

involved in monitoring the work as it proceeds as specified in the original approval.

A motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Tischer, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Branstner, Dunphy, Stamps, Thompson, Tischer and Thomasson

Absent 3 - Eastman, Kilpatrick and Winters

2012-0017 1855/1899 Washington Road (HDC File #12-005)

Applicant: CP Ventures LP/Christopher Cousino

Sidwell: 15-01-227-015, 034 & 035

District: Winkler Mill Pond

Request: Certificate of Appropriateness
- New Construction

(Reference: Staff Report dated May 2, 2012, prepared by Kristine Kidorf of Kidorf Consulting, and Jim Breuckman, Manager of Planning, and associated plans were placed on file and by reference became part of the record thereof.)

Chairperson Dunphy called for a summary of the staff report describing the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Breuckman indicated this is a resubmittal of the case that was before the Commission in February. The applicant has new information, and Mr. Breuckman suggested we hear their presentation first before getting into the staff report.

Mr. Anthony Lombardo came forward and stated he is a friend and business partner of the property owner Mr. Chris Peyerck, who apologized that he is unable to attend tonight as he is out of town on a family issue. Mr. Lombardo is present to try and secure approval for the house tonight. He has been working with Mr. Peyerck about how to address the Commission's concerns. Since the last meeting, the property owner has hired an historic architect, Mr. William Finnicum of Finnicum Brownlie Architects, and an historic landscape architect, Mr. Andrew Poehlman of Historic Courtyards and Gardens to help address the previous concerns. What Mr. Peyerck has done is move the house back, move the house down so it's not so elevated on the site, as well as lowering the roof line while preserving the substantial trees on site. The trees that will be removed will be replaced with historic trees. The plan is to go from 170 trees on site to over 200 trees which is a substantial increase. The property owner, along with Mr. Chris Cousino of his office, also met with the adjacent 26 residents, 15 of which agreed with the home being built there. Mr. Peyerck has done a grass roots effort to try and address the Commission's concerns, move the house so that it is not visible from the street and screened from the existing neighbors, and also respect the views from the pond. Although the house is very massive, you will never see the entire house from one viewpoint to understand the size. Mr. Lombardo then asked the architect and landscape architect to explain exactly how they revised the plans to meet the intent of what the Commission is looking for.

Mr. William Finnicum of Finnicum Brownlie Architects, Mr. Andrew Poehlman of Historic Courtyards and Gardens, and Mr. Paul Samartino of Martini-Samartino Design Group, representing the applicant and the homeowner, came forward and introduced themselves.

Mr. Finnicum said he is happy to be present tonight with a new approach to the project. Since February, the Commission's concerns were taken very seriously and the architects have gone back and recentered on the approach to the project. The first thing they did was to take a look at the historic district and the characteristics that define this district with regard to the site. The site does not contain any structures, so its value lies solely in the rolling hills and terrain, the heritage trees, the native vegetation and the broad waterline that it has. He showed and explained pictures of the subject property from all surrounding views. In the effort to protect the natural features of the site, the building was moved 15 feet closer to the pond. It was moved as close to the pond as possible without jeopardizing the heritage trees. The effect of moving the house preserved the crest of the hill which was an HDC concern last time. It is now moved beyond the crest of the hill and reversed the need for a retaining wall that could be seen from the street. A smaller retaining wall is now required for the motor court which will be concealed from the street because the house is down the slope away from the road. The effect of moving the house back also helps to maintain and enhance the wooded buffer from the road. The HDC had made it an objective to preserve the wooded frontage along Washington Road, and this will allow all the woods right on the road to be preserved. The effect of pushing the house back from the street also served to lower the house about 7-1/2 feet because as the house is moved back, it slides down the hill. Relocating the house was done very sensitively to the contours of the land, which Mr. Finnicum pointed out on a contour map of the property. This way, the architect was able to avoid gross manipulation of the grades; very little balance and fill will be required now. A major change from the last time is that at the end of the garage on the west side there was a very steep retaining wall - that is now able to be removed because the building has been moved down the grade, so this can be handled with a small stone retaining wall made out of the same type of stone as the house. Mr. Finnicum projected photographs of retaining walls in the district and pointed out the stone wall at the Van Hoosen Museum, indicating the retaining wall proposed for the new house is of this nature - very short and made of Michigan native stone. 48% of the hard surfaces have been eliminated by narrowing the two driveways, shrinking the motor court and eliminating the rear terrace, outdoor pool and cabana. The two driveways are currently existing and does several good things for the plan; no new curb cuts, no loss of additional trees to create curb cuts or by having to cut a new drive through the woods, less required grading and the good gravel base will remain gravel up to the motor court.

Mr. Poehlman indicated his first study began with going to the site and investigating what exists. Renderings of existing conditions were shown. Through the findings, they found there are 151 significant historical type trees on the site. A tree modification plan was then shown, indicating the removal of 78 trees. These trees are either damaged, old, need to be removed for safety or they are invasive species, such as the Siberian Elm and the Silver Maple. A double choke-cherry tree will be relocated from the middle of the site to the

upper west side of the property. Upon these findings, Mr. Poehlman moved into the naturalized screening. Four different varieties of trees were chosen; Eastern White Pine, Douglas Fir which will be planted primarily on the western property line, Kousa Dogwood, and an apple orchard. Through the naturalized screening, you can see how the contours are affected with the intermingle of the existing tree canopies, the new plantings and how it will screen the house from the road and from the pond. Mr. Poehlman then projected and explained renderings showing how the screening will look from different views of the house.

Mr. Finnicum added that the rolling terrain of the property will be maintained and unaffected as much as possible and the native vegetation retained and protected to preserve the historic qualities of the district as seen from the surrounding properties, particularly those across the pond. Along with moving the building, there were changes to the house. The greatest change was lowering the roofline 24 inches, the net result is that the roof is about 7-1/2 feet lower than first designed in its relationship with the road. The Commission's concern with the size of the house is understandable, but it should not be judged on size alone. Scale and proportion, of which size is a component, is a much more important consideration. The coverage statistics previously presented are quite valid in revealing statistics; that a house has 6.8% coverage on a 5-acre site, compared to a house that covers 7.2% of a 1-acre site is quite proportional. The house is organized linearly to maximize exposure to the surroundings, and also to run parallel to the natural grades. The new house leaves 26% of the width of the site that does not have the house covering it. The setbacks amount to more than 25% of the site, which is greater than what is allowed in the ordinance. The massing of this house is done in such a way that it has smaller components, such as towers, protruding wings, dormers and covered porches breaking up the facade. This is not a monolithic block. The house is broken into smaller segments which are easier for people to relate to. The house also has many features and materials that are used through the historic district (various photographs were projected), the stone walls are similar to the walls at the Van Hoosen Farm, and cedar shingle roofs with copper gutters, downspouts and flashing are common throughout the district. All natural materials will be utilized for the house; natural wood, natural wood shingles, natural stone, so all the colors are in natural tones. Vertical windows with a proportion of 2-1/2 to 1 in height are being proposed, and the second floor windows are aligned above the first floor windows similar to the contributing property at 6400 Winkler Mill Road. Mr. Finnicum showed two photographs of the Winkler Mill before it burned and explained how some of the details of the proposed house mimics the historic mill. Another detail evident in the historic district is the use of carriage doors for garage doors. The heritage trees actually dwarf the building. The trees, terrain and native vegetation will dominant this site despite the height of the house, especially as seen in the pond view rendering. This will allow the contributing historic resources in the district to be the primary feature of the district. The groupings of trees also serve to break up the facade of the house - the house will never be seen as one large house, it will be broken up by the trees. This plan shows how carefully the house is placed among the trees. Mr. Finnicum then commented that the State Enabling Act, PA 169 1970 states that an historic district shall do one or more of the following; 1) safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving historic districts in that City and reflect elements of the City's history, architecture, archeology, engineering

or culture (this project is enhancing the natural environment and is ensuring its maintenance for many decades); 2) stabilize and improve property values in each district and the surrounding areas (this house is a sizeable investment and is adding to the values of all properties in the district); 3) foster civic beauty (the landscaping and house will be of the best materials, be well crafted and maintained impeccably and Mr. Finnicum feels it will add beauty to the historic district); 4) strengthen the local economy (the construction will add jobs, support suppliers and the house will contribute greatly to the tax rolls); 5) promote the use of historic districts for education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the City (this home is private, but people can enjoy the natural beauty, rolling hills and wildlife from the public way). It is Mr. Finnicum's professional opinion that the house design meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, in particular, standards #9 and #10. The placement of the house and the screening allow the historic houses to remain the prominent features of the district. It has a strong natural relationship to the site, it has compatible scale enhanced by comparable elements within the historic district, it is gently set into the existing contours with little need for retention, the historic legacy trees are saved, the existing landscape features are protected and enhanced, the rolling terrain is protected and retained, the drainage course is unimpeded, the road is lined by woods per the Study Committee's recommendations, flowering plants are woven into the evergreen screens per the Study Committee's recommendations. The historic materials, features and spatial relationships are all site related because there are no man-made resources currently on the property. The standards are also met due to its compatibility and scale with the contributing structures of the historic district. The massing of the house is broken into smaller components, the mass of the house is intermittently broken up by groupings of trees, elements characterizing the historic district are utilized in the proposed house design and materials characteristic of the historic district are utilized in the proposed house design. Also, if the house was removed, all historic aspects of the district, i.e., shoreline, heritage trees, native vegetation and the two existing driveways would remain in place. The historical architectural value and significance of the resource is in its rolling hills, the historic trees and the existing evergreen screening. The building is secondary because it is the land features that are most important to preserve. The relationship of the architectural features echo without mimicking, elements of the historic district - dormers, carriage doors, wood siding and trim, etc. The house is proportional to its large lot. It is an estate size lot, and the house is sited comfortably from the road and the pond, softened by vegetation and a broad vista on the pond side and concealed from the road side. Mr. Finnicum added that he respectfully requests that the HDC issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1855 and 1899 Washington Road.

Chairperson Dunphy is not clear about which trees are to be removed and asked for clarification. If trees are to be replaced, he wants clarification of how big they will be and how long it will take to reach maturity and provide the full screening that would be necessary.

Mr. Poehlman confirmed there are 151 trees on the site and 78 trees are slated to be removed. He pointed out on the plan the trees to be removed. The new screening trees scheduled to be planted will be 30 foot tall mature trees, so there will be immediate screening. The dogwood and apple trees will be brought

in at 9 feet; apple trees to be ready for fruit in two years. New trees to be planted total 189, bringing the total trees on the site to 262, significantly boosting the environmental value of the property.

Mr. Lombardo came forward and clarified that when the house is built and the trees planted, the screening as shown on the renderings tonight, will be instantaneous. So, the house will be screened from Washington Road, from the two adjacent neighbors and from the pond. The house will not be seen from Washington Road or by either neighbor, and because of the way the landscape was planned in the rear, only snapshots of the house will be seen from the pond, never the entire house.

Mr. Tischer asked if the boathouse still exists. Mr. Samartino replied the boathouse will remain and will be reconditioned and painted.

Mr. Tischer asked if a generator is planned for the structure. Mr. Samartino indicated this is not addressed in the plans being reviewed tonight. The property owner does intend to have a gas generator, and if required, will return to the Commission for approval.

Mr. Tischer commented he does appreciate the attempt for the drainage and the wetlands on site.

Chairperson Dunphy opened the floor to public comment at 8:10 p.m. 16 letters of support for the new construction have been received from Winkler Mill Pond Historic District residents and have been placed on file.

Ms. Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race, Rochester Hills, MI 48306 came forward and commented that designated historic districts are significant as a collective whole, it must be considered as such and protected in their entirety. This should be a primary principle when considering proposed work. New construction must respond to and protect the integrity of the overall historic district in much the same way as an addition does to an historic building. Infill buildings should relate to and strengthen the characteristics of the district, and should appear as complimentary members. In February, the HDC denied the proposed structure indicating a house with more modest massing that does not sit in a prominently visible location on the site, and has less extensive landscape alteration to the site might be a more appropriate direction to take. She indicated the applicant has reduced the visibility by citing the home lower on the slope toward the pond, slightly reduced the roof height, and revised the landscaping impacts. With the size and amount of trees proposed to be added, it appears that the visibility from the street side has been reduced. She still believes that it is a stretch that the applicant is not supporting, nor enhancing the true underlying character of the majority of the district. The structure is still too massive and carries very few of the district's compositional elements. She is concerned about the close proximity of the septic field to the pond. Please protect the integrity of the collective whole district. She commented that some of the proposed plantings near the pond might be within the required 25 foot natural features setback.

Ms. Kathy White, 1939 Washington Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48306 came

forward and stated this home will have an impact on her as she is two doors away from it, her home is down in the valley and she will be looking at it. She said she couldn't be more pleased that these people have put together such a magnificent home. She said she was in their seat when she proposed her home, and had the same push-back from Commission. She was asked if she could build a more traditional colonial type home. She came to her meeting with her lawyer and architect. It was important to her to be in this location. It was devastating for her to come before this Board and combat this Board because a notice was sent out that the home was not going to be appropriate for the district, and the home was contemporary. The home is a country French home. In talking with the neighbors, the majority are more than happy with the plans. Her disappointment is the density of the trees being put in, so you can't see the structure. She suggested that the driveways be widened because homes of this magnitude deserve to have that. Ms. White wants them there, she supports that they are going to be there, is sorry they have to come back another time and totally supports the heartbeat that they are going to bring to her community.

Mr. Gerald Behayo, 1805 Washington Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48306 came forward and said he came before this Commission back in 1980. His home is strictly contemporary. He has seen a lot of homes built and outside of three historic homes, the rest is an eclectic - there's already one 10,000 square foot home on the pond. Half the pond is in Shelby Township and who knows what they will do over there. He feels the size of the home should not be a consideration; the consideration should be where the home is placed, how it is sheltered in terms of historic values, etc. Yesterday, there was an association meeting at his home and the 16 letters of support received by the City are less than the total people in favor. Only three people at the meeting voiced a minor objection to the house, the rest of the district, which is 20+ homes, are in favor of this, number one - property values and number two - it's a stunning home, number three - it uses all of the native materials, number four - the association thinks it will be the centerpiece of the Oakland side of the pond. 90+% of the association are in favor of the home being built there.

Public comment ended at 8:22 p.m.

Chairperson Dunphy reminded everyone that under the ordinance, which follows the State law, the HDC is charged with applying the Secretary of Interiors Standards. That is the guiding principle the Board has to use, and there is no flexibility on that. That is what is applied in these cases, and that's drives the decision making in this situation. The Chair called for any other discussion from the members.

Mr. Thompson said he is much more impressed with this proposal than what was originally reviewed. This is a much more comprehensive plan than what the Board previously looked at. The time, energy and resources that have been poured into making this project meet some of the concerns that were raised by the Board last time have paid off. Mr. Thompson indicated he does not have an objection to the plan anymore as the applicant has made the changes, the house is lower than what it was, will not be visible from the roadside and has resident support. He is in favor to support the request.

Mr. Branstner feels the applicant has done a good job trying to comply with Secretary of Interior standards #9 and #10, but personally still struggles with the size in context with the district and the other homes, it is still much larger. Otherwise, the applicant has done a good job of trying to mitigate the Board's previous concerns.

Ms. Thomasson stated she too appreciates all the time and effort the applicant has put into reworking the plans as she knows it was a major undertaking. The new plan addressed a lot of concerns to the point that Ms. Thomasson is satisfied with the plan as it is.

Dr. Stamps added he appreciates the effort and energy put into revising the plans, but still feels the home is a little bit big. But the biggest issue is how the neighbors feel.

Mr. Tischer echoes everyone else's comments and thanked the applicant for completing his due diligence. He appreciates what has been done and is more comfortable with the plan as reviewed tonight.

Ms. Kidorf stated that staff deferred the staff report knowing the applicants had an extensive presentation and didn't want to repeat everything. She summarized the concluding paragraph. By situation the house further down the pond-facing slope and reducing the roof height, retaining mature and native trees, planting additional native trees as screening, planting a meadow lawn, and using the existing gravel driveways, the impact of the large size of the house is mitigated. The proposed plan retains the historic rolling terrain of the district and the important landscape features. This placement of the house and installation of the screening will allow the historic houses to remain the prominent features in the district.

MOTION by Thomasson, seconded by Tischer, in the matter of HDC File 12-005, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new house located at 1855 & 1899 Washington Road, Parcel Identification Numbers 15-01-227-015, 034 & 035, with the following Findings and Condition :

Findings:

- 1. The proposed house is in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District and is compatible in massing, size, scale and materials with the district.*
- 2. The proposed landscape alterations including retention of existing trees, planting of new trees and an apple orchard, the gravel driveways and stone retaining walls are compatible with the rolling terrain of the district.*
- 3. The proposed house construction is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard 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 shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Condition:

1. *Any other changes to the proposed plan will need to be approved by the HDC.*

A motion was made by Thomasson, seconded by Tischer, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Branstner, Dunphy, Stamps, Thompson, Tischer and Thomasson

Absent 3 - Eastman, Kilpatrick and Winters

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Stamps reported that both the Oakland County Historical Commission and the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society have voted to support the Oakland Regional Historic Sites website, both financially and attempting to add information to the database.

Chairperson Dunphy commented that because the Historical Society is doing a lot of good work in historic preservation and other issues in this community, he urges everyone to become members of the Historical Society. You can sign up on line or contact Mr. Dunphy for an application.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairperson Dunphy reminded members the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2012.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the HDC, and upon motion by Tischer, seconded by Stamps, Chairperson Dunphy adjourned the Regular Meeting at 8:40 p.m.