

**STAFF REPORT: JUNE 11, 2025 MEETING**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00203**

**VIOLATION NUMBERS: 25-1006, 25-1007, 25-1027**

**ADDRESS: 4069 STURTEVANT**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN**

**APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: JUSTIN JOHNSON, RIVER SHORE REALTY**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: MAY 19, 2025**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: MAY 29, 2025**

**PREPARED BY: A. DYE**

**SCOPE: REPLACE ASPHALT ROOF WITH METAL ROOF, INSTALL GUTTERS/DOWNSPOUTS, REPLACE REAR PORCH ENCLOSURE, (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL), INSTALL RAILING AT FRONT PORCH**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The dwelling at 4069 Sturtevant is located on the north side of Sturtevant, four lots to the west of Petoskey. The two-story dwelling has a pyramidal hip roof and two intersecting front-facing gables, all covered with asphalt shingles. The walls are predominantly clad in dark red brick; random ashlar pattern stone veneer covers the wall below the façade's bay window. Limestone surrounds encase the small decorative window and front entrance, where the top of the door is finished with a Tudor arch. The half-timbering in the gable over the front entry is scored, and the brick infill was laid in multiple, yet symmetrical patterns. The narrow-wide chimney has a highly detailed corbel chimney cap. Steel windows fill the window openings. Most openings have a multiple-operation, divided-light design; the dominant pattern is a single or double casement with fixed transom. The transom windows in the bay and the fixed/casement window adjacent to the front door are stained glass.

The raised front porch, whose concrete platform/floor is enclosed with a low masonry wall, is currently being rebuilt. New concrete steps and front walk are also in the process of being completed.

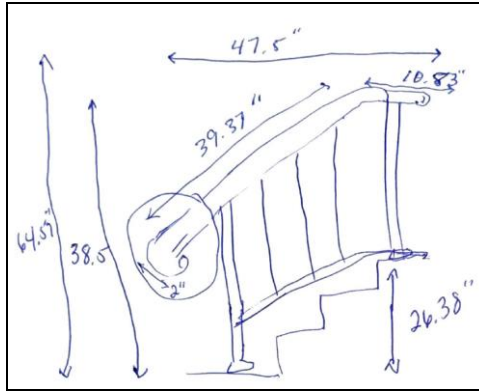


*Façade. HDC staff photo, May 2025.*

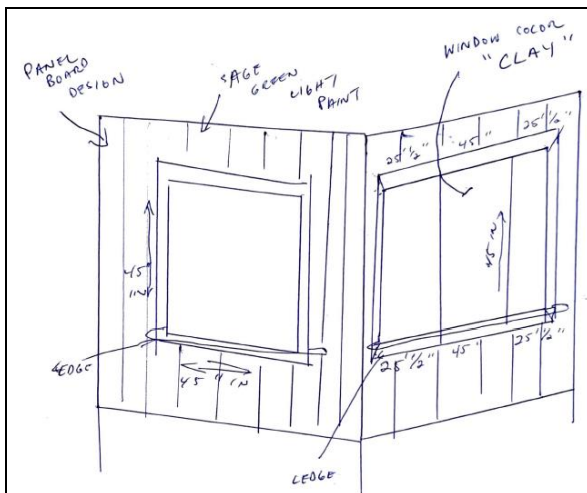
## PROPOSAL

Per the submitted drawings and documents, the applicant proposes the following work items:

- Install metal roofing on façade bay, color: copper (completed)
- Install gutters/downspouts/collector boxes – color: coppertone (completed)
- Install aluminum handrails at front porch, color: black, height: 45”
- Replace rear porch wall infill and windows
  - Windows: Wallside vinyl casement, color: almond or clay – applicant to confirm (completed)
  - Walls: LP Smartside cedar texture vertical siding, (completed) paint color: SW sage green light

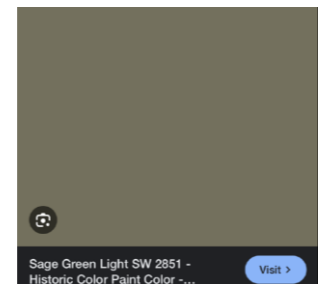


*Applicant cut-sheet and drawing of proposed railings for front porch stairs.*



**LP SmartSide Cedar Texture 8 in. OC  
Panel Engineered Treated Wood Siding  
8 in. Application as 3/8 in. x 4 ft. x 8 ft.**

★★★★★ (1386) ✓



*Applicant sketch, wall siding cut sheet and wall paint color*



*Applicant photo – rebuilt enclosure partially completed*

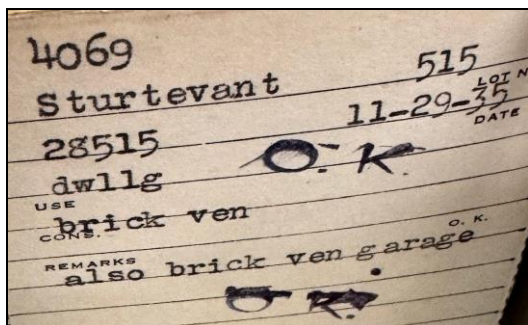


*Applicant photo of installed window within newly sized opening.*

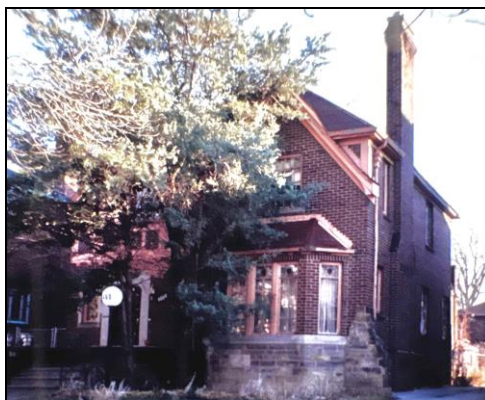


## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was enacted on November 12, 1999.
- The original building permit for the dwelling and garage was issued on November 29, 1935.



*Building permit card. BSEED.*



*District designation photo. HDAB.*

- Early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses in the Russell Woods-Sullivan historic district are replete with an abundance of decorative details, of which this house is a strong example. Distinctive character-defining features include:
  - Window openings with steel sash; including mullied windows of fixed transoms (and sometimes sidelights) and operable casement sash. some transoms have stained glass. Sills for the windows differ by location on house: facade masonry openings are stone, façade opening within the ½-timbered gable wall has a wood sill/horizontal bottom trim, and the openings on the side and rear have projecting angled bricks laid in the stretcher (long) position.
  - Half-timbering with brick infill in one of the façade gable walls.
  - Decorative and projecting rakeboards, limestone surrounds at entry, stone veneer below bay window
  - Corbel cap of chimney
  - Stained glass window of modern geometric shapes (showcasing its 1935 date of construction)
  - Tudor arched front door
  - Raised front porch with low masonry walls

## VIOLATIONS / STAFF REVIEW

- March 22, 2025 – SeeClickFix notice submitted to HDC staff, reporting work being completed at 4069 Sturtevant.
- March 25, 2025 - Staff site visit, photos taken document the beginning of exterior painting, removal of concrete driveway and walkway, and removal of one porch railing.



*HDC staff photo, March 25, 2025.*



*HDC staff photo, April 10, 2025.*

- April 8, 2025 SeeClickFix notice submitted to HDC staff, reporting removal and rebuilding of front porch.
- April 10, 2025 HDC staff site visit, documenting new driveway, partially completed walkway and partially erected new masonry porch.



- April 15, 2025 SeeClickFix photo submitted to notify continued work at property.
- April 15, 2025 Staff visits site and takes photos of additional completed work, including gutters/downspouts/collector boxes and metal roof at bay window.
- April 22, 2025 Applicant submits initial application for work items; HDC staff has numerous requests for additional documents and photographs in order to review the application.



*HDC staff photo, April 15, 2025*



*HDC staff photo, May 16, 2025*

- May 16, 2025 Staff issues a Certificate of Appropriateness (HDC2025-00204) for the following work items:
  - Rebuild of porch in-kind and re-installation of historic caps
  - Concrete driveway and sidewalk within same footprint
  - Paint half-timbering in SW Sage Green Light
  - Paint window trim in SW Green Black
- May 18, 2025 HDC application (HDC2025-00203) submitted for Commission review (which includes already begun alterations at rear porch).
- May 19, 2025 SeeClickFix notice submitted to notify work continues and includes alterations at rear

#### RAKEBOARD

- During the research of this staff report, staff identified that the end/edge trim on the front gable's rakeboard (right side) has been removed. The edge detail, although small, is a distinctive character-defining feature of early 20<sup>th</sup> century English Revival design and must be retained and reinstalled. According to the timeline of staff photos, this element was removed between March 25 and April 10.



*HDC staff photo, May 29, 2025.*



## GUTTERS/DOWNSPOUTS/COLLECTOR BOXES/BAY WINDOW ROOF

- Staff appreciates the selection of finely ridged downspouts, and detailed and appropriately-scaled collector boxes. The challenge with the installed components is the “coppertone” color. When real copper components are installed, they are brilliant in color and have an exceptionally shiny finish, similar to the products used at this property. However, the bright shiny finish is temporary (for a few years); the long-term finish is achieved through oxidization – when copper forms a coating that turns dark gray and eventually develops the distinguishing and highly identifiable patina of a deep rich green color. Painted/coated metal (i.e., aluminum/steel) components conversely will never change color and will retain the bright and shiny “copper” color. This unchanging contrast of color and finish is not compatible for this English Revival dwelling, where the overall color palette is generally muted and with matte finishes.



*Left: Copper components newly installed*

*Right: Copper components once oxidized with the patina.*

*Photos: <https://www.kobettmetals.com>*



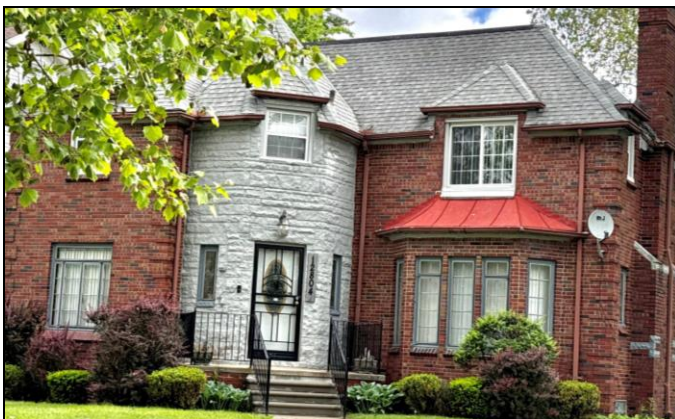
- Staff has a similar concern with the finish of the metal roof installed at the bay window and has additional concerns with the specific metal used due to the highly dimensional surfaces. The material, color and dimensionality causes this roof to be the dominant feature on the front of the house, rather than being one of collection of decorative features. Staff offers a visual comparison of the installed metal roof, an installed copper roof (located on a property in Rosedale Park), a historic metal roof (located on a property in Russell Woods) as well as the asphalt shingle roof that was previously in place at this bay window.



*Contemporary metal roof, 4069 Sturtevant*



*Copper roof, patina not yet developed*



*Historic-age painted metal roof*



*Asphalt shingle roof (previous condition), 4069 Sturtevant*





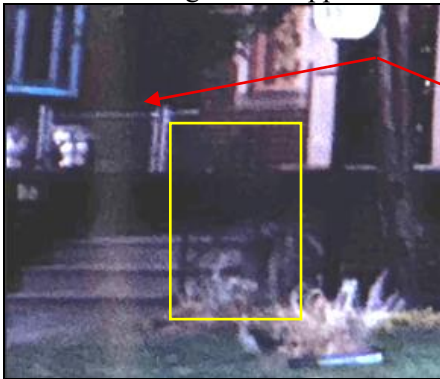
*Close-up comparison of the two example metal roofs show similar, minimally visible joints, and relatively flat flashing against the masonry walls. The copper should oxidate to create a similar matte finish as the painted metal roof.*



*Conversely, the seams of the new metal roof protrude quite far, and corner pieces add additional depth. The "flashing" edge pieces against the house and roof are laid over the seamed roof, creating a shadow line. Applied decorative square components at the top adds yet another dimensional feature/pattern that is not found on the copper and historic-age metal roofs.*

#### FRONT PORCH RAILING

- Regarding the proposed front porch railing, it appears a black metal railing was in place at time of designation (as was the chain-link driveway gate). The main issue staff has with the proposed railing is the stated 45" height. A 36" railing would be appropriate and proportional for the stairs. The applicant should confirm in writing that no railing will be applied to the low masonry walls.



*Designation photo*



*Google street view, 2019.*



## REAR PORCH – FIRST FLOOR

- Staff couldn't locate a Sanborn map to confirm the porch's original condition, but as the corner masonry columns extend the height of the two-story porch, and the sill height at the first floor is about one-third of the distance between the floor and ceiling, it is staff's opinion it was likely erected as an open, or screened, porch.
- The applicant provided a photo documenting the previous condition; fixed and operable vinyl windows extended the entire width and height of the masonry opening. This window design was in place in 2006 (the earliest photo staff could find of the rear of the house), so it is possible this porch enclosure was in place at the time of the district's 1999 designation.



*Applicant photo, undated.*



*Eagle View aerial image, April 2024.*



*Applicant photo submitted April 29, 2025.*



- The current design of the first floor rear porch, as partially constructed, encloses the porch further through the installation of shorter windows and erection of small sections of walls below and above the windows. The three-unit grouping of fixed and operation windows is similar to the previous condition: a wide, central fixed window is flanked by narrow operable windows; however, the operational windows changed from double-hung to casement.

- It is staff's opinion that the previous enclosure using windows that extended the full opening was a compatible solution for three-season living space and the current proposal of windows and walls is not appropriate as it alters the features, massing and proportions of the rear porch structure and does not meet the following 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.*
  - 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.*
- Additionally, the vertical LP Smartside siding, proposed to enclose the areas above and below the windows, is an engineered wood product made from smaller pieces of wood, such as wood fibers or particles, and bound together with adhesives. It is a panelized product with a faux raised wood grain and shiplap edges and does not adequately replicate painted historic, horizontal wood lap siding. Additionally, wood lap siding is readily available and can offer a matching texture (smooth finish), exposure and edge profile to historic wood siding.
- The new windows are vinyl framed units and replace vinyl windows. Although the previous non-historic windows were within a non-historic opening, the rear porch structure is an original or historic-age component of the house and any changes/alterations proposed for must be appropriate and compatible with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century house. It is staff's opinion, through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
  - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.



## FRONT PORCH MASONRY WALLS – RECENT WORK OBSERVED – NOT INCLUDED IN THIS APPLICATION

- Staff is confused over the existing condition of the front porch walls. The photo taken by staff on May 29 shows a stacked bond pattern on the left wall and a running bond (matching the pattern of the house) on the right wall. Based on the photos of the porch before demolition, the bricks appeared to be intact and reusable when the structure was rebuilt. The COA stipulated the porch be rebuilt in-kind - based on the May 29 photos, it is staff's opinion this was not done. The dimension and color of the new red bricks is compatible, but the omission of randomly placed gray/black bricks (as clearly seen on the house) also does not meet the scope of work in the COA. Furthermore, the mortar joints on the new walls are not consistent with each other and do not match the historic mortar joints (profile, texture, dimension) on the house, and mortar appears to have been spread across many bricks.
- Strangely, the photos submitted by the applicant one month earlier as part of the staff review application show different masonry walls. A running bond pattern used on both walls, and the mortar joints appear to be consistent within the new construction and closer in dimension to the thin mortar joints on the house. The existing condition shown in the May 29 photo does not meet the approved scope of work listed in the Certificate of Appropriateness.



*HDC staff photo, May 29. 2025.*



*These applicant photos of the rebuilt masonry porch walls were submitted on April 29, 2025 as part of the application for staff review (against which the COA was issued). The bond patterns and mortar joints on both sides of the porch match.*

## ISSUES

- The “coppertone” color of the installed gutters, downspouts and collector boxes is bright and shiny; and, unlike real copper, will retain its bright, shiny finish for the duration of their installation. This unchanging contrast of color and finish with the dark brick exterior walls is not compatible for this English Revival dwelling, where the overall color palette for this architectural style is muted and with matte finishes.
- The metal roof installed at the bay window will similarly have an incompatible bright and shiny never-changing finish, as well as highly dimensional surfaces which are not characteristic of metal roofed bay windows. The material, color, and dimensionality of the installed product causes this roof to be the dominant feature on the front of the house, rather than being one of collection of decorative features.
- The previous exterior condition of the first floor rear porch had fixed and operable vinyl windows extending the entire width and height of the masonry openings. The current design of this porch, as partially constructed, encloses the porch further through the installation of shorter windows and erection of small sections of walls below and above the windows, which alters the features, massing and properties of the porch.
  - Additionally, the vertical LP Smartside siding, is a panelized product with a faux raised wood grain and shiplap edges and does not adequately replicate painted historic, horizontal wood lap siding.
- The new windows are vinyl framed units. The rear porch is an original or historic-age component of the house and proposed alterations must be appropriate and compatible with its early 20<sup>th</sup> century date of construction and architectural style. Through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts.
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
  - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

#### **Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial**

Staff recommends that the metal roof at the bay window, front porch masonry walls, and rear porch enclosure 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:

- 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.*
- 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.*
- 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 “coppertone” color of the installed gutters, downspouts and collector boxes is bright and shiny; and, unlike real copper, will retain its bright, shiny finish for the duration of their installation. This unchanging contrast of color and finish with the dark brick exterior walls is not compatible for this English Revival dwelling, where the overall color palette for this architectural style is muted and with matte finishes.



- The metal roof installed at the bay window will similarly have an incompatible bright and shiny never-changing finish, as well as highly dimensional surfaces which are not characteristic of metal roofed bay windows. The material, color, and dimensionality of the installed product causes this roof to be the dominant feature on the front of the house, rather than being one of collection of decorative features.
- The previous exterior condition of the first floor rear porch had fixed and operable vinyl windows extending the entire width and height of the masonry openings. The current design of this porch, as partially constructed, encloses the porch further through the installation of shorter windows and erection of sections of walls below and above the windows, which alters the features, massing and proportions of the historic rear porch structure.
- The vertical LP Smartside siding is a panelized product with a faux raised wood grain and shiplap edges and does not adequately replicate painted historic, horizontal wood lap siding.
- Through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic districts and are not compatible with this house and its early 20<sup>th</sup> century character.
  - Vinyl windows and wrapped brickmould offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile/dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood.
  - Consumer grade vinyl windows weather poorly, deteriorate rapidly, and exhibit poor detailing and detracting color/sheen.
  - The framing material, glazing, and seals (which keeps the argon gas intact between the insulated glass) of vinyl windows break down more quickly in ultraviolet light than wood or steel-framed windows.
  - Vinyl also lacks rigidity and can expand and contract more greatly than wood and steel. This can result in discoloration and warping of the vinyl frames, as well as condensation between the glass layers.

**Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Front porch stair railing and gutters/downspouts/collector boxes**

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District's Elements of Design, with the condition that:

- The top railing of the porch railing be a maximum 36" from the step surface.
- The gutters, downspouts and collector boxes will be painted dark brown, similar to the asphalt shingle roof and brick veneer on the house walls; or, the Sherwin Williams Sage Green Light, which will be used on the house's trim.