



Department of Planning and Development

Staff Report to the Historic Districts Commission

February 6, 2013

1877 Washington Road – Landscaping for New House

REQUEST	Certificate of Appropriateness for landscaping for new house, and accessory buildings and structures
APPLICANT	CP Ventures, LP
FILE NO.	HDC # 13-001
PARCEL NO.	70-15-01-227-038
ZONING	RE: Residential Estate
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Winkler Mill Pond
STAFF	Jim Breuckman, AICP, Manager of Planning Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

In this Report:

Request	1
Review Considerations	2
Summary	4
Potential Motions.....	5

Request

This is a follow-up application for proposed landscaping and outbuildings for the new house at 1877 Washington Road (formerly 1855, 1899) that was approved by the Commission in May 2012 with the condition that the final landscaping plan and any outbuildings are brought back before the Commission.

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 combined three parcels that were vacant. The approved new house is under construction.

This portion of the district contains mostly non-contributing properties except for directly across the Winkler Mill pond. The applicant is constructing a broad 11,385 square foot house with an attached 2,900 square foot garage. The two- to three-story stone house in a “rustic mountain style” is located near the center of the site on the back (west) side of the main slope on the property.

The landscaping plan has been revised from what the Commission approved last year. Originally two gravel driveways were proposed; they are now proposed to be asphalt or concrete, possibly with a cobblestone border. Driveway gates and lighting are proposed. The apple orchard has been removed from the project.

The rain filtration gardens have been changed to layered plantings and create a more sculpted lawn. The placement of new trees in front of the house has changed slightly. Several new features are proposed for the rear yard including a babbling brook, pavilion, walking paths and stone overlook. An existing dock is proposed to be removed and an existing boathouse is proposed to be renovated.

The number of trees proposed to be removed and planted has also changed. Originally just over half of the number of trees on the site were proposed for removal; that number has increased by seven trees. Originally 189 trees were proposed to be planted, that number has been reduced to 157. This reduces the total number of trees on the property to 224, thirty-eight less than originally approved/proposed.

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

Trees

The site originally had 151 trees on the site and it was proposed to remove 73 trees and plant 189 trees for a total of 242 trees. Tree types originally proposed included Douglas Fir, Eastern White Pine, Malus, Dogwood and American Beech. Trees were generally proposed along both the north and south property lines, along Washington Road, and groups near the front and rear of the house. An apple orchard was proposed for the southwest corner of the site.

It is now proposed to remove 84 and plant 157 trees for a total of 224 trees. The types proposed include River Birch, Red Oak, Sugar Maple, Tulip, Willow, White Spruce, Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir, White Pine, Dogwood, Amelanchier, and Eastern Red Bud. Trees are still proposed along the north and south property lines and along Washington Road. More trees are proposed in front of the house, and the orchard has been removed from the plans.

Front Yard

The front lawn area is reduced in size from the original proposal and is now proposed to have layered plantings around the edges to separate it from the tree planting areas and create a more defined lawn space. A circular raised planting bed is now proposed for the center of the drop off area in front of the house. An undetermined feature is proposed for the center of the raised bed.

Driveways and Entrance Gates

The originally proposed gravel driveways are in the same location but are now proposed to be paved in asphalt or concrete, and possibly have a cobblestone border. Low stone bollards with low-volt lighting are proposed along the driveway. Gates are proposed for both driveway entrances. The gates consist of stone piers that are approximately 7'8" tall and are capped with limestone. The stone is proposed to match the house. Lanterns are proposed for the front of the piers. A pair of wood and iron gates are proposed to span between the piers.

Rear Yard Elements

Several new elements are proposed for the rear yard including two terraces, pavilion, walking paths, a stone overlook, a babbling brook water feature, and sitting area. An existing boathouse (unknown date of construction) is proposed to be renovated into a studio building. The existing condition, materials and appearance of the boathouse are unknown. It is proposed to re-side and re-roof the structure with cedar shake siding that "complements the main house."

The proposed pavilion is sited slightly southwest of the house and is approximately 25 feet wide by 30 feet long and 15' 6" to the ridge in height. It will use materials to match the house including a stone foundation, heavy wood timbers, and cedar siding. The hip roof will have a central stone chimney and cedar shingles. The pavilion will generally be open but will have two sides enclosed. Small multi-pane windows with wood shutters are proposed for the exterior walls. A small barrel dormer is proposed for the center of both ends of the roof.

A semi-circular paved terrace with circular planting areas cutout is proposed around the two-story rear porch. It is proposed to be paved in a multi-colored slate or flagstone. A paved path/steps lead from the terrace to a second terrace by the proposed pavilion. Below the house terrace a paved sitting area is proposed beside a "babbling brook" water feature that will run from next to the house, along the terrace and down to the sitting area. Walking paths of an unspecified permeable material are proposed to run between the terrace and the studio/boathouse and from the sitting area to the studio/boathouse.

A variety of trees are proposed in various clumps throughout the backyard with a larger concentration near the north end of the house. Between the pond edge and the edge of the lawn a vegetative buffer is proposed that will be planted with native grasses and shrubs.

A circular stone overlook is proposed near the southwest corner of the lawn, overlooking the pond. The stone walls around the overlook will be about three feet tall.

Materials

The applicant has indicated that the following materials will be used for the project:

1. Both driveways are proposed to be paved in asphalt or concrete and may have a cobblestone edge. The terraces are proposed to be paved in a multi-colored slate or flagstone.
2. Tree types proposed include River Birch, Red Oak, Sugar Maple, Tulip, Willow, White Spruce, Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir, White Pine, Dogwood, Amelanchier, and Eastern Red Bud. Other plantings proposed include native grasses and shrubs. The lawns will be grass or meadow.
3. Cedar siding and roofing matching the house are proposed for the boathouse and pavilion. Stone matching the house is proposed for the pavilion and for the piers supporting the wood and iron driveway gates. Stone is proposed for the overlook walls.

Summary

1. The property is in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District. The new house was approved by the Commission in May 2012 and is under construction. 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. Per the Commission's May 2012 approval the applicant has returned with a final landscaping plan and is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove a dock, renovate an existing boathouse, construct a pavilion, construct a stone overlook, install a stream and sitting area, construct driveway gates, use a different driveway paving material, install driveway lights, install a planting bed and feature, remove additional and plant fewer trees.
3. The landscape design proposes to retain 67 mature and native trees on the site and to plant 157 new native trees for screening. Trees will be planted along Washington Road, in front of the house, along the north and south property lines, and in the backyard. The lawn areas are proposed to be no-mow meadow grass.
4. Two driveways along the north and south property lines will lead to the house and will be paved in asphalt or concrete, possibly with a cobblestone edge. Wood and iron driveway gates supported by stone piers are proposed at the ends of the driveways. Bollard lighting in stones is proposed along the driveway.
5. A circular raised planting bed with an unknown feature is proposed for in front of the house.
6. The age, existing condition and appearance of the boathouse proposed for renovation is unknown. Therefore it is difficult to determine if the proposed re-siding and re-roofing are appropriate. An existing dock is proposed to be removed.
7. A new one-and-a-half story hip roof pavilion is proposed for the rear yard. The materials are proposed to be heavy timbers, stone, siding and roofing to match the house.
8. Paved terraces are proposed near the house and pavilion in the rear yard. A babbling brook water feature is proposed beside the house and terraces. Walkways with an unknown permeable surface are proposed through the back yard. A stone wall overlook is proposed near the pond.
9. Provided information is given at the meeting on the existing boathouse age and appearance, the appearance of the babbling brook, the permeable walkway material and the feature for the front of the house the proposed landscaping and accessory buildings could be compatible with the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District. Even with the proposed landscape alterations the rolling terrain and mature trees will be preserved and the additional landscape features are compatible with the historic characteristics of the district.
10. 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 13-001, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the landscaping, accessory buildings and structures for the new house at 1877 Washington Road in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District, Parcel Identification Numbers 70-15-01-227-038, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The property is in the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District and the proposed landscape alterations, driveway gates, pavilion, and boathouse renovation are/**are not** compatible with the landscape and built features of the district;
- 2) The proposed landscape alterations and accessory building renovation and construction **are/are not** 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 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.*

CONDITIONS

(insert any applicable conditions regarding materials, design, exclusions or additions from the improvements shown on the plans, etc. and as appropriate)