

STAFF REPORT: NOVEMBER 12, 2025 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00498
ADDRESS: 3768 TYLER

PREPARED BY: E. THACKERY

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN HISTORIC DISTRICT
APPLICANT: STEPHEN WASHINGTON, GRANDIOSE REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS LLC
PROPERTY OWNER: GRANDIOSE REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS LLC
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 10/17/25
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 9/15/25; 10/24/25

SCOPE: INSTALL FRONT PORCH NEW GUARDRAIL, REBUILD GARAGE ROOF, REPAIR GARAGE'S CONCRETE BLOCK WALLS, REPLACE GARAGE HINGED DOOR AND OVERHEAD DOORS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Permit cards in the building department show that 3768 Tyler was built as a multifamily home in 1927 with a wood frame garage and that a new masonry garage was built in 1966. The lot is 35' wide and 116' deep, and the house is also deeper than it is wide, with a garage behind the house, along the alley. The house is two-and-a-half stories tall with an asphalt roof and features diamond-patterned bricks, wood shingles on the dormer, small dentils on the modest frieze board, historic wood shutters with pine tree cut-outs, rounded windows on the first floor at the front, decorative brickwork above and below the first-floor front porch, a second-floor half-width balcony, and low, cast stone-capped porch piers. The historic wrought iron railing remains in place on the balcony, but it was removed at the first floor between 2011 and 2013, according to Google Street View. The house faces southeast and aluminum awnings were added on the first and second floors, likely in the 1960s. A concrete block garage with a collapsed roof is behind the house.



3768 Tyler, October 2025, front (south) end. Staff photo.



3768 Tyler, aerial view of site, 2006, ConnectExplorer. The lot is sited on an angle, with the northwest end of the garage closest to the alley and the southeast end of the house being the primary façade on Tyler. Throughout this report, staff simply refers to the end of the garage along the alley as “north,” the front of the house as “south,” and the building walls near the next-door neighbor walls as “west” and “east.” The garage’s west side in 2006 was largely composed of overhead doors—it appears that there was one double-wide door toward the north and one single-wide door toward the south.



Same 2006 image, now from the west, showing garage doors under a gable roof. Proposed are new garage doors replacing the old, in the same locations.



3768 Tyler, south end and some of the west side. The decorative curved brickwork at the front edge of the front porch originally had cast stone coping and the iron guardrail was installed between these curved features. Staff photo, October 2025.



Front porch detail from August 2011, courtesy of Google Street View. Railing is now missing.



3768 Tyler, south end and west side, staff photo, October 2025.



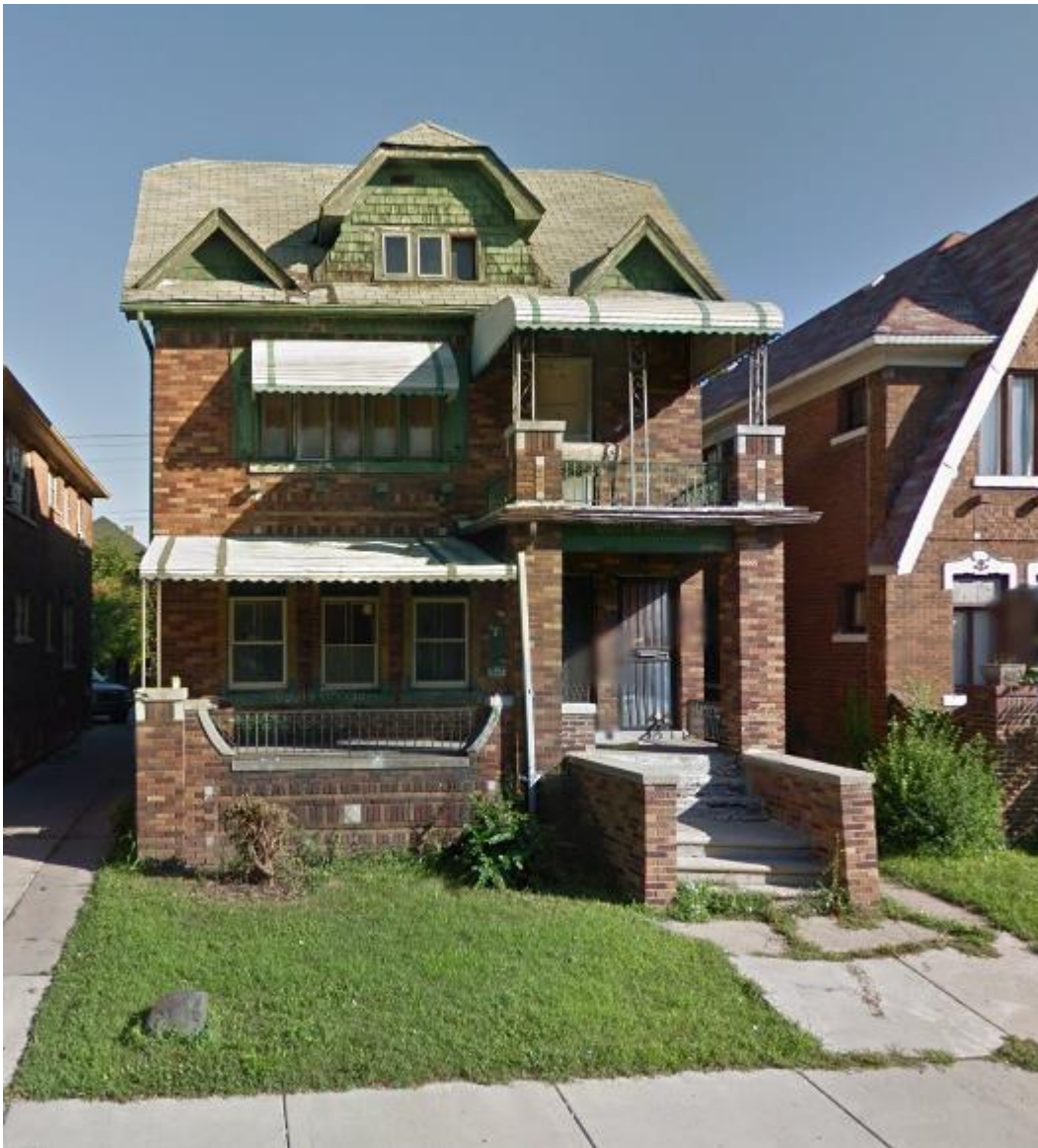
3768 Tyler, south end and east side, staff photo, October 2025. The eastern wing wall next to the front steps is leaning and the front steps and porch cap are deteriorated. These conditions will be addressed as part of the approved front porch rebuild.



3768 Tyler, south end, staff photo, October 2025. The eastern wing wall next to the front step is leaning and the front steps and porch cap are deteriorated. These conditions will be addressed as part of the approved front porch rebuild, and the porch ceiling will be repaired in kind. New gutters and downspouts, painted to match the wood trim, were also approved. The aluminum awning over the front porch has been removed. The diamond-patterned brick can be seen in the sunlight.



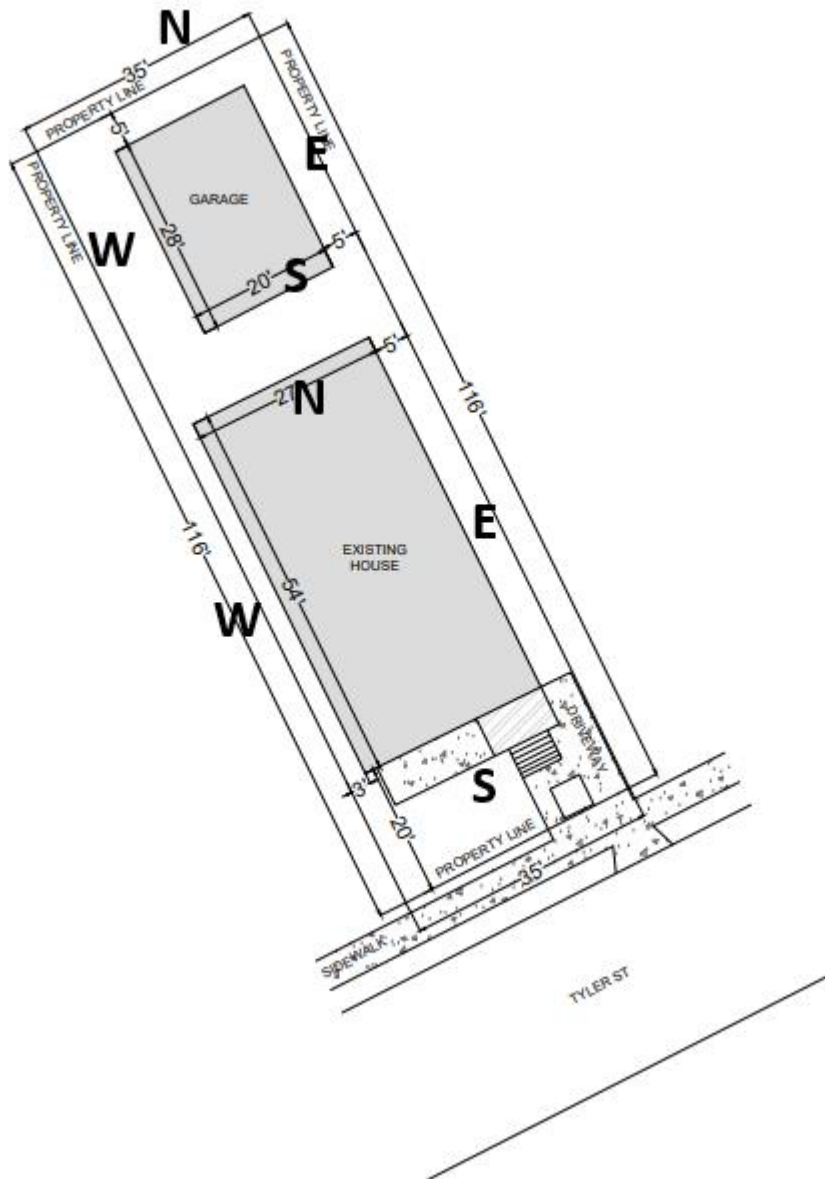
3768 Tyler, October 2025, staff photo. Front (south) end. Rounded arches over front first-floor windows and some of the decorative brick work below the front porch can be seen.



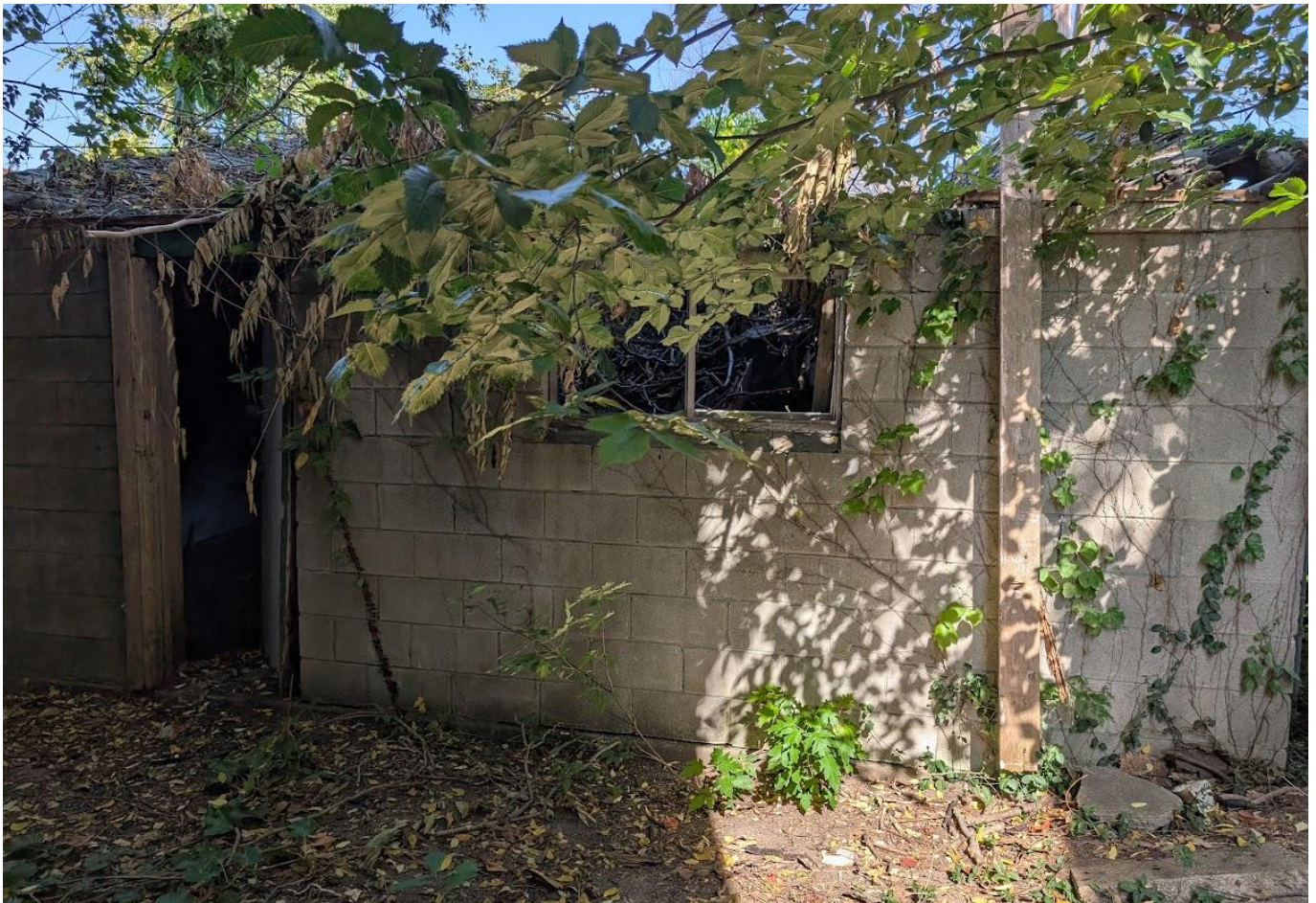
3768 Tyler, Google Street View, August 2011. First-floor porch railing visible; matches second-floor railing above. 1960s-era aluminum awnings were shown on the first and second floors.



3768 Tyler, HDAB designation slide, PDD files, 1999.



Site plan from applicant's materials. Staff labeled the directions here. Staff believes that the applicant's elevation drawings are mislabeled regarding directions. See captions below.



3768 Tyler, garage, south end, facing the rear of the house. Applicant has labeled this elevation “EAST” on their drawing and has included a gable roof on the drawing. The service door is to be replaced with a similar steel door, and the window is proposed to be repaired. If it is beyond repair, the applicant proposes to block the opening with concrete blocks to match existing. (Staff site visit, September 2025)



3768 Tyler, garage, south end sliding window, but lacks glass. Applicant plans to repair it and insert new glass, but may ultimately remove the window frame and block in the opening. Because the garage dates from 1966, it is outside the period of significance.



3768 Tyler, garage, south wall, applicant-provided photo from materials. Currently, there is no roof on this portion of the structure. The applicant's drawing shows this south wall with a gable roof, but if the garage is to be rebuilt as it was, the peak of the gable roof would be centered over the east and west sides instead.



3768 Tyler, garage, west side near the northwest corner. This overhead door was shown in the 2006 aerial photo, before the roof collapse. Applicant has labeled the long sides of the garage on their drawing as "NORTH" and "SOUTH." The applicant's drawing labeled "WEST" has a peak and a garage door, but is clearly a short end of the structure (either the north or south). (Staff site visit, September 2025)



3768 Tyler, garage, west side from near the northwest corner looking toward the southwest corner. The non-collapsed garage door is at the southwest corner. These overhead doors were shown in the 2006 aerial photo, before the roof collapse. Applicant has labeled the long sides of the garage on their drawing as "NORTH" and "SOUTH." The applicant's drawing labeled "WEST" has a peak and a garage door, but is clearly a short end of the structure (either the north or south). (Staff site visit, September 2025)



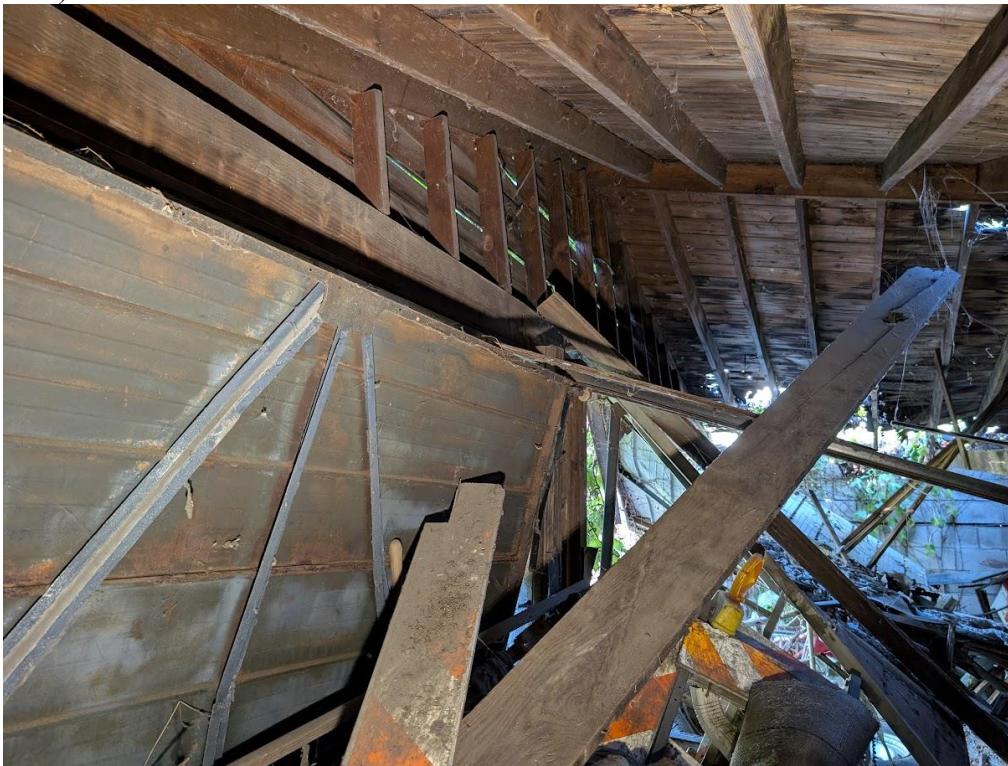
3768 Tyler, garage, west side near southwest corner, applicant-provided photo from materials. This door was also shown in the 2006 aerial photo. These overhead doors on the garage's west side open onto a concrete driveway or pad connecting to the alley.



3768 Tyler, garage, west side, detail of scalloped trim below the gable roof and above the overhead doors. This kind of trim is typically found at primary elevations of midcentury garages. (Staff site visit, September 2025)



3768 Tyler, garage, extreme overgrowth visible at the peak of the gable on the west side. (Staff site visit, October 2025)



3768 Tyler, garage interior, standing near the southwest corner facing north. The garage door closest to the southwest corner is visible in the foreground, and the collapsing garage door is further to the north. It is evident that the garage's gable roof peaks over the west (on the viewer's left) and east walls. (Staff site visit, September 2025)



3768 Tyler, garage, southern portion of the west side shown, along with the overgrowth and state of driveway/pad adjacent to the alley. An overall photo of the garage was difficult, even for staff, given the extreme overgrowth around the structure. (Staff site visit photo, October 2025)



3768 Tyler highlighted in yellow on Detroit Parcel Viewer. The garage is behind the house and immediately west of the garage is the driveway/concrete pad; it is partially covered in visible debris.

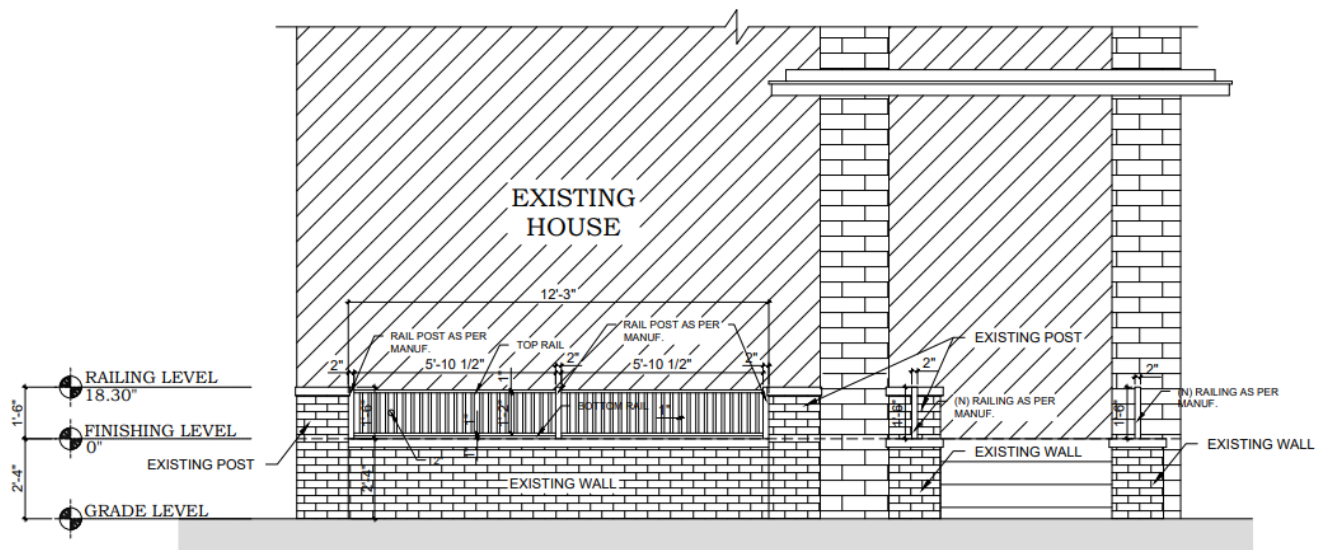
PROPOSAL

The proposed work will be performed on two areas: the front porch and the garage. **Please note that all of the other work mentioned in the application, including masonry repointing, new roof on house, window repairs, brick porch rebuild with new concrete cap, new gutters and downspouts, and wood fascia and soffit boards, were all staff-approved in October 2025 as part of HDC2025-00622.** In the future, if an applicant submits an application and then chooses to split their application into two parts for efficiency (staff-approved work and commission-approved work), the applicant will withdraw the original, combined application and submit two new applications.

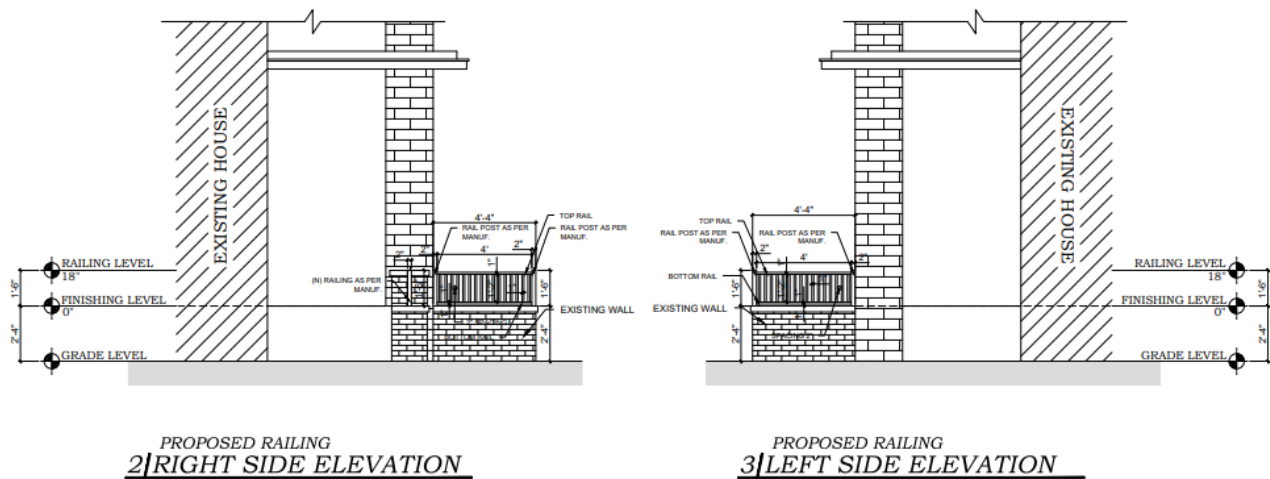
- Porch Guardrail work
 - Remove the curved decorative masonry insets between the porch pier at the house's southwest corner and the westernmost, full-height porch column (see photo below).
 - Next to the full-height west porch column, build a brick porch pier that matches the pier at the southwest corner.
 - Install new front porch guardrail on the first floor, as shown in the drawing below.
 - Install matching handrails on both sides of the steps, as shown below.



As part of the porch work, the curved inset shown here (without its stone coping, staff photo detail from October 2025) will be rebuilt as a brick pier to match the same feature on the left (partially hidden by the shrub). The guardrail will be installed between the brick piers.



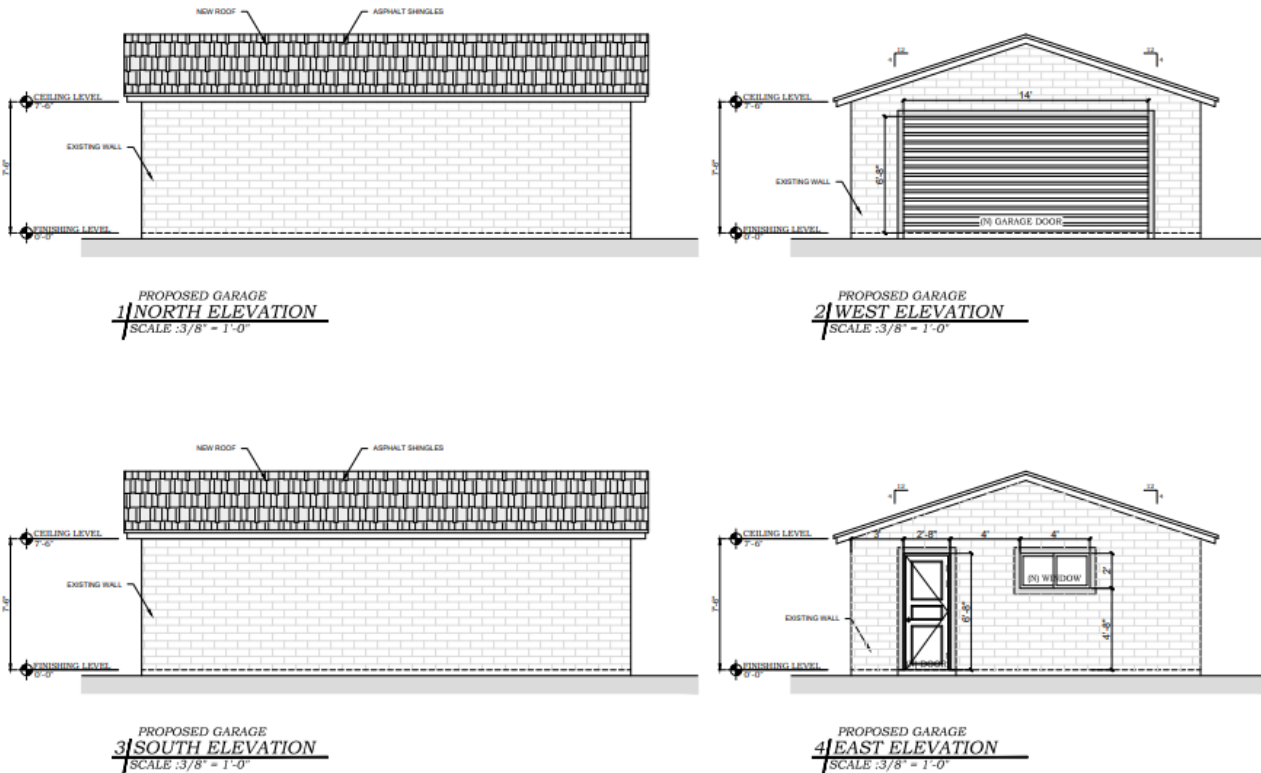
Drawing from applicant's materials, showing the existing pier/post on the left, the rebuilt pier to the right, next to the tall column, and the new proposed guardrail. Also shown are new matching handrails on both sides of the front steps.



Drawings from the applicant's materials. The proposed handrails flank the steps.

- Rebuild garage roof, repair garage's concrete block walls, replace garage hinged door and overhead doors
 - Remove and dispose of all collapsed roof debris and overgrowth.
 - Rebuild the roof structure using wood rafters, sheathing, and architectural shingles to match the house (asphalt shingles in similar color and profile, Charcoal color).
 - Install new pressure-treated rafters and joists.
 - Sheathe roof with CDX plywood.
 - Install underlayment and architectural asphalt shingles to match house color and profile.
 - Reinstall soffits and fascia to match existing.
 - Preserve existing block wall structure, repairing minor cracks with mortar and tuckpointing as needed. Clean all masonry to blend old with new.

- Replace the garage doors with new steel paneled doors that mimic the original designs and dimensions. Retain original door opening dimensions and framing.
- Repair window opening, install historically compatible fixed window or block it in with matching cement block if beyond repair.
- Clear and treat vegetation. Apply root barrier or eco-friendly vegetation control solution. Ensure base of garage is clear of overgrowth to prevent future damage.
- Paint new exterior elements (trim, door surround) to match house body or trim color.



Drawing from applicant's materials showing repaired garage with rebuilt roof. Replacement garage doors and window products have not been selected. Staff believes these elevations are mislabeled. The longer sides should be west and east elevations and the shorter ends should be north and south. If the former roofline will be reproduced, the gable ends should be on the long sides (the west and east).



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by GAF >

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Ann Arbor Store

✓ 144 in stock Aisle 16, Bay 003

- Architecturally stylish roof shingles with Lifetime Ltd. warranty
- Upgraded Shingle nailing zone with 99.9% nail placement accuracy
- Industry leading 25-year Algae Protection Shingle Warranty

Color/Finish: Charcoal



Selected roof to match roof on house. (From applicant's materials)

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District was designated in 1999. The period of significance is not directly stated in the Historic Designation Advisory Board Final Report but the houses were described as having been built between 1920 and 1949. As a result, staff is treating that period as the period of significance.
- Sealing the masonry was mentioned in the application, but the applicant clarified in an October email that the masonry would not be sealed.
- 3768 Tyler was in the hands of the Detroit Land Bank Authority by 2017. Staff was not able to determine the exact date that the house's ownership reverted to the Land Bank.
 - Staff can see on Google Street View that in July 2009, the house was maintained, there were outdoor chairs on the front porch, and the shrubs and weeds in the concrete cracks near the front steps were trimmed.
 - By August 2011, the porch chairs were gone, the front shrubs had been cut down to low trunks, and weeds were evident in the cracks near the front steps.
 - By August 2013, weedy shrubs had grown taller than the front porch awning and the first-floor front porch railing was removed. Staff finds no approvals for the removal of the front porch railing in the City's records.
 - By June 2019, an "X" had been spray painted on one of the front doors, indicating at least some utilities were disconnected, and the property's overgrowth was more apparent. That appearance remained the same by June 2022 when the house was last documented by Google Street View.

Porch:

- The historic railing is no longer in place on the first-floor front porch, but it is clear in photos that the first-floor railing matched the railing on the second floor. The brick details above and below the front porch, and the historic railing that was there are historic character-defining features of the house and should be preserved. Since the missing railing is a historic feature, Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation 6 states that the new (replacement) feature "shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials." This Standard requires that the replacement for the missing feature "shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence." The Google Street View photos document that the historic guardrail matched the guardrail on the balcony and, because that balcony guardrail exists as physical evidence, it could serve as a model to duplicate for the first floor. Replicating that first-floor guardrail and retaining all of the brick masonry details on the front of the house would meet the Standards.
- Proposed, instead, is to: remove the curved masonry insets that had stone coping and that held the front porch guardrail; build a replacement porch pier next to the porch's center column that matches the porch pier at the southwest corner of the house; and install a new, simple, aluminum rail in black between those two square piers. The result would be brick features that are similar to the porch piers that hold the second-floor guardrail, but with a simpler guardrail on the first floor. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation would allow for a compatible replacement rail to be installed if the missing historic feature was unknown and undocumented, but that is not the case here.
- The proposed rail is simple, black, custom-welded aluminum, and 18" tall like the balcony guardrail. Worth noting is that the drawing shows the existing square brick pier at the house's southwest corner as just slightly taller than the 18-inch railing, but that is not actually the case. The existing brick pier is taller than shown on the drawing because the existing curved masonry inset tapers in height to meet the 18-inch rail, and that feature has been removed in the drawing. The second-floor brick piers/columns stand quite a bit taller than the 18-inch rail on the balcony, and that relationship, as proposed, would be similar at the first floor as well.
- The character-defining features around the first-floor front porch include the decorative brickwork above and below the porch. Because the brick and stone details below the porch are coordinated with the curved masonry insets that held the original iron guardrail, retaining those curved inset sections (instead of removing them as proposed) and duplicating the historic rail would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Garage:

- The garage's height and footprint are not proposed to change. The walls are proposed to remain in place and be repointed (but ultimately may need to be rebuilt, depending on condition), and the roof structure is to be rebuilt to match the proportions of the original. This work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The metal frame window is proposed to be retained but if it cannot, it is proposed that it get blocked in with concrete block. Since the current garage is a 1966 replacement for the historic building, the metal window is not a historic feature. If a replacement window is desired, product cut sheets have not been provided.
- The service door and overhead doors are both to be replaced to match the existing. Product cut sheets were not provided.
- The garage elevation drawings seem to staff to be mislabeled.

ISSUES

- To meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the front porch guardrail should be duplicated from the balcony guardrail, and the curved masonry sections that originally held the guardrail should be preserved, along with the other masonry details above and below the front porch.
- The applicant has indicated that his plan is to rebuild the garage as it was, with the same footprint, height, and roof pitch, but the elevation drawings do not seem to indicate that. Staff believes them to be mislabeled and is unclear as to which direction the proposed gable roof will be oriented.
- Because product cut sheets for the garage doors (service and overhead) were not provided, staff recommends that if approval is to be granted, the commission give staff authority to review and approve the final door selections.
- If the applicant would like to propose a new garage window, staff would recommend that staff review and approve the window selection.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation 1 of 1, Certificate of Appropriateness

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 conditions that:

- the applicant will submit corrected front porch drawings for staff review and approval that preserve the historic, character-defining features including the curved masonry sections between the brick column and pier and the brick and stone details below the front porch concrete cap, and the applicant will duplicate the missing porch guardrail based on the historic second-floor balcony guardrail.
- the applicant will submit corrected garage elevation drawings for staff review and approval that accurately reflect the proposed design.
- product cut sheets for the garage doors (both overhead and service doors) and any garage window will be submitted to staff for review and approval before the work begins.