



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

1000 Rochester Hills Dr
Rochester Hills, MI
48309
(248) 656-4600
Home Page:
www.rochesterhills.org

Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Julie Granthen
Members: Darlene Janulis, Kelly Lyons, Susan McKinnon, Steve Reina,
Dr. Richard Stamps, Tom Stephens, Charles Tischer

Thursday, September 14, 2017

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 7 - Julie Granthen, Darlene Janulis, Susan McKinnon, Richard Stamps, Tom Stephens, Jason Thompson and Charles Tischer

Absent 2 - Kelly Lyons and Steve Reina

Also Present: Sara Roediger, Director of Planning
Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting
Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2017-0411](#) August 10, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Janulis, seconded by Stephens, that this matter be Approved as Presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Granthen, Janulis, McKinnon, Stamps, Stephens, Thompson and Tischer

Absent 2 - Lyons and Reina

COMMUNICATIONS

No communications were brought forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT for Items Not on the Agenda

No public comment was heard on non-agenda items.

NEW BUSINESS

[2017-0413](#) **FILE NO. HDC#17-033**

Request: Certificate of Appropriateness - Replacing siding and windows, barrier free access and house site plan design
Location: 3861 S. Adams Rd.
Parcel: 15-31-301-011
Owner: Detroit Meeting Rooms Inc. - Chuck Truan

(Reference: Staff Report dated September 7, 2017, prepared by Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting, and associated documents were placed on file in the Planning and Economic Development Department and by reference becomes part of the record thereof.)

Chairperson Thompson read the request for the record, asked the applicants to come forward, and requested a summary of the staff report.

Ms. Kidorf explained the house is a single-resource historic district. The stone house is an upright and wing in the Greek Revival style. It is the only stone Greek Revival style house in Rochester Hills and is significant for its architecture. The original portion was constructed in 1824, but the portion the Commission is dealing with tonight was the 1840's stone upright and wing section constructed possibly by Daniel Grey. The house underwent a renovation in the 1950's and renovated the 1824 section beyond recognition, and has since been removed. The original survey sheet did call out that the windows were hand blown glass. Currently, all the windows have been removed, at least from their frames. The wood frames remain. There was a detached garage that was constructed in 1983 that appears to have been demolished. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to install aluminum clad wood windows, reconstruct a rear wall, which includes installing a new door that would match the front door and blocking in several window openings, installation of cementitious siding on the second floor, both on the rear wall and the other two elevations where the second floor addition exists. They also propose installation of a new driveway cut, a driveway that leads to parking areas, concrete walkways from the parking area to the front and rear of the house, and a concrete barrier free ramp, as well as some gardens. The applicant may bring a window sample to the meeting because drawings giving dimensions and detail were not provided prior to the meeting. The aluminum siding that the cementitious siding would replace is not original and the wood siding is missing and deteriorated beyond repair, so the proposed siding is appropriate. The reconstruction of the east wall as proposed appears to be appropriate, and provided mature trees are not removed, the proposed parking, driveway, walkways, barrier free ramp and gardens all appear to be appropriate for the property.

Chairperson Thompson asked if the applicants would like to provide additional information.

Mr. Michael Gorden, Moiseev/Gordon Associates, Inc., the applicant, and Mr. Chuck Truan, the property owner were in attendance. In reference to replacing the siding, Mr. Gordon indicated he is going to remove and replace with a 5-inch wide plank siding. He displayed the material for the members. He feels it is wise to use this siding because of the longevity, the lack of decay and it will be painted, so it will look as authentic as if it was real wood. He also indicated the molding detail that exists in the cornice will be replicated around the upper

structure. He displayed a sample of the windows that are proposed. He has met with the window company as there was very little evidence of what the windows were originally. They discussed windows appropriate to the period of time, the 1850's. He thinks with an aluminum window, you get a crisp profile that real wood displays. This is not the window configuration, it is portrayed on the actual drawings. The windows will be slightly inset so they will be directly set into the wood. Most of the windows are 6 over 6, and one is an 8 over 8. There are four windows that are going to be filled in on the back side - two on the stone wall and two in the siding. The second floor of the structure will become a mechanical loft space, it will not be a functional space. It has inappropriate horizontal sliding windows, so the two windows on the front are actually a creation to blend in with the existing ones that are there. There is an old porch that was added in the 1950's. When the porch was added, they turned the windows into horizontal sliders. He believes double hung windows were there originally when the second floor was completed. The barrier free access and site design go hand-in-hand. He thinks that putting the parking and the access as far possible to the south leads the presentation of the home to the street as original as possible. He is still waiting for a tree survey and will change the parking to work around the major trees. This also keeps the parking away from the historic cistern and well on the site. Putting the barrier free ramp to the rear allows him to preserve and restore the front door to its original condition. There will be a similar door in the back which will meet the three foot barrier code. The house will look as close to original, in it's original setting, as it can from the road. The applicant is proposing a separate drive, because at some point, this property may be an independent structure. He wants to make sure the structure continues for the next 200 years. The applicants look forward to restoring the home and in 2024, celebrate the 200th anniversary of the essence of the home, as the original structure had been remodeled beyond redemption. He thinks they are respecting and creating an environment that really preserves the setting of the home as well as creating an energy efficient, modern structure. He commented they are having a lot of challenges in finishing the inside in an appropriate way to preserve the stone and make it a functional building again.

Dr. Stamps commented the owner is listed as Detroit Meeting Rooms, and previously it said "the church".

Mr. Truan said the Detroit Meeting Rooms is an LLC, as they used to have a place in Detroit. So, it's just carried on as a legacy, it's just an LLC. A few copies of a brochure were given to the members.

Dr. Stamps said it's the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, and the proposed use of the building is to hold meetings on Sundays and Monday nights.

Mr. Truan said it would be used for worship for an hour on a Sunday and Monday.

Dr. Stamps feels this is a wonderful adaptive use by caring people who want to take care of the historic resource. The rear wall, siding, and driveway and access proposals make perfect sense. Dr. Stamps commented that at first he didn't understand the closing of the windows on the back, but now it makes sense and feels it won't alter what the building looks like. He no longer has a

concern with windows. The applicant has met all of Dr. Stamps' concerns and wishes, and he is in favor of approving the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Ms. Granthen asked if there were any zoning issues having a church in residential zoning.

Ms. Roediger explained it is a residential zoning which allows places of worship by right, so it's not an issue. She added that there was discussion on this property in the past, and some preliminary approvals were given for a Lorna Stone PUD many years ago that never came to fruition. She has been speaking with the applicants for over a year about this site and how it can develop. There is a bigger plan for the bigger piece of property that includes possibly a mixture of uses, but the plans are not ready yet. The concern from the applicant and the City is to make sure preservation of this building is buttoned up sooner rather than later. Staff's suggestion was the applicant advance this portion of the site, so the building can be secured through the winter and get the applicants in using the front part of the building. And then we look at the greater site as part of another PUD, because the property is zoned single family residential; so to change it to a mixture of uses with office and townhomes will require a PUD. When the PUD is reviewed, one of the benefits is the historic preservation that will have already taken place.

Ms. Janulis commented she attended the site visit a few weeks back and said it was beautiful to see the work that is being done and the care that's being taken to make it a functioning building. She feels fortunate that the applicants took a serious interest in preserving the building as it's very important to the City. She posted some photos from the visit on Facebook and was amazed at the response she got, even from people who've moved out of the area, that were happy the structure is going to be preserved. She thanked the applicants for taking the project on.

Chairperson Thompson also thanked the applicants for putting forth the effort and taking care of the property. He commented the applicant's proposal is the perfect idea for an adaptive reuse, and he is happy to see it happening.

Dr. Stamps recommended that as you're facing the proposed drinking fountain, show the wooden pieces of the wall as there are architectural details in the woodwork that goes up the side of the door. He feels this would be educational to the future.

MOTION by Stamps, seconded by Janulis, in the matter of HDC File 17-033, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new windows, cementitious siding, rear wall construction, driveway, walkways, parking areas and gardens as proposed for the single-resource historic district located at 3861 S. Adams Road, Parcel Identification Number 15-31-301-011, with the following findings:

Findings:

1. The property is a single resource historic district, the proposed window replacement, cementitious siding installation, rear wall reconstruction including the new door and closing of window openings, construction of a new driveway,

walkways, ramp, parking areas and gardens do not appear to destroy any character defining features to the house;

2. The proposed window replacement, cementitious siding installation, rear wall reconstruction including the new door and closing of window openings, construction of a new driveway, walkways, ramp, parking areas and gardens are in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 2, 6, 9 and 10 as follows:

2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

6) Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials 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 such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

A motion was made by Stamps, seconded by Janulis, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Granthen, Janulis, McKinnon, Stamps, Stephens, Thompson and Tischer

Absent 2 - Lyons and Reina

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Stamps said Ms. Hill asked him to mention that she is concerned about the historic barn at the Rochester College as it suffered some windstorm damage. He is a little nervous about it and said they need to be reminded that it is an issue. Staff will contact the Building Department and the College.

Dr. Stamps then asked if there is any update on where the City is with respect to the 1841 Crooks Road property. Ms. Roediger apologized for not attending the last meeting, but has reviewed the minutes. She and Ms. DiSipio had a meeting with John Staran, the City Attorney, and presented him with the concerns and questions raised by the HDC. He feels it essentially needs to go to City Council for their direction. He will review the minutes, prepare a memo detailing options and schedule a closed session to discuss this issue with City Council to see their direction on this property. Dr. Stamps feels this is a clear example of demolition by neglect. Two quotes came out of a HDC meeting - one quote from the Building Department said they inspected the building, found serious problems and said the house is not fixable - it's really in bad shape. His

recommendation was almost to allow the homeowners to demolish the building. The HDC as a group then said, they can't allow this because they are not authorized to allow the demolition per the guidelines. If it's going to be delisted, and then demolished, then it has to meet certain criteria, and it did not meet that criteria. So the HDC denied the request to delist so they could demolish. Then the comment from the owners was - well we'll just tear it down and pay the fine. These two quotes were on Dr. Stamps' mind the last time the Board met and the HDC has to do something, because if they do nothing, and it continues to deteriorate, then it will just fall down on it's own, and the Board will not have saved it. That's why the meeting with Mr. Staran was requested. Someone at the previous meeting then asked if this was the best use of City resources, to spend on lawyers to go to court - is there anything that can be accomplished? Dr. Stamps is very torn on this issue - on one hand he would like to take them to court and make a public case. If not, anyone else in an historic house could just start letting the house go. He is interested in other input and ideas. The Board needs to monitor other historic structures, and if the members see demolition by neglect, something needs to be done before the structure is 90% gone. A neighbor of the property owner spoke at the last HDC meeting and indicated the barn was pretty nice. But in looking at the barn, Dr. Stamps is nervous with the plants growing up around it. Pretty soon there will be two structures that are being demolished by neglect. Ms. Janulis has been in the house when owned by the previous owner, it was in need of an update and wasn't well cared for. She thinks the people that currently own the house assisted in the neglect, and intentionally did things like knocking out walls and removing the fireplace. The problem she has is if you can't trust the owners to take care of the one historic property, how can you trust them to take care of the other one - the barn. She added the property owners have been taken to court over this issue. They want the property and want a house that will not fit unless the existing house goes away - it was very close to the barn. They never returned to the HDC with revised plans that would give the Board the opportunity to weigh both sides. The barn will eventually become an issue by neglect. She's sure history will repeat itself, is not sure what the answer is, but this is a big problem with this property. Dr. Stamps clarified when Mrs. O'Neill Pottery sold the property, it first went to another owner, and that owner sold to the current owners. He is not sure how much damage was done by the first owners, but it was continued by the second buyer. He believes that the current owner's ability to build their dream house is no longer there. Maybe they should try and sell it to someone who could fulfill their dream of historic preservation. The owners did explore the option of selling the property, does anyone know what it was listed for? Mr. Tischer went through the steps of what could potentially happen. It goes to City Council, and they decide yes or no, and the Board goes from there. He feels tonight's discussion is a little premature - they should wait to see what Council wants to do. Chairperson indicated the Board could make a motion, and vote on a motion -- but the HDC is limited on what they can do -- it is up to Council to have a meeting and then to direct staff and Mr. Staran. There is not much more the HDC can do at this point. It is Ms. Granthen's understanding that the owners are very surprised that the barn would still be considered historic. They figured if the house is demolished, then the barn could also be demolished. The rumor she has heard is that they want to subdivide the land to have numerous houses there, and the asking price is about one million dollars for the property. Their premise is that the purchaser

would be able to put quite a few houses on the parcel. Ms. Kidorf confirmed that the barn is historic, as the whole parcel is the historic district. Dr. Stamps wants to make sure Mr. Staran and the City Council know the barn is part of the historic district and to understand the precedent that will be set.

Ms. Kidorf gave the board some sample brochures she had found, just for informational purposes. As far as articles for the quarterly City paper, brochures, or newsletters, Ms. Roediger offered her assistance in any way she can, but just doesn't have the resources or time to be the lead person heading up this effort. This can be taken up in discussions with the subcommittee. Ms. Roediger has had conversations with some realtors about the addition of a "check if historic box" on the disclosure form - they have taken the issue to their state policy board, but she has not heard back from them. Mr. Stevens is also working with the realtors, and mentioned the Governor wanted to include another box on the disclosure form regarding lead pipes, but is being met with resistance. He will continue his contacts.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, and upon Motion by Janulis, seconded by Tischer, the Chairperson adjourned the Regular Meeting at 7:55 p.m.

*Jason Thompson, Chairperson
Historic Districts Commission
City of Rochester Hills*

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary