



Department of Planning and Development
 Staff Report to the Historic Districts Commission

January 6, 2012

1855 & 1899 Washington Road – New House	
REQUEST	Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new single-family house
APPLICANT	CP Ventures LP/Christopher Cousino
FILE NO.	HDC # 12-001
PARCEL NO.	15-01-227-015 & 15-01-227-034 & 15-01-227-035
ZONING	RE – Residential Estates
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Winkler Mill Pond
STAFF	Jim Breuckman, AICP, Manager of Planning Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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Request

The subject site is located on the west side of Washington Road near the north end of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District., on the east bank of Winkler Mill Pond. The owner has combined three parcels that are presently vacant. The HDC approved demolition of a non-contributing house at 1899 Washington in 2005 and a house at 1855 was previously demolished. This portion of the district contains mostly non-contributing properties except for directly across the Winkler Mill pond. The applicant is proposing to construct a sprawling, 11,385 square foot house with an attached 2,900 square foot two level garage. The proposed two-to three-story stone house in a “rustic mountain style” is located near the center of the site. Two driveways are proposed, one to access garages in front of the house and one to access lower garages in the rear. The house is proposed for the highpoint on the property. A pool and cabana house are proposed for the rear of the property but are not part of the current request.

Historical Information

The subject property is located in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District. The 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey* describes the district as generally surrounding Winkler Mill Pond from the north edge of the Stoney Creek Historic District along both Winkler Mill Road and Washington Road. The district is almost wholly residential in character, with houses dating from the 1830s to the 1990s. A few of the houses retain agricultural outbuildings. The foundation of Winkler Mill is visible and two of the mill dams are functioning. The district has sloping terrain and is heavily treed.

The district was developed around the Winkler Mill (a gristmill that burned in 1985) and a wool carding mill owned by Levi Cole who also owned the majority of the property in the nineteenth century. In the 1920s the first suburban and summer homes appeared in the area. Most of the residential development around the mill pond took place after World War II, particularly beginning in the 1970s. The district has sixteen contributing resources and forty-three non-contributing resources, and two that require more research to determine their status. Some of the most significant properties in the district include the Greek Revival Levi Cole house; the house at 1740 Washington Road; the Colonial Revival Von Isser House built c. 1918; the mill house on Winkler Mill Road; the mill dams and the mill pond.

Review Considerations

The proposed house has a sprawling footprint that spans across the width of the property, from the edge of fifteen foot setback on the north to within sixty feet of the south property line. A driveway on the north edge of the property runs from the street to an area in front of the house to access four sets of garage doors. A stone wall is proposed near the south end of the driveway that turns into a fourteen foot high retaining wall that will have large boulders so it is not a large wall surface. A gravel driveway is proposed for the south edge of the property to access a four car lower garage at the rear of the house. An in-ground pool with a cabana are proposed for the rear of the property. The cabana has not been fully designed and approval for that building will come back to the Commission at a later date.

The front elevation ranges from one-and-a-half stories to two-and-a-half stories with a complex roof line featuring gables, eyebrow dormers and round towers with conical roofs. The central entrance projects forward from the house and is marked by a gable front with heavy timber trim and a two-story (nineteen foot tall) window. A porch with a curved roof supported by massive stone piers projects from the entrance. The front doors are French doors. There is a round turret with conical roof proposed for the north half of the house, and the attached four car garage in the south half has a gable roof with heavy timber trim and two shed roof dormers. The roof overhangs a section of the garage, creating recessed garage doors. Copper shed roof “vent” dormers are proposed for the roof on the north half of the house.

The rear of the house has a walk-out basement, creating a three-and-a-half story elevation. A multi-sided screened in porch above a terrace projects from the rear and has a conical roof. Two stone chimneys rise from the center of the house. Two porches with railings are located on the rear elevation.

The proposed house has a larger footprint than any other contributing or non-contributing property in the district. The house is proposed for the highest point in the property. The footprint size of contributing properties in the district range from about 1,200 to 3,200 square feet. Non-contributing properties footprint sizes range from about 1,000 to 5,500 square feet. The proposed house has a footprint of about 10,500 square feet. The surrounding non-contributing houses are one to two stories tall, are well screened with landscaping, and do not sit prominently on their sites. These attributes allow the historic houses to remain the prominent features in the district when viewed from the street.

The applicant has indicated that not all of the materials and details have been decided upon, but the following materials will be used for the project:

1. The south driveway will be gravel, the north driveway material has not been determined.
2. The exact appearance of the retaining walls and landscaping on the site is unknown at this time but will be provided on a detailed landscaping plan.
3. The walls of the house will be “Astoria Blend” natural stone with wood timber elements, cedar siding and cedar trim. The windows will be bronzed aluminum Marvin windows. Porches with railings and a screened in porch will be located at the rear.
4. The house will have a natural cedar shake roof with decorative copper finials, a copper chimney cap, and copper dormers.

Summary

1. The property is in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District. It is currently vacant and previously had two non-contributing houses. The property backs on to the east side of the mill pond and fronts on Washington Road. The highpoint of the land is about halfway between the road and the pond.
2. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a two to three-story single family house that is 11,385 square feet with an attached 2,900 square foot garage. The house is proposed in the “rustic mountain style” with stone walls, heavy timber trim, and a cedar shake roof with decorative copper dormers and finials. The applicant is also requesting approval of an in-ground pool and footprint of a cabana. The cabana design will need to come back for Commission approval at a later date.
3. Additional information is needed to determine whether the proposed house is compatible with the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District. This includes a parcel map showing the proposed footprint on the site in comparison with the other properties surrounding the pond; and a rendering or 3-D drawing showing how the house will sit on the site, and the appearance from the road and from the pond. More information is needed on what trees will be retained and any proposed landscaping, including plants, terraces, retaining walls, fencing, gates, the pool and cabana.
4. The applicant has submitted the proposed plans to the City’s Building Department for a formal review, conditioned on the decisions made by the Historic Districts Commission. Any work performed in connection with this project will be required to meet all zoning and building codes, rules and regulations.

Potential Motions

(Subject to adjustment based on Commission discussion)

MOTION, in the matter of File No. HDC 12-001, that the Historic Districts Commission **POSTPONES** action until the February 9, 2012 regular meeting of the Historic Districts Commission on the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new house at 1855 and 1899 Washington Road in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District, Parcel Identification Numbers 15-01-227-015 & 15-01-227-034 & 15-01-227-035, with the following Findings and Conditions:

Findings:

1. The property is in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District and more information is needed to determine if the house is compatible in massing, size, scale, and materials with the district.
2. The following information is needed:
 - a) Materials proposed for the north driveway;
 - b) A detailed landscaping plan showing existing trees to be removed and retained, any proposed plantings, proposed fencing and gates, information and materials on terraces, patios, and retaining walls;
 - c) A rendering or 3-D drawing showing the appearance of the house from Washington Road and the pond;
 - d) Material samples (if not provided at the meeting); and
 - e) A parcel map showing the surrounding parcels and building footprints on the pond (including across the pond) and the proposed building footprint.

OR

MOTION, in the matter of File No. HDC 12-001, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new house at 1855 and 1899 Washington Road in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District, Parcel Identification Numbers 15-01-227-015 & 15-01-227-034 & 15-01-227-035, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The proposed house is in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District and **is/is not** compatible in massing, size, scale and materials with the district;
- 2) The applicant returns to the Commission for approval of the design of the cabana and any other landscape elements not shown on the current plans; and
- 3) The proposed house construction **is/is not** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation and Guidelines Numbers 9 and 10 as follows:
 9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

* If denying – include reason for denial along with information about how to correct the application and how to reapply.