



**Department of Planning and Development**  
 Staff Report to the Historic Districts Commission

December 5, 2017

<b>1841 Crooks Road – Asphalt Pathway Construction</b>	
<b>REQUEST</b>	Construct 8’ wide asphalt pathway across property
<b>APPLICANT</b>	City of Rochester Hills
<b>FILE NO.</b>	HDC # 17-049
<b>PARCEL NO.</b>	15-20-428-003
<b>ZONING</b>	R-1 – One family residential
<b>HISTORIC DISTRICT</b>	1841 Crooks Road
<b>STAFF</b>	Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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**Request**

This is an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an 8-foot-wide asphalt pathway across the front of the property at 1841 Crooks Road to further complete the City’s pathway system.

The property presently contains a deteriorated house and barn that contribute to this individually designated historic district that is located on the east side of Crooks Road. The house sits southwest of the barn on the property with the house being closest to Crooks Road. The site has a circular drive with many trees and bushes around the buildings and edges of the property. There are subdivisions around the property. The applicant is proposing to construct the north-south running pathway near the west edge of the property, parallel to Crooks Road.

Historical Information

1841 Crooks Road which is an individual historic district was designated by the City of Rochester Hills in 1978. The house was built sometime in the 1860s and 1870s, and is an example of the upright and wing house type popular in Avon Township and Oakland County in the nineteenth century. The house was

originally part of the 230 acre A.C. Parker farm which also contained other buildings to the south near the stream. The 1908 Oakland County Atlas shows the house on 52 acres of property owned by E. Berry. The 1938 Rural Property Inventory shows the house belonging to E. J. Beattie, of Grosse Pointe Park. Per the inventory the house was remodeled in 1910, well within the period of significance for the district and during the time property was being used for agricultural purposes. Twenty-four acres of the property were “class A agricultural crop land.” It is rare to find a surviving house and barn in Rochester Hills. From the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts* survey, “Relatively few farm buildings other than farmhouses survive to represent the agricultural landscape that once constituted nearly the whole of Avon Township. Therefore, most farm buildings that retain the greater part of their historic appearance are considered significant. Most common are barns: a total of twenty-five buildings historically used as barns are extant in the survey area. This is likely the total or very close to the total for Rochester Hills.”

## Review Considerations

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The applicant is requesting approval to construct an 8-foot-wide asphalt paved pathway to further complete the City’s pathway system. This property is one of two segments of missing pathway on Crooks Road within the city limits. Construction of the pathway will necessitate the removal of about 20 trees, the age, size and species are unknown. The pathway is proposed to run straight along the property and will connect to the existing pathway at both edges of the property.

## Summary

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1. The property is an individually designated historic district and is one of the few remaining upright and wing houses with a barn remaining in the city.
2. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an 8-foot-wide asphalt pathway that will run in a straight line in a north-south direction near the west edge of the property parallel to Crooks Road. The construction of the pathway will necessitate the removal of about 20 trees of an unknown age, size, and species.
3. The materials proposed in the application are asphalt to match the adjacent pathways.
4. Staff comments – the proposed pathway matches those found around the city and is compatible with the historic district. Provided the trees being removed are not large, mature, historic trees the proposed pathway will meet *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*.
5. Any work performed in connection with this project will be required to meet all zoning and building codes, rules and regulations.

## Potential Motions

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(Subject to adjustment based on Commission discussion)

**MOTION**, in the matter of File No. HDC 17-049, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES/POSTPONES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an 8’ wide asphalt pathway running 240’ near the west edge of 1841 Crooks Road, an individual historic district, Parcel Identification Number 15-20-428-003, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The proposed pathway is in the individually designated 1841 Crooks Road Historic District and **is/is not** compatible in massing, size, scale and materials with the district;
- 2) The proposed tree removal and pathway construction as proposed **is/is not** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 9 and 10 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.*

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*