

**STAFF REPORT: 06/11/2025 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: J. ROSS**

**ADDRESS: 2018 11<sup>th</sup> STREET**

**APPLICATION NO: HDC2025-00250**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN**

**APPLICANT/OWNER: TIMOTHY KILLEEN**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 5/25/2025**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 4/19/2025**

**SCOPE: INSTALL BRICK VENEER AT FOUNDATION, PAINT PORCH, REPLACE PORCH SPINDLES, LANDSCAPING**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Erected ca. 1890, the building at 2018 11<sup>th</sup> Street is a 2-story, single-family dwelling. The building features a two-story, hipped-roof central mass with pyramidal roof turrets at the northwest and southwest corners. Exterior walls are clad with vinyl and the concrete block foundation wall has been painted grey. Windows are vinyl, 1/1 units. A partial-width, shed-roof porch at the building's south facade displays turned wood columns with decorative, jigsawn, wood brackets, wood flooring and stairs, and tall ahistorical wood handrails with square balusters. Concrete has been added to the parcel's small front yard area. A metal fence encloses the parcel's side yard.



**Current appearance. Photo taken by HDC staff on 5/25/2025**



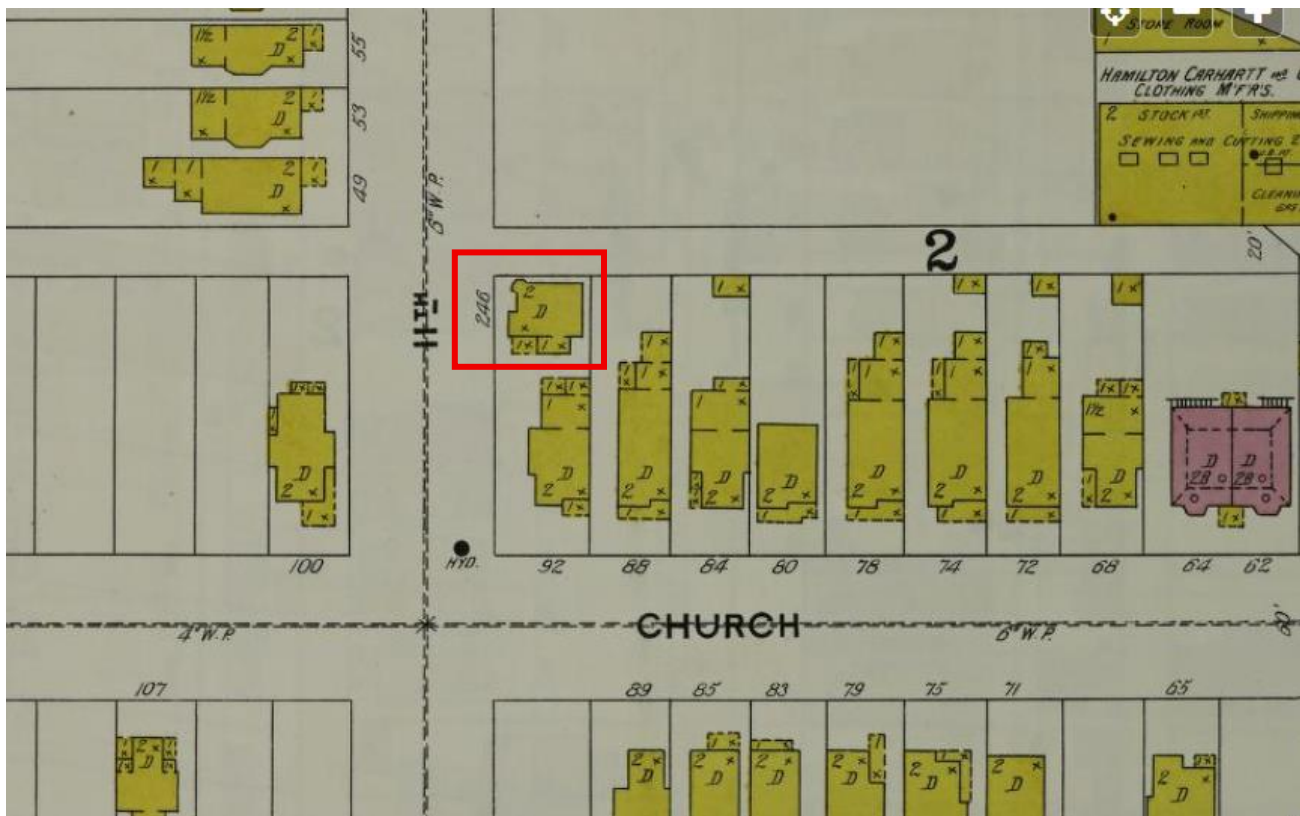


**Current appearance. Photo taken by HDC staff on 5/25/2025**

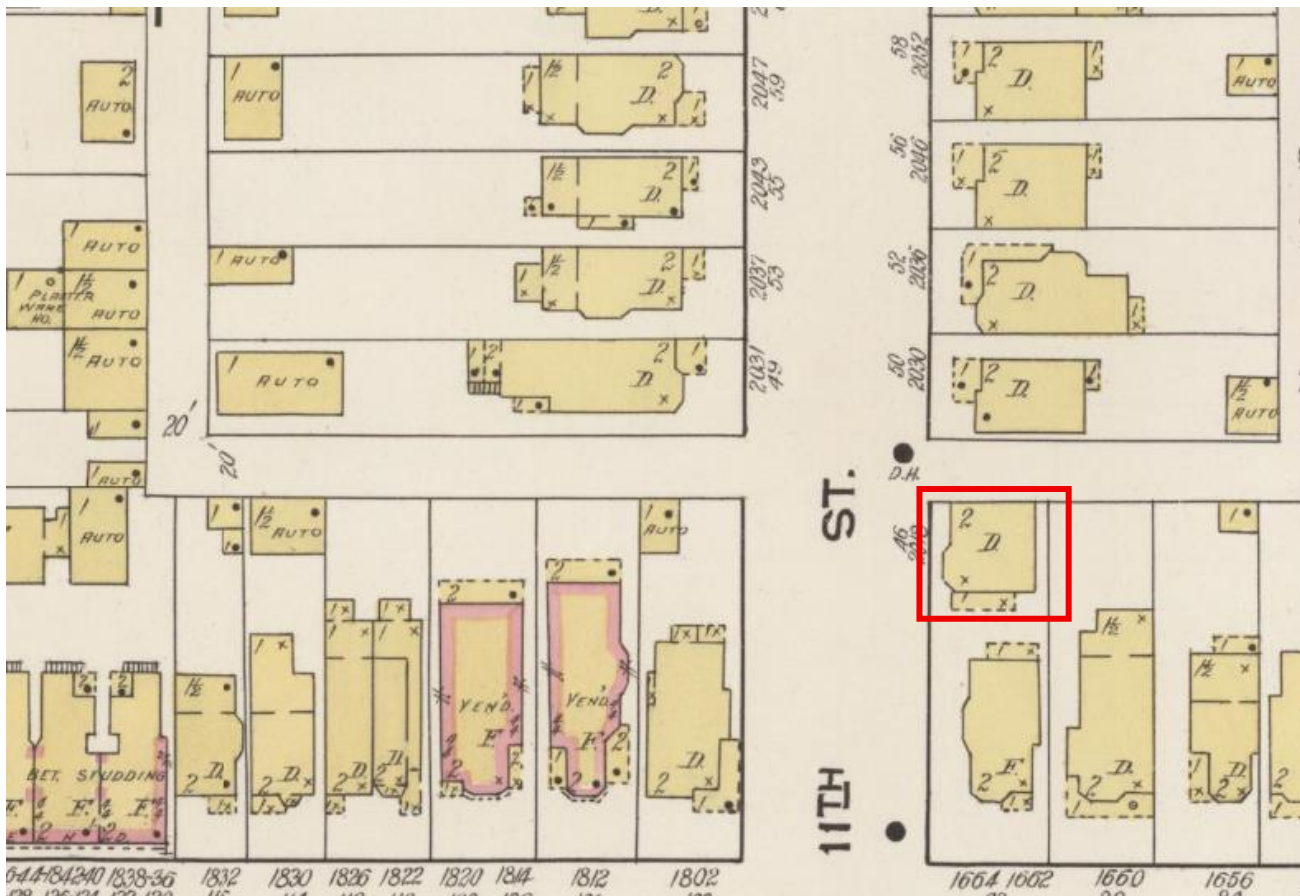




2018 11<sup>th</sup>, outlined in yellow. Detroit Parcel Viewer



Sanborn fire Insurance map, 1897. 2018 11<sup>th</sup> Street, outlined in red (addressed as 246 in 1897)



Sanborn fire Insurance map, 1920. 2018 11<sup>th</sup> Street, outlined in red



Sanborn fire Insurance map, 1970. 2018 11<sup>th</sup> Street, outlined in red



## PROPOSAL

With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval of the following items:

- Install 2.5", thin brick veneer at exterior of foundation wall visible above grade
- At porch, replace existing balusters with turned wood balusters. Paint porch
- At berm area/public right-of-way to the west of the parcel, replace mulch with brick pavers.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Corktown Historic District was designated in 1984
- A review of files maintained by the HDC revealed that a COA for the current concrete block foundation and vinyl siding was issued in 1988
- The house's designation slide is of poor quality so staff is unable to review the appearance of the side porch in 1984. However, staff did locate photo of the house which were taken in 1988. Please see the below which depicts the appearance of the side porch four years after the district was designated. Note that the porch did not have railings in 1988. By 2001, a low wood railing with square wood balusters had been installed per the below photo. However, sometime between 2013 and 2015, this low wood railing had been replaced with the current high wood railing. Staff was unable to locate a COA for the new/current railing.
- The current railing appears to be about 42" high (3'-6"), far in excess of compatible railing height for an historic wood porch, which are typically 2'-2'-6" (24"-30"). Chapter 12 of the Michigan Rehabilitation Code allows building code officials to approve features that do not meet current code standards on historic properties like this one. Installation of a lower height railing would restore proper balance and proportion to this historic porch.



2018 11<sup>th</sup>, photo by HDC staff in 1988



2018 11<sup>th</sup>, photo by HDC staff in 2001. Note that the railing is approximately 2'-6" in height and features square wood balusters.



Google Streetview, 2013. Note that the railing that was present in 2001 is present at this time





Google Streetview, 2015. Note that the railing visible in 2001 and 2013 has been replaced with the current, high handrail.



Current appearance. Photo taken by HDC staff on 5/25/2025. Note square wood balusters and height of the railing, likely 3'-6" (42")



- The current application proposes to replace the plain square balusters at the railings with new turned wood balusters that are intended to resemble the existing turned wood porch columns. It is staff's opinion that the proposed turned wood balusters would present a false sense of historical development, which is not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standard #3, which states the following:
  - *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken*
- The current application proposes to install a 2.5" thick brick veneer cladding over the concrete block foundation wall. Note that the walls present a slight projection/stand proud at their junction with the foundation, which is a typical characteristic feature of this type of house. The introduction of the 2.5"-thick brick veneer will eliminate that projection at the wall/foundation junction, thus flattening the appearance of the wall. Additionally, plain square balusters are a typical and character-defining feature of many late 19<sup>th</sup> century wood houses (see below photo of the proposed brick, taken at the interior of the applicant's house). Staff therefore recommends that the Commission deny these two items.



**Current appearance. Note the slight project of the wall at its junction with the foundation. The proposed installation of a 2.5" thick brick veneer will eliminate this projection thus flattening the appearance of the wall**



**Brick veneer proposed for installation at exterior of foundation. Photo provided by applicant**



- The application proposes to install brick pavers in the berm area to the west of 2018 11<sup>th</sup>. See the below photo to note current conditions. Staff visited the site, assessed the public right-of-way in the direct vicinity of the subject property, and noted no existing hardscape in the berm area. Therefore, the proposed addition of pavers would not be consistent with district's historic character, in staff's opinion.



**Berm area to the west of 2018 11<sup>th</sup>. The applicant is seeking to install brick pavers in this area.  
Photo by HDC staff, 5/25/2025**



**Streetscape, showing berm area on Church Street. Photo by  
HDC staff 5/25/2025**





**Streetscape, showing berm area on Church Street. Photo by HDC staff 5/25/2025**



**Streetscape, showing berm area on Church Street. Photo by HDC staff 5/25/2025**



## ISSUES

- The proposed new porch spindles/balusters would present a false sense of historic development, which is inconsistent with SOI Standard #3. Additionally, they are proposed within a railing that was installed without approval at an incompatible height.
- The introduction of the 2.5"-thick brick veneer will eliminate the distinctive projection at the wall/foundation junction, thus flattening the appearance of the wall and detracting from the building's historic character
- The berm area throughout the district typically features grass/turf. The proposed introduction of brick pavers/hardscape in the berm is not appropriate to/incompatible with the district's historic character

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

### **Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial: Install turned wood balusters at porch handrail, brick pavers in berm area, and brick veneer at exterior of foundation wall**

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Corktown 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.*
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

For the following reasons:

- The proposed new porch spindles/balusters would present a false sense of historic development, Additionally, they are proposed within a railing that was installed without approval at an incompatible height.
- The introduction of the 2.5"-thick brick veneer will eliminate that projection at the wall/foundation junction, thus flattening the appearance of the wall and detracting from the building's historic character
- The berm area throughout the district typically features grass/turf. The proposed introduction of brick pavers/hardscape in the berm is not appropriate to/incompatible with the district's historic character

### **Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Paint the porch**

Staff recommends that the proposed work item will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Corktown Historic District's Elements of Design.