

Findings:

1. The use of crushed limestone is compatible with the property.
2. The subject site is a contributing resource within the Stoney Creek Historic District located in the City of Rochester Hills.
3. The use of the driveway is consistent with the Stoney Creek Historic District and will have a positive impact on the resource.
4. The proposed improvement is consistent with the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Conditions:

1. Prior to applying the crushed limestone drive, the applicant shall submit for and receive all required permits from the City of Rochester Hills.
2. The crushed limestone drive will be approximately 12 feet wide by 30 feet deep, running south from Tienken Road, and will be at least 3 inches thick and will be consistent with the proper installation of a base and necessary drainage.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Sieffert, Thompson, Cozzolino, Dunphy, Dziurman, Miller

Nays: None

Absent: Kilpatrick, Stamps, Szantner

MOTION CARRIED

Vice Chairperson Dunphy stated that the motion had carried and wished the applicant success with his project.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

9A. Ferry Court (Wayside Park) (HDC File #03-002)

Vice Chairperson Dunphy stated this matter was before the Commission for discussion, and invited the applicants to come forward to the presenter's table, introduce themselves and provide a summary of their project.

Jim and Linda Ball, 1083 N. Livernois, and Architect Douglas Necci, Metco, 23917 Cass Street, Farmington, Michigan, were present. Mr. Ball stated he was the current owner of property that was formerly owned by the Ferry Morse Seed Company, known as Wayside Park, located on Hamlin Road, one-quarter mile east of Rochester Road. He stated the property was bordered by a cemetery on two sides, and bordered by Bordine's to the west.

Mr. Ball stated the property was slated for historical designation before City Council, and noted they spoke out against the designation at that time. He indicated since that time, they had discussions with Derek Delacourt and John Dziurman, and were looking at the possibility of having the property designated historically, along with some development of the property.

- Mr. Ball stated the property consisted of several 800 square foot units that had bathrooms in the basement. He noted some units had problems with leaky basements. He explained it was their intent to fix some of the units and sell all the units. He indicated they would like to enlarge the units to make them more saleable.

Mr. Ball stated they would like to review some options with the Commission, noting their concern would be that when the units were sold, the guidelines would be in place that were acceptable to the Commission and that set forth approved elevations and materials. He noted if a subsequent purchaser desired something different, they would have to receive HDC approval.

Mr. Ball stated they would like to receive the Commission's opinion on their proposed elevations and a proposed site plan.

Mr. Necci reviewed a proposed site plan, noting they proposed to add some substantial additions to the buildings. He explained while the structures were very substantial, their architectural character was minimal, and were very spartan. He stated the units were 800 square feet each, and they hoped to redesign them to a more modern standard with attached garages and more modern amenities. Mr. Ball noted the 800 square feet included the bathroom in the basement, which meant they had 625 square feet on the main floor.

Mr. Necci stated the proposed additions would be done with an architectural style that was consistent with what was there, but more importantly to create a neo-traditional neighborhood with picket fences and perennial beds and those things found in a small neo-traditional community. He felt the proposed additions would enhance that aspect because they created a more intimate, contained feel to the neighborhood.

Mr. Necci then presented a character sketch of a proposed unit with an addition. He pointed out the original structure, and noted that the materials and details for the addition would have to be approved by the Commission. He stated inasmuch as the improvements might be done by a future purchaser, they would prepare written standards with respect to all the architectural requirements, to be approved by the Commission.

Mr. Necci explained the concept was to add a two-car attached garage with living space above it, and a two-story addition in the back of the existing structure. He stated because of the basic arrangements of the site, the garage doors had to face forward. He noted they explored the possibility of having side entrance garages, but it could not be worked out. He indicated the idea was to create a carriage house type feel, or something that would be in general context with the original structure. He stated they would like to receive some feedback from the Commission about adding the additional square footage to the existing structures. He noted that was the essence of the marketability and sale of the entire concept.

Mr. Miller asked if the concept was to leave the existing structure as is, while building on the rear of the building. Mr. Ball indicated that was correct. Mr. Miller clarified that the front and the original side facades would remain, and in terms of the elevations, it would be similar to the materials and style of the original historic structures. Mr. Necci pointed out the original building, and the attached garage and addition. He noted the addition would be two stories high.

He stated the original building would be maintained. He indicated the entrance porches were not all the same because some had been improved, and others were less improved. He stated that some of the buildings had vinyl siding on them, and the intention would be to continue that from a maintenance point of view.

Mr. Dziurman referred to several small buildings included in the site plan and asked what they were. Mr. Necci stated the square located in the northwest corner would be a maintenance garage to be used for the general maintenance of the project, which was fenced in and would contain lawn equipment. He stated the squares located in the southeast corner were garages for the large house on the site. He indicated the garages would be consistent in architectural style with the garages attached to the house, similar to a carriage house.

Mr. Necci stated the houses on the northerly edge of the site were of a different vintage, built in a different style. Mr. Ball indicated those homes had been moved to their present location and were basically 1950's ranch homes on a crawl space. Mr. Necci stated they would include an addition and attached garage to those structures as well.

Mr. Necci referred to the addition of a row house at the end of the street, which would be built in an architectural style consistent with the rest of the proposal. He stated they envisioned putting a berm and a landscape area in front of that building to buffer it from the rest of the project.

Mr. Necci stated the road would be maintained as a one-way boulevard, circular road, with the interior section landscaped with amenities such as a gazebo to enhance the area. He pointed out the proposed location for a community mailbox. He indicated the gateway into the project would be maintained because it had some historical significance. He stated the proposed plans included a sidewalk that went in concert with the picket fence, with a gateway into each individual entrance. He explained the picket fences would be 3' or 4' tall, they would be white, and would be adjacent to the sidewalk. He stated they had not developed a plan for lighting, but that it would be in concert with a neo-traditional neighborhood.

Vice Chairperson Dunphy inquired about the approximate average square footage of the cottages at the present time, and with the proposed additions. Mr. Ball stated that the current square footage was about 800 with the inclusion of the bathroom in the basement. He stated the new units would be approximately 1,400 square feet. Mr. Necci stated they had developed several various floor plans, and they did not have a final floor plan at this time.

Ms. Cozzolino clarified that some of the houses were originally duplexes. Mr. Necci indicated that was correct. Ms. Cozzolino asked if it was the intent to keep them as two separate dwellings. Mr. Necci stated that was correct. Ms. Cozzolino asked if the intent that all the homes would be the same style, with the exception of the two ranch houses that were moved to the site. Mr. Necci indicated that was the intent.

Ms. Cozzolino asked why the three garages were being added around the large house. Mr. Ball stated there would be four units in the big house, and each unit would have a two-car garage.

Ms. Cozzolino referred to the discussion regarding the lawn maintenance, and asked if the units would be condominiums with an association. Mr. Necci indicated that was the intent.

Mr. Dziurman asked, if the units were considered site condominiums, if there would be any defined property lines around each unit. He asked if each unit would have its own defined space, other than the front yards. He noted the plan showed some units with back yards, and some without any backyard space.

Mr. Delacourt stated a Condominium Master Deed would include definitions for each unit, the limited common area, and the general common area. He explained the limited common area could be related to a lot, that would only be usable by the tenant of that condominium or unit; and the general common area would be the area open to everyone in the Association. He asked if there would be limited common area associated with each unit in the project, or whether it was just the unit and all other space would be considered general common area.

Mrs. Ball stated the current plan was to have a limited building envelope type of situation, i.e., a site condominium. Mr. Delacourt asked if each unit structure itself would have an outdoor area that was only for use by that unit; and there would also be general common area, such as the center of the boulevard that would be open to everyone. Mrs. Ball indicated that was correct.

Mr. Dziurman stated the Commission had to review the proposal based on the National Register criteria for evaluation. He stated the Commission had to evaluate how the integrity of the property was being preserved. He noted it had always been an issue of how to keep the integrity of the property. He stated the Ball's had worked diligently to figure out a way to make the project cost effective. He indicated he knew the Ball's were trying to work with the HDC, and they wanted to do the right thing, but also wanted to make some money. He stated the Ball's were asking the Commission to determine if their proposed project fell within the integrity of the property. He noted when the project was completed, an individual entering the site would have to be able to understand what was there originally. He stated how the houses were added onto could be an issue, and what was being added on was what made the houses affordable to save the units. He indicated that was a difficult situation for the Commission, and noted the houses were not designated as historic, but were on the City's potential list.

Mr. Delacourt stated the homes were not a designated historic district, but was an area that was highly prioritized on the City's potential list. He noted the process had been followed, i.e., the Study Committee had completed a study on the property, and held a public hearing. He stated at the Public Hearing, the Balls had indicated they were not interested in having the property designated. He indicated during discussion held at the Public Hearing, it appeared there might be some common ground. He stated since that time, the Ball's had been working with various professionals in discussing this plan. He noted the Ball's had brought a plan to the Commission that they felt worked for them and were seeking input from the Commission about, if the site were designated, whether the addition, the additional buildings on the site, and the other items associated with the plan would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He indicated the Ball's did not expect a formal vote on this matter, but input from the Members. He noted the input was crucial in the Ball's decision to move forward, because they needed to determine if their proposed plan was workable before making a decision on designation.

Mr. Dziurman stated that if the Commission thought favorably about the proposed project, at some point the Commission would have to formally approve the project. He stated it was his understanding that the Ball's did not necessarily intend to do the work themselves, but would sell the units and the new owners would do the work. He noted the project would have to be structured legally so the new owners would be required to follow the plans.

Mr. Dziurman stated the one aspect that stood out was the townhouse proposed for the end of the boulevard. He noted that was the vision as one drove into the site. He noted the National Register Bulletin referred to the seven (7) aspects of integrity, which were location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. He stated "feeling" was defined as "a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time". He noted all the aspects were important and had to be considered by the Commission.

Mr. Necci referred to the addition of the proposed townhouse, and noted there was another large house on the site, referred to as the "big house". He felt the big house set the architectural standard more so than the other buildings. Mr. Dziurman stated it was not a matter of one structure being more important than another. He explained the Commission was limited by the standards they were required to follow.

Mr. Necci stated they did not have a detailed design developed at this time, but rather had proposed a beginning concept plan. He noted the essence of the proposal was that the Balls wanted to put additions on the houses. He explained the additions were being proposed to be done within the context of the current architecture. He did not feel the current architecture made a strong statement, but were very modest buildings without much strong character or direction for the design to be expanded upon. He thought the stronger and more important issue was the sense of community. He did not believe the sense of community would be adversely affected by the addition of the row house. He noted the addition of the row house might not be more than a duplicate of an existing structure. He explained the idea was to utilize that additional space for additional units.

Vice Chairperson Dunphy stated he thought there was a lot of potential in the proposal, and noted that the idea of putting additions on the cottages extending toward the back so they did not distract from the front elevations of the cottages was a concept that both the HDC and the Study Committee were supportive of from the beginning. He felt the modest look of the cottages was a large factor because in the historical context of the units, they were farm workers cottages. He explained part of the history included the fact that the housing was modest because that was all they were intended for. He thought the Commission could be comfortable with the proposed project as long as the things that took place in the front of those buildings, i.e., what people would see looking into or moving through the complex to look at the front elevations, did not distract from the front of the cottages or that would inappropriately embellish what were originally farm workers cottages. He stated the Commission would want to be careful of items added to the front elevations that would be dressing up the units beyond what would have been farm worker cottages. He thought the proposal contained some positive concepts, and noted he would like to see the project go forward. He stated it was critical that the project not lose the

sense of history. He understood the need to make the units salable, which also had to be part of the consideration; however, the sense of history also had to be present.

Mr. Ball asked about how the addition of the shutters and flowerboxes to the front of the units appeared to the Commission. Ms. Cozzolino stated she was open the idea of the proposal; however, it was hard to determine from the black and white information presented how the units would look when finished. She felt a color presentation would help her make a decision.

Mrs. Ball stated they did not want to spend more money to develop the idea if the Commission did not feel the proposal was acceptable. She explained they were willing to work with the Commission and felt there was some validity to the historical significance of the property. She stated she did not feel the historical significance was as much an architectural issue, but more the fact it was a garden community. She noted the houses were built for the purpose of housing farm workers and were not meant to be a great showpiece from an architectural standpoint. She stated the 625 square foot size of the units made it difficult to bring in a tenant willing to live in such a small house, and did not bring in enough money to invest in upgrading more substantially. She pointed out the location of the bathrooms in the basement was a disadvantage. She thought in order for the property to be economically feasible, something had to be done. She stated their plan would be to construct a model to show the potential of the area, with the hope they would appeal to a market that did appreciate historic designation and would be willing to live in a small cottage with the ability to sell or enlarge the unit.

Ms. Cozzolino stated she was open to any idea that would help maintain the integrity of the area and still provide what the Ball's needed from the property.

Mr. Dziurman stated it was key to convey to the Commission that the original element would stay prominent. He thought the proposed addition to the back was too overwhelming. He stated he was aware of the difficulty of headroom; however, the proposed addition was too heavy over the original structure. He referred to the rounded window in the garage, and suggested the windows should be more compatible with the original. He noted he was not sure the garage doors should have an oval at the top. He stated he did not want to see "cutesiness" added to the structures, while losing the character of the structures. He suggested the use of a lighter color on the original, with a darker color used for the addition, which would help define and distinguish the original structure and make it easily visible.

Mr. Dziurman stated it would be helpful if the Commission were provided with a massing site plan to allow the Commission to see the massing of the project. He stated the Commission had reviewed a massing drawing for another project, which had proved to be very helpful for the Commissioners. He noted the whole context of the site was important.

Mr. Necci stated the sketch provided to the Commission had not been the only sketch prepared during discussions regarding the project. He stated one of the initial iterations did not depict a raised second story, but rather attempted to put all the space under the roofline with dormers. He explained that created a problem because the existing roof slope was not conducive to that, and did not give them enough to justify a second story by just adding dormered space. He noted the sketch was a beginning concept and would be developed in more detail and researched if the

project was considered acceptable. Mr. Dziurman stated he would prefer to see a more simplified roof.

Vice Chairperson Dunphy questioned the use of a picket fence and some of the other embellishments. He felt the project could go forward, but suggested the elimination of some of the embellishments. Mr. Dziurman stated he did not object to the flower boxes and picket fences, because those items had been in other districts.

Mrs. Ball stated that to a certain extent the existing homes were somewhat stark, noting there were no windows on the sides of the homes. She indicated they had attempted to dress up the homes with shutters in an effort to create curb appeal for the tenants. She stated they wanted to know if the Commission would agree to additions being constructed on the homes. She noted the homes were very square with an odd roofline.

Mr. Ball stated they had discovered a picture of the property, which depicted the homes with picket fences. He stated a gentleman had stopped by the property and spoke to one of their tenants. He told the tenant he had lived there in the 1930's, and he told the tenant about the picket fences, window boxes and shutters.

Mrs. Ball stated that things had changed on the structures over the years, and noted there was stucco underneath the siding that had been peeling off. She stated they had replaced all the windows and doors, and if window boxes had been there, they were probably taken off because they were most likely falling apart and pulling off the stucco.

Mr. Ball noted that one side of the structures did not have a window, and asked if there would be a problem if they put in a window on that side. Mr. Dziurman noted the duplexes had a window on the side. He thought the Commission could consider the idea of putting in a window. He noted this type of project was not a type of project that the Commission had faced before, and it was not a black and white issue. He explained the Commission wanted to save the property, while still working with the property owners. He stated if adding the window on the side enhanced the project and was compatible with the existing, it would be a compromise that he could live with.

Mr. Ball stated the big house had dormers, and asked if it would be a problem if dormers were installed on the third floor or if the existing dormers could be extended. Mr. Dziurman stated that was a matter the Commission would consider. He explained if it did not detract from the original building and kept the original character intact, it was something the Commission could consider.

Mr. Ball asked about skylights. Mr. Dziurman stated that skylights were allowable, but were normally allowable in the back area where they could not be seen from the road.

Mr. Delacourt stated many of the questions asked by the Ball's at this meeting related to a specific house, and clarified the question was really if there was a way to do what they were proposing, if it were done appropriately, or if there was an item discussed that was not appropriate or there was not an appropriate way to do it. Mr. Dziurman referred to the question

about the roof windows, which he had indicated would be acceptable if they were not seen from the road. He referred to the new gables and noted he would not be able to make a decision until a concept was presented to the Commission. He noted a quick answer would be that if it were in the back of the house, the standards allowed almost anything within reason. He noted once things were proposed for the side or the front, then the Commission had to review them. He explained no one drove by a home and only saw the front. He pointed out some of the homes were located in the back of the complex and were not seen well from the road, but they would be seen when someone drove into the complex. He felt the proposed changes to the home could be distinguished by color, such as by keeping all the fronts the same color, which would give the feeling of what the original complex looked like. He thought the dominance of the roofs would be important as well.

Mr. Delacourt stated the Ball's were trying to determine if what they were proposing to do could be done appropriately. He noted it was hard for the Commission to answer that question without seeing actual drawings.

Mr. Dziurman stated that oftentimes decisions were made based on how historic the property is. He stated his firm had done some work on Mackinaw Island for the State Historic Parks Commission, where they reviewed designs made for the cottages on the island. He noted there were cases where a homeowner wanted to put in a window as part of a bathroom relocation on the facade, which was not approved or permitted. He indicated it was part of how historic a building was or how important it was to the community. He felt the Ferry Court site was a very historic site, and an extremely important site for the City.

Mr. Delacourt noted that was the reason the Study Committee had the property studied and had ranked it high on the City's Potential List. Mr. Dziurman stated that next to the Stoney Creek Historic District, the property could be one of the City's most historic sites. He felt it was a very important historic site within the Community, which is why he felt it was important to keep the integrity of the cottages without overwhelming them.

Mr. Necci stated if the nuance of a window being allowed or not allowed in the corner of the house was a deal breaker, he thought that adding 1,000 square feet to the back of the structures was much more of a deal breaker. He explained they would be happy to come back before the Commission with more information, and stated he was confident they could satisfy the Commission with respect to the accuracy and authenticity of the architecture they proposed to do. He pointed out they did not want to move forward unless there was a general feeling among the Commissioners that the concept of adding that amount of square footage to the back of the units with garages facing the road was acceptable.

Mr. Miller clarified that the site was not currently listed on a historic register or was not designated historic locally. Mr. Dziurman stated the property was listed on the City's Potential List.

Mr. Miller clarified that the property owners were attempting to determine what would be allowed as a potential historic site in the City, while making it possible for the property owners to not only make some money, while retaining the property by making the cottages larger and

more valuable. He stated he liked the idea that they were trying to keep the Ferry Court look, and stated he supported and applauded the Ball's efforts in working with the Commission to retain the historical integrity. He noted the Commission was required to work within the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, although there was some flexibility permitted.

Ms. Sieffert stated she was in favor of the Ball's expanding with something behind the original cottages. She was bothered by the massing of the project, and stated she felt the proposed addition overwhelmed the original homes. She stated the Commission liked to see the original character retained, and noted the original character of this site were very humble cottages. She felt the garages lost the character of this particular community, because the original occupants would have been too poor to own cars, therefore, there would not have been any aspect of a garage or even a driveway. She suggested if the garages were not so prominent in facing the front, she thought the project would be more successful in terms of the Commission approving the retention and definition of the character of the site. She felt the proposed project lost the simplicity of an earlier era, which she noted was not in style any longer. She was bothered by the dormer over the garage, and suggested perhaps that could be moved to the back. She referred to the little oval window positioned on the second story behind the cottage echoing the first roofline, and noted she would prefer the rear portion be kept as one straight line, emphasizing simplicity, because the cottages were simple cottages.

Ms. Sieffert stated she did not believe the Commission would have a problem with expanding on the cottages, but might have some problems with the details that would lose the simple charm. She explained she had found that authentic history was surprisingly not that charming. She thought the Ball's were heading in the right direction in order to make the project work as a commercial enterprise. She noted that no one would want to live in little two-room houses, which was what the cottages actually were. She felt the garages destroyed the original character, because they detracted from the way the property originally looked.

Mr. Dziurman stated he did not disagree with Ms. Sieffert's comments about the garages, but noted it would be difficult to locate the garages in the back because the site had too many constraints with the existing buildings. He also pointed out the fact that longer driveways would be necessary and would destroy the look of the complex.

Ms. Sieffert asked if the garage doors could be disguised in some manner, noting she had not seen that done before. Mr. Dziurman stated the simplicity in form and shape would be important.

Mr. Thompson stated he did not have any objections to the proposed project. He noted he had resided in a 600 square foot house and would never do so again because there was not enough room. He understood the need to add onto the houses. He indicated the Commission would need some additional detail about the proposed project, but felt the Ball's were moving in the right direction, as long as the project kept with the plain and simple nature of the historic houses. He stated he did not have an objection to the addition of a garage, noting in today's market that would be a requirement to sell the homes.

Mr. Dziurman asked why the project included three garage structures for the big house, and asked if there might be an advantage to putting them all together and not add as many structures to the site. Mr. Ball explained that the big house had three entrances, and if the garages were located in one spot, the individual residing in the back would have to walk around the house to access the garage. He stated the proposed location for the garages were the closest location to the various entrances.

Mr. Dziurman stated he had commented about the proposed garages in an attempt to determine if there was a way to leave more open space in the development. He noted he was not sure how parking would be worked out for the proposed townhouse in the back of the property, but indicated that was something the Ball's would need to decide. He questioned whether the rear yard setbacks could be met.

Mr. Delacourt stated that in order for the proposed project to be developed, several different factors would have to occur. He explained one factor would be the utilization of the Planned Unit Development (PUD). He stated a PUD Agreement would be written that would be based on what was acceptable to the HDC if the property were designated. He indicated there were other important issues that also had to be addressed in the PUD Agreement, such as the Fire Department requirements; health, safety and welfare; engineering, and retention, which would all be addressed once the conceptual design and elevations were prepared. He stated the HDC would have to agree to the elevations and a basic site plan; as well as the fact the property owners would have to accept the historic designation. He noted there were many steps in the process for the project to go through.

Vice Chairperson Dunphy stated that the general consensus of the Commission was favorable. He noted the Commissioners would like to see additional details, and wished the Ball's success in going forward with the project. He thanked Mr. and Mrs. Ball for their continued efforts to make this project happen, noting the amount of time, money and effort they had expended on this project. He stated the Commission would really like to see this become a reality and the property become a resource for the Community.

~~OB. Proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance Amendments~~

~~Vice Chairperson Dunphy stated the Commissioners had received a copy of a letter from the State Historic Preservation Office, which pointed out some deficiencies in the City's application for Certified Local Government (CLG) status. He noted one of the issues that needed to be addressed involved Amendments to the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. He stated the Commissioners had been provided with copies of potential Ordinance Amendments, which had not been reviewed by the City Attorney or City Council at this time.~~

~~Mr. Delacourt requested that the Commissioners review the proposed amendments. He explained the Historic Preservation Ordinance was being reviewed to bring the Ordinance up to date regarding the designated properties. He noted designated properties had been split, addresses and tax identification numbers had been changed and the Ordinance did not reflect those changes. He explained the maps would be updated, along with the addresses and tax identification numbers, which was more a function of housekeeping.~~