



SR-1 – OBJECTIVE STAFF REPORT (03/27/2026) Revised 04/06/2026

This report, prepared by staff, summarizes the proposed scope of work, the existing conditions at the property, and any factual background information. No PDD/HDC staff analysis/opinion is included.

ADDRESS: 4221 CORTLAND

MEETING DATE: 04/08/2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00097

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN

APPLICANT: CHELSEA STURZA, REFINED DESIGN SOLUTIONS

OWNER: ROB SAXON, JR., REPRESENTING DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 03/16/2026

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 03/19/2026

SCOPE PHRASE FOR AGENDA: DEMOLISH AND ERECT REAR AND SIDE WALLS OF REAR WING (WORK STARTED WITHOUT APPROVAL); INSTALL FRONT PORCH RAILING

PUBLIC HEARING PER 21-2-77: YES

SUMMARY OF SCOPE OF WORK:

Based on staff review of the submitted documents, the following work is proposed:

- **Demolish and erect two walls of rear wing**
 - Reinstall salvaged wood windows previously in place
 - Install LP Smart Siding, smooth finish, 4-1/2” exposure
- **Install 36-inch metal railing at front porch and stairs.**
 - Straight spindle; posts to have round finial.

MISSING INFORMATION, CLARIFICATION, OR OTHER ITEMS RELATING TO A COMPLETE SCOPE OF WORK:

Missing

- ~~Cut sheet confirming design, material and finish of railing.~~
- The applicant confirmed the proposed railing will match (in design, material, height, and finish) the railing installed at 4510 Cortland. A photo of the 4510 Cortland railing was submitted to staff and is posted with the applicant’s materials. Staff’s advisory report has also been updated to reflect this additional information.

Clarification

- The applicant’s drawing of the rear wing includes an outline of a door opening on the side wall facing the open porch. This indicates the installation of a double door/French door that was approved by HDC staff under COA 22-7760.

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- The 2-1/2 story house has a front facing double gable that offsets the house’s rectangular massing and hip roof. Reddish-brown brick wraps the first floor and extending gable walls; wood shake siding clads the second story walls. The widow openings on the house are comprised of single, double, and triple windows. Wood double-hung units with a six-over-one pattern are in place on each side of the house, and the two small single units in the front and rear gables are fixed or casement in operation. A raised porch extends across the front of the house and is accessed by concrete stairs enclosed by masonry wing walls with cast stone caps. The front door opening has a stepped arch design; a curved brick detail is in place above the first floor windows. The house’s roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There is no garage at this property.
- At the house’s rear wall, an open porch and shallow one-story wing extend the width of the house. Two of the walls of the rear wing were recently demolished and are in the process of being rebuilt.



Staff photo, looking southeast, 03/19/2026



City of Detroit Base Unit Tools

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- A low height front porch railing was removed from the house without HDC approval between July 2009 and August 2011 (per Google street view).
- In 2021, HDC staff issued COA 20-7143 for the rehabilitation of the house, which included a new roof, removal of vinyl siding and restoration of the wood siding, masonry repairs and rebuilding of the front masonry porch and stairs.
- In 2022, HDC staff issued two COAs:
 - 22-7760 - repair of existing wood windows; rebuilding of rear open wood porch; enclosing historic door opening on exterior/walling off on interior; installation of double doors/French doors in the side wall of the rear wing; removal of rear door opening at second floor and covering with wood shake shingles.
 - 22-7740 - installation of new wood windows where windows were missing, and new driveway and curb cut.

DISTRICT INFORMATION/SIGNIFICANCE:

- Staff's derived period of significance for residential structures is 1920 – 1949, based on the interpretation of the HDAB Final Report.
- Link to [District Elements of Design](#)
- The building permit for the house was issued on May 7, 1925.
- Contributing resource

REPORT PREPARED BY: AD