



Department of Planning and Development

Staff Report to the Historic Districts Commission

February 1, 2021

1500 Mill Race Road – House Demolition	
REQUEST	Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a single-family house
APPLICANT	Adam Randels – The Adams Group
FILE NO.	HDC # 21-003
PARCEL NO.	70-15-01-100-026
ZONING	R-E Residential Estate
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Stoney Creek
STAFF	Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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Request

This is an application for the demolition of a house. The property owner plans to grade and landscape the site after the house is demolished. The property contains a house constructed in 1975 that was determined as non-contributing in the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey*.

The subject site is located about halfway down Mill Race Road. The property is in the northern section of the Stoney Creek Historic District., within the part of the district that was suggested for removal in the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey*. The parcel has many trees and is surrounded by newer houses. The applicant is proposing to demolish the house which is in poor condition and landscape the site afterwards.

Historical Information

The subject property is located in the Stoney Creek Historic District. The 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey* describes the district as containing the unincorporated village of Stony Creek and Van Hoosen Farm. The northern boundary generally follows Stony Creek and extends northward along Washington Road including Cornerstone, Mallon Court and Mill Race Roads. The district is almost wholly residential in

character, with houses dating from the 1830s to the 1990s. The Stony Creek settlement was established in 1823 and developed in the 1830s. The district has thirty-seven contributing resources, seventy-one non-contributing resources, and one that requires more research to determine its status. Some of the most significant properties in the district include the Van Hoosen Farm; the Greek revival house at 1046 East Tienken Road; the Stoney Creek School; and the Sign of the Black and White Cow.

This parcel 1500 Mill Race Road sits far north of the portion of the district containing the village, school, and Van Hoosen Farm. This northern part of the district is surrounded by subdivisions and newer houses. The non-contributing houses in this portion of the district are generally one- to two-stories tall, have gable roofs, attached garages and are clad in brick with asphalt shingle roofs. The houses are generally on large lots and are extensively landscaped.

Review Considerations

The applicant has provided photos of the 1975 house proposed for demolition and states that the house is in poor condition with water damage. The applicant states that the site will be restored with soil and seed/straw after the house is removed.

Summary

1. The property is in the north end of the Stoney Creek Historic District. The house proposed for demolition was constructed in 1975, outside of the district's period of significance and is non-contributing to the district. This part of the district has all newer houses and was recommended for removal in the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey*.
2. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the house and restore the site with soil and seed/straw after the house is removed.
3. Staff offers the following comments on the proposed demolition. This portion of the district is primarily new houses and the house proposed for demolition is non-contributing. The site restoration as proposed appears to be compatible with and is appropriate for the district. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* generally recommends the removal of non-contributing properties and elements within historic districts.
4. The applicant has submitted the proposed demolition to the City's Building Department for a formal review. Any work performed in connection with this project will be required to meet all zoning and building codes, rules and regulations.

Potential Motions

(Subject to adjustment based on Commission discussion)

MOTION, in the matter of File No. HDC 21-003, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES/POSTPONES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the house and site restoration as proposed at 1500 Mill Race Road in the Stony Creek Historic District, Parcel Identification Number 70-15-01-100-026, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The house proposed for demolition is in the Stony Creek Historic District and **is/is not** contributing to the district;

- 2) The proposed site restoration on the heavily treed lot **is/is not** compatible with the district; and
- 3) The proposed house demolition and site restoration **is/is not** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard number 9 as follows:

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships 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.*