

Proposed Alternative Use  
for  
**Historic Albert Terry House**  
1081 W. Auburn Rd., Rochester Hills, MI 48309

As mentioned in the State of Michigan Historic Preservation Office Intensive Level Survey, Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey, and various other articles held by the Rochester Hills Museum about the home, the historic Albert Terry House, built in the 1840's, "is an excellent example of a brick variation of the Greek Revival style."

The proposed alternative use of this home would support all five of the Historical Preservation Ordinances for Rochester Hills as outlined in the City of Rochester Hills document entitled "What every historic property owner needs to know. . ."

**What is the purpose of historic preservation?**

The Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 118) was adopted in 1978 to ensure the preservation and protection of historical, architectural, archaeological, engineering and cultural elements that reflect the history of the City of Rochester Hills. Historic preservation is declared to be a public purpose, according to State Act 169 of the Public Acts of 1970 of the State of Michigan, as amended. The Historical Preservation Ordinance for Rochester Hills declares its purpose shall be to do one or more of the following:

1. Safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving Historic Districts that reflect elements of the City's history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.
2. Stabilize and improve property values in each District and the surrounding areas.
3. Foster civic beauty.
4. Strengthen the local economy.
5. Promote the use of the Historic Districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the City, State and Nation.

The proposal currently being put forward in this document for the historic home and property is to let its uniqueness and beauty be enjoyed by the general public as a tea house restaurant and garden. In this way, visitors would not only be able to enjoy the Greek Revival architecture which helped to establish it on the historic registry, but also they would be able to experience what this gem of history is like on the inside, with its almost eleven foot ceilings, leaded glass windows, high baseboards, hardwood floors, and so much more while enjoying the pleasure of relaxation and conversation over an early American service of tea. During the wonderful weather of Michigan summers, seating would be available in the garden among the many exotic varieties of trees which were planted by a science teacher and her husband who were former owners of the home and property during most of the twentieth century.

Making the home and garden open in this way would add a point of interest to the area and raise property values. The formal beauty would be appreciated by both the neighbors as well as those passing

by on the roadway. Moreover, as this unique offering gains attention and patronage, an opportunity for expanded business hours and need for additional employees would likely develop.

Each visitor to the tea house and garden would have the opportunity of learning about the history of the home and property through various pictures and articles which would be put on display. In addition, the house would include a gift shop which would make available items appropriate to the period of the home, classical music CD's of individuals and groups who will have added to the atmosphere with their talents, DVD's of this and other historical homes, including interviews with current or former residents, and, of course, the varieties of teas offered in the home.

Furthermore, the tea house and garden would be open for special events, group meetings, and home and garden tours. Area photographers would be encouraged to utilize the facilities for wedding, graduation, anniversary, and other photos. During the winter, ice sculpture carvers, including those from Oakland Community College's award winning team, would be invited to display their work in the garden.

If this proposal were given support by the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission, and consequently a variance to the residential zoning were granted by the City of Rochester Hills Planning Department, the historical value of the home and property would be kept in tact and enhanced. Because of the current condition of the home (leaking roof, water damaged ceiling and structural support wall, lack of piping for heating and plumbing – stolen for the copper, gutters and fascia pulled off, etc.), some restoration work would have to be done both internally and externally in order to protect the structure, but only minor changes would be necessary (mostly in the kitchen area) to make it suitable as a tea house and garden. However, the main goal would be to keep the historical integrity of the architectural features of the home which helped it to gain its historical designation.

In order to allow easy public access in the transition from single family residence into a tea house and garden, parking areas would have to be developed. The most convenient location for parking would be along the length of the property line on the western side, where the current driveway already exists, and continuing to the rear of the home, but just as a single row so as not to detract from the aesthetic appeal of either the home or gardens. A privacy fence would also be needed to clearly separate the parking from the adjacent property. Throughout the yard, various “garden rooms” would need to be developed. Also, some exterior lighting would need to be added for safety and security. Such alterations would be added in a way so as to have little to no impact on the qualities that deem the home to be historically significant.

Therefore, this information is firstly provided to the Historic Districts Commission to inquire whether such a proposal may be likely to receive its support in the future so that a formal offer to purchase the property may be put forward to the realtor representing the current property holder.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert C. Bruhn  
67 Cherryland  
Auburn Hills, MI 48326  
248-852-2997  
the5bruhns@gmail.com