



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

SR-2 – ADVISORY STAFF REPORT (04-03-2026)

This advisory report, prepared by staff, represents the opinion and advice of professional staff, and does not represent nor direct the separate review and decision of the Historic District Commission. This report serves as an addendum to SR-1, an objective staff summary of the proposal and property.

ADDRESS: 541 LODGE STREET

MEETING DATE: 04-08-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00059

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY: B. SALIE

STAFF OBJECTIONS TO APPROVAL:

This first section describes itemized conclusions/concerns, which, in staff's professional opinion, would prevent the issue of an unconditional Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). "None" means staff has no objections and believes a COA is warranted, with no conditions. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

1. The security lights are incompatible with the historic context of the neighborhood and are not an appropriate lighting type for the district. The style, size, and color are incompatible with the historic character of the house.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This second section expands on the reasoning and analysis leading to staff's conclusions given in the first section above. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.



Designation Photos 1978

- Berry Subdivision was designated as a historic district in 1978.

- Staff received a complaint regarding the lighting coming from the house at 541 Lodge, to which staff responded by performing a site visit. On-site staff observed that the security lights in question, which are unusually large for security lights, were never approved by staff and therefore sent a Notice of Work Observed letter requesting that an application be submitted.
- The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #2, states: ***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.***
 - The installation of the security lights contrasts with the historic character of the property and alters the historic features of the house.



Photo taken by staff on 03/23/2026

- Per the Historic District Commission guidelines for Security Lighting:
 - *Mounting hardware shall not permanently damage significant architectural or landscape features. If the equipment must be affixed to a masonry wall, it shall be secured in mortar joints rather than into the brick or stone.*
 - As staff were not involved in the installation process, it is unclear to staff how the lights were mounted and whether any brick was drilled into versus only mortar.



Photo taken by staff on 03/23/2026

- ***The installation shall be as small and limited in number as feasible. The equipment shall be unobtrusive and simple in form, without decorative embellishment.***
 - The security lights are obtrusive in nature and do not blend in with the historic context of the neighborhood.
- ***The equipment shall be shop finished or painted a color to match that of the building surface to which it is affixed. If installed within the site/yard, the equipment shall display a neutral finish color.***

- The existing light, with a silver/white finish, contrasts with the brown color of the brick veneer. This goes against the district's elements of design #9, which states:

Relationship of colors. Natural brick colors (red, yellow, brown) predominate in wall surfaces. Natural stone colors are also acceptable. Where stucco or concrete exists, it is either left in its natural state, or painted in a shade of cream. Roofs are in natural colors (red, tile, slate colors, natural wood) and asphalt shingle should be kept within this range. Paint colors often relate to style. The classically inspired buildings, notably Neo-Georgian, 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 buildings of this type in the 18th Century or early 19th Century on similar buildings may be considered for suitability. Buildings of Medieval inspiration, notably Neo-Tudor, generally have painted woodwork and window frames of dark brown or cream color. Half-timbering is virtually always stained dark brown. Original colors on houses built before 1942, as determined by professional analysis, are always acceptable.

- ***If the installation requires a conduit, it shall be not visible or minimally visible. The conduit shall not be placed on or across ornamental features and shall be shop finished or painted a color to match that of the building surface to which it is affixed. If the conduit must be affixed to a masonry wall, it shall be secured in mortar joints, not the brick or stone. If there are multiple proposed or existing installations, associated conduit shall be combined to the maximum extent feasible.***
 - The conduit does not blend in with the brown brick surface.

- Therefore, it is Staff's opinion that the style, size, and color of the security lighting is not an appropriate alteration to this 1910 Neo-Georgian style house.
- The Historic District Commission's *Security Bar and Lighting Guidelines* mention:

Adequate lighting of the entranceway should be provided on the interior as well as the exterior. The best location for exterior lighting is under the eaves.

If a person was to choose to install exterior lighting you should evaluate where the lighting is needed to illuminate dark areas or areas susceptible to break-ins. Motion activated lighting is popular and come in a variety of traditional designs which would be compatible to your historic home style or commercial building. Some motion activated lighting units also come

equipped with an indoor audible alarm which will alert the homeowner of a would be perpetrator. When positioning lights, one should take care not to shine lights on surrounding properties or in surrounding houses. Other types of lighting can also focus on the ground level or walking paths.



- On site, staff observed additional lighting at the front and the portico. Similar to the other lights, these are not historically appropriate lights and do not blend in with the brown brick veneer or the cream-colored columns at the portico. These were also never approved by the Commission. However, this is not a part of the current application.

Photo taken by staff 03/23/26

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This third and final section takes staff's itemized "objections" identified in the first section, and presents them in the form of "conditions" in support of a proposed approval recommendation or "reasons" in support of a proposed denial recommendation, in the form required by Section 21-2-78 of the City Code. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

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 Berry Subdivision Historic District's Elements of Design, 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.*
- And Elements of Design #9

For the following reasons;

1. The security lights are incompatible with the historic context of the neighborhood and are not an appropriate lighting type for the district. The style, size, and color are incompatible with the historic character of the house.