

STAFF REPORT 07-24-2019 SPECIAL MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: 19-6333
ADDRESS: 1914 EDISON STREET
HISTORIC DISTRICT: BOSTON EDISON
APPLICANT: RICHARD FERNANDEZ
STAFF SITE VISIT: 07-15-2019

PREPARED BY: A. PHILLIPS

PROPOSAL

The building located at 1914 Edison Street is a 2½-story single-family residence constructed in 1924. The structure is clad in buff-colored brick and features limestone and wood detail. A raised porch spans the entire width of the front façade and provides support for a porte cochere. The hipped roof contains dormers at the front and side facades. The dormers are clad in cedar shake. The wood-frame garage, located at the northwest corner of the parcel, was constructed at the same time as the house and is utilitarian in design.



With the current proposal, the applicant is seeking the Commission’s approval **to perform extensive repairs the existing wood-frame garage**, including the following scope items:

- Repair the wood structure in kind as necessary
- Replace the existing asbestos siding with “Textured Redwood Grain Fiber Panel Siding” – to remain unpainted.
- Replace existing exterior soffits with “Edge and Center Bead Gold Pine Wood Wall Panel”—to remain unpainted.
- Install (2) new garage doors and (1) new person door.
- The existing dark gray asphalt shingles are to remain.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

- Existing garage is in significant disrepair.

- Existing siding and roofing materials at the garage are not considered to be historic materials.
- Proposed wood-grain textured fiber panel siding is not an appropriate material within historic contexts.

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

- (1) ***Height.*** Virtually all of the houses in the district have two (2) full stories plus an attic or a finished third floor within the roof, which are generally called "two-and-a-half" (2½) story houses, additions to existing buildings shall be related to the existing structure. New buildings shall meet the following standards:
- (i) The eight (8) adjoining houses on the same block face, excluding any houses built since 1930, shall be used to determine an average height. If eight (8) houses are not available on the same block face, then one (1) or more houses as close as possible to being directly across the street from the proposed structure may be used. The height of the two (2) adjoining houses shall be added into the total twice, with a divisor of ten (10) used to determine the average. The main roof of any new building must have a height of at least eighty percent (80%) of the resulting average. In no case shall a new building be taller than the tallest roof height included in the calculation. In determining the height of existing buildings and proposed buildings, the highest point of the main roof shall be used, even where towers or other minor elements may be higher.
 - (ii) The level of the eaves of the proposed new structure has as much or more significance for compatibility as the roof height. Therefore, an average eave or cornice height shall be determined by the same process as that described above. The proposed new structure shall have a height at the eaves or cornice of not less than ninety (90) percent of the average determined from existing structures; and in no case shall the eaves or cornice of the proposed structure be lower than the lowest eave or cornice height used in the computation, nor higher than the highest eave or cornice.
- (2) ***Proportion of buildings' front facade.*** Proportion varies in the district, depending on the age, style, and location in a specific subdivision. Most houses are wider than tall, especially those on large or multiple lots east of the John C. Lodge Freeway. With height being established by the standards above, proportion will be established by prohibiting any proposed building or addition from creating a front facade wider than the widest, or narrower than the narrowest, of those existing on the same block face.
- (3) ***Proportion of openings within the facade.*** Windows openings are virtually always taller than wide; however, several windows are sometimes grouped into a combination that is wider than tall. Window openings are always subdivided. The most common window type is double-hung with sashes that are generally further subdivided by Muntins or leaded glass. Facades have approximately fifteen (15) percent to thirty-five (35) percent of their area glazed. Sun porches with a very high proportion of window openings subdivided by mullions and muntins are common.
- (4) ***Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades.*** In buildings derived from classical precedents, voids are usually arranged in a symmetrical and evenly-spaced manner within the facades. In examples of other styles, particularly those of English Medieval Inspiration, voids are arranged with more freedom, but usually in a balanced composition.
- (5) ***Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets.*** The spacing of the buildings is generally determined by the setback from side lot lines. There is a variance in the widths of subdivision lots from one block to another. The lots generally range from forty (40) feet to seventy-five (75) feet in width. The minimum spacing between houses is ten (10) feet and the maximum spacing between houses is approximately three hundred and twenty-five (325) feet, where several lots are combined. The typical spacing is ten (10) feet to fifteen (15) feet from side lot lines. In the case of very wide properties, two (2) conditions exist: The house is located in the center of the site with extensive side yard space, which only occurs with extremely large houses by district standards; or the house is located at the side of the wide site, which creates an extensive side yard on one (1) side of the house.
- (6) ***Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections.*** In those examples derived from classical precedents, entrances and porches, if any, tend to be centered on the front facade. Other examples display more freedom with entrance and porch placement. Porches and permanently enclosed sun porches are often placed at the side and sometimes at the rear of the building.
- (7) ***Relationship of materials.*** The majority of houses are faced with brick, while many are partially or totally stucco. There are some stone buildings, sometimes combined with stucco; clapboard is rare, and is extremely rare as the sole material. Roofing includes slate, tile and asphalt shingles. Wood shingle roofs were once common and have generally been replaced with asphalt. Wood shake does not exist and there is no known evidence that it was ever used in the district. Stone trim is common. Wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim and is used in many examples for all trim.
- (8) ***Relationship of textures.*** The most common relationship of textures in the district is that of a low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted with the smooth surface of wood or stone trim. There are a few houses with rough or rusticated stone surfaces. The use of stucco or concrete, with or without half-timbering, as a contrast to brick surfaces, is not unusual. Tile, slate, or wood shingle roofs have particular textural values where they exist. Asphalt shingles generally have little textural interest, even in those types which purport to imitate some other variety.
- (9) ***Relationship of colors.*** Natural brick colors (such as red, yellow, brown, buff) predominate in wall surfaces. Natural stone colors also exist. Where stucco or concrete exists, it usually remains in its natural state, or is painted in a shade of cream. Roofs are in natural colors (tile and slate colors, natural and stained wood colors), and asphalt shingles are predominantly

within this same dark color range. Paint colors often relate to style. The buildings derived from classical precedents, particularly those of Neo-Georgian Style, generally have woodwork painted white, cream, or in the range of those colors including "putty"; doors and shutters are frequently dark green or black.

Colors known to have been in use on similar buildings of this style in the eighteenth or early twentieth centuries may be considered for appropriateness. Buildings of medieval inspiration (notable Neo-Tudor) generally have painted woodwork and window frames of a dark brown or cream color. Half timbering is almost always stained dark brown. The original colors of any building, as determined by professional analysis, are always acceptable for a house, and may provide guidance for similar houses.

- (10) **Relationship of architectural details.** Architectural details generally relate to style. Neo-Georgian buildings display classic details, mostly in wood, and sometimes in stone. Porches, shutters, window frames, cornices, and dormer windows are commonly, although not always, treated. Details on "Mediterranean" style or vernacular buildings including arched windows, door openings, and porches, are often done in stone, brick, tile, and sometimes in stucco. Buildings of medieval inspiration tend to have details in the form of carved wood or carved stone ornaments on window frames, door frames, and eaves. In general, the various styles are rich in architectural details.
- (11) **Relationship of roof shapes.** A variety of roof shapes exist in the district, depending on building style. Shallow hipped roofs with dormers, roofs with triangular gables, and steep hipped roofs predominate. A few Gambrel roofs exist. Complex arrangements of the gabled and/or the hipped types, with subsidiary or transverse roofs, are not unusual. Dormers are common. Flat roofs are present only as subsidiary roofs on residential structures. Garage roofs generally reflect the style and pitch of the roof on the main house.
- (12) **Walls of continuity.** The major wall of continuity is created by the buildings, with their uniform setbacks within the blocks. New buildings should contribute to this wall of continuity. Minor walls of continuity are created where rows of trees have survived in sufficient numbers or new trees are planted in rows, and where hedges along front lot lines exist in numbers.
- (13) **Relationship of Significant Landscape Features and Surface treatments.** The typical treatment of individual properties is a flat or graded front lawn area in grass turf, often subdivided by a straight or curving walk leading to the front entrance. Materials for such walks are concrete, brick, stone, or combinations of those materials. Some front yards have rectangular raised earthwork terraces upon which the house stands. These unpaved terraces having sloping embankments or retaining walls which are made of brick, stone, or both, at the change of grade foundation plantings, often of a deciduous character, characteristic of the period 1900—1930, are present virtually without exception. Hedges between properties and along front property lines are not uncommon. It is characteristic for corner lots to have hedges or fencing at side lot lines along the sidewalk. There is a wide range in the type of fencing. Fencing within the public view was generally designed to compliment the style, design material, and date of the residence. Although the American Elm was once the dominant tree, it is virtually extinct in the district. Replacement trees should be characteristic of the area and period. Plantings of new trees should be directed to "tree lawns" and medians. If American Elm is planted, it should be disease resistant.

Straight side driveways leading from the street to rear garages are the norm, although access to garages is also off the alley, especially in areas of the district that were developed earlier. On corner lots, garages and driveways often face the side streets. These driveways are paved in asphalt, concrete, or brick. Side lots are not uncommon for the larger properties in the district, and a number of these form a part of the original site plan for the residence. Such side lots are usually landscaped and are often fenced at or near the setback line.

The width of tree lawns varies from block to block. Street pavements are now asphalt. Cut stone curbs exist in areas of the district where they have not yet been replaced with concrete, primarily east of the John C. Lodge Freeway. Public sidewalks are concrete. Some tree lawns/berms have been covered with concrete in parts of the district, which may represent encroachment on city property. The resulting wide sidewalks are not appropriate in the district. The ample one hundred and twenty-five (125) foot street right-of-ways of West Boston Boulevard and Chicago Boulevard are ample, and each have two (2) narrow pavements divided by the large graded grassy median strips which are planted with evergreens and deciduous trees, the other east-west streets, Longfellow Street and Edison Boulevard, are sixty-six (66) feet wide.

The Detroit Lighting Commission's ornamental poles ("O.P.") with cast iron bases (Pattern #10 and Cast Iron Panel Pattern #16A) and wooden shafts are placed at regular intervals primarily on the medians on Boston Boulevard and Chicago Boulevard, and on the tree lawns on other east-west streets. Lighting on the north-south side streets consists of steel poles, some of which are fluted, with either ornate pendants or simple cranes. There are historic upright poles along the periphery of Voight Park. Concrete and brick entrance piers exist at Woodward Avenue and Longfellow Street. Alleys run east-west down the center of the blocks, with the exception of the north-south alleys behind the Woodward Avenue frontage.

- (14) **Relationship of open space to structures.** Open space in the district occurs in the form of vacant land, a city park, side lots, and grassy median strips in the boulevards. There are no houses facing Woodward Avenue. Ample open space is provided at Woodward Avenue and Boston Boulevard, creating a park-like entrance into the district. The John C. Lodge Freeway is

depressed and forms a visual and physical gap in the district. All houses have rear yards as well as front yards. Where an original or early arrangement of house and grounds included, and still includes, landscaped lots which form part of the landscaping plan for the residence, such landscaped lots are significant landscape features.

- (15) **Scale of facades and facade elements.** There is a variety in scale from block to block and style to style, the largest and most substantial houses being primarily those on the first two (2) blocks west of Woodward Avenue and on Boston Boulevard east of the John C. Lodge Freeway West of the John C. Lodge Freeway and on Longfellow Street and Edison Boulevard, the houses are generally smaller in scale and are situated on smaller lots. The size and complexity of facade elements and details either accentuate or subdue the scale of the facades. Facade elements have been determined by what is appropriate for the style. Window sash are usually subdivided by Muntins, which affect the apparent scale of the windows within the facades.
- (16) **Directional expression of front elevations.** Although many of the larger buildings are wider than tall, the expression is generally neutral.
- (17) **Rhythm of building setbacks.** Because of the existence of various subdivisions and related subdivision and deed restrictions, setbacks vary from area to area within the district, although they are generally consistent within each block or area. The varying designs of the houses, occasionally with slight setbacks in the facades, cause the houses to relate to the front setback line in different ways. This creates a slight variation in the setback line. Nevertheless, within each block or area, a wall of continuity is created.
- (18) **Relationship of lot coverage.** Lot coverage ranges from approximately forty (40) percent (40%) to ten (10) percent or less in the case of homes with large yards. Most homes are in the twenty-five (25) percent to thirty-five (35) percent range of lot coverage.
- (19) **Degree of complexity within the facade.** The degree of complexity has been determined by what is typical and appropriate for a given style. The buildings derived from classical precedents usually have simple, rectangular facades with varying amounts of ornamentation. Other styles, such as those of medieval inspiration, frequently have facades complicated by gables, bays, slight setbacks, and an occasional tower. In general, the smaller houses in the district are less complex.
- (20) **Orientation, vistas, overviews.** Most of the houses in the district have front entrances which are oriented toward the streets running east-west. The houses on LaSalle Boulevard, from Chicago Boulevard to Edison Boulevard, are orientated toward LaSalle. Garages are frequently oriented either toward an alley and/or the front drive or toward a side street in the case of corner lots. Almost all garages are detached and are at the rear of the lot.
- (21) **Symmetrical or asymmetric appearance.** Neo-Georgian and other buildings derived from classical precedents are generally symmetrical, buildings in other styles, including the Neo-Tudor, are generally asymmetric, but balanced, compositions.
- (22) **General environmental character.** The Boston-Edison District, with its long straight streets, two (2) boulevards, large-to-moderate sized stately single-family homes, Voight Park and Woodward Avenue's open space, has an urban, substantial, low density residential character.

RECOMMENDATION

It is staff's opinion that the work, as proposed, does not destroy historic materials that characterize the building, its site, or setting. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission find the extensive repair of the existing garage to be appropriate as the scope of work meets the following Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- 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.*

However, staff recommends the following conditions:

- The proposed siding be a more appropriate material than fiber board.

Ignited International Ministries

Longfellow St

1914 Edison Street

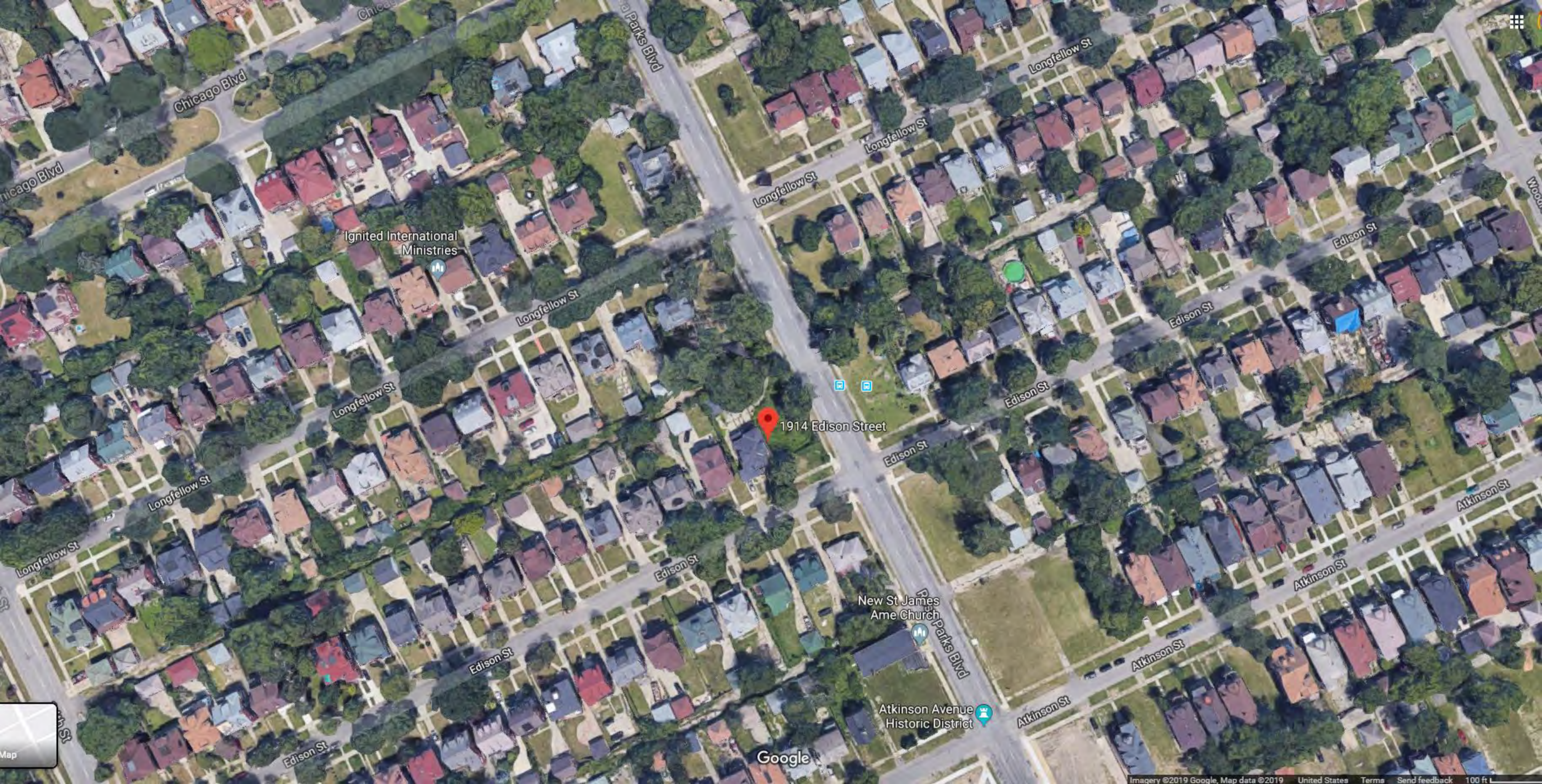
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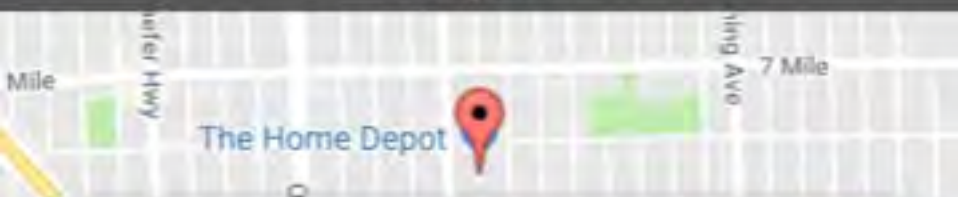
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