

**PRELIMINARY REPORT**  
**ROCHESTER HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**EUREKA FRUIT FARM, 1021 HARDING ROAD**  
**ROCHESTER HILLS, MICHIGAN**  
**Adopted February 11, 2021**

**CHARGE OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE**

The historic districts study committee was appointed by the Rochester Hills City Council on December 15, 1999, pursuant to the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 118, as amended in 2009. The study committee is a standing committee charged with conducting the duties and activities of a study committee on a continuing basis. These duties include inventory, research, and preparation of a preliminary study committee report for a proposed historic district. Study committee members serve two-year terms. A list of current committee members follows.

Pursuant to Chapter 118, Section 129, the City Council referred a request for elimination of the Eureka Fruit Farm, a single property historic district located at 1021 Harding Road to the Historic Districts Study Committee on December 14, 2020. The study committee is to make a recommendation back to Council as soon as possible.

**STUDY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Julie Granthen* is chairperson of the Historic Districts Study Committee and is also a member of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission. She has been a Rochester Hills resident for over fifty years. She grew up in the community and is a graduate of Adams High School, Oakland University (B.A. Economics and M.B.A.) and the University of Toledo (J.D.). She is a retired professor and attorney and serves on the Oakland University Alumni Board of Directors.

*Darlene Janulis* is a marketing coordinator and has a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Newport University. In addition to also being a member of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission she belongs to the Historical Society of Michigan and the education committee of the Rochester Avon Historical Society. She formerly served on the Board of Education for the Rochester Community Schools.

*Kelly Lyons* is the Curator of Education at the Cranbrook Art Museum and is also a member of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission. She has a Bachelor of Architecture from Carnegie Mellon University and a Master of Science from Duquesne University. She is a board member of the Association of Architecture Organizations.

*Tom Stephens* is a performance development coach in business practices with degrees from Cornell University and Northwood University. He is also member of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission and is a board member of the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

*Jason Thompson* is also Chairperson of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission. He has received a bachelor's degree in history from Oakland University, and a Master of Public Administration from Oakland University. His academic and work activities include a strong background in research and grant writing.

*Charles Tischer* is also a member of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. A native of the Rochester Hills area, he has a BA in Political Science/Public Policy from Western Michigan University. He is a Trustee of the Avondale Board of Education.

*LaVere Webster* is an art and antiques conservator who lives in one of the city's designated local historic districts. He has served on the board of directors of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society for more than six years.

Kristine M. Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting, a 36 CFR 61 qualified architectural historian, assisted the study committee with their work.

## **INVENTORY**

An initial survey was conducted by Avon Township (now Rochester Hills) in 1978, out of which the property at 1021 Harding Road was designated a local historic district. In 1993 and 1994, the staff members of the Rochester Hills Museum updated the photo documentation of properties previously designated. A photographic inventory of the district was conducted in 2002 as part of the *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey*. Copies of the inventory forms are located at the Rochester Hills Planning Department, the Rochester Hills Museum, and the State Historic Preservation Office. Additional photographs were taken in January 2021 as part of the preparation of this report.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT**

The district consists of an approximately 1.8 acre parcel located on the south side of Harding Road, about a half-mile east of Livernois Road. The north edge of the rectangular parcel rises above Harding Road but then gently slopes from the rear of the house to the southern edge of the property. Several bushes and smaller evergreen trees are at the top of the embankment along the road. A gravel driveway enters the property west of the house from Harding Road and runs straight back to the rear of the house. There is a cluster of large, mature trees at the northeast corner of the property, and scattered along the east and west sides. There are remnants of an orchard on the east side of the property towards the south. There is a small grassy area along the south edge of the property. Various types of fencing are placed randomly in the south half of the parcel. There are four buildings on the property, a house, a barn, a pumphouse and a shed.

House - contributing

Note that the house suffered an extensive fire in November 2017. As a result many window and door openings are boarded over, there are tarps on the roof, and there is evidence of fire damage on some areas of the brick walls and the roof.

The house faces north to Harding Road with a deep setback. The house is a two-story tall upright with a one-and-a-half-story wing projecting to the east and a one-and-a-half-story tall rear ell. The house is clad in red brick in a

common bond with a coursed stone foundation. The gable roofs have deep eaves with a simple wood fascia and are clad in asphalt shingles and tarps.

The north façade of the upright has flat arched window openings at the first and second floor. The first-floor opening has a limestone sill and is boarded, the second floor contains a pair of two-over-two double-hung windows with narrow louvered shutters. The north façade of the wing has a central door opening flanked by tall narrow window openings at the first floor that are all boarded closed. At the second floor there is a gable-front wall dormer with a boarded window opening. A shed roof porch supported by turned posts which appear to be original runs the full width of the wing. A second boarded door opening enters the east side of the upright from the porch.

The house's east elevation is comprised of the gable end of the wing, and the side of the rear ell. The gable end of the wing has a five-sided projecting one-story tall bay with a stone foundation, wood walls, and a hipped roof. The window openings are boarded. Above the bay, in the gable end, is a window opening with a shallow-arch lintel. The window opening is boarded. The east elevation of the rear wing has the remains of a hipped roof porch at the first floor and a shallow arched window opening. Behind the porch there is a door flanked by two window openings that are boarded over. There is one square window opening at the second floor with no window sash and small louvered shutters.

At the rear of the house there is a one-story tall hip roof enclosed porch with wide siding on the lower half and boarded window openings in the upper half. A single door is located near the west side. The second floor of the rear ell has a single tall opening in the center. The rear elevation of the upright has a one-story hip roof addition that is clad in wood clapboard siding. A door and window opening in the addition are both boarded over. In the second floor of the upright there is a tall narrow window opening with a shallow arch lintel that is boarded over.

The west elevation of the house consists of the two-story tall upright, the side of the one-and-a-half-story tall rear ell, and the side of the small one-story addition to the rear of the upright. The upright has a non-original exterior brick chimney in the center of the wall. To the north of the chimney are wide shallow-arched window openings at the first and second floor that are boarded over. To the south of the chimney at the first floor there is a small window opening, and a larger shallow arched window opening. Both are boarded over. At the second floor there are two narrow window openings with shallow arched lintels. The side of the rear ell consists of the clapboard sided addition to the upright. The remains of a shed roof porch extends along the remainder of the side of the rear ell. There are two boarded window openings at the first floor. At the second floor there is one boarded window opening near the rear wall of the upright. There are two skylights in the gable roof of the rear ell.

#### Barn - contributing

The barn is located south of the house and is one-and-a-half stories tall with a saltbox gable roof – the rear slope is longer than the front. The eaves have exposed rafter tails. The barn has a rectangular footprint. The barn is built into the hill so that the lower level is equal to the lower ground level. The barn has a cobblestone basement and the walls are clad in narrow wood clapboard siding.

The north elevation has two wide door openings with paneled wood sliding doors with windows in the upper third of each door. There is a wood panel pedestrian door. A wide opening in the east half of the elevation contains a

combination of double-hung windows with a wider fixed sash window in between. The east elevation has a small square opening in the top of the gable, the ground slopes away sharply toward the south. The west elevation is identical with a more gradual slope toward the south. The south elevation has wide openings at both ends of the lower level that have half-high wood gates across the bottom. The wall in between the openings has seven four-over-four windows that alternate with sections of wall clad with wood louvers. In the upper level at the east end there is a wide window opening containing two one-over-one double hung windows flanking a large, fixed center sash. In the west end there are three four-over-four double hung windows.

#### Pumphouse – non-contributing

To the southwest of the house is a one-story tall pumphouse with a square footprint and pyramidal roof. The walls are clad in narrow wood clapboard with wood trim. The west and north elevations have no openings. The east elevation has a single door opening with no door. The south elevation has a small window opening with a casement window.

#### Storage Shed – non-contributing

According to the owner as reported in the 2002 survey, this building was moved from across the street just prior to 2002.

The shed is one-story tall with a gable hip roof and deep eaves. It is clad in modern vertical wood siding. The hinged door matches the siding and makes the building appear that there are no openings.

### **COUNT OF HISTORIC AND NON-HISTORIC RESOURCES**

There are two historic and two non-historic resources in the district.

### **BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Parcel ID 15-15-327-002

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The district consists of the entire intact parcel that remains of the property historically associated with the house. The property boundaries are the same as in the 1938 Rural Property Inventory.

Across and to the west on Harding Road are houses that range from about 1910 to the 1950s and a church of an unknown date. Surrounding the property to the south is city owned open space.

### **HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT**

The district is an approximately 1.8-acre parcel that remains of an approximately forty acre farmstead that straddled Harding Road. The existing house on the property was constructed about 1865 according to the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey*.



Henry Wellington Ostrom was born in Belleville, Ontario, Canada on March 17, 1828. He immigrated to the United States in 1867. According to the *Rochester Souvenir Directory* published in 1907 by W. H. Barnes, Ostrom established the Eureka Fruit Farm in 1870. The 1880 census lists Henry W. Ostrom and his wife Ellen. The 1880 farm census lists Henry as having 16 acres tilled, a farm valued at \$1,000 with \$50 of farming implements, and \$150 worth of livestock. He hired labor for four weeks in 1879 and had two horses, one milk cow, one calf, one pig, and eight chickens. The farm produced one hundred pounds of butter in 1879. In 1879 he farmed five acres of corn, eight acres of oats, and four acres of wheat. He produced one hundred bushels of potatoes in 1879. There were twenty-six bearing apple trees and nine bearing peach trees. The total value of produce sold in 1879 from the market garden was \$300 and the fifteen cords of wood sold were valued at forty-five dollars.

It is unknown what became of his first wife Ellen, but in October 1884 Henry at 50 years old married twenty-eight-year-old Louisa Ann Gottschatz of Canada. The 1900 census lists a daughter Ella born in 1883, so it is possible that Ellen died during or soon after childbirth. The five other children listed in the 1900 census are Lizzie (1885), Laura (1887), Lucy (1889), May (1891), and Wellington (1895). In the 1910 census only the younger three children, Lucy, May, and Wellington are shown as living at home.

The 1896 Oakland County Illustrated Atlas shows the property containing 42 acres on both the north and south side of Harding Road with a square about where the house is located. The 1908 atlas shows the same property with forty acres.

A historic photograph of an unknown date shows the house with a two-story barn in the background. The house shows more of its original elements such as cornice brackets and decorative porch posts and brackets.



Residence of H. W. Ostrom, Proprietor Eureka Fruit Farm, Rochester, Mich.

**Photo 1** Photo of H.W. Ostrom house, Eureka Fruit Farm, unknown date, courtesy property owner.

The 1907 *Rochester Souvenir Directory* published by W. M. Barnes states that the Eureka Fruit Farm had “twenty-four acres of bush berries with more varieties than any other farm in the township.” Ostrom drove his berries to Detroit using his own team and bringing his own cashier to sell directly to customers and avoiding the middleman. This procedure was reported to be new to the area and made the Eureka Fruit Farm more profitable.

A May 27, 1909 article in the *Detroit Free Press* reads, “Rochester - Henry W. Ostrom, a prosperous farmer. One mile south of here. Was kicked by a mule while feeding his stock. His right leg was broken. He is 81-years old and proprietor of the Eureka Fruit Farm.”

A February 2, 1910 article in the *Detroit Free Press* lists the farm for sale, although it is unknown whether it sold at that time. The ad reads: “FORTY-ACRE FARM for sale: the buildings cannot be built for cost of farm: pleasant, healthy location: nine-room brick house. Basement barn: three-fourths mile from Rochester schools, three-fourths mile from D.U.R.; good cement sand pit on farm. G.T. passing 20 rods from sand pit, southeast corner. For particulars address H. W. Ostrom, owner, Rochester, Mich.”

Henry W. Ostrom died at the age of 85 on April 26, 1913 in Avon Township after what appears to be a nearly two-month long illness. The cause of death was listed as chronic bronchitis. His daughter Ella testified to his personal information on the death certificate. He is buried in Rochester.

The 1925 Oakland County Atlas shows the same forty acres belonging to Isaac E. Boomer. A brief search for information on Mr. Boomer indicates that he lived in Highland Park, Michigan and was president of the Michigan Builders Supply Company. He was possibly behind the construction of the 1920s era houses on the north side of Harding Road. By the time of the 1938 Rural Property Inventory the house and barn were listed as a homesite with 1.8 acres owned by Mrs. W. W. Jersey. The house is listed as having been built in 1863 and the site plan shows the existing front porch and a rear porch at the south end of the upright, as well as a glass enclosed porch at the south end of the rear ell. The east side porch is not shown. The house is listed as having a wood shingle roof, pine floors, and plaster interior walls with pine trim. The barn is listed as having been constructed in 1905 with dimensions of 60x24x12 with a concrete foundation, finished lumber exterior, and a wood shingle roof. The barn basement dimensions are noted as 60x24x8. It seems likely that the barn described in 1938 is the existing barn on the property.

The 1947 Oakland County Atlas appears to show the current property as about 2.9 acres belonging to L. Smith, with the remainder of the original forty acres belonging to a variety of surrounding property owners. The part of the original property on the north side of Harding Avenue is subdivided into a number of small lots.

The Miller family purchased the property in 1974 and continues to own the property. In November 2017 the house suffered a significant fire.

## **CRITERIA FOR DISTRICT ELIMINATION**

Pursuant to Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 118, as amended in 2009, and PA 169 of 1970 as amended, if considering elimination of a historic district, the study committee shall follow the procedures set forth in this division for issuing a preliminary report, holding a public hearing and issuing a final report, but with the intent of showing one or more of the following:

- 1) Lost physical characteristics. The historic district has lost those physical characteristics that enabled establishment of the district;
- 2) Insignificance. The historic district was not significant in a way previously defined; or
- 3) Defective procedure. The historic district was established pursuant to defective procedures. (Section 118-34, Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances)

### ***Lost Physical Characteristics***

The house at 1021 Harding Road suffered a fire in November 2017. The only outbuilding that may be considered contributing is the barn which was possibly constructed in 1905. The pumphouse construction date is unknown and the storage shed was constructed on the property about 2002. In comparing a photograph of the house from 1978 when the district was originally designated to a current photograph shows the only difference is the fire damage from 2017. The house retains its physical characteristics and is still considered contributing to the district.



**Photo 2** Photo of 1021 Harding from the 1978 Avon Township "Inventory of Historic Properties," Rochester Hills Museum



**Photo 3** Photo of 1021 Harding, January 2021.

Other than windows and portions of the roof all damaged by fire the district has not lost its original physical characteristics from when it was designated.

The National Register of Historic Places, through its document, *National Register Bulletin 16A*, discusses evaluating historic integrity.

“Historic integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period. Historic integrity is the composite of seven qualities:

- location
- design
- setting
- materials
- workmanship
- feeling
- association



Historic integrity enables a property to illustrate significant aspects of its past. For this reason, it is an important qualification for National Register listing. Not only must a property resemble its historic appearance, but it must also retain physical materials, design features, and aspects of construction dating from the period when it attained significance. The integrity of archeological resources is generally based on the degree to which remaining evidence can provide important information. All seven qualities do not need to be present for eligibility as long as the overall sense of past time and place is evident.”

The property at 1021 Harding is significant from the time of the establishment of the Eureka Fruit Farm in 1870 until when the Ostrom’s sold the property, either in 1910 when it was listed for sale, or at some point after Henry Ostrom’s death in 1913. The exact sale date or who owned the property until 1925 when Isaac Boomer is shown as the owner in the 1925 atlas, however additional information may justify extending the period of significance.

Using the criteria above to judge historic integrity, the property does resemble its historic appearance and retains physical materials, design features, and aspects of construction from the period of significance. Additionally, it remains in its original location, has most of its original design and materials. The setting has not changed significantly, and the property still retains the feeling of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead.

### ***Insignificance***

In 1978, when the Avon Township Historic District Study Committee conducted their investigation of potential historic districts in the township, they had relatively little guidance. Michigan’s Local Historic Districts Act, PA 169 of 1970, instructed study committees to conduct studies and research and make a written report on the cultural, social, economic, political, architectural, or historical significance of the property under consideration. The law did not specify how to go about this study, what the report should include, or what criteria should be used to evaluate historical significance. Furthermore, in the 1970s methods to identify and evaluate historic properties were less sophisticated than they are today.

A primary purpose of the 2002 Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey was to re-evaluate all of the properties that were designated in 1978. This was because the practice of historic preservation has progressed greatly since then and techniques for identifying and evaluating historic properties have advanced notably. Michigan’s Local Historic Districts Act has been amended extensively. The 1992 amendments specify requirements for study committee reports in some detail and require study committees to be guided by the evaluation criteria for the National Register of Historic Places.

Rochester Hills’ historic preservation ordinance has also undergone substantive amendment, in large part to follow state law. The original ordinance limited the local historic district to one hundred feet from the primary structure. This was amended in 1995 to include the entire parcel in the local historic district. Thus, it became necessary to evaluate all of the resources on each historic property. Finally, the former Avon Township had grown and changed tremendously since 1978. It was necessary to evaluate the historic districts within the context of the Rochester Hills of 2002.

After the 1992 amendments to Public Act 169 of 1970, and prior to 2002, Public Act 169 of 1970, as amended (PA 169) required that study committees "shall guided by" the criteria for listing in the National Register of

Historic Places. In 2002, the State Historic Preservation Office, per Section 399.205 (3) of PA 169, adopted rules regarding local historic district designation that every study committee is required to follow. Those rules state that any local historic district--single or multiple resource--"shall follow" the criteria for listing in the national register. Any local historic district established between 1992 and 2002 was created under the "shall be guided by" requirement, which then existed in Public Act 169. Previous to the 2002 rules, PA 169 of 1970 allowed the local community more autonomy in determining what they considered to be historic and worthy of protection. Therefore not meeting the national register criteria is not valid grounds to de-designate a single resource historic district designated before 2002.

The 2002 survey found that the Eureka Fruit Farm/1021 Harding Road was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. National Register Criterion A is relevant to the designation of 1021 Harding Road. Evaluation of the property according to this criterion leads to the conclusion that the property continues to be as historically significant as originally thought.

### **The National Register Criteria**

**The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:**

**A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.**

Agriculture is the central theme in the city's history and is its most significant pattern of events. Note that the events referred to in National Register Criterion A are not necessarily single events. As explained in *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*: "Criterion A recognizes properties associated with single events, such as the founding of a town, or with a pattern of events, repeated activities, or historic trends, such as the gradual rise of a port city's prominence in trade and commerce."<sup>1</sup> Further in the 2002 survey report evaluation standards are given in order for a former farm to meet the agricultural context. It states, "Domestic property types including single and multiple family houses may contribute to the agricultural theme when they are associated with other farm buildings or landscape features. A farmhouse alone is significant under the theme of agriculture only when it is associated with a farm of outstanding significance to the agricultural history of the township."<sup>2</sup>

The original study committee determined that the property contributed to the pattern of settlement and agriculture as the house was associated with the Eureka Fruit Farm, established in 1870, a significant farm in Avon Township. According to the 1978 Avon Township "Inventory of Historic Resources", the property as described in the 1907 Rochester Souvenir, "is the original bush berry farm of Avon Township, and was established thirty-seven (37) years ago by the present proprietor, H.W. Ostrom, who is now eighty years old. This farm has twenty-four acres devoted to bush berries and has more varieties than any other farm in the Township. Mr. Ostrom introduced the custom of driving berries to Detroit by team, avoiding commission men, carrying his own cashier and selling direct to consumer, and his enterprise, industry and thrift have built one of

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin 15 (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, n.d.), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Busch, *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey* (Rochester Hills: City of Rochester Hills, 2002), 26.

the most profitable berry farms in the state, with fine farm and home buildings, and every convenience for work, giving employment to eight-five pickers at the height of the season.”

In summary the property at 1021 Harding Road continues to be significant in the way the original study committee thought. It is significant with events or persons significant in the history of Rochester Hills as it pertains to agriculture and the Eureka Fruit Farm. The property retains enough architectural integrity under Criteria A and the agriculture context. The house was the residence of the Ostrom family, the founders and operators of the Eureka Fruit from its establishment in 1870 until at least 1910 and possibly at least until 1913 when Henry W. Ostrom died. The barn may date from 1905, which is within the period of significance of the Eureka Fruit Farm.

### ***Defective Procedure***

The procedures followed in establishing the Eureka Fruit Farm/1021 Harding Road Historic District were not defective. When the property was designated a local historic district in 1978, the Avon Township Board and Avon Township Study Committee correctly followed the procedures prescribed by state law at that time. The study committee adopted evaluation criteria, conducted an inventory, prepared inventory sheets on each property, prepared a preliminary and a final report, drafted an ordinance, and undertook the required transmittals and public hearing. Of the several hundred properties that the study committee inventoried, sixty-five were recommended for local historic district designation. The Avon Township Board designated thirty-one of these as non-contiguous historic districts each containing one building and the remainder as part of the Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill Pond Historic Districts.

The historic districts ordinance that Avon Township adopted in 1978 limited a non-contiguous district to the designated structure on the property and the area within one hundred feet from that structure (or to the property line if that was less than one hundred feet away). In 1995, the city of Rochester Hills amended their ordinance to include the entire parcel with all of its historic and non-historic resources.<sup>3</sup> This was done to comply with the changes in state law.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study committee finds that the house at 1021 Harding Road should continue to be designated as a local historic district. The original study committee understood the significance of Henry W. Ostrom and the Eureka Fruit Farm to Avon Township and its agricultural history. While the fire damage to the house is tragic, the property retains its historic integrity and conveys its historic appearance, workmanship, setting, and feeling.

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<sup>3</sup> Rochester Hills Historic Districts Study Committee. “Preliminary Historic District Study Committee Report, Demay-Potere Farm Historic District, Rochester Hills, Michigan” no date, p. 13.

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## **DISTRICT MAP**



# Location Map 1021 Harding Ave.



Aerial photographs as of April 2015.  
The Parcel lines were obtained as 2/17/17 from Oakland County.  
Although the information provided by this map is believed to be reliable, its accuracy is not warranted in any way. The City of Rochester Hills assumes no liability for any claims arising from the use of this map.

5/1/17

1 inch = 125 feet

**PHOTO KEY**





Rochester Hills, Oakland County

— = 100'



— Approximate district boundary



## PHOTOGRAPHS



1-Looking south at 1021 Harding Road, January 2021



2-Looking southwest at front and east side of house, January 2021





3-Looking northwest at east side of house, January 2021



4-Looking northwest at rear of house, January 2021





5-Looking northeast at west side and rear of house, January 2021



6-Looking southeast at front and west side of house, January 2021





7-Looking southwest at barn north and east elevations, January 2021



8-Looking south at north elevation of barn, January 2021





9-Looking northwest at south elevation of barn, January 2021



10-Looking southeast at north and west elevations of barn, January 2021





11-Looking west at pumphouse, January 2021



12-Looking east at storage shed, January 2021





13-Looking southeast at south portion of property and orchard remnants, January 2021



14-Looking west across property between house and barn at pumphouse, January 2021





15 – Looking west at houses on north side of Harding Road, January 2021



16 – North dormer showing fire damage, January 2021



17 – Looking at fire damaged interior, damaged east bay window to left, January 2021