

STAFF REPORT: MARCH 25, 2025 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00599

ADDRESS: 1610 EDISON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON-EDISON

APPLICANT: ROBERT COLUMBO

PROPERTY OWNER: ROBERT COLUMBO

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: FEBRUARY 18, 2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: FEBRUARY 28, 2025

SCOPE: INSTALL WINDOWS AT REAR PORCH

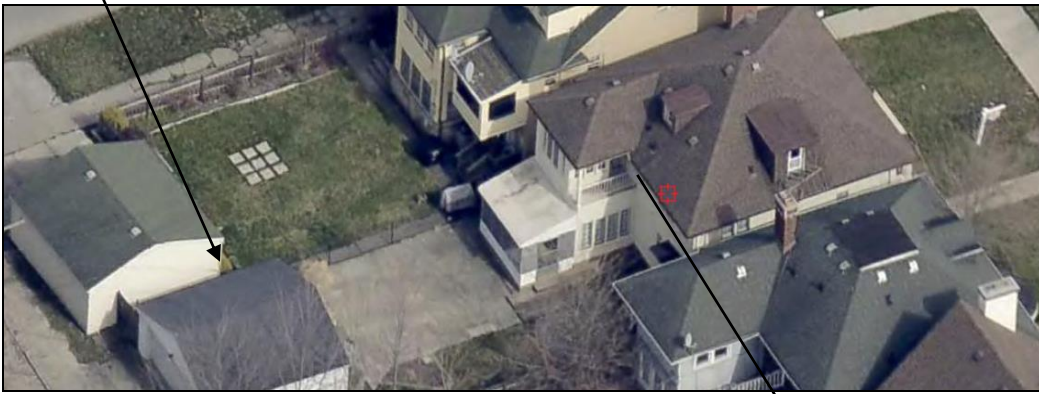
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected circa 1915, this property is located on the south side of Edison, between Woodrow Wilson Street and Rosa Parks Boulevard. The house fills the width of the lot, with exception of a small walkway along the western property line connecting the front sidewalk to the rear yard. The Prairie-style house has a low-rise pyramidal hip roof which extends far over the walls of the house, creating deep eaves which are decorated with brackets. Groups of mulled casement windows break the expanse of the stucco-faced exterior. A projecting horizontal trim band spanning all four walls under the second floor windows mirrors the projecting rowlock course that tops the raised basement's exterior masonry-clad walls. The facade includes a projecting box bay window at the second story, directly above the covered front porch which is emphasized by large brackets which are similarly covered with stucco.



Facade. HDC staff photo, February 28, 2025.

The garage (building permit issued - 10/08/1954) sits at the rear lot line and the automotive doors open to the alley.



Aerial view. ConnectExplorer. April 2024.

A two-story extension sits at the northeast end of the rear wall. Grouped casement windows are on each wall. A single door at the first floor leads out to a covered aluminum screened porch, and a single door at the second floor leads to a small open, covered porch. The extension has a hipped roof that matches the main roof, and the walls are painted wood.



Above: View of west wall that faces the rear yard. Applicant photo.



Left: View of rear/north wall and partial view of east/side wall. Taken from sidewalk on Woodrow Wilson Street, looking southwest. Staff photo, February 2025.

PROPOSAL

- Remove the windows and mullions from the three window openings at the second floor rear extension (four openings are the east-side wall, four openings at the north-rear wall, three openings at the west-side wall).
- Install Pella Lifestyle aluminum-clad wood casement windows.
 - Factory mulled units
 - Simulated divided light (7/8”), 2W x 5H
 - Glass: Insulated Tempered Low-E Advanced Insulating Glass
 - Exterior cladding color: Poplar White
 - Screen: Full screen – InView, white
- Window order:
Two (2) four-unit openings (east-side, north-rear)

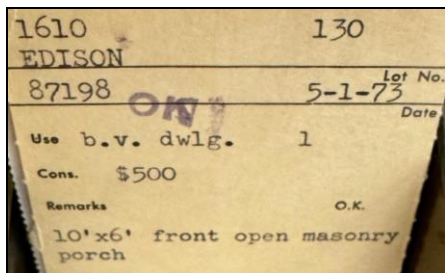
5	None Assigned	<p>Lifestyle, 4-Wide Casement, 81 X 60.75, Without HGP, Poplar White</p>
	<p>PK # 2188</p>	<p>1: Non-Standard SizeNon-Standard Size Left Casement Frame Size: 20 1/4 X 60 3/4 Unit Type: No Program General Information: No Package, Without Hinged Glass Panel, Clad, Pine, 5", 3 11/16", No Certification Exterior Color / Finish: Standard Enduraclad, Poplar White Interior Color / Finish: Primed Interior Glass: Insulated Low-E Advanced Low-E Insulating Glass Argon Non High Altitude Hardware Options: Wash Hinge Hardware, Fold-Away Crank, White, No Window Opening Control Device Sensor: Screen: Full Screen, White, InView™ Performance Information: U-Factor 0.29, SHGC 0.25, VLT 0.47, CPD PEL-N-14-00679-00001, Performance Rating 50, Calculated Negative DP Rating 50, STC 25, OITC 22, Clear Opening Width 10.5, Clear Opening Height 56.5, Clear Opening Area 59.25 sq. ft., Clear Opening Egress Does not meet typical United States egress, but may comply with local code requirements Grille: SDL w/Spacer, No Custom Grille, 7/8", Traditional (2W5H)</p> <p>2: Non-Standard SizeNon-Standard Size Right Casement Frame Size: 20 1/4 X 60 3/4 Unit Type: No Program General Information: No Package, Without Hinged Glass Panel, Clad, Pine, 5", 3 11/16", No Certification Exterior Color / Finish: Standard Enduraclad, Poplar White Interior Color / Finish: Primed Interior Glass: Insulated Low-E Advanced Low-E Insulating Glass Argon Non High Altitude</p>

- One, three-unit opening (west). Adjancet door to remain.

10	None Assigned	
		<div>  </div> <div> <p>PK # 2188</p> <p>Viewed From Exterior</p> </div>
		<p>Lifestyle, 3-Wide Casement, 60.75 X 60.75, Without HGP, Poplar White</p> <p>1: Non-Standard SizeNon-Standard Size Left Casement</p> <p>Frame Size: 20 1/4 X 60 3/4</p> <p>Unit Type: No Program</p> <p>General Information: No Package, Without Hinged Glass Panel, Clad, Pine, 5", 3 11/16", No Certification</p> <p>Exterior Color / Finish: Standard Enduraclad, Poplar White</p> <p>Interior Color / Finish: Primed Interior</p> <p>Glass: Insulated Tempered Low-E Advanced Low-E Insulating Glass Argon Non High Altitude</p> <p>Hardware Options: Wash Hinge Hardware, Fold-Away Crank, White, No Window Opening Control Sensor</p> <p>Screen: Full Screen, White, InView™</p> <p>Performance Information: U-Factor 0.29, SHGC 0.25, VLT 0.46, CPD PEL-N-14-00687-00001, Performance Rating 50, Calculated Negative DP Rating 50, STC 25, OITC 22, Clear Opening Width 10.5, Clear Opening Height 59.5, Egress Does not meet typical United States egress, but may comply with local code requirements</p> <p>Grille: SDL w/Spacer, No Custom Grille, 7/8", Traditional (2W5H)</p> <p>2: Non-Standard SizeNon-Standard Size Fixed Sash Set</p> <p>Frame Size: 20 1/4 X 60 3/4</p> <p>Unit Type: No Program</p> <p>General Information: No Package, Without Hinged Glass Panel, Clad, Pine, 5", 3 11/16", No Certification</p> <p>Exterior Color / Finish: Standard Enduraclad, Poplar White</p> <p>Interior Color / Finish: Primed Interior</p> <p>Glass: Insulated Tempered Low-E Advanced Low-E Insulating Glass Argon Non High Altitude</p>

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Boston-Edison Historic District was enacted on April 2, 1974; this dwelling is a contributing structure to the district.
- The designation photo shows the previous porch and aluminum awnings. The current front entry covered porch was reviewed and approved by the Commission in September 2018.
- Interestingly, staff found a building permit card issued in 1973 for work at a “10’ x 6’ open masonry porch”. Staff concludes that this may refer to the building of a new porch and installation of the iron posts and railings. The size and surface texture of the concrete masonry units below the front porch do not appear to be an early 20th century product and likely dated to 1973.

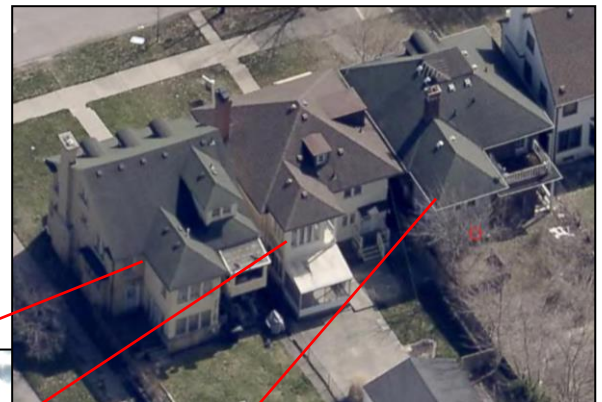


Left: BSEED permit card.

Above, right and below: Views of 1610 Edison at time of 1974 district designation. HDAB.



- Moving to the rear of the lot, staff noted that the three houses on the northwest corner of Edison and Woodrow Wilson have similarly-designed rear extensions. With the two-story massing, hip roof and flat wall space and multiple grouped window openings, the second floors of the extensions were likely sleeping/sun porches that were enclosed many decades ago. Based on the condition of the enclosures, staff believes the overall design and placement of these extensions are historic age and still read as early 20th century architectural building components.



Above: Aerial view, ConnectExplorer, April 2024.

Left: Rear walls of (from left) 1602, 1610 and 1616 Edison. Staff photo, February 2025.



- The dissimilar design treatment to the half-walls below the grouped windows, and the small open porch suggest the exterior walls were modified at some point in time. The white aluminum railing matched the design of the 1970's-era aluminum railing at the front porch (a photo comparison of the front and rear porch rails is on page 8), so it is possible these walls were changed at that time.



Comparison of the three walls of the rear extension. Each lower wall is finished in a different manner. Applicant photos.

Left: West-side wall

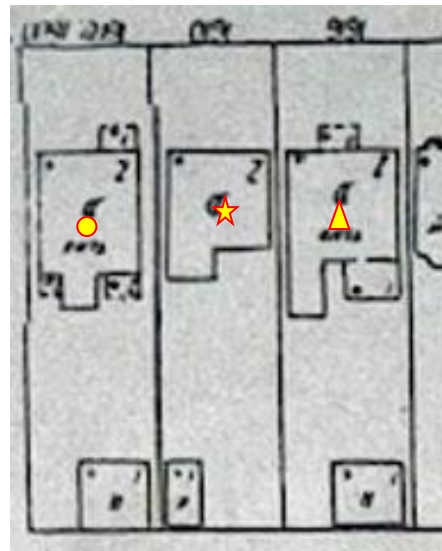
Middle: North-rear wall

Right: East-side wall

- While the exterior wall materials have been altered and an open porch integrated into the second floor footprint extension, the combined effect of the existing massing, height, hip roof, and grouped window openings with historic-age wood casement windows, still conveys the architectural and historic association of an early 20th century two-story porch extension, and staff considers it a character-defining feature of the dwelling and property.



Aerial view looking southeast. ConnectExplorer, April 2024.
From left to right (photo and map): 1602, 1610 and 1616 Edison.



This Sanborn map shows the extensions are components of the dwelling at the three properties. Undated Sanborn map. This map was found in the property folder for 1602 Edison. Staff dates the map to pre-1954, as a small garage is shown at 1610 Edison (staff has record that a permit was issued in 1954 for a frame garage, and a larger garage is there now).

- The interior and exterior photos submitted by the applicant show the windows to be intact (with the exception of one missing window on the east wall) and in repairable condition.
- The applicant mentions in the “Description of Existing Conditions” part of the application form, that the water problems which caused deterioration to the interior porch walls are directly related to the current sills and how they were constructed. It is possible to fabricate new sills (and mullions, if needed) and reinstall the existing casements after the windows are repaired.



Interior view of the east-side wall. Applicant photo.

- The close-up exterior views of this set of windows, as shown below, confirm their deep placement within the walls.
- The existing exterior wood wall treatment may have been in place at the time of designation and is a compatible material and wall finish for the house; therefore, staff does not consider this a violation.

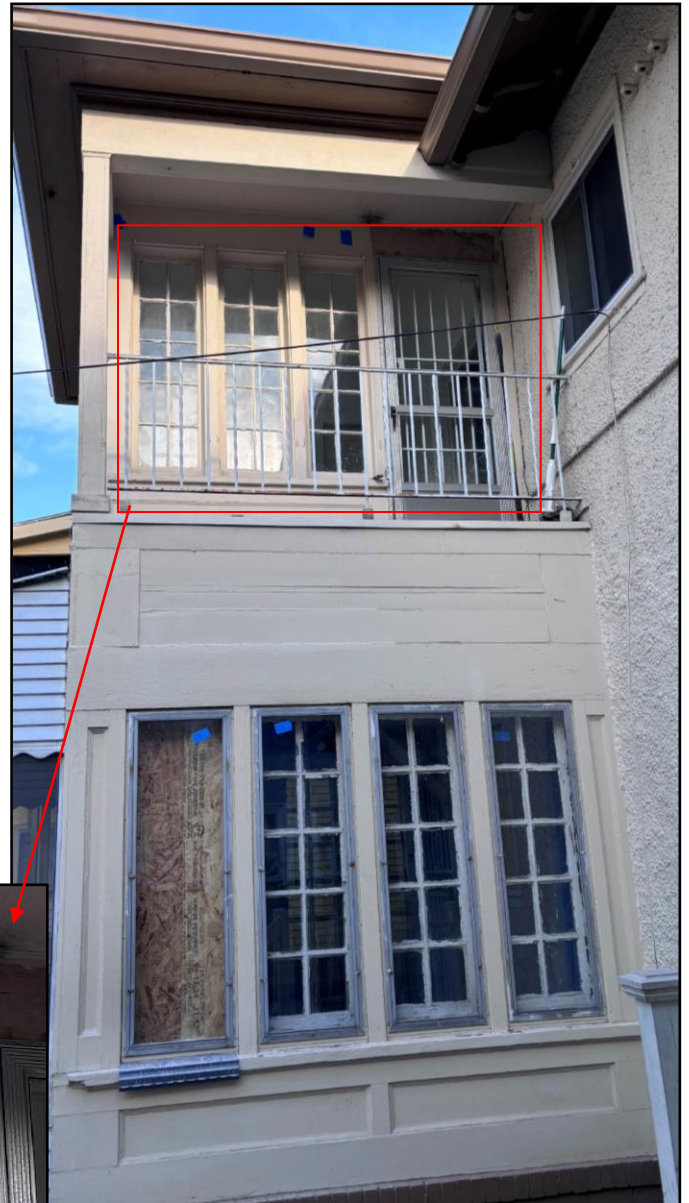


Interior and exterior views of the rear-north wall and windows. Applicant photos.





Interior and exterior views of the side-west wall and windows. The white aluminum railing has alternating twisted and straight simples, identical to the railing that had been installed at the front porch. Applicant photos. Bottom right photo is circa 2018.



- The applicant submitted the estimate for the repair of the casement windows at the first floor, as a point of comparison when viewing against the applicant's request to install new windows at the second floor. The window sizes might be slightly different between the two floors, but the estimate is for 11 windows (the first floor porch also has one missing window sash), so the ballpark figure is a fair estimate to use for comparison with new windows.
- **Window Diverse Services estimates the repair cost for 11 casement windows, including new storm/screen windows, to total \$25,916.17 – which makes an average window cost of \$2,356.** However, it must be noted that this price does not include the cost to fabricate one new casement window. So the repair and installation of one new window estimate would be higher.
- **Window Replacements Unlimited's window order for the 11 casement windows (fabricated in three large Pella grouped window units) totals \$28,514 – which makes an average window cost of \$2,592.**
- Staff identified the existing windows as character-defining features of this extension, and visible features from the public right of way along Woodrow Wilson Street. The estimated repair cost confirms the windows can be repaired at a reasonable price, so the replacement of the existing windows would not meet Standard Six, which 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."*
- The applicant informed staff that the wood casement windows at the first floor, per the submitted cost estimate, will be restored. Similarly restoring the second floor casement windows would create a cohesive appearance on the extension as the windows would retain matching materials, operation, dimensionality, finish and placement within the window openings.
- As the historic windows did not meet the threshold of deteriorated beyond repair, staff did not compare the replacement windows (dimensions, matching of features, etc.) to the existing windows, as replacement windows shouldn't be considered at this time.

- In preparation for this staff report, staff noticed that the windows on the front of the dwelling were replaced after the front porch rehabilitation project was reviewed by the Commission. The historic-age shutters have also been removed.



Above: This 2016 photo shows the conditions of the front facade prior to the 2018 – 2019 rehabilitation of the front porches.



Above: This 2019 photo shows the lower wall of the upper porch has been rebuilt, and evidence of the awning at the first floor grouped window opening is still visible. Staff photo, January 6, 2019.



Above: Current conditions - The repair and finish work to the stucco at the bottom of the box bay, as well as the area above the grouped window shows minimal, if any, evidence of the former awnings.

Staff photo, February 2025.

ISSUES

- The rear extension is historic-age and likely an original feature of the house and property. Although the exterior wall material has changed, the combined effect of the massing, two-story height, hip roof, and grouped window openings with historic-age wood casement windows, still conveys the architectural and historic design of, and association with, an early 20th century porch extension. The existing historic components are character-defining features of the dwelling and property.
- The existing windows are set deeply within the window openings, mimicking the placement of the historic windows on the house. The windows at the first and second floor of the extension should also retain matching materials, operation, dimensionality, finish and placement within their respective window openings.
- Due to its prominence in massing, design and location, the extension is visible from the public-right-of-way and retention of original materials is crucial for the historic character, features and spaces of a property to be retained.
- The submitted photos documenting the physical condition of the eleven (11) wood casement windows show them to be intact and in repairable condition. Additionally, a submitted repair estimate confirms the windows are technically and economically feasible to be repaired; therefore, as Standard Six states – The deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced.
- The window opening which is missing a window sash is on the public-facing elevation of the extension and should match the historic windows in all ways – including operation, material, finish, dimensions, profile(s), color and placement within the opening.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Boston Edison Historic District's Elements of Design, specifically:

Standard 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.

Standard 5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Standard 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.

and

- *Elements of Design 3, 6, and 7.*

For the following reasons;

- The rear extension is historic-age and likely an original feature of the house and property. Although the exterior wall material has changed, the combined effect of the massing, two-story height, hip roof, and grouped window openings with historic-age wood casement windows, still conveys the architectural and historic design of, and association with, an early 20th century porch extension. The existing historic components are character-defining features of the dwelling and property.
- The existing windows are set deeply within the window openings, mimicking the placement of the historic windows on the house. The windows at the first and second floor of the extension should also retain matching materials, operation, dimensionality, finish and placement within their respective window openings.
- Due to its prominence in massing, design and location, the extension is visible from the public-right-of-way and retention of original materials is crucial for the historic character, features and spaces of a property

to be retained.

- The existing windows in the rear extension are character-defining features of the property, and the submitted photos documenting the physical condition of the eleven (11) wood casement windows show them to be intact and in repairable condition. Additionally, a submitted repair estimate confirms the windows are technically and economically feasible to be repaired; therefore, as Standard Six states – The deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced.
- The window opening which is missing a window sash is on the public-facing elevation of the extension and should match the historic windows in all ways – including operation, material, finish, dimensions, profile(s), color and placement within the opening.