Ann Arbor Historic District Commission Staff Report

Application Information

Address: 415 West Mosley Street.

Application Number: HDC26-0077.

District: Old West Side Historic District.

Status: Contributing.

Report Date: July 6, 2026.

Report Prepared By: Mariana Melin-Corcoran, City Planner.

Review Committee Date: July 9, 2026.

Owner: Thomas Hoppe and Maya Fineberg.

Owner Address: 415 West Mosley Street, Ann Arbor, MI, 48103.

Owner Phone: (217) 369-9186.

Applicant: Kurt Hudgins, Protect Environmental.

Applicant Address: 287 Jackson Plaza, Ann Arbor, MI, 48103.

Applicant Phone: (734) 761-3595.

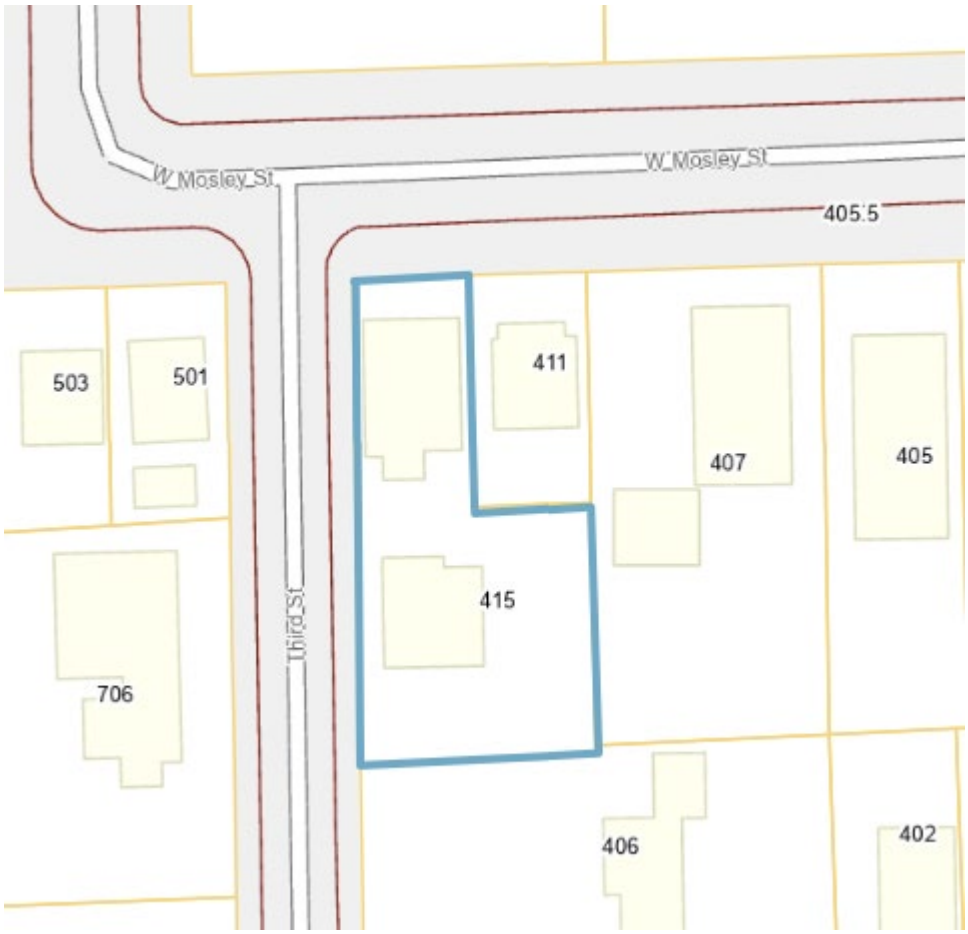
Background

Site History: This two-story vernacular house features textured concrete block on the foundation and first-floor and wood shingles on the second floor. It has a full-width stone front porch with brick walls and columns and field stone retaining walls along Mosley Street. The side gable roof has front and rear dormers with shed roofs, and there are bumpouts on both side elevations. There is a garage with a gable roof and vertical siding on the southwest corner of the site. This was built after the period of significance, likely in the 1970s based on historic aerials.

The house first appears on the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map and then in city directories in 1933, as the home of Nathan Lowe, a carpenter, and Rachel Lowe.

Location: The site is on the south side of West Mosley Street and the east side of Third Street.

Figure 1: Location map showing 415 West Mosley Street outlined in blue.



Application: The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a radon mitigation system on the west elevation of the house, which will be visible from Third Street.

Applicable Regulations

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (other SOI Standards may also apply):

(2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will 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.

(10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property will be unimpaired.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):

Mechanical Systems:

- Recommended*:* Installing a completely new mechanical system if required for the new use so that it causes the least alteration possible to the building's floor plan, the exterior elevations, and the least damage to the historic building material.

Building Site:

- Not Recommended: Installing a completely new mechanical system if required for the new use so that it causes the least alteration possible to the building's floor plan, the exterior elevations, and the least damage to the historic building site.

Health and Safety:

- Recommended*:* Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.

- Not Recommended: Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining spaces, features, and finishes while making modifications to a building or site to comply with safety codes.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other Guidelines may also apply):

Safety Codes:

- Appropriate: Complying with barrier free and safety codes in a manner that ensures the preservation of character-defining features.

Mechanical Equipment

- Appropriate: Attaching mechanical equipment so historic fabric is not damaged or destroyed.

- Appropriate: Installing mechanical equipment and wiring in locations on the roof, rear elevations, or in alleys, so they are not visible from the street.

- Appropriate: Painting mechanical equipment to blend with the historic building.

Staff Findings:

1. Radon mitigation (and other mechanical) units are typically approved by staff if they are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact the historic building. Since this work does not meet those criteria, it requires approval by the Historic District Commission.

2. The applicant proposes installing the radon mitigation system on the west elevation, near the rear of the house. Near the rear on a side elevation is typically an appropriate location for mechanical systems. However, because this is a corner lot, this location will be highly visible from Third Street.

3. Per the application, the proposed location is the only feasible option on the house. The rear of the home has a dormer. If the system were routed to a termination point at the rear, it would not meet code requirements for distance. The other side elevation (east) is not feasible because of basement window placement and bumpouts, which would require longer and more complex routing of the system.

4. Highly visible mechanical systems that impact character-defining features and finishes are generally not appropriate, but it is necessary to follow safety codes. The applicant has explained that this location is the only feasible option for a radon mitigation system on the house. It is far enough back that it will not impact the front elevation of the house and will not be highly visible from Mosley Street. The system will be directly vertical on the elevation (will not have to snake around building elements), keeping the length of the system to a minimum and avoiding impacts to features like windows, dormers, bumpouts, and brackets. Staff has included a condition in the suggested motion that the system is painted to blend in with the building to minimize visual impact.

Possible Motions:

(Note that the motions support staff findings and are only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 415 West Mosley Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to install a radon mitigation system on the west elevation on the condition that the system is painted to blend in with the historic building. As conditioned, the work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings,* in particular standards 2, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for mechanical equipment, building site, and health and safety, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for safety codes, and mechanical equipment.

ATTACHMENTS: application, narrative, photographs.

Image 1: 415 West Mosley Street (2008 staff photo)

HDC

415 W Mosley St.

System location was chosen as it is the only feasible option on the home to route the system. Due to bump outs on the left side of the home near the neighboring driveway, as well as basement window placement. The system cannot route to this side of the home. The rear of the home has a second story dormer style window. If the system was routed to the back the termination point wouldn’t be able to meet code requirements in terms of distance. The opposing side was chosen due to no bump outs and ability to get to a higher elevation regarding the dormer window. The side street does cause the system to be seen from street due to house location.


411
415
Systems only possible location - Due to the windows and house layout the system cannot go out the back - or opposite side.


COMPOST
9MR D19