



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

September 30, 2020

<b>1841 Crooks Road – Construct new house</b>	
<b>REQUEST</b>	Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of new house
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Grace Properties – Lijo Antony
<b>FILE NO.</b>	HDC #20-023
<b>PARCEL NO.</b>	15-20-428-003
<b>ZONING</b>	R-1 – One family residential
<b>HISTORIC DISTRICT</b>	1841 Crooks Road
<b>STAFF</b>	Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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**Request**

This is an application to construct a new house for a 12 bed-senior living facility at 1841 Crooks Road. The Commission approved the demolition of the previous house in 2017. The property contains a barn that contributes to this individually designated historic district that is located on the east side of Crooks Road. The proposed house sits southwest of the barn on the property with the house being closest to Crooks Road. The site has the remains of a gravel circular drive with many trees and bushes around the buildings and edges of the property. There are subdivisions around the property. The applicant is proposing to construct a new 6,827 square foot, one-and-a-half-story tall house on the south half of the site and construct a circular drive and parking spaces from Crooks Road to access the house and barn.

Historical Information

1841 Crooks Road, which is an individual historic district, was designated by the City of Rochester Hills in 1978. The property was originally part of the 230-acre A.C. Parker farm which also contained other buildings to the south near the stream. The 1908 Oakland County Atlas shows the barn on 52 acres of property owned by E. Berry. The 1938 Rural Property Inventory shows the property belonging to E. J. Beattie, of Grosse

Pointe Park. Per the inventory the property was being used for agricultural purposes. Twenty-four acres of the property were “class A agricultural crop land.” From the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts* survey, “Relatively few farm buildings other than farmhouses survive to represent the agricultural landscape that once constituted nearly the whole of Avon Township. Therefore, most farm buildings that retain the greater part of their historic appearance are considered significant. Most common are barns: a total of twenty-five buildings historically used as barns are extant in the survey area. This is likely the total or very close to the total for Rochester Hills.”

## Review Considerations

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The applicant is requesting approval to construct a new one-and-a-half story house and circle drive with parking spaces on the property. Although a larger footprint, the house in about the same location as the house previously on the property. The existing barn is proposed to remain.

The circle drive is proposed to be paved in concrete and will be of an unknown width. Two areas of four parking spaces each will be located near the north and south corners of the drive. The drive will extend to the attached two-car garage located at the north end of the house. A concrete walkway will lead from the south parking spaces to the front porch. According to the site plan there are 82 trees on the site, 20 of which will be removed – 3 of those are in the building footprint. The 3 trees in the building footprint are large, mature trees and include a 40” maple, a 28” maple, and a 19” mulberry. 20 new trees will be planted on the site.

The house footprint is generally rectangular with an overall size of 110’ 5” wide facing/parallel to Crooks Road and 74’ 6” deep. A hipped-roof front porch extends across the front and around the sides of the front part of the building. Square pillars with simple tops and bottoms sit on top of a stone veneer wing wall that wraps around the porch. The remainder of the house has a brick veneer foundation. All of the walls are proposed to be clad in vinyl vertical board and batten siding. Multi-pane windows are proposed throughout the house. The front door is accessed from the front porch and has a multi-pane door with sidelights. Two gable front dormers sit on top of the porch roof. The main roof is a steep complex side gable roof. The roof is proposed to be clad in dimensional asphalt shingles. The height from the ground to the top of the roof is 23’ 11”.

The north elevation is closest to the barn and has four different gable roof ends. The brick veneer continues around the foundation level with the vinyl vertical board and batten siding above. A two-car wide overhead garage door, and three multi-pane windows are located on the elevation.

The rear elevation has a smaller recessed porch with shed roof supported by square pillars on a wing wall clad in stone veneer. A pair of multi-light doors with sidelights access the rear porch. There are two gable-front dormers above the porch roof and there are gable wall fronts on both sides of the porch. Eight pairs of multi-light casement windows are spread across the elevation.

The south elevation has three large gable ends, more of the front porch wraps around to this side, and there is a single multi-light door accessing the porch. There are two sets of multi-light casement windows in the center gable end.

## Summary

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1. The property is an individually designated historic district and contains a barn and the remains of a gravel drive. The Commission approved the removal of the house previously on the property.
2. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new one-and-a-half story tall (about 24' to top of roof) 6,827 square foot house for senior living along with a circular drive and parking spaces. No plans were specified for the barn except that it is proposed to remain in place.
3. Materials proposed for the project include a concrete driveway and parking areas; concrete walkways; CertainTeed StoneFacade molded stone veneer panels (unknown color); brick veneer (unknown type/color); CertainTeed Board and Batten vinyl siding (unknown color); and CertainTeed Landmark dimensional asphalt shingles (unknown color). The renderings provided show light gray board and batten siding, white trim and columns, and black asphalt shingles.
4. The proposed house is in about the same location as the previous house although it has a much larger footprint (approximately 110' by 75'). The height of the house is about the same height as the barn remaining on the property.
5. The massing, scale, materials, and placement of the house and driveway appear to be compatible with the existing barn on the property. Construction of the house, drive and parking as proposed meets The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 9 and 10.
6. It is unknown if the applicant has submitted the proposed plans to the City's Building Department for a formal review. Any work performed in connection with this project will be required to meet all zoning and building codes, rules and regulations.

## Potential Motions

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(Subject to adjustment based on Commission discussion)

**MOTION**, in the matter of File No. HDC 20-023, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES/POSTPONES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new house at 1841 Crooks Road, Parcel Identification Number 15-20-428-003, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The proposed drive, parking and house construction **is/is not** compatible in massing, size, scale, and materials to the barn remaining on the property; and
- 2) The proposed drive, parking and house construction **is/is 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.*

Staff visualization exercise of approximate new house on aerial view of site

