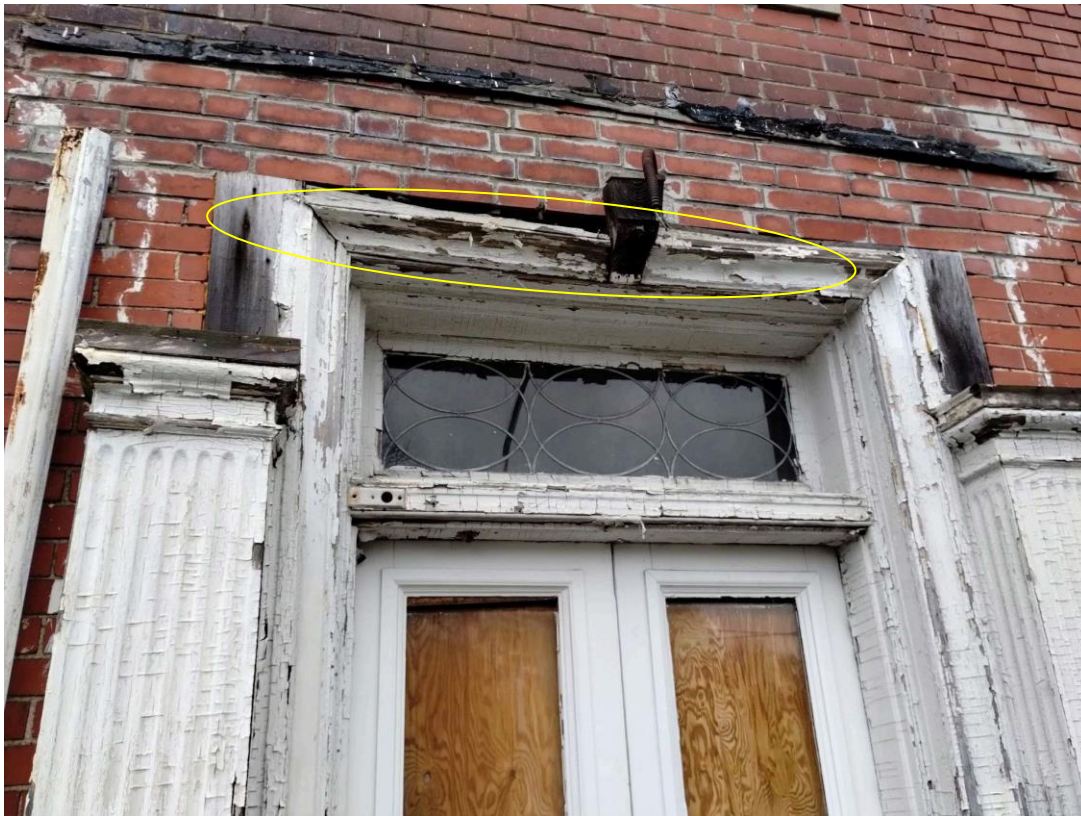


The last documentation of the intact portico is this 2013 Google street view.

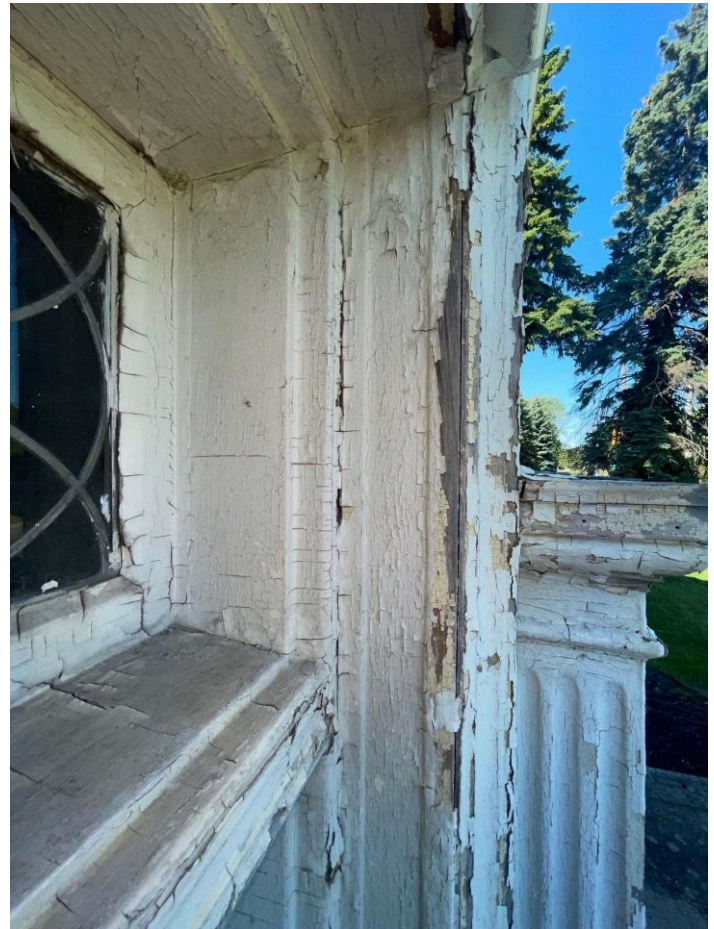


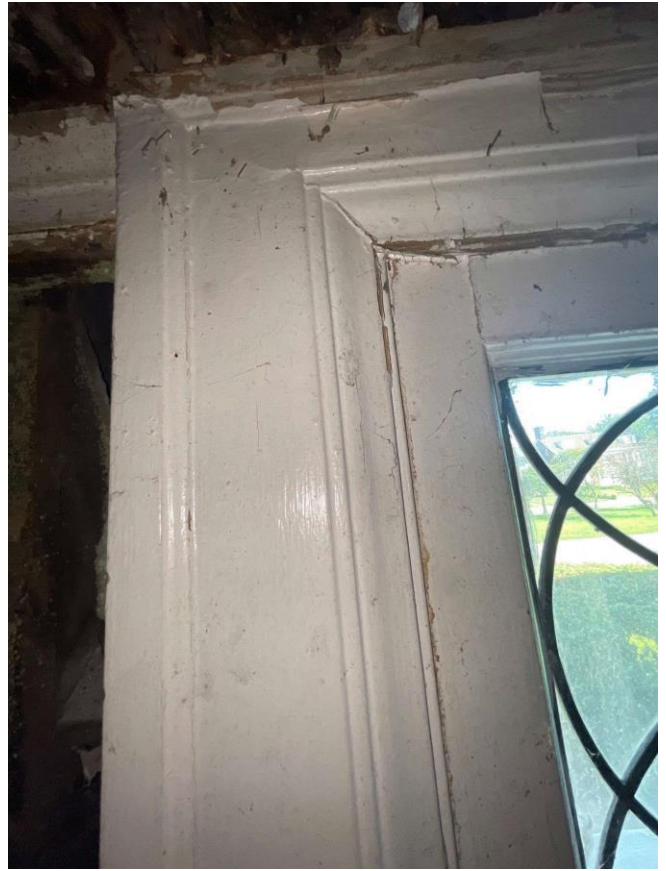
Staff lightened up the 1974 designation photo to gain definition to the entrance doors. The door handles and locks are visible, as is the mail slot at the bottom of the right-side door. It is staff's opinion wood panels covered, or had replaced, some type of glass inserts.

- It is staff's opinion that the existing French doors and transom are historic-age and are distinctive character-defining features within the larger highly detailed entry portico.
- The applicant is not aware if the owner obtained a repair estimate for the doors and window. Staff made multiple requests to the applicant that they submit details on why it is stated that the current door is beyond repair.



Applicant photographs. The entire entry surround requires repair and repainting, and that missing elements be fabricated and installed. For this application's scope of work, the transom window (glass and lead cames) and French doors are intact and repairable; new glass panels can be ordered for the doors.





Applicant photographs. The interior framing understandably exhibits less weathering than the exterior, and only requires spot repairs and repainting, as well as the new glass for the doors.



- The applicant proposes new doors to be fabricated with glass and wood panels.



Existing doors



Applicant's proposed design for new doors.

- The installation of the new doors and undivided glass transom would impart a design that would alter the features that comprised the historic and architecturally distinctive portico/front entrance.

ISSUES

- The French doors and leaded glass transom are character-defining features, and the applicant has not provided information to support that they are beyond repair. Therefore, replacement products should not be considered at this time. Additionally, when windows and doors are beyond repair, the Standards require that the new components must match the old in design, dimension, and operation.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

The wood French doors and leaded glass transom proposed for replacement on the façade do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for the following reasons:

- The historic leaded glass transom window and French doors are distinctive, character-defining features of the house, and their removal and replacement would substantially alter the appearance of the dwelling.
- The applicant hasn't substantiated that the doors and window are beyond repair, therefore replacement of these components should not be considered at this time.
- Additionally, if replacement components are considered, Standard Six requires the new doors and window match the old in design, materiality, texture, and other visual qualities.

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.