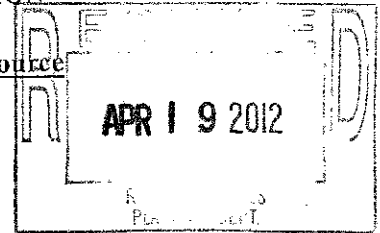


ROCHESTER HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

Application for Approval of Modification/Construction of Resource  
(New Construction / Demolition)

(There is no fee for this Application)



NOTE: All information must be received at the Rochester Hills Planning and Development Department at least three (3) weeks prior to the Historic Districts Commission Meeting. Regular meetings are held on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Thursday of each month.

Address and Site:

1855 AND 1899 WASHINGTON ROAD  
(Street Address)

ROCHESTER HILLS MI  
(City) (State) (Zip)

Location of Site:

WEST OF DEQUINORE ON NORTH SIDE OF WASHINGTON ROAD

Sidwell Number:

15-01-227-015, 034, 035

Requesting Approval For: (Check all that apply)

- |                                     |                     |                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | New Building        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Residential |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Addition            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Commercial  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Exterior Alteration | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Other       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Building Relocation |                                     |             |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Demolition          |                                     |             |

Historic District Location: (Check one)

- Stoney Creek     Winkler Mill Pond     Non-contiguous

For an Existing Home/Structure:

Year Built: NEW CONSTRUCTION

History of site, structure(s), and building(s): \_\_\_\_\_

SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Description of Proposed Work: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:**

Applicants are required to provide the following information to the Historic Districts Commission at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting date.

In accordance with Chapter 118, Historical Preservation, of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Rochester Hills, the following information applies:

**Sec. 118-161 *Permission required.*** Before construction, alteration, repair, moving or demolition affecting the exterior appearance of a structure, or the construction of a new structure or part thereof, within a Historic District, the person proposing to take such action shall apply for and obtain permission to do so from the Historic Districts Commission. Permission is required regardless of whether a building permit is required.

## **Project Narrative:**

**1855 & 1899 Washington Road  
Winkler Mill Pond Historic District, Rochester hills, MI**

### **Introduction:**

Taking into account the Historic Districts Commission's strong concerns expressed at the February meeting, the design team has worked diligently for the past ten weeks to bring the design into a greater degree of compatibility with the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District. The revised proposal addresses in detail, responses to those concerns, which can be categorized into three broad areas:

1. Historic Character
2. Size
3. Compatibility

The solutions to all are closely dovetailed and not easily separated. Affecting one effects the others. Each action has a compounding benefit to the Historic District.

### **Historic Character:**

We began the re-centering of our approach to the project by analyzing the site in terms of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District's defining characteristics. The site has no architectural features so its strength and importance lie with its rolling terrain, heritage trees, mature native vegetation and broad frontage. Protecting and enhancing these features defines the project.

- Moving the house 15 feet deeper into the property created a greater opportunity to maintain and enhance a wooded buffer from the road. The Historic District Study Committee report urged preserving the rural feel of the roadway with woods and preserving the sight of the rolling terrain from the road. The proposal is very successful in accomplishing this objective
- Moving the house pushed it further from the high point of the slope preserving the view of the slope from the street and lowering the house due to the fall of the natural slope. The finish floor is now 7.5 feet lower than the high point; it cannot be moved further without great risk to the heritage trees.
- The house has been carefully placed onto the site: it is nestled among the existing trees and vegetation. The existing driveway cuts are used to save trees, to keep the road view unchanged and to keep the existing site drainage unimpeded.
- The house is planned to utilize the neutral slope and minimize grade manipulation. The grade now has a gently rolling transition from the motor

court past the end of the garage. The need for the extensive 14 ft high retaining wall and rock outcropping has been eliminated.

- The outdoor pool and cabana have been eliminated and replaced with a remnant historical apple orchard.
- 48% of the hard surfaces have been eliminated. This was accomplished by narrowing the two driveways, eliminating the need for a retaining wall at the motor court, shrinking the motor court and eliminating the rear terrace, in addition to the pool and cabana.

The following actions are a result of the Historic Landscape Designer treating the landscaping as site preservation, not traditional landscaping.

- A site survey and full **species** investigation was **conducted** at the subject property to gain a three dimensional understanding of the site in its relation to the conforming properties. Our process of tree identification and noting of all substantial architectural elements, rock and or land formations, and habitats of the indigenous wild life is recorded accurately to scale and transcribed onto the existing site condition survey.
- Upon studying our findings we find that it will be beneficial to the district to remove all invasive, non-native and or soft wood trees (Siberian Elm and Silver Maple) as well as trees that have become damaged, diseased or are in decline due to long term illness or stress. All trees that stand the best chance of survival are noted and marked to be transplanted to alternate locations on the site if necessary. We intend that the large historical trees in the North end of the property be retained and protected to maintain the original balance.
- In our study we recorded 151 existing trees of which we recommend removing 78 due to their inherent nature as stated above (invasive soft wood, or damaged) and then planting a mix of 189 historically indigenous species to bring our total on site tree count to 262.
- To provide the desirable naturalized screening we recommend two species of evergreen trees that are indigenous to Michigan and the Historic District. Along the East end of the property where the elevation is high and sandy, White Pine will be planted in natural occurring clumps so as to mimic the natural pattern of propagation that happens in nature. The clumps staggered along all of the property lines screen all of the views from the street and from all neighboring properties. The second selection is Douglas Fir which will be primarily planted on the West property line to absorb and filter the natural rainwater run-off as it follows the natural grade that will be maintained sloping to the pond.

- Dogwoods will dot in and out of pockets of evergreens along the road side, following the gravel drives, and along the shore line. This treatment is another recommendation by the Historic Districts Study Committee report. American Beech will be placed in and amongst the existing oaks so as to recreate the original Oak-Beech Savannah which was the original indigenous landscape composition prior to the arrival of the first European Settlers into the area. This deciduous selection will be best placed in areas of higher elevation in a sandy environment where over time its canopies will add cool shade in hot summers.
- An area on the North West lawn will be reserved to plant a remnant Historical Apple orchard. It will serve not only as a message from the past History of the district but also provide food for the indigenous wild life habitat that walks freely through all of the properties.
- To maintain a rolling and natural feel as well as protecting the watershed from fertilizers and pollutants we suggest the usage of native no-mow meadow lawn species instead of traditional blue grass/fescue/rye lawn applications throughout the property. This will help with rain water runoff filtration as well as maintain the natural rolling terrain that is a key character element to the property at the subject property.
- In the attached appendix there is a list of the indigenous shrubs, perennials, and water filtration plants that are to be used on this site dictated by purpose and native to the district.

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 inherent historical qualities of the district as seen from the surrounding properties, particularly the contributing property across the pond.

### **Size & Compatibility:**

In response to the HDC's concerns about the house size, changes have been made to the house. In concert with moving and lowering the entire house, the roof lines were also lowered 24 inches. The net result is that the roof is about 7.5 feet lower than first designed in relationship to the road.

The HDC's concern with the size of the house is understandable. It is a large house, but it should not be judged merely on size alone. Scale and proportion, of which size is a component, are more important considerations. Size is the dimension or magnitude of an object in the space surrounding it. Scale is the relationship of the size of the parts to the size of the whole and to the space it occupies. The coverage (density) statistics that have been previously presented are, in fact, relevant measures of scale. That the proposed house covers 6.8% of its 5 acre property and the average neighboring houses cover 7.2% of one

acre property is proportional. It is harmonious because it is a matter of degree (scale) not magnitude.

Proportion is the proper or harmonious relationship of one part to another creating a sense of order. The new house is organized linearly to maximize exposure to the natural surroundings and also to control scale.

By being more broad and less deep, the rooflines are kept lower. As a building widens in the direction of the roof pitch it must get taller to cover the span. The house must be wider to make it shorter, so other matters of scale are used to reduce its relative, or perceived size.

- The massing is broken into smaller components, towers, protruding wings, dormers and covered porches. The smaller parts comprise the whole; it is not a monolithic block.
- The rhythm of solid and void, i. e. wall to glass, also breaks up the mass. The proposed rhythm is different in style, but not unlike that of the contributing structures.
- The smaller components are broken into elements of a comfortable scale: bracketed overhangs, dormer vents, timber framing, stone arches, stairways and masonry piers.
- Many of these elements are evident in the Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill Pond Historic Districts; stone foundations; stone walls above the second floor line with wood siding above; vertically orientated rectangular window proportions; cedar shingle roof, painted wood trim, copper flashings and eaves troughs, hip roofs, gable roofs; shed dormers; carriage doors; exposed aggregate paving.
- Another element of scale is the proportion of the heritage trees to the house. The trees dominate despite the size of the house – this is proper scale.
- The groupings of trees on the pond side create a rhythm by giving, then taking away glimpses of the house. From off the property the house will never be fully visible.
- The perceived width of the property pond frontage is at least double the actual dimension, so the house is comfortably framed in space.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion, while considering the basis for acceptance, we must consider the purposes of historic preservation, which under the state enabling Act No. 169 of 1970, shall be to do one or more of the following:

1. *Safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving historic districts in the city that reflect elements of the city's history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.*

This project is enhancing the natural environment and ensuring its maintenance for many decades.

2. *Stabilize and improve property values in each district and the surrounding areas.*

The house is a sizable investment adding to the values of the Historic District.

3. *Foster civic beauty.*

The landscaping and house will be of the best materials; well crafted; and maintained impeccably. We feel 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 the education, pleasure, and welfare of the citizens of the city, state and nation.*

The home is private, but people can enjoy the natural beauty, rolling hills, birds and wildlife from the public way.

It is the opinion of our conscientious team of design professionals, that the house design fits the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* because of its strong natural relationship to the site and its compatible scale as 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 is protected and enhanced.
- The rolling hills are protected and retained.

- The drainage course is unimpeded
- The road is lined by woods per the Historic District Study Committee recommendations
- Indigenous flowering trees are woven into the evergreen screens per the Historic District Study Committee recommendations

It also meets the Standards due to its compatibility of scale with the contributing structures of the Historic District.

- The massing of the house is broken-up into smaller components
- Elements characteristic of the Historic District are utilized in the proposed house design
- Materials characteristic of the Historic District are utilized in the proposed house design
- The mass of the house is intermittently broken-up by groupings of trees so that only portions of the house are visible at any point in time.

With respect to the other HDC considerations:

1. *The historic or architectural value and significance of the resource and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area.*  
The historical architectural value and significance of resource is in the rolling hills, the heritage trees and the existing mature evergreen screening. The building is secondary because it is the land features that are most important to preserve.
2. *The relationship of any architectural features on the resource to the rest of the resource and to the surrounding area.*  
The relationship of architectural features echo without mimicking elements of the historic district: Dormers, carriage doors, strong stone base, wood siding and trim, cobble stone features, gravel driveway and cedar shake roof.
3. *The general compatibility of the design, arrangement, texture and materials to be used.*  
The house is proportional to its large lot – the lot is estate-sized and the house is sited comfortably from road and pond, softened by vegetation.
4. *Other factors such as aesthetic value that the HDC deems relevant to its determination under the above review standards and guidelines.*



We have to separate individual taste and judge it not by style but by quality, durability and maintainability.

We respectfully request the commission issues a certificate of appropriateness for 1855 & 1899 Washington Road.