



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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SR-2 – STAFF ADVISORY REPORT (04-03-2026) Revised 04/06/2026

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: 4221 CORTLAND

MEETING DATE: 04-08-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00097

SCOPE: REBUILD REAR AND SIDE WALLS OF REAR WING; INSTALL FRONT PORCH RAILING

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY: A. DYE

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 front porch railing and rear wing's wood lap siding were distinctive, historic character-defining features that date to the resource's Period of Significance.
2. The installation of a 36" high railing at the front porch does not match the low height of the historic railing that was removed without HDC approval. The taller metal railing would end above the height of the windowsill at the first floor, and would not provide an appearance that is appropriate to the early 20th century historic and architectural character of the dwelling, thus altering the features and spaces that characterize the property.
3. The proposed replacement of the original wood lap siding does not demonstrate that the historically distinctive, character-defining material was beyond reasonable repair and replacement in-kind where missing.
4. The proposed LP SmartSide composite product does not match the depth, profile, and shadow lines of the previously installed historic wood siding. Installing the substitute product on walls of a historic feature/location would create a loss of authenticity and the physical features and characteristics closely associated with the property's historic significance.
5. Wood clapboard siding is commercially available and can be purchased and installed with minimal, if any, additional cost. Wood lap siding at this first floor location would retain the characteristics of an early 20th century structure and match the materiality and dimensional features of the intact historic wood shake siding at the second floor and wood lap siding at the attic/3rd floor dormer wall.

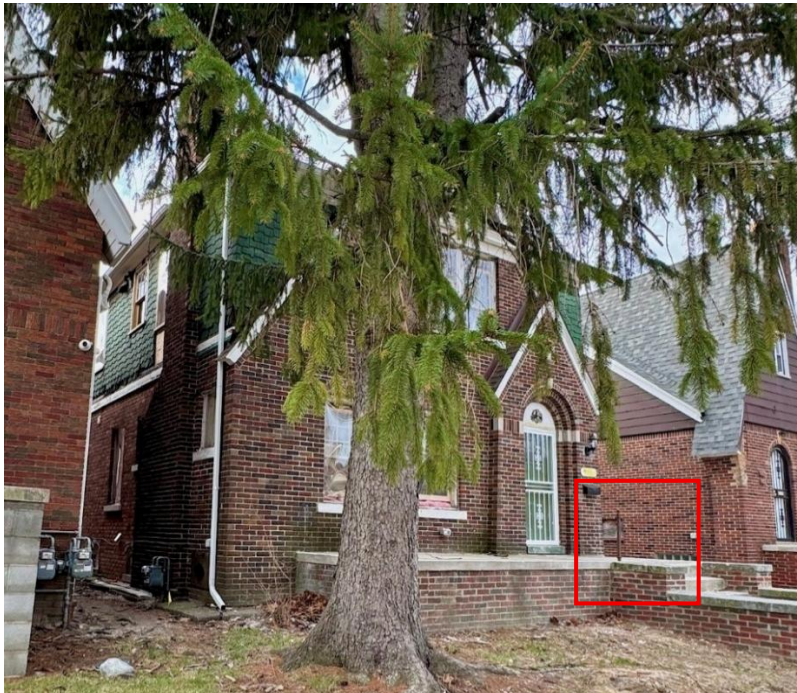
STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

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.

Front Porch Railing



Google Street View, Left: July 2009 -- Right: August 2011. Although the front of the house is only partially visible due to a pine tree, the 2009 view offers a full view of a low height railing intact at the perimeter of the porch. The 2011 photo shows one small railing remnant and one post remained two years later.

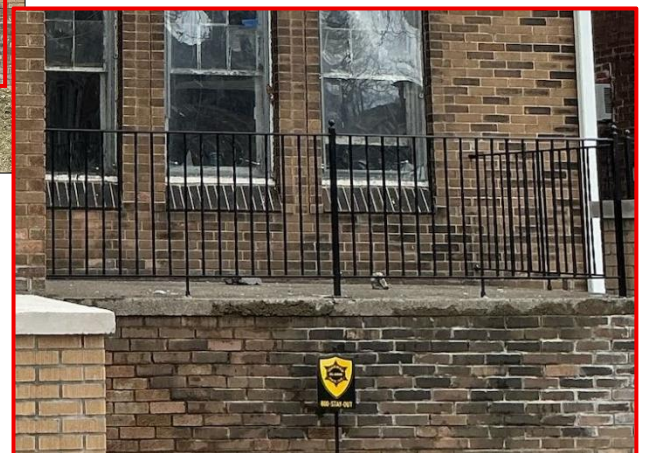


Currently, only one post at the top left of the stairs remains intact. Staff photo, March 19, 2026.

- While the historic, character-defining railing is no longer present (outside of one end post), staff notes that it was removed without HDC approval between 2009 and 2011, ten to twelve years after the district’s historic designation (1999).
- The original railing height was below, or in line with, the bottom of the sill of the grouped windows. It created a visual and physical boundary to the porch while not compromising a full view of the historic, distinctive character-defining window opening.
- Standard Six 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 installation of a 36” high railing at the front porch does not match the low height of the historic railing that was removed without HDC approval. The taller metal railing would project (or extend) above the height of the windowsill at the first floor and would not provide an appearance that is appropriate to the early 20th century historic and architectural character of the dwelling, thus altering the features and spaces that characterize the property.
- **The applicant proposes to install a straight spindle metal railing with narrow posts with ball caps, identical to the railing installed at 4510 Cortland (shown below). Staff notes the railing at 4510 Cortland had been installed without HDC approval and was reviewed by the Commission after the fact, at its August 13, 2025 meeting. HDC staff recommended denial of the railing; the Commission issued a COA (HDC2025-00485) for the railing as installed.**



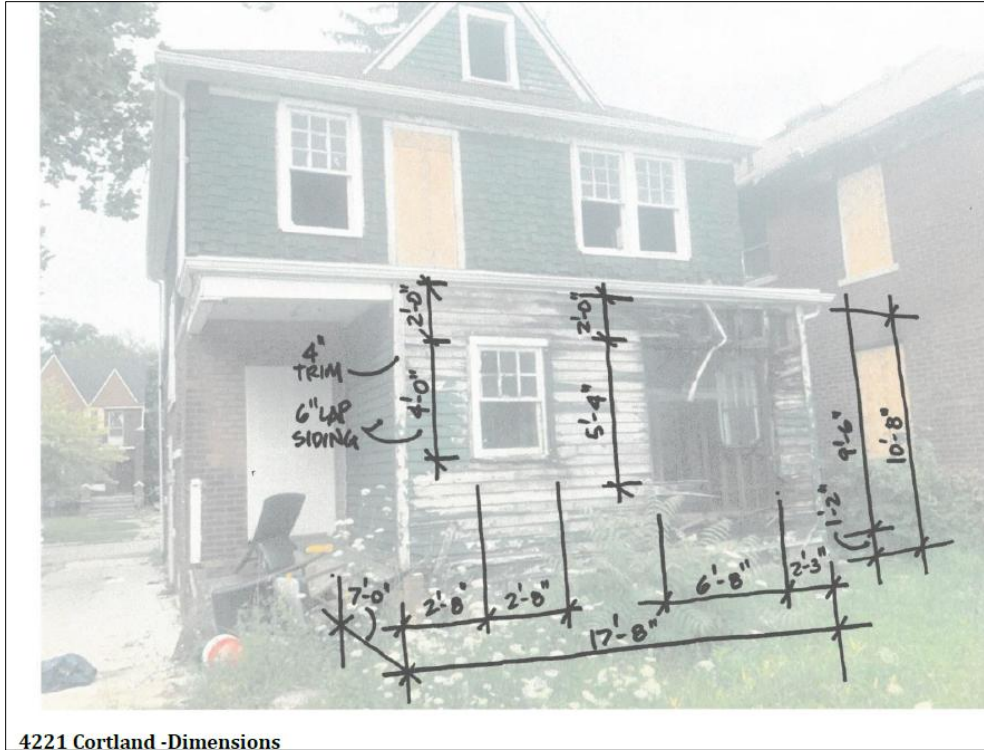
Applicant photo of 4510 Cortland. This is the railing proposed for installation at 4221 Cortland.



Rear Wing

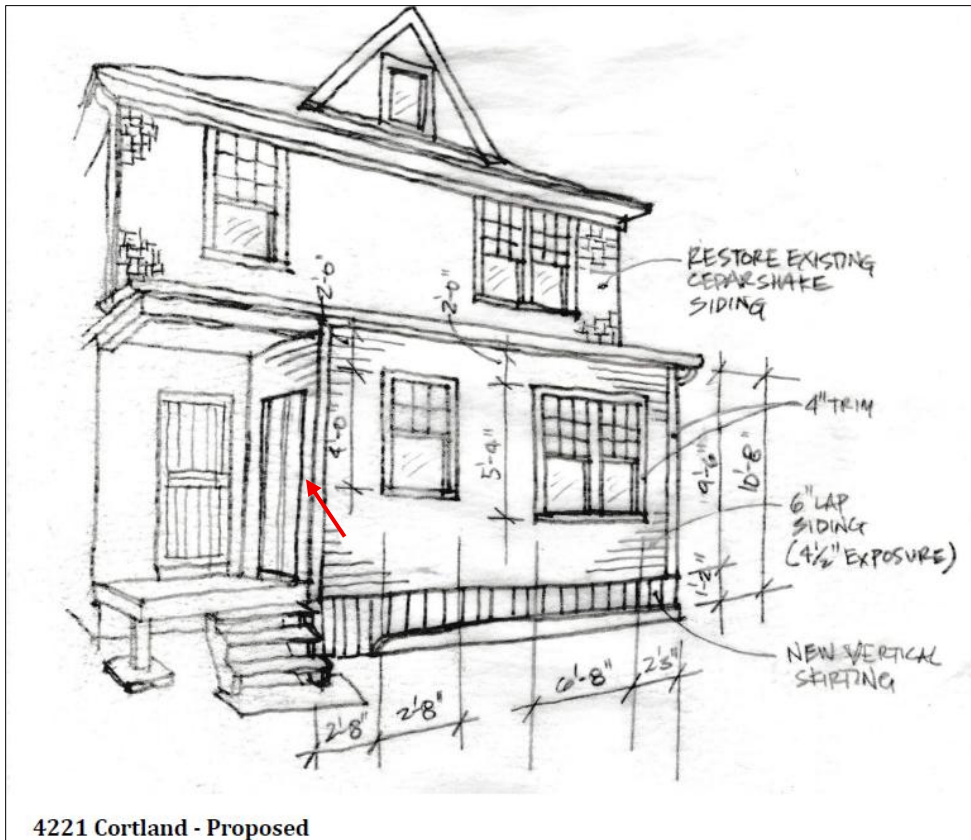


Applicant photo. With exception of the deteriorated section of the wall, the historic age wood siding on the remaining walls appeared to be intact and in repairable condition.



4221 Cortland - Dimensions

Applicant diagram of the previously existing dimensions.



4221 Cortland - Proposed

Applicant's proposed design. The opening on the side wall denotes a double door or French door, approved by staff in 2022 (COA 22-7760). Also approved within this COA was the repair and reinstallation of the existing wood windows.



Applicant photo of existing conditions. The removal of the door at the second floor and installation of matching wood shake siding was approved by staff in 2022 (COA 22-7760).



4221 Cortland - Existing 6" Wood Lap Siding (Exposure 4-1/2")

LAP SIDING
 38 Series 6" - 5.84 in. (148 mm) x 192 in. (4.9 m) -
 38 Series 8" - 7.84 in. (199 mm) x 192 in. (4.9 m) -
 38 Series 12" - 11.84 in. (301 mm) x 192 in. (4.9 m)



TRIM
 440/540 Series 2" - 1.50 (38 mm)
 440/540 Series 3" - 2.46 in. (62 mm)
 440/540 Series 4" - 3.46 in. (88 mm)
 440/540 Series 6" - 5.47 in. (139 mm)
 440/540 Series 8" - 7.21 in. (183 mm)
 440/540 Series 10" - 9.21 in. (234 mm)
 440/540 Series 12" - 11.21 in. (285 mm)



Propose Lap Siding:
 LP SmartSide Primed, Brushed Smooth, 6" Lap Siding
 LP SmartSide Primed 4" Trim



The above photo was copied from Preservation Brief #16 showing the difference in appearance and depth of wood siding and fiber cement siding.

The depth difference of fiber cement and LP Smartsiding is nominal - .312" vs. .354" respectively, so the differential between composite sidings and wood siding would be similar for both manufactured products.

Applicant photo and material specifications.

- The applicant is proposing to install LP SmartSide Primed, "brushed smooth" finish, 6" lap siding, installed with a 4-1/2" exposure. This would replace the historic age wood siding that had been in place prior to the removal of the two walls.

- Per National Park Service Preservation Brief #16 The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors:

- *The Standards for Rehabilitation require that the replacement of a distinctive feature match the old in physical and visual properties. While the use of matching materials is always preferred, the **Standards purposely allow for the use of substitute materials when the use of original materials is not reasonably possible, such as in consideration of economic and technical feasibility.***
- *When using a substitute material for replacement it is critical that it match the historic material in all of its visual and physical properties to preserve the historic character of the building and minimize the impact on its integrity.*

- The manufactured composite product does not match the depth, profile, and shadow lines of the previously installed historic wood siding. Installing the substitute product on walls of a historic feature/location, as opposed to being used on new construction (such as an addition or free-standing structure), would create a loss of authenticity and the physical features and characteristics closely associated with the property’s historic significance would be altered.
- Wood clapboard siding is commercially available and can be purchased and installed with minimal, if any, additional cost. Wood lap siding at this first floor location would retain the characteristics of an early 20th century structure and match the materiality and dimensional features of the intact historic wood shake siding at the second floor and wood lap siding at the attic/3rd floor dormer wall.
- The cladding of this historic wing relates to the following Elements of Design:

7) *Relationship of materials.* The majority of houses are faced with brick, often combined with wood, stone or stucco... Stone trim is common, and wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim. Windows are commonly either metal casements or wooden sash.

(8) *Relationship of textures.* The major texture is that of brick laid in mortar, often juxtaposed with wood or smooth or rough-faced stone elements and trim. Textured brick and brick laid in patterns creates considerable interest, as does half-timbering, leaded and subdivided windows, and wood-shingled or horizontal-sided elements.



Close-up of applicant photo prior to wall demolition.

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 *Russell Woods-Sullivan 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 #7 and #8

For the following reasons;

1. The front porch railing and rear wing's wood lap siding were distinctive, historic character-defining features that date to the resource's Period of Significance.
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