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Putnam Residence Narrative

In the heart of Rochester Hills, MI, where the whispers of history mingle with the pulse of modern life, stands 947 Tienken Rd., a cherished relic of bygone eras. As custodians of this storied landmark, we are tasked with the delicate balance of preserving its rich heritage while accommodating the needs of contemporary living. In this narrative, we explore the thoughtful process of adding an addition to 947 Tienken, seamlessly integrating modern amenities with its timeless charm.

Before embarking on any additions, the key to preserving the curb appeal of 947 Tienken lies in honoring its authenticity. Embracing the original architectural features that define its character such as the cedar siding, shake shingles and prominent trim. Avoiding modern alterations detracting from its historic charm. From the road, 947 Tienken will sustain its same 1800's charm.

The relocation of 947 Tienken, is not merely a logistical necessity but a strategic step toward preserving its rich history while simultaneously fulfilling the client's design objectives. Several compelling reasons underscore the importance and benefits of this relocation.

Firstly, the farmhouse, as it stands, currently lacks a foundation, vulnerable to deterioration and decay. By relocating the house, the opportunity arises to provide a stable, concrete poured foundation, ensuring the structural integrity of this historical gem for years to come. Aligning with Sec. 118-33 of the Rochester Hills building ordinance, "Duty to maintain and repair." This Section stipulates that every resource in any historical district shall be maintained to:

1. Prevent deterioration of exterior walls or vertical supports, roofs, horizontal members, exterior chimneys, exterior plaster or mortar, and any documented exterior architectural feature.
2. Prevent deterioration by the weather due to inadequate weatherproofing of exterior walls, roof, and foundations, including the necessity of replacing broken windows and doors if the deterioration has or is likely to cause structural weakness or otherwise affect the continuation of the resource as a historic resource.

This change will not affect the defining character of 947 Tienken but ensures that Designhaus safeguards its unique architectural features and historic charm.

Secondly, the addition represents what constitutes a habitable environment by today's standards. Properties change over time to reflect societal and cultural changes. Additions that expand on existing structures are not prohibited by the National Parks Service, if the addition is subservient to the original, a larger floor plan should be considered. We argue that placing the new addition nestled between trees and buried in the hillside, while the existing 2-story structure remains situated along side the road and in front of the new structure, minimizes primary views to the addition while accentuating the original structure. Resulting in the original house being visually dominant whereas the addition will be a pleasant backdrop.

Our design respects the original while differentiating the addition, complementing the traditional homesteads elements. Throughout the addition we are using 4" vinyl siding in contrast to 6" cedar planks, the windows will be proportionally similar to the existing but larger in scale, the white of the windows will be complementary but not derivative. The stone for the proposed retaining wall will be sourced directly from site, complementing the color of the existing brick. The roof will be constructed with asphalt shingles, as opposed to the wood shake shingles of the existing. We also created a threshold between the new and existing by offsetting the entry doors 3' from the exterior walls to highlight the transition from old to new.

In conclusion, this narrative provides a concise overview of the essential steps and considerations involved in adding to a historical house, emphasizing the importance of preserving historical integrity while embracing modern functionality.

947 Tienken Pictures:







