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CITY OF ROCHESTER HILLS

**P**lanning and  
Development

FROM: Derek Delacourt 

DATE: October 13, 2008

TO: Planning Commissioners

RE: 3976 S. Livernois

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The City's Historic Districts Study Committee has completed a Preliminary Report regarding the proposed designation of 3976 S. Livernois, also known as the Stiles School, located at the corner of Livernois and South Boulevard. A copy of the Preliminary Report is attached.

Section 118-130 (Duties of Study Committee) of the City's Historical Preservation Ordinance requires that the Preliminary Report be transmitted to the City's Planning Commission for review and recommendation.

The Preliminary Report was also transmitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment. Copies of the SHPO comments and the State Review Board's comments are attached.

The Ordinance also requires the Study Committee to hold a Public Hearing to take public comment regarding the proposed designation, which was done on April 30, 2008. A copy of the Minutes from the April 30, 2008 Public Hearing are attached.

The Planning Commission is being asked to review the Preliminary Report with a view towards whether the proposed designation would have any impact on the City's Master Land Use Plan or any other development related issues.

Following is a proposed motion for your consideration in this matter:

**RESOLVED** that upon review of the Historic Districts Study Committee Preliminary Report regarding the proposed designation of 3976 S. Livernois (also known as Stiles School), the City of Rochester Hills Planning Commission has determined that the proposed designation **will/will not** have any impact on the property with respect to the City's Master Land Use Plan or any other development related issues.

Attachments: Preliminary Report  
Location Map  
Survey Sheet  
State Historic Preservation Office Comments  
04-30-08 Public Hearing Minutes

FINAL HISTORIC STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT  
STILES SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
ROCHESTER HILLS, MICHIGAN

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act (PA 169 of 1970, as amended) and Chapter 118 of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances, the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Study Committee has prepared this report on the proposed Stiles School Historic District following all of the procedures for preparing a preliminary historic district study committee report.

CHARGE OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE

The historic districts study committee was appointed by Rochester Hills City Council on December 15, 1999, pursuant to the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 118, as amended in 1999 by the city of Rochester Hills, Oakland County, Michigan. The study committee is a standing committee charged with conducting the duties and activities of a study committee on a continuing basis. These duties include inventory, research, and preparation of a preliminary historic district study committee report for a proposed historic district. Study committee members serve two year terms. A list of current study committee members follows.

STUDY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*John Dziurman, AIA*, is a registered architect with a practice focused on historic preservation, and meets the federal professional qualification standards for historic architect. He has served on the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission for eighteen years, many of those years as chairperson.

*Shawn Grant*, is an educator with an interest in research, law, and social studies. She has served on the study committee for two years.

*Dr. Richard Stamps*, is associate professor of anthropology at Oakland University. A professional archaeologist with a strong interest in history, he is a former member of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission.

*LaVere Webster*, is an art and antiques conservator who lives in one of the city's designated local historic districts. He has served on the board of directors of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society for more than eight years.

*Rev. Dr. Pamela L. Whateley*, is a minister and healing counselor interested in the city's building and development. She served for two years on the subcommittee for the city's Earl Borden Historic Preservation Award.

The study committee was assisted in its work by Jane C. Busch, historic preservation consultant, who conducted the 2002 historic districts survey, and by Kristine M. Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting.

## INVENTORY

A photographic inventory of the proposed district was conducted in 2002 as part of the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey. Copies of the inventory form are located at the Rochester Hills Planning Department, the Rochester Hills Museum, and the State Historic Preservation Office. Additional photographs were taken in January 2006 as part of the preparation of this report.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

Stiles School, at 3976 South Livernois Road, is located on the northwest corner of Livernois Road and South Boulevard, in Section 33 at the southern border of the City of Rochester Hills. The current property contains three parcels and is about seven acres in size.

The school building is near the southeast corner of the property, set back from the intersection of Livernois Road and South Boulevard. At the very south end is a two story, brick Collegiate Gothic style school built in 1929. Two modern, single story additions are attached to the north side of the two-story building (photo 1). The building stands on level land. Mature pine and deciduous trees are located south and east of the older portion of the building. A concrete walkway surrounds the entire building and connects with South Boulevard. A relatively new, backlit double-sided sign sits at the southeast corner of the property near Livernois.

Two driveways on Livernois access asphalt paved parking areas in front of, and to the north of, the modern additions. A driveway on South Boulevard accesses the parking lot southwest of the 1929 building. Recent play equipment and landscaping are located behind the entire building, including a garden with wood fencing and trellis at the north end. The vacant parcels contain soccer fields, a partially built straw bale playhouse, small wood sheds, and two earth mounds used for sledding.

The 1929 Stiles School building is a two story, light brown brick structure with limestone trim and detailing. Its massing is comprised of two rectangular gable roof structures placed perpendicularly to each other, one parallel to Livernois and one parallel to South Boulevard. A two story stair tower projects from the rear intersection of the two masses, and a one story flat roof mechanical room is attached to the western end of the southern mass.

The two rectangular masses are about equal in size, each five bays long and one bay wide. The bays are separated by brick pilasters capped in limestone trim. Sets of two double hung windows are in the first and second floors of each bay, with the exception of the entrance bay on the east elevation and the five-sided projecting bay on the first floor of the south elevation. The building originally had paired nine over nine double hung wood windows, as shown in an interior photograph from 1957. All of the windows have been replaced with one over one double hung metal windows, with an opaque metal panel in the upper sash. Within each bay, the first and second floor windows are separated by brick laid in a basket weave pattern. Seven regularly spaced stone brackets top the second story windows below a simple stone cornice (photo 1).

The ends of the rectangular masses on the east, west, and north elevations are solid brick up to the gable. Three bands of limestone trim span the gable ends. A small rectangular attic window is in the center of each gable end. The gable roof is covered in asphalt shingles with copper flashing. There are two massive decorative chimneys spaced equally in the east facing block, and matching central and end chimneys in the south facing block.

The east elevation is the most ornate, with a slightly projecting, flat roofed entrance bay facing Livernois, next to where the two building blocks intersect. The entrance is flanked by stone trimmed buttresses and has a limestone Tudor arch doorway containing three single leaf doors topped with wood transom windows (photo 5). The second story of the entrance bay has a set of double hung windows, and the parapet wall above has two stone trimmed crenellates.

The main building contains four classrooms on each floor, with an office on the second floor above the entrance hall. The floors are terrazzo in the hallways and covered in carpet in the classrooms. The hallways have tan brick wainscot two thirds of the way up the wall with painted concrete block above (photo 6). The classrooms have painted concrete block walls with wood trimmed blackboards and coat closets (photo 9). The original wood trim and wood panel doors exist throughout the interior.

The kindergarten room is on the first floor near the entrance door. It has a fireplace of animal theme Flint Faience tiles (photo 8) and a five-sided single story bay projecting from the room. There are seven round murals depicting classic nursery rhymes painted on the upper portions of two walls. The murals may be original to the building or possibly were painted during the Depression by an itinerant worker or through the WPA program (photo 7).

The first addition was constructed in 1957-1958 and is attached to the north end of the 1929 school. The majority of this one story addition is set behind the 1929 building. It is constructed of a light brown brick nearly matching the color of the 1929 building. It has a flat roof with dark metal coping. There are metal, double hung windows placed throughout the rectangular shaped wing (photos 1 and 3).

The 1963 addition is to the north of the 1958 addition, and has two rectangular wings projecting west on the property. The flat roofed, building has brick walls matching the 1958 addition and is comprised of a one story double loaded classroom corridor wing and a two story gymnasium. Both the 1958 and 1963 additions appear to have been remodeled and have sections of the brick covered with exterior insulated finishing system ("EIFS") (photos 3 and 4).

## COUNT OF HISTORIC AND NON-HISTORIC RESOURCES

The proposed Stiles School Historic District contains one historic (contributing) resource. The two additions are counted as part of the building, but they do not contribute to the school's historic character or significance.

## BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION –

The proposed Stiles School historic district consists of the following parcel:

15-33-476-027

T3N, R11E, SEC 33; PART OF SE ¼; BEG AT SE SEC CORN; TH N 88-15-00 W 396 FT; TH N 01-00-00 E 361 FT; TH S 88-00-00 E 338 FT; TH S 08-15-00 E 365 FT; TO BEG 3 A; B576

And the southern 90 feet (approximately) of parcel: 15-33-476-014

T33N, R11E, SEC 33; HOMESTEAD ACRES; LOTS 1 TO 7 INCL.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The proposed historic district contains the entire parcel originally associated with the 1929 school building and a portion of the parcel that contains the 1963 addition. Two of the three parcels currently associated with the school were acquired by the school district in 1958 and were not historically associated with the 1929 school building. Per National Register guidelines, the boundary must include the entire building with additions, so part of one of the 1958 parcels is included in the proposed district. Historically the two parcels now associated with the school would have been vacant or used for agricultural purposes.

The proposed district is surrounded by newer development. Houses built in the 1970s and 1980s have been constructed on the parcels to the west. Houses constructed in the 1980s are on the parcels to the north. Across South Boulevard (in the city of Troy) there is a mix of 1980s and 1930s houses. Across Livernois to the east are two 1960s-era office buildings and a mix of houses constructed primarily after the 1940s. Within a wider area surrounding Stiles School there are a few scattered nineteenth and early twentieth century properties. In the winter the Eli Bristol house at 1160 South Boulevard (locally designated) is barely visible from the school.

## HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT

### *Schools in Avon Township*<sup>1</sup>

The history of schools in Avon Township is typical of rural Michigan. Schools were established in Avon Township within a few years of the first settlement, before there was a township government. Territorial law mandated that school districts be laid out as soon as there were fifty families in the township. This system continued when Michigan became a state. School districts levied school taxes, and the residents of each district elected a director, moderator, and treasurer to administer the school. By the 1870s Avon Township had thirteen school districts including some fractional districts that were shared with other townships. All of these were one room schools except for district number five, the Rochester school, which adopted a graded system in

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<sup>1</sup> Avon Township was incorporated as the city of Rochester Hills in 1984.

1865.<sup>2</sup> The 1896 atlas indicates that Avon Township had twelve school districts at that date, including three fractional districts. The primary district schools typically went to eighth grade.

Beginning in about 1910 the population of Avon Township began to grow. By 1929 the population had increased over 260 percent since 1910.<sup>3</sup> This was no doubt related to the large number of subdivisions being platted, especially in the southern part of the township. In the fifteen years prior to 1930 the township reviewed over thirty-five requests for new subdivisions, and most were approved, although not all were successfully developed. A 1916 sketch shows six subdivisions within a mile of Stiles School.<sup>4</sup> This increased population and the associated increase in property taxes could account for the construction of a new, larger school building. This was typical of the larger school districts in the township. Brooklands, Hamlin, and Avon School District #2 also built new brick school buildings in the late 1920s. The first two, like Stiles, were built in the Collegiate Gothic style popular for schools at that time.

The Depression caused a setback in both Avon Township and Rochester schools. Due to decreased budgets teachers' salaries were lowered and school years were shortened. The banking crisis of 1933 tied up any money that school districts might have had on hand.<sup>5</sup> Those district schools that remained open taught grades one through eight. Students who continued on after eighth grade went to Rochester High School on a tuition basis.

As Michigan's rural population grew in the 1940s, primary school districts around the state began to consolidate. In her history of Avon Township, Eula Pray listed eleven school districts in 1944, three of which had recently closed.<sup>6</sup> In Avon Township two school districts emerged, the Rural Agricultural School District No. 10 Fractional of the Township of Avon, created in 1947, and the Rural Agricultural School District No. 5 Fractional Avon Township in 1949. Later that year District No. 5 became the Rochester Community School District, and District No. 10 Fractional held a naming contest. Five students, including Lefa Sullivan of Stiles School, all came up with the winning name, "Avondale." This became the name of the new high school and the school board, "School Board of Avondale Fractional School District."<sup>7</sup>

### *Stiles School*

Stiles School, erected in 1871, is reportedly named after Mr. Samuel Stiles,<sup>8</sup> a teacher at the school. In the abstract for the Eli Bristol House, a lease for a school is shown as early as 1837.<sup>9</sup> A school is shown in this location on the 1872 and 1896 atlas maps. On the 1896 map it is

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<sup>2</sup> Jane C. Busch, "Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey," (City of Rochester Hills, Rochester Hills, MI., 2002), 38.

<sup>3</sup> Eula Pray, *A History of Avon Township, 1820-1940* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Nonce Press, 1986), 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Max Mallon, *One-Hundred Years of Rochester Schools 1865-1965* (Rochester: Rochester Board of Education, 1972), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Pray, *History of Avon Township*, 97, 157.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Rural Agricultural School District No. 10 Fractional of the Township of Avon (Avondale School District), February 7, 1949. Collection of Floyd Cobb Jr.

<sup>8</sup> Kari Clark, phone conversation with Jackie Beecher, October 20, 1998. Rochester Hills Historic Districts Study Committee file.

<sup>9</sup> LaVere Webster, comments at Rochester Hills Historic Districts Study Committee Meeting, March 9, 2006.

identified as Fractional School District Number One, meaning the district was comprised of properties in Avon and Troy townships. It was one of twelve school houses in Avon Township at the time. Local histories indicate that the site contained a one-room school as would be expected for the time and place.

According to the 1938 rural property inventory, a one room rectangular, wood frame building with a hipped roof was built on the property in 1915, and a two room rectangular frame building with a gabled roof and covered porch was built there in 1920. Both of these buildings were extant in 1938 along with the 1929 brick building. Although the rural property inventory is not always reliable on construction dates, considering that it is correct on the 1929 date perhaps it is correct on the other dates. A ca. 1920 date for the two-room school is corroborated by Eula Pray, who dates it to 1923.<sup>10</sup>

As indicated on the dedication plaque still inside the school, in 1929 the present Collegiate Gothic style school was constructed by Fractional District Number 11, Avon and Troy Townships. The architect was Frederick D. Madison of Royal Oak and the contractor was Lee Campbell and Son. The school board is listed as Elias E. Johnson, director; Elmer E. Maitrott, moderator; and Arthur B. Winter, treasurer (photo 10). On the 1930 atlas the land surrounding the school parcel is shown belonging to Rena Maitrott.

The architect had experience designing schools and was most likely aware of the publications and guidance provided by the state of Michigan for school design. The kindergarten or children's room was constructed in accordance with accepted practice at the time. As kindergarten rooms were new they were typically on the first floor, near an entrance, with a fireplace to create a more home-like atmosphere. In some elementary schools the kindergarten room walls were semi-rounded to allow more light and fresh air into the room.<sup>11</sup> The fireplace, bay window, and painted decorations in the kindergarten room at Stiles all demonstrate these principles. Mr. David Hackett recalled that in his early years at Stiles, the children would sit inside the fireplace, which never had a fire, and read books.<sup>12</sup>

In 1931 Stiles School had nine teachers, two in the two-room building and seven in the new brick building.<sup>13</sup> Former students remember the 1929 building being constructed in front of the 1920s two-room building. At various times the two-room building was used for drama programs, study hall, community center and upper grades.<sup>14</sup> In 1932 the residents of the district voted to continue the school through the tenth grade in order to stop paying tuition for students to attend Rochester High School.<sup>15</sup> It is not certain how long the school contained ten grades.

As was common throughout Michigan, the school was used for community functions, such as clothing distribution during the Depression, and for community events. A newspaper article from 1933 indicates a three-act comedy was being performed by the Stiles Dramatic Club that

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>11</sup> State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan Historical Center, *An Honor and an Ornament: Public School Buildings in Michigan* (Detroit: Inland Press, 2003), 10.

<sup>12</sup> Peggy Schodowski, conversation with David Hackett, Fall, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Pray, *History of Avon Township*, 96.

<sup>14</sup> Peggy Schodowski, conversations with former students, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> *The Rochester Era*, "Stiles a Junior High School," August 12, 1932.

evening. A dramatic club would seem to indicate that plays for the public were a regular occurrence at the school.

The 1938 rural property inventory describes a 2.5 acre parcel with a woven wire fence. It contains cards for the three buildings described above, although it does not show how the buildings are arranged on the parcel. It does indicate that the 1929 building originally had a slate roof.

By 1939 the school housed 240 students.<sup>16</sup> In 1947 the Stiles School District, along with three other districts in Avon, Troy, Bloomfield, and Pontiac townships were merged to form the Rural Agricultural School District No. 10 Fractional of the Township of Avon with the first meeting of the elected school board being held on October 16, 1947.<sup>17</sup>

According to school board meeting minutes, insurance bids were obtained for Stiles School and the Annex in 1948. It is presumed that the Annex is the two room building based on the lower value. The meeting minutes in 1948 and 1949 indicate that the Stiles fence was an issue; a chain link fence was installed in 1949. During these and subsequent years the population of the area serving the school continued to grow. In 1949 the population estimate of the total number of people in the Avondale School District was seven thousand, and in 1951 the Avondale School Board attempted to lease space in the Avon Southwest Community Hall to alleviate the overcrowding at Stiles. By 1953 the school had 623 students, nearly 400 more than in 1939. In 1956 an addition was being planned for Stiles School by architect George D. Mason. It was constructed in 1957 – 1958 at the northwest corner of the 1929 building. In late 1957 discussions began with adjacent landowners to add parcels to the school property. After months of negotiations it appears that the land was added sometime in 1958.<sup>18</sup>

In a March 23, 1959 letter to the school superintendent, the insurance company indicates that the Annex for Stiles School had been razed.<sup>19</sup> In January 1963 the *Pontiac Press* reported that the school board approved adding classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and kitchen, designed by architects O'Dell, Hewlett, and Luckenbach of Birmingham. In 1998 the Avondale school system stopped using the building as an elementary school, and it is currently being leased to the internationally known Oakland Steiner School.

#### *Frederick D. Madison, Architect*

The architect of Stiles School was based in Royal Oak, Michigan and designed a large number of buildings in the 1920s. The Oakland County Jail (demolished) in Pontiac was built in 1921, the Washington (now Baldwin) Theater in Royal Oak in 1922, and the Genesee County Courthouse

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<sup>16</sup> School Census Report, May 31, 1952, collection of Floyd Cobb Jr.

<sup>17</sup> Municipal Advisory Council of Michigan, Report No. 1017-A, G-926, 8/31/49, \$500,000.00 Avondale School District No. 10 Fractional Avon, Troy, Pontiac and Bloomfield Townships, Oakland County, Michigan, School Site and Building Bonds, September 7, 1949, collection of Floyd Cobb Jr.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Rural Agricultural School District No. 10 Fractional of the Township of Avon (Avondale School District), 1947 through 1964. Collection of Floyd Cobb Jr

<sup>19</sup> Letter dated March 23, 1959 from Thatcher, Patterson, & Wernet, General Insurance Agency, Pontiac, Michigan, to Raymond M. Baker, Superintendent of Avondale School District #10 Fractional of Avon Township, collection of Floyd Cobb Jr.



and Jail in 1925-26. About the time Madison was designing Stiles he was also working on Royal Oak (Dondero) High School (1928), along with additions to schools in Birmingham, Royal Oak, and Allen Park. He also designed a store for Montgomery Ward in Royal Oak and the Genesee County Juvenile Home. In 1934 he provided architectural information for the Rochester schools for work to be performed under the Civil Works Administration, including additions to Rochester High School and Woodward School. In 1939 he designed the Gladwin County Courthouse in the Art Deco style.<sup>20</sup>

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISTRICT

The proposed Stiles School Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its association with a pattern of historical events, and under Criterion C, for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type of architecture. The areas of significance are education and architecture. The district's period of significance is from 1929, when the current school building was constructed, to 1947, when the Stiles School District was merged into the Rural Agricultural School District No. 10 Fractional of the Township of Avon.

### The National Register Criteria

**The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:**

**A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.**

Historic schools were symbols of community as well as functional centers for community activities. The most important activity, of course, was education. The commitment to education was made at the local, state, and national levels; thus schools represent a nationally significant pattern of events that was manifested locally.

At the time of construction the property owners in the Stiles School District were responsible for the school's construction, maintenance, and operating costs. The fact that money was raised to construct an architect-designed school meeting current standards showed a commitment by the population to the importance of education. The new, larger school building also represents a surge in population growth in this area of the township. More people in the district created enough tax dollars and a need for a large brick school to be built within ten years of the district building a two room school. The school was used as a community center, including as a distribution center for relief supplies during the Depression.

Three schools built in Avon Township during the 1920s survive and retain integrity. Stiles School is the last intact school that became part of the Avondale School District. The nearby Brooklands School, which is similar in style to Stiles and was built in 1927, is part of the Rochester Community School District. Brooklands has large additions; however the historic school is still intact and not overwhelmed by the additions. The former Avon School District

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<sup>20</sup> Robert O. Christensen. "Genessee County Courthouse and Jail" (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1989), Section 8, 5.

No. 2 building located on John R (A.C.E. High School) that was built in 1928 retains its integrity despite the usual replacement windows. Unlike Stiles and Brooklands, this school does not display any specific architectural style.

Two other schools that were constructed about the same time as Stiles and were also absorbed into the Avondale School District, have been converted to retirement residences and have been completely enclosed with newer construction. The additions to Hamlin School, in the Rochester Community School District, do overwhelm the building, which no longer retains integrity.<sup>21</sup> Thus at least three other schools built in Avon Township during the 1920s have lost their integrity and no longer represent the importance of education in this rural community.

**C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.**

Schools are architectural landmarks, with a recognizable form that distinguishes them from their surroundings. By the twentieth century school architecture was often quite imposing, even in rural areas such as Avon Township. The two story brick Stiles School was unquestionably a landmark in the rural landscape of agricultural fields, farmhouses, and newer suburban houses along Livernois Road and South Boulevard in the 1920s. Today the school is a historic landmark at a busy intersection devoid of other historic buildings.

Stiles is the only school in the city designed by Frederick D. Madison of Royal Oak, who designed schools and civic buildings throughout southeast Michigan. It is one of two Collegiate Gothic style schools retaining architectural integrity in the city of Rochester Hills. The Collegiate Gothic Style was very popular across the United States for over thirty years beginning about 1905, and by the end of World War I the majority of new school buildings were designed in the Collegiate Gothic style. It was chosen because of its scholastic connotations, and many Michigan communities have vernacular versions of Collegiate Gothic Style Schools dating primarily from the 1920s. The style is characterized by Tudor arches, stepped parapets, and multi-paned windows.<sup>22</sup>

Stiles is pictured in the 2003 Michigan State Historic Preservation Office publication, *An Honor and An Ornament: Public Schools in Michigan*, as an example of a later, simpler version of the Collegiate Gothic Style.<sup>23</sup> The intact Tudor arch entry, the extensive use of limestone trim including the banding on the gable ends, and the decorative chimneys all are characteristic of the style. Although the multi-paned double hung windows have been replaced, the large original openings remain intact. The interior of the building, simple in style, is highly intact and is an excellent example of school design at the time. The terrazzo floored hallways and the extensive use of wood trim and doors throughout the building do not usually survive in school buildings. The kindergarten room, with its bay window, fireplace, and murals is demonstrative of school design and philosophy of the 1920s.

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<sup>21</sup> Busch, "Rochester Hills," 39.

<sup>22</sup> State Historic Preservation Office, *An Honor and an Ornament: Public School Buildings in Michigan*, 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

The two additions are to the north and are set back so that the historic school building is clearly evident. With its intact exterior Collegiate Gothic detailing and intact interior, the building retains its historic character.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Study Committee recommends that the Stiles School (3976 S. Livernois) should be designated as a local historic district. The significance of the district meets the National Register Criteria under both Criteria A (significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City's history), and Criteria C (architecture).

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Stiles School Scrapbook, 1948-1957. A scrapbook of the Stiles School P.T.A., located at the Rochester Hills Museum.





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MAP

# Proposed Stiles Historic District



## Legend

-  Lot Lines
-  Tax Parcel
-  Proposed Stiles Historic District
-  Existing School Property

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Stiles School, looking southwest, 1958 addition in foreground.





Photo 2: South elevation, note first floor bay for kindergarten room.

Photo 3: Stiles School, west elevation, 1958 & 1963 additions on left.







Photo 4: Stiles School, view from the north end, looking south.

Photo 5: Stiles school, historic entrance detail.



Photo 6: Main first floor corridor in 1929 building.



Photo 7: Stiles School, one of the painted murals in the kindergarten room.



Photo 8: Flint Faience tile fireplace in kindergarten room.

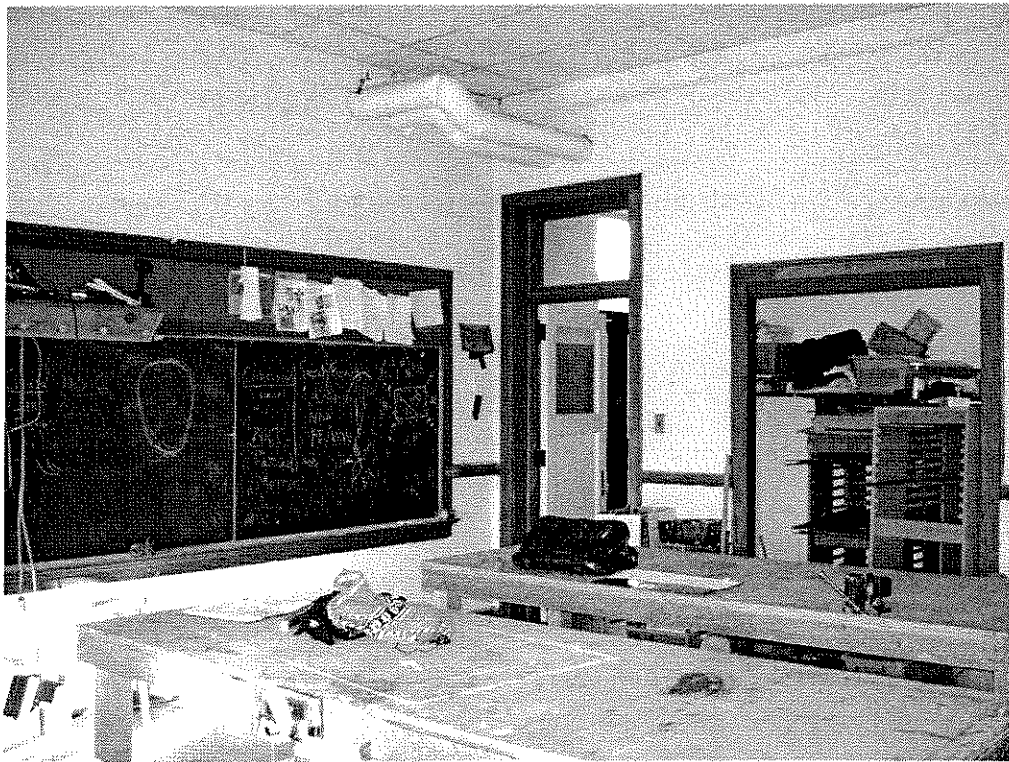


Photo 9: Stiles School, typical classroom.

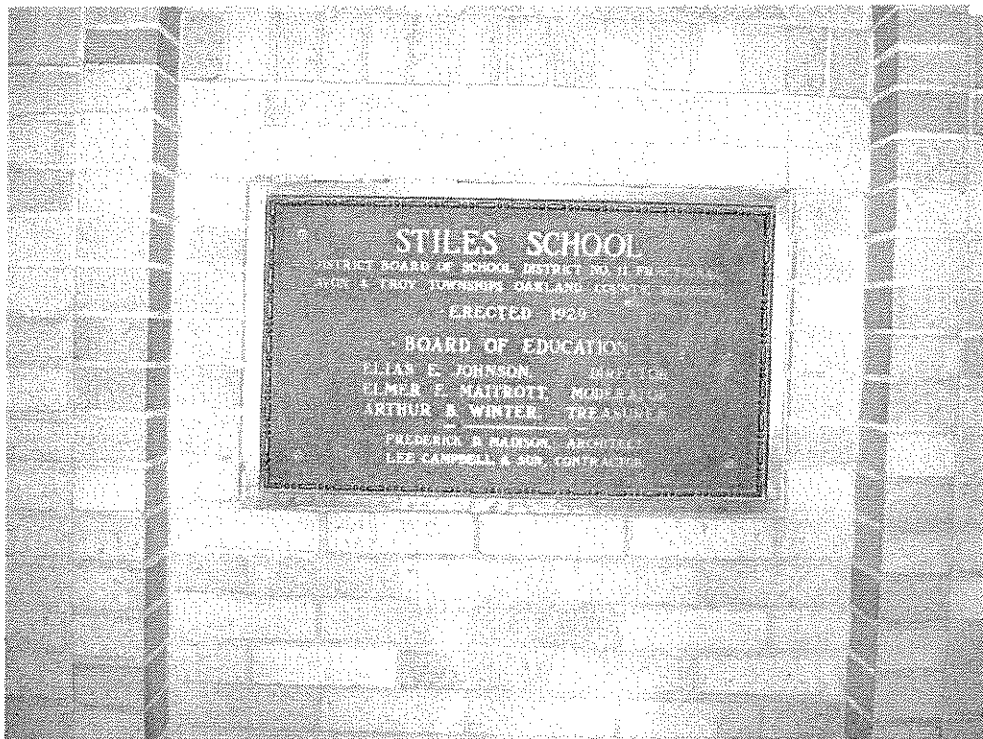


Photo 10: 1929 school dedication plaque.





Photo 11: Stiles School, view from property looking east across Livornois.



Photo 12: Looking south across South Boulevard from rear of property.



Photo 13: View of parcels behind school looking west down South Boulevard.

# 3976 S. Livernois Stiles School Property



## Legend

-  TaxParcel
-  RoadEdge

Aerial photographs as of April 2005.  
Parcel lines were obtained on 07-01-06 from Oakland County.  
Although the information provided by this map is believed to  
be reliable, its accuracy is not warranted in any way. The City of  
Rochester Hills assumes no liability for any claims arising  
from the use of this map.

10-16-08

1 inch equals 202 feet

**State of Michigan Historic Preservation Office  
Intensive Level Survey  
Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey**

**Address**

Street: 3976 S Livernois Rd.  
 City: Rochester Hills County: Oakland ZIP: 48307  
 Current Name: Oakland Steiner School  
 Historic Name: Stiles School



**Evaluations**

Contributes to: Stiles School  
 NR Eligible: Not NR Eligible  
 Contributing: Contributing Site  
 SHPO Evaluation:

**Photo**

Filename: RHPhotos\Livernois\S Livernois\3976 S Livernois.JPG  
 Roll: Frame:  
 View: Northwest  
 Credit: Burke Jenkins  
 Caption: Stiles School, 3976 S. Livernois Rd., Rochester Hills, MI

**Resources on Property/Status**

Historic Use: E/school  
 Current Use: E/school  
 Owner Type: Private

**Main Building**

<b>Foundation:</b>	<b>Roof:</b>	<b>Period of Significance:</b>
1. Brick	1. Asphalt	
2. Concrete	2.	<b>Area of Significance:</b>
3.	3.	1 Architecture
<b>Wall:</b>	<b>Other:</b>	2 Education
1. Brick	1. Brick	3
2. Concrete	2.	<b>Arch/Builder:</b>
3. Stone: Limestone	3.	<b>Date Built:</b> ca. 1930

**Architectural Classification:** Late Gothic Revival

**Material Notes:**

**Description:** Two story gable roof school building, L-plan plus additions. Two story flat roof addition on west and one story brick and concrete additions on north and west. Original building is brick with limestone trim, with decorative brickwork in spandrels. Gothic details include Tudor arch and drip mold over front door, buttresses. Bay window south side. Exterior brick chimney on west side and three brick chimneys on center ridge. Stone brackets under cornice. Newer, smaller metal windows in original window openings.

**Other Buildings/Features:** Asphalt paved playground on west side. Parking lots north side with grass play area north of parking lot.

**Significant Persons:**

**Statement of Significance:** This was fractional school district #1 in 1896 but appears to have been renumbered fractional school district #11 by the 1940s. In 1923 it became a two room school and in 1931 had nine teachers, two in the old building and seven in the new brick building. A good example of Collegiate Gothic school architecture with good (not great--windows have been changed; additions) integrity. Historic schools such as Stiles serve as community landmarks.

**References:** Michigan Rural Property Inventory, Avon Township, 33DD; Atlas maps, 1872, 1896; Pray, History of Avon Township, 96.

**Surveyor's Comments:**





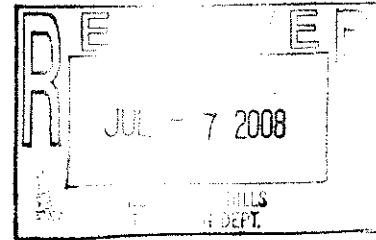
JENNIFER GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES  
LANSING

DR. WILLIAM ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR

June 30, 2008

Mr. Derek Delacourt  
City of Rochester Hills  
1000 Rochester Hills  
Rochester Hills, MI 48309



Dear Mr. Delacourt:

During my June 16 meeting with the Rochester Hills Historic District Study Committee, there was some discussion about the National Register eligibility of the Stiles School. As you will recall, when the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the study committee report, we determined that the school was not eligible for listing due to the size and inappropriate design of a modern addition. However, at their meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup> the State Historic Preservation Review Board disagreed with the SHPO assessment and determined that the Stiles School is eligible for listing. You asked for clarification on how two different determinations could be derived if the same criteria were used as well as clarification on the current eligibility status of Stiles School.

Eligibility determinations are based on the Secretary of the Interior's criteria for the National Register of Historic Places found in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. In reviewing properties proposed for National Register listing we apply the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The SHPO review was based on photographs submitted with the historic district study committee report for the school. The photographs highlighted a massive addition that dominated the small historic school and seemingly destroyed its historic setting and feeling. Since local historic district commissions only review the exterior of buildings we felt we had to limit our review to the physical integrity of the exterior of the building, even though photographs of the interior showed it retains much of its original character.

When the study committee report and SHPO comments were presented to the State Historic Preservation Review Board, they disagreed with the SHPO eligibility assessment. One of the Board members was familiar with the property and indicated that the addition was not visible as you approached the front of the school due to topography and vegetation. The Board member also indicated that the addition, while large, was attached to the original school in a way that was appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and could easily be removed with minimal damage to the original structure. The SHPO had also commented that the windows on the School had been altered, which coupled with the addition, detracted from the school's overall integrity. The Review Board determined that this was not the case, as the window openings themselves had not been altered. The Board felt that Stiles School still displayed the significant features and characteristics of a historic school.

It is important to remember that when reviewing preliminary study committee reports, Public Act 169 of 1970 only provides the SHPO and the State Historic Preservation Review Board with the authority to comment on the reports.

Determinations for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places are made by our National Register Coordinator and, ultimately, by the Keeper of the National Register. We suggest that the property owner utilize the submittal of Part I of the state tax credit application as the opportunity to provide more information about the property to our National Coordinator, Robert Christensen for his review and official determination of eligibility. It is important that you provide him with the materials that would make the case for the school's integrity including pictures that show how the new addition is attached, views from the front of the school that show it retains its feeling and setting, etc. If the owner intends to rehabilitate the building including installation of period appropriate windows or removal of the addition, it should be noted. It should also be made clear if the intent is to designate just the historic school building or to include the newer additions. Please contact Bryan Lijewski at [LijewskiB@michigan.gov](mailto:LijewskiB@michigan.gov) or 517-373-1631 for assistance with the state tax credit application.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to clarify the decisions on Stiles School. We look forward to working with the city of Rochester Hills in the protection of its historic resources. If I can assist you further, please don't hesitate to contact me at 517-355-2729 or [ArnoldA@michigan.gov](mailto:ArnoldA@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,



Brian D. Conway  
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC:ALA

Enclosure



STATE OF MICHIGAN

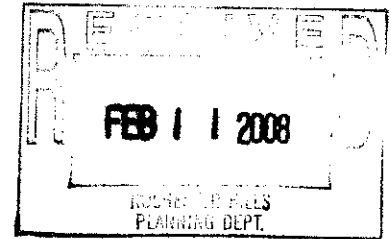
JENNIFER GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES  
LANSING

DR. WILLIAM ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR

January 29, 2008

Mr. Derek Delacourt  
City of Rochester Hills  
1000 Rochester Hills  
Rochester Hills, MI 48309



Dear Mr. Delacourt:

Staff members of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) have reviewed the preliminary historic district study committee reports for the Stiles School Historic District and the Frank Farm Historic District. A copy of our comments is enclosed. We offer these comments in order to assist communities to prepare final study committee reports that meet the requirements of Michigan's *Local Historic Districts Act* and that provide a strong legal basis for protecting historically significant resources.

The report was presented to the Michigan Historical Commission and the State Historic Preservation Review Board. The State Historic Preservation Review Board did not concur with the SHPO that the Stiles School was ineligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. They stated that the majority of building's historic material was still in place and that while the windows had been altered, the openings themselves were still in tact. They also felt the massing of the original school building had not been lost when the inappropriate additions were constructed. The historic building can still be discerned and is distinct from the additions. They believed the school building itself would be eligible as long as the report indicates that the additions are non-contributing resources.

We look forward to working with the city of Rochester Hills in the protection of its historic resources. If we can assist you further, please contact Amy Arnold at 517-355-2729 or [ArnoldA@michigan.gov](mailto:ArnoldA@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

Brian D. Conway  
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC:ALA

Enclosure

**State Historic Preservation Office  
Michigan Historical Center**

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**Staff Comments, December 19, 2007  
Stiles School Historic District, Rochester Hills**

Unfortunately, after reviewing this resource using the Secretary of the Interior's Criteria for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, it is our opinion that it would not individually qualify for inclusion in the National Register due to the loss of its original windows, a significant design feature for this building. According to *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* "the property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style" (p. 46). The resource has also lost its historic setting and feeling due to insensitive additions. According to National Register Bulletin 15, "A district is not eligible if it contains so many alterations or new intrusions that it no longer conveys the sense of a historic environment." (p.46)



# Rochester Hills Minutes

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

## Historic Districts Study Committee

Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Dr. Richard Stamps  
Members: John Dziurman, David Kibby, Dennis Mueller,  
Peggy Schodowski, LaVere Webster

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Wednesday, April 30, 2008

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

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**MINUTES** of a **ROCHESTER HILLS REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE** meeting held at the City Municipal Offices, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills. Oakland County, Michigan.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

### 2. ROLL CALL

Present 4 - Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster and Peggy Schodowski

Absent 3 - John Dziurman, David Kibby and Dennis Mueller

Others Present: Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director, Planning Department  
Judy Bialk, Recording Secretary

### 3. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairperson Thompson stated for the record that a quorum was present.

### 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any announcements or communications.  
No announcements or communications were provided.

### 5. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)

No public comments were received on any non-Agenda items.

### 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairperson Thompson announced that the Study Committee would hold a Public Hearing regarding the following property and for the following purpose:

#### 6A. 2005-0537 PUBLIC HEARING - FILE NO. HDSC 05-002

Location: 3976 S. Livernois Road, located on the northwest corner of Livernois

Road and South Boulevard, and further identified as Parcel Number 15-33-476-027 and the southern 90-feet (approximately) of Parcel Number 15-33-476-014, zoned R-4 (One Family Residential).

**Purpose:** To receive public comment regarding a proposal to establish the subject property as a Historic District within the City of Rochester Hills, in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976 (MCL 15.261 et seq., MSA 5.3407(3) et seq.) and the Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 118-131.

Chairperson Thompson explained the information received at this Public Hearing would be included in the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) Final Report for the property commonly identified as 3976 S. Livernois Road.

Chairperson Thompson stated that 3976 S. Livernois had been studied by the Historic Districts Study Committee in accordance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and a Preliminary Report had been prepared. He explained the Minutes from this Public Hearing would be included in the Final Report, along with all other relevant material. He noted that once the Final Report is completed, it would be forwarded to City Council for action.

Chairperson Thompson summarized the procedure used to establish a district. He explained the duties of the Study Committee outlined in Section 118-130 of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances included conducting a photographic inventory of the resource; conducting basic research regarding the proposed historic district; determining the number of historical and non-historical resources within the proposed district; preparing the Preliminary Report, which included the charge of the Committee, the composition of the Committee, the boundaries of the proposed historic district, the history of the proposed historic district, the significance of the proposed district, and the Committee's recommendation to establish, modify or eliminate.

(Arrive David Kibby 6:34 PM)

**Present** 5 - **Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster, Peggy Schodowski and David Kibby**

**Absent** 2 - **John Dziurman and Dennis Mueller**

**2005-0537**

Chairperson Thompson stated the Study Committee transmitted a copy of the Preliminary Report for review and recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office on November 30, 2007. He noted a Staff Report and Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the State Review Board on January 29, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-131 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Public Hearing is to be held sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the Preliminary Report to the SHPO. The Public Hearing is held in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (the Open Meetings Act), which includes notice to the property owner of any proposed district no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Public Hearing. He noted written notice was provided to the property owner of record on April 11, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Rochester Eccentric on April 13, 2008, as required by Ordinance to be published one time only at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of hearing.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-132 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Study Committee would prepare a Final Report with a recommendation, along with any recommendation received from the Planning Commission, to be submitted within one (1) year after holding the Public Hearing to the Mayor and City Council. He noted if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, the Final Report would include a draft Ordinance Amendment.

Chairperson Thompson noted for the record that if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, any final action on this matter would be taken by City Council.

Chairperson Thompson stated the intent of the Public Hearing was not to conduct a debate or dialog between the members of the HDSC and the public, but rather to allow the public to place any comments or concerns they may have on public record to be provided to City Council. He noted the HDSC Members would be available for questions at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Chairperson Thompson opened the Public Hearing at 6:37 PM.

**Mark Gavulic, 520 Nichols Drive, Auburn Hills**, stated he was present representing the Oakland-Steiner School. He explained the school's Administrator had intended to be at the meeting but was out of the country.

Mr. Gavulic stated that the Oakland-Steiner School was the current owner of the Stiles School Building. He indicated he had been a parent at the school since 1990, and noted the school was founded in 1989 so he was considered one of the founding parents of the school. He commented his three-year old son would attend the school, and by the time his son completed his education at the school, he, himself, would be associated with the school for over thirty years.

Mr. Gavulic stated he was credited with bringing the Stiles School to the attention of the Oakland-Steiner location committee as they had outgrown their Bloomfield

Hills location. He noted he was attracted to the building because of its architecture, and knew it was a wonderful match for a Waldorf School. He indicated his sister was a chairperson of a historical committee in Genesee County in the 1970s, and his brother is a historical preservation architect in Clarkston. He stated he had a deep appreciation for the building and its significance.

Mr. Gavulic stated he was the chairperson of the school's master plan committee, and now that the school owned the building and the site, they had to begin the process of figuring out how to make it their own, which he did not take lightly. He applauded what the Study Committee was doing, and noted he had an opportunity to read the Preliminary Report and it was excellent, thorough work. He was impressed with the resources the Committee used to prepare the Report.

Mr. Gavulic stated that Waldorf Schools were very sensitive to materials. He explained Rudolph Steiner spoke of the "touch sense" which was very different than the sense of touch. He stated it was fundamental in their education process, and natural materials such as wood and stone were universally important to them. He commented they sometimes had trouble with the regulators who came in to the school and wanted to know where the plastic toys were, and the school continually has to explain they will not cover a wood floor with carpet.

Mr. Gavulic felt that the school and the Study Committee had the same goal, which was to protect the building as the touchstone it was and the Community gem it was in the past in terms of being a community center. He stated the Oakland-Steiner School wanted to use the building as it was and restore the Community access. He commented they wanted their neighbors to be glad they were there, and wanted everyone to be proud of their beautiful building.

Mr. Gavulic stated that as the proposed designation stood, the Oakland-Steiner School could not support it, for the following reasons:

First, they appreciated they were only stewards of this property and the decision that will be made will affect generations. He noted the proposed district included the 50-year old wings that the State Historic Preservation Office called "inappropriate additions" and "non-contributing resources". The Oakland-Steiner School did not believe they should have to preserve those errors in perpetuity, especially because those additions themselves were ruined in the 1970s when EIFS was added to them. He stated the school would like the right to raze those wings and construct something more complementary to the original school building that adhered to the Department of the Interior Standards and guidelines. He noted he had been told that similar projects were done in both Clarkston and Birmingham. He stated the Birmingham project was a 1920s school that added an addition that did not attempt to duplicate what was



there, but created a beautiful building that complemented the original. He was told there was a similar situation in Clarkston with a 1920s collegiate gothic building with a 1950s single-story, rectangular addition. The addition was razed, and a new addition added on to the original 1920s building in a very tasteful way.

Secondly, the designation would cost the school immediately. He stated it would be an immediate financial penalty for the school, and there were no tax advantages to offset that since the school was a tax-exempt entity. He noted that about a year ago there was a lightening event that caused some damage to one of the additions on the school. He stated they were still in the process of recovering from that event, and the entire process was still going on and had not been settled at this point. He indicated that the school's insurance agent, who was in constant contact with the school, was told about the proposed designation, and advised the school they absolutely should not go along with it and should fight it because the insurance agent felt their insurance rates would quadruple. He noted that at this point the school had not been able to ascertain whether that was factual information or whether there were alternatives. He stated the school had not yet received their new insurance rates based on the restoration of the building, so they did not know what that cost might be. With the current economic times, that affected their enrollment and their programs. He explained if they became a historic district and had to pay the insurance rates, it would come at a direct expense to their programs.

Thirdly, the proposed district includes land that is significantly removed from the original Stiles School building, and the Oakland-Steiner School is worried that local Ordinances, such as setbacks from the proposed historic district, would inadvertently limit what they could construct on the property, including structures that would be removed from the original building and would not affect that building.

If the proposed historic district could be reduced within a reasonable interpretation of the enabling legislation to include only the property that the 1929 building occupied and the 1929 building itself, then the Oakland-Steiner School would reconsider their position. He noted that the inappropriate non-contributing 1957 and 1963 additions are functionally free-standing. He commented when the Oakland-Steiner School moved in, they did not use the Stiles Building proper for two years and it was shut down and not heated. The additions and the heating plant, which is part of the additions, are functionally independent, and the 1929 building functions as an annex to the newer construction. He believed it was within the Committee's reasonable discretion to declare the additions are two attached buildings and, therefore, under the Department of Interior rules, the Committee could shrink the proposed district.

Chairperson Thompson asked if anyone else wished to speak on this matter. Upon hearing none, he closed the Public Hearing at 6:50 PM.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee was pleased to receive the input and thanked the representatives from the school for attending the Hearing.

**This matter was Discussed**

**6B. 2006-0425 PUBLIC HEARING - FILE NO. HDSC 04-005**

Location: 1290 E. Auburn Road; 1304 E. Auburn Road; 1344 E. Auburn and 1356 E. Auburn Road, located on the south side of Auburn Road, east of John R Road and west of Dequindre Road, and further identified as Parcel Numbers 15-36-126-004 (1290 E. Auburn); 15-36-126-005 (1304 W. Auburn), and 15-36-126-029 (1344 and 1356 E. Auburn), zoned R-3 (One Family Residential).

Purpose: To receive public comment regarding a proposal to establish the subject property as a Historic District within the City of Rochester Hills, in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976 (MCL 15.261 et seq., MSA 5.3407(3) et seq.) and the Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 118-131.

Chairperson Thompson explained the information received at this Public Hearing would be included in the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) Final Report for the properties commonly identified as 1290 E. Auburn Road, 1304 E. Auburn Road, 1344 E. Auburn Road and 1356 E. Auburn Road.

Chairperson Thompson stated that 1290 E. Auburn Road, 1304 E. Auburn Road, 1344 E. Auburn Road and 1356 E. Auburn Road had been studied by the Historic Districts Study Committee in accordance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and a Preliminary Report had been prepared. He explained the Minutes from this Public Hearing would be included in the Final Report, along with all other relevant material. He noted that once the Final Report is completed, it would be forwarded to City Council for action.

Chairperson Thompson summarized the procedure used to establish a district. He explained the duties of the Study Committee outlined in Section 118-130 of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances included conducting a photographic inventory of the resource; conducting basic research regarding the proposed historic district; determining the number of historical and non-historical resources within the proposed district; preparing the Preliminary Report, which included the charge of the Committee, the composition of the Committee, the boundaries of the proposed

historic district, the history of the proposed historic district, the significance of the proposed district, and the Committee's recommendation to establish, modify or eliminate.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Study Committee transmitted a copy of the Preliminary Report for review and recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office on November 30, 2007. He noted a Staff Report and Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the State Review Board on January 29, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-131 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Public Hearing is to be held sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the Preliminary Report to the SHPO. The Public Hearing is held in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (the Open Meetings Act), which includes notice to the property owner of any proposed district no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Public Hearing. He noted written notice was provided to all property owners of record on April 11, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Rochester Eccentric on April 13, 2008, as required by Ordinance to be published one time only at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of hearing.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-132 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Study Committee would prepare a Final Report with a recommendation, along with any recommendation received from the Planning Commission, to be submitted within one (1) year after holding the Public Hearing to the Mayor and City Council. He noted if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, the Final Report would include a draft Ordinance Amendment.

Chairperson Thompson noted for the record that if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, any final action on this matter would be taken by City Council.

Chairperson Thompson stated the intent of the Public Hearing was not to conduct a debate or dialog between the members of the HDSC and the public, but rather to allow the public to place any comments or concerns they may have on public record to be provided to City Council. He noted the HDSC Members would be available for questions at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Dr. Stamps asked if all the property owners were notified about the Public Hearing. Mr. Delacourt stated that copies of the Preliminary Report and Notice of the Public Hearing were sent to each of the affected addresses and to all addresses associated

with the tax rolls for the parcels. He stated the Planning & Development Department did not receive any comment back from any of the property owners, and those notices were mailed to the same address used for water and tax bills.

Chairperson Thompson opened the Public Hearing at 6:55 PM.

**Anita Holtz, 1290 E. Auburn Road**, expressed her concern about the 1304 E. Auburn Road property and whether that property owner actually received notice of the Public Hearing.

Mr. Delacourt noted that property was a rental property and stated that notice had been sent to the property owner of record, as reflected on the City's tax rolls, along with a second address recently added to the tax roll information. He commented no response had been received from that property owner. He noted the City had attempted to make contact with that property owner on several occasions and had not received any response.

Ms. Holtz stated she was part of the bloodline of the Frank family that was born and raised on the property, noting her mother still resided at 1290 E. Auburn, as does her cousin, Ray Frank, who resides at 1356 E. Auburn Road. She commented that the third house, 1344 E. Auburn Road was still within the Frank family. She noted the rental property, 1304 E. Auburn Road, is no longer in the family.

Ms. Holtz stated the family members had concerns that there were elderly family residents residing at 1356 E. Auburn and 1290 E. Auburn, and eventually the next generation would inherit those properties. The next generation's concern about becoming a designated historical property is that the houses were built in the late 1940s, modified in the 1950s, and the structures themselves did not really have any historical significance. She agreed the property had been in the Frank family since the early 1800s, but if it became a historic district, it would be difficult to sell the property. She noted the children of the current residents would not be living on the property, and that was one of their biggest concerns. She commented that had the designation happened twenty years ago and there was something of great building significance left, she would be One Hundred Percent for the designation and would have pitched in to help it along. However, unfortunately now it would become a white elephant if it became a historic district. She did not know how they could sell the properties or market them when people were looking for new modern, updated items, and these were just older, single-story family homes. She stated it would be very difficult to entice buyers, other than the fact they sat on a lot of property. If the property is designated historic, then the existing homes could not be razed and new homes built.

Ms. Holtz stated that was their dilemma. They loved the property; they were born and raised there, and it was their roots and their earth. She noted her mother was in

her mid-80's, and her cousin was in his 90's, and the next generation was concerned about what they would do with the property after the older generation is gone.

Ms. Holtz referred to the house located at 1304 E. Auburn Road, and stated she would love for someone to embrace that home and to restore it to what it was, and she would be willing to help them do that. She did not think there was enough money to restore it, and the gentleman who owned it right now would not even have a hint of interest in restoring the home, unless he could be enticed with a large paycheck to take the house off his hands. She noted the home was only a rental to the current owner, and he did not have any attraction to the home.

Ms. Holtz stated she was not aware of the process, but asked if that house was deemed historical, whether the City could purchase the home and restore it to what it was, although she understood that was not the purpose of the Study Committee. She commented even the 1304 E. Auburn Road house had expired; it was past its time; it was over 143 years old; and although it was a grand structure, it was falling apart. She stated that was unfortunate, but true. She commented she had read the building materials on that house, and it was listed as asbestos, that some of the walls were made of asbestos, which was not a real positive thing to have in trying to restore a house. She stated she did not believe the current owner would do any restoration to the home, and commented that perhaps it would be struck by lightning and the house go out in a blaze of glory. Otherwise, the house will just fall down. She noted that if designated, the home would be considered demolition by neglect.

Ms. Holtz stated that as much as the family would love for the properties to be historical properties, or as had been mentioned by Dr. Stamps, become a part of the community and become an active working farm for the education system, she felt the buildings that would have been important for that to happen are already gone. She stated if the properties were to become historical, they would become albatrosses for the family.

Ms. Holtz stated that was how the family felt at this time, and stated they appreciated the Study Committee's time and efforts. She requested to be advised of the next step in the process.

Chairperson Thompson called for any other public comments. Upon hearing none, he closed the Public Hearing at 7:01 PM.

Chairperson Thompson thanked Ms. Holtz for her comments and stated the Committee appreciated the input.

**This matter was Discussed**

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairperson Thompson called for any other business.

Chairperson Thompson asked the Committee how they wanted to proceed. He asked if the Committee wanted to discuss the two properties at the next regular meeting with respect to finalizing the Report.

Dr. Stamps suggested the Committee take the Public Hearing input and discuss the properties, noting there were some serious concerns stated regarding both properties.

Ms. Schodowski commented the Oakland-Steiner School had some serious concern about the insurance for the building, and did not know how things stood after the fire. She wanted to keep the dialog open between the school and the City so that everyone was on the same page. She noted the comment about reducing the size of the proposed district, and would like to explore that option further.

Chairperson Thompson stated that both properties would be discussed at a future Study Committee meeting.

Chairperson Thompson stated he appreciated the input from the Oakland-Steiner School, and would like to invite the school to attend a Study Committee meeting to discuss the matter and work with the school. He suggested the school contact Mr. Delacourt and arrange a mutually agreeable time to meet with the Committee.

Mr. Delacourt stated he would advise both property owners when the properties were scheduled for a Study Committee Agenda, and invite them to attend the meeting to discuss the matter or provide further input.

Mr. Kibby asked the representatives from the Oakland-Steiner School if they had any idea when they would get numbers from the insurance company. Mr. Gavulic responded he did not have any idea.

Chairperson Thompson reminded the Study Committee they had a year from the date of the Public Hearing to finalize the Reports, and the properties would be discussed at a future meeting.

Dr. Stamps suggested the Oakland-Steiner School contact their insurance agent and ask for more specific information about the insurance rates if the property is designated. He noted the Committee had held back on moving forward with the report because they had not received any feedback from the school, then the fire happened, and the Committee wanted to give the school some time to sort through those issues.

Mr. Gavulic stated that the most significant factor was whether the entire current building would fall under the designation, or whether it would just be the 1929

building. He noted the school would be dealing with replacement costs. He stated the school's master planning architect, and the person who got them through the fire restoration, was adamant that the school would have to manufacture the tools to make the trim, to make the windows, to put them back to their 1929 original state, which scared them. He noted the school had enough problems with the State of Michigan regulations because they wanted the school to use carpet squares. The school also discussed whether tempered glass could be used because that was not original or available in 1929. He stated those types of questions had come up, although he had been told by his brother that that was not the case.

Mr. Delacourt stated that whomever the school was speaking to had a slight misunderstanding of what it meant to be part of a designated district. He offered to sit down with representatives of the school, noting he had recently met with Ms. Katherine Thivierge, the school's administrator. He thought there was some misunderstanding about what a non-contributing resource in a district was required to do, as well as what was involved in replacement or updating of damaged materials, even on a contributing resource. He explained that was something that was separate from the Study Committee, and was the responsibility of the City's Historic District Commission if the property is designated. He stated that a non-contributing portion of a building on a designated district did not prevent that addition from being razed or removed, which had happened in the City. He noted approval for that removal had to come from the Historic Districts Commission, but it did not automatically prevent that from happening, and it did not mean identical pieces had to be used to replace items.

Mr. Delacourt commented that the person advising the school may have had a different experience somewhere else; however, he would be glad to sit down and talk to them, and any representatives from the school. He suggested that time could be arranged for the school to meet with the Historic Districts Commission to review what was being proposed with the school's master plan, and what the Historic Districts Commission thought would be approvable or not.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee really wanted to work with the school regarding this matter.

Mr. Gavulic stated the school wanted to work with the Committee as well. He noted the building was an integral part of the school and its architecture was very much appreciated by the school. He stated they put the oldest children in that wing because they have a mature enough sense of art and form to appreciate that architecture.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee would love to hear more from the school, and hoped arrangements could be made for a meeting between the school and the Committee.

Ms. Schodowski stated she had learned that the architect of the school was Frederick Madison from Royal Oak, Michigan. Mr. Madison also built some schools in Royal Oak; however, those schools had been demolished. She commented on the magnitude of the potential resource, noting Mr. Madison did quite a bit of excellent work. She knew the school would take care of the building no matter what, but wanted the school to know the building was one of the few pieces still left from Mr. Madison's work.

Chairperson Thompson asked for any other comments. No other comments were provided.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

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Jason Thompson, Chairperson  
City of Rochester Hills  
Historic Districts Study Committee

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Judy A. Bialk, Recording Secretary

Approved as presented at the June 12, 2008 Regular Historic Districts Study Committee Meeting





# Rochester Hills

## Minutes

### Historic Districts Study Committee

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

Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Dr. Richard Stamps

Members: John Dziurman, David Kibby, Dennis Mueller,

Peggy Schodowski, LaVere Webster

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Wednesday, April 30, 2008

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

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MINUTES of a ROCHESTER HILLS REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE meeting held at the City Municipal Offices, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills. Oakland County, Michigan.

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Present 4 - Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster and Peggy Schodowski

Absent 3 - John Dziurman, David Kibby and Dennis Mueller

Others Present: Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director, Planning Department  
Judy Bialk, Recording Secretary

#### 3. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairperson Thompson stated for the record that a quorum was present.

#### 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any announcements or communications.  
No announcements or communications were provided.

#### 5. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)

No public comments were received on any non-Agenda items.

#### 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairperson Thompson announced that the Study Committee would hold a Public Hearing regarding the following property and for the following purpose:

6A. 2005-0537

PUBLIC HEARING - FILE NO. HDSC 05-002

Location: 3976 S. Livernois Road, located on the northwest corner of Livernois

Road and South Boulevard, and further identified as Parcel Number 15-33-476-027 and the southern 90-feet (approximately) of Parcel Number 15-33-476-014, zoned R-4 (One Family Residential).

**Purpose:** To receive public comment regarding a proposal to establish the subject property as a Historic District within the City of Rochester Hills, in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976 (MCL 15.261 et seq., MSA 5.3407(3) et seq.) and the Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 118-131.

Chairperson Thompson explained the information received at this Public Hearing would be included in the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) Final Report for the property commonly identified as 3976 S. Livernois Road.

Chairperson Thompson stated that 3976 S. Livernois had been studied by the Historic Districts Study Committee in accordance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and a Preliminary Report had been prepared. He explained the Minutes from this Public Hearing would be included in the Final Report, along with all other relevant material. He noted that once the Final Report is completed, it would be forwarded to City Council for action.

Chairperson Thompson summarized the procedure used to establish a district. He explained the duties of the Study Committee outlined in Section 118-130 of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances included conducting a photographic inventory of the resource; conducting basic research regarding the proposed historic district; determining the number of historical and non-historical resources within the proposed district; preparing the Preliminary Report, which included the charge of the Committee, the composition of the Committee, the boundaries of the proposed historic district, the history of the proposed historic district, the significance of the proposed district, and the Committee's recommendation to establish, modify or eliminate.

(Arrive David Kibby 6:34 PM)

**Present** 5 - Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster, Peggy Schodowski and David Kibby

**Absent** 2 - John Dziurman and Dennis Mueller

2005-0537

Chairperson Thompson stated the Study Committee transmitted a copy of the Preliminary Report for review and recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office on November 30, 2007. He noted a Staff Report and Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the State Review Board on January 29, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-131 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Public Hearing is to be held sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the Preliminary Report to the SHPO. The Public Hearing is held in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (the Open Meetings Act), which includes notice to the property owner of any proposed district no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Public Hearing. He noted written notice was provided to the property owner of record on April 11, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Rochester Eccentric on April 13, 2008, as required by Ordinance to be published one time only at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of hearing.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-132 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Study Committee would prepare a Final Report with a recommendation, along with any recommendation received from the Planning Commission, to be submitted within one (1) year after holding the Public Hearing to the Mayor and City Council. He noted if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, the Final Report would include a draft Ordinance Amendment.

Chairperson Thompson noted for the record that if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, any final action on this matter would be taken by City Council.

Chairperson Thompson stated the intent of the Public Hearing was not to conduct a debate or dialog between the members of the HDSC and the public, but rather to allow the public to place any comments or concerns they may have on public record to be provided to City Council. He noted the HDSC Members would be available for questions at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Chairperson Thompson opened the Public Hearing at 6:37 PM.

**Mark Gavulic, 520 Nichols Drive, Auburn Hills**, stated he was present representing the Oakland-Steiner School. He explained the school's Administrator had intended to be at the meeting but was out of the country.

Mr. Gavulic stated that the Oakland-Steiner School was the current owner of the Stiles School Building. He indicated he had been a parent at the school since 1990, and noted the school was founded in 1989 so he was considered one of the founding parents of the school. He commented his three-year old son would attend the school, and by the time his son completed his education at the school, he, himself, would be associated with the school for over thirty years.

Mr. Gavulic stated he was credited with bringing the Stiles School to the attention of the Oakland-Steiner location committee as they had outgrown their Bloomfield

Hills location. He noted he was attracted to the building because of its architecture, and knew it was a wonderful match for a Waldorf School. He indicated his sister was a chairperson of a historical committee in Genesee County in the 1970s, and his brother is a historical preservation architect in Clarkston. He stated he had a deep appreciation for the building and its significance.

Mr. Gavulic stated he was the chairperson of the school's master plan committee, and now that the school owned the building and the site, they had to begin the process of figuring out how to make it their own, which he did not take lightly. He applauded what the Study Committee was doing, and noted he had an opportunity to read the Preliminary Report and it was excellent, thorough work. He was impressed with the resources the Committee used to prepare the Report.

Mr. Gavulic stated that Waldorf Schools were very sensitive to materials. He explained Rudolph Steiner spoke of the "touch sense" which was very different than the sense of touch. He stated it was fundamental in their education process, and natural materials such as wood and stone were universally important to them. He commented they sometimes had trouble with the regulators who came in to the school and wanted to know where the plastic toys were, and the school continually has to explain they will not cover a wood floor with carpet.

Mr. Gavulic felt that the school and the Study Committee had the same goal, which was to protect the building as the touchstone it was and the Community gem it was in the past in terms of being a community center. He stated the Oakland-Steiner School wanted to use the building as it was and restore the Community access. He commented they wanted their neighbors to be glad they were there, and wanted everyone to be proud of their beautiful building.

Mr. Gavulic stated that as the proposed designation stood, the Oakland-Steiner School could not support it, for the following reasons:

First, they appreciated they were only stewards of this property and the decision that will be made will affect generations. He noted the proposed district included the 50-year old wings that the State Historic Preservation Office called "inappropriate additions" and "non-contributing resources". The Oakland-Steiner School did not believe they should have to preserve those errors in perpetuity, especially because those additions themselves were ruined in the 1970s when EIFS was added to them. He stated the school would like the right to raze those wings and construct something more complementary to the original school building that adhered to the Department of the Interior Standards and guidelines. He noted he had been told that similar projects were done in both Clarkston and Birmingham. He stated the Birmingham project was a 1920s school that added an addition that did not attempt to duplicate what was

there, but created a beautiful building that complemented the original. He was told there was a similar situation in Clarkston with a 1920s collegiate gothic building with a 1950s single-story, rectangular addition. The addition was razed, and a new addition added on to the original 1920s building in a very tasteful way.

Secondly, the designation would cost the school immediately. He stated it would be an immediate financial penalty for the school, and there were no tax advantages to offset that since the school was a tax-exempt entity. He noted that about a year ago there was a lightening event that caused some damage to one of the additions on the school. He stated they were still in the process of recovering from that event, and the entire process was still going on and had not been settled at this point. He indicated that the school's insurance agent, who was in constant contact with the school, was told about the proposed designation, and advised the school they absolutely should not go along with it and should fight it because the insurance agent felt their insurance rates would quadruple. He noted that at this point the school had not been able to ascertain whether that was factual information or whether there were alternatives. He stated the school had not yet received their new insurance rates based on the restoration of the building, so they did not know what that cost might be. With the current economic times, that affected their enrollment and their programs. He explained if they became a historic district and had to pay the insurance rates, it would come at a direct expense to their programs.

Thirdly, the proposed district includes land that is significantly removed from the original Stiles School building, and the Oakland-Steiner School is worried that local Ordinances, such as setbacks from the proposed historic district, would inadvertently limit what they could construct on the property, including structures that would be removed from the original building and would not affect that building.

If the proposed historic district could be reduced within a reasonable interpretation of the enabling legislation to include only the property that the 1929 building occupied and the 1929 building itself, then the Oakland-Steiner School would reconsider their position. He noted that the inappropriate non-contributing 1957 and 1963 additions are functionally free-standing. He commented when the Oakland-Steiner School moved in, they did not use the Stiles Building proper for two years and it was shut down and not heated. The additions and the heating plant, which is part of the additions, are functionally independent, and the 1929 building functions as an annex to the newer construction. He believed it was within the Committee's reasonable discretion to declare the additions are two attached buildings and, therefore, under the Department of Interior rules, the Committee could shrink the proposed district.

Chairperson Thompson asked if anyone else wished to speak on this matter. Upon hearing none, he closed the Public Hearing at 6:50 PM.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee was pleased to receive the input and thanked the representatives from the school for attending the Hearing.

This matter was Discussed

6B. 2006-0425

**PUBLIC HEARING - FILE NO. HDSC 04-005**

Location: 1290 E. Auburn Road; 1304 E. Auburn Road; 1344 E. Auburn and 1356 E. Auburn Road, located on the south side of Auburn Road, east of John R Road and west of Dequindre Road, and further identified as Parcel Numbers 15-36-126-004 (1290 E. Auburn); 15-36-126-005 (1304 W. Auburn), and 15-36-126-029 (1344 and 1356 E. Auburn), zoned R-3 (One Family Residential).

Purpose: To receive public comment regarding a proposal to establish the subject property as a Historic District within the City of Rochester Hills, in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976 (MCL 15.261 et seq., MSA 5.3407(3) et seq.) and the Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 118-131.

Chairperson Thompson explained the information received at this Public Hearing would be included in the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) Final Report for the properties commonly identified as 1290 E. Auburn Road, 1304 E. Auburn Road, 1344 E. Auburn Road and 1356 E. Auburn Road.

Chairperson Thompson stated that 1290 E. Auburn Road, 1304 E. Auburn Road, 1344 E. Auburn Road and 1356 E. Auburn Road had been studied by the Historic Districts Study Committee in accordance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and a Preliminary Report had been prepared. He explained the Minutes from this Public Hearing would be included in the Final Report, along with all other relevant material. He noted that once the Final Report is completed, it would be forwarded to City Council for action.

Chairperson Thompson summarized the procedure used to establish a district. He explained the duties of the Study Committee outlined in Section 118-130 of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances included conducting a photographic inventory of the resource; conducting basic research regarding the proposed historic district; determining the number of historical and non-historical resources within the proposed district; preparing the Preliminary Report, which included the charge of the Committee, the composition of the Committee, the boundaries of the proposed

historic district, the history of the proposed historic district, the significance of the proposed district, and the Committee's recommendation to establish, modify or eliminate.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Study Committee transmitted a copy of the Preliminary Report for review and recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office on November 30, 2007. He noted a Staff Report and Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the State Review Board on January 29, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-131 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Public Hearing is to be held sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the Preliminary Report to the SHPO. The Public Hearing is held in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (the Open Meetings Act), which includes notice to the property owner of any proposed district no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Public Hearing. He noted written notice was provided to all property owners of record on April 11, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Rochester Eccentric on April 13, 2008, as required by Ordinance to be published one time only at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of hearing.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-132 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Study Committee would prepare a Final Report with a recommendation, along with any recommendation received from the Planning Commission, to be submitted within one (1) year after holding the Public Hearing to the Mayor and City Council. He noted if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, the Final Report would include a draft Ordinance Amendment.

Chairperson Thompson noted for the record that if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, any final action on this matter would be taken by City Council.

Chairperson Thompson stated the intent of the Public Hearing was not to conduct a debate or dialog between the members of the HDSC and the public, but rather to allow the public to place any comments or concerns they may have on public record to be provided to City Council. He noted the HDSC Members would be available for questions at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Dr. Stamps asked if all the property owners were notified about the Public Hearing. Mr. Delacourt stated that copies of the Preliminary Report and Notice of the Public Hearing were sent to each of the affected addresses and to all addresses associated

with the tax rolls for the parcels. He stated the Planning & Development Department did not receive any comment back from any of the property owners, and those notices were mailed to the same address used for water and tax bills.

Chairperson Thompson opened the Public Hearing at 6:55 PM.

**Anita Holtz, 1290 E. Auburn Road**, expressed her concern about the 1304 E. Auburn Road property and whether that property owner actually received notice of the Public Hearing.

Mr. Delacourt noted that property was a rental property and stated that notice had been sent to the property owner of record, as reflected on the City's tax rolls, along with a second address recently added to the tax roll information. He commented no response had been received from that property owner. He noted the City had attempted to make contact with that property owner on several occasions and had not received any response.

Ms. Holtz stated she was part of the bloodline of the Frank family that was born and raised on the property, noting her mother still resided at 1290 E. Auburn, as does her cousin, Ray Frank, who resides at 1356 E. Auburn Road. She commented that the third house, 1344 E. Auburn Road was still within the Frank family. She noted the rental property, 1304 E. Auburn Road, is no longer in the family.

Ms. Holtz stated the family members had concerns that there were elderly family residents residing at 1356 E. Auburn and 1290 E. Auburn, and eventually the next generation would inherit those properties. The next generation's concern about becoming a designated historical property is that the houses were built in the late 1940s, modified in the 1950s, and the structures themselves did not really have any historical significance. She agreed the property had been in the Frank family since the early 1800s, but if it became a historic district, it would be difficult to sell the property. She noted the children of the current residents would not be living on the property, and that was one of their biggest concerns. She commented that had the designation happened twenty years ago and there was something of great building significance left, she would be One Hundred Percent for the designation and would have pitched in to help it along. However, unfortunately now it would become a white elephant if it became a historic district. She did not know how they could sell the properties or market them when people were looking for new modern, updated items, and these were just older, single-story family homes. She stated it would be very difficult to entice buyers, other than the fact they sat on a lot of property. If the property is designated historic, then the existing homes could not be razed and new homes built.

Ms. Holtz stated that was their dilemma. They loved the property; they were born and raised there, and it was their roots and their earth. She noted her mother was in



her mid-80's, and her cousin was in his 90's, and the next generation was concerned about what they would do with the property after the older generation is gone.

Ms. Holtz referred to the house located at 1304 E. Auburn Road, and stated she would love for someone to embrace that home and to restore it to what it was, and she would be willing to help them do that. She did not think there was enough money to restore it, and the gentleman who owned it right now would not even have a hint of interest in restoring the home, unless he could be enticed with a large paycheck to take the house off his hands. She noted the home was only a rental to the current owner, and he did not have any attraction to the home.

Ms. Holtz stated she was not aware of the process, but asked if that house was deemed historical, whether the City could purchase the home and restore it to what it was, although she understood that was not the purpose of the Study Committee. She commented even the 1304 E. Auburn Road house had expired; it was past its time; it was over 143 years old; and although it was a grand structure, it was falling apart. She stated that was unfortunate, but true. She commented she had read the building materials on that house, and it was listed as asbestos, that some of the walls were made of asbestos, which was not a real positive thing to have in trying to restore a house. She stated she did not believe the current owner would do any restoration to the home, and commented that perhaps it would be struck by lightning and the house go out in a blaze of glory. Otherwise, the house will just fall down. She noted that if designated, the home would be considered demolition by neglect.

Ms. Holtz stated that as much as the family would love for the properties to be historical properties, or as had been mentioned by Dr. Stamps, become a part of the community and become an active working farm for the education system, she felt the buildings that would have been important for that to happen are already gone. She stated if the properties were to become historical, they would become albatrosses for the family.

Ms. Holtz stated that was how the family felt at this time, and stated they appreciated the Study Committee's time and efforts. She requested to be advised of the next step in the process.

Chairperson Thompson called for any other public comments. Upon hearing none, he closed the Public Hearing at 7:01 PM.

Chairperson Thompson thanked Ms. Holtz for her comments and stated the Committee appreciated the input.

**This matter was Discussed**

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairperson Thompson called for any other business.

Chairperson Thompson asked the Committee how they wanted to proceed. He asked if the Committee wanted to discuss the two properties at the next regular meeting with respect to finalizing the Report.

Dr. Stamps suggested the Committee take the Public Hearing input and discuss the properties, noting there were some serious concerns stated regarding both properties.

Ms. Schodowski commented the Oakland-Steiner School had some serious concern about the insurance for the building, and did not know how things stood after the fire. She wanted to keep the dialog open between the school and the City so that everyone was on the same page. She noted the comment about reducing the size of the proposed district, and would like to explore that option further.

Chairperson Thompson stated that both properties would be discussed at a future Study Committee meeting.

Chairperson Thompson stated he appreciated the input from the Oakland-Steiner School, and would like to invite the school to attend a Study Committee meeting to discuss the matter and work with the school. He suggested the school contact Mr. Delacourt and arrange a mutually agreeable time to meet with the Committee.

Mr. Delacourt stated he would advise both property owners when the properties were scheduled for a Study Committee Agenda, and invite them to attend the meeting to discuss the matter or provide further input.

Mr. Kibby asked the representatives from the Oakland-Steiner School if they had any idea when they would get numbers from the insurance company. Mr. Gavulic responded he did not have any idea.

Chairperson Thompson reminded the Study Committee they had a year from the date of the Public Hearing to finalize the Reports, and the properties would be discussed at a future meeting.

Dr. Stamps suggested the Oakland-Steiner School contact their insurance agent and ask for more specific information about the insurance rates if the property is designated. He noted the Committee had held back on moving forward with the report because they had not received any feedback from the school, then the fire happened, and the Committee wanted to give the school some time to sort through those issues.

Mr. Gavulic stated that the most significant factor was whether the entire current building would fall under the designation, or whether it would just be the 1929

building. He noted the school would be dealing with replacement costs. He stated the school's master planning architect, and the person who got them through the fire restoration, was adamant that the school would have to manufacture the tools to make the trim, to make the windows, to put them back to their 1929 original state, which scared them. He noted the school had enough problems with the State of Michigan regulations because they wanted the school to use carpet squares. The school also discussed whether tempered glass could be used because that was not original or available in 1929. He stated those types of questions had come up, although he had been told by his brother that that was not the case.

Mr. Delacourt stated that whomever the school was speaking to had a slight misunderstanding of what it meant to be part of a designated district. He offered to sit down with representatives of the school, noting he had recently met with Ms. Katherine Thivierge, the school's administrator. He thought there was some misunderstanding about what a non-contributing resource in a district was required to do, as well as what was involved in replacement or updating of damaged materials, even on a contributing resource. He explained that was something that was separate from the Study Committee, and was the responsibility of the City's Historic District Commission if the property is designated. He stated that a non-contributing portion of a building on a designated district did not prevent that addition from being razed or removed, which had happened in the City. He noted approval for that removal had to come from the Historic Districts Commission, but it did not automatically prevent that from happening, and it did not mean identical pieces had to be used to replace items.

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Ms. Schodowski stated she had learned that the architect of the school was Frederick Madison from Royal Oak, Michigan. Mr. Madison also built some schools in Royal Oak; however, those schools had been demolished. She commented on the magnitude of the potential resource, noting Mr. Madison did quite a bit of excellent work. She knew the school would take care of the building no matter what, but wanted the school to know the building was one of the few pieces still left from Mr. Madison's work.

Chairperson Thompson asked for any other comments. No other comments were provided.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

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Jason Thompson, Chairperson  
City of Rochester Hills  
Historic Districts Study Committee

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Judy A. Bialk, Recording Secretary

Approved as presented at the June 12, 2008 Regular Historic Districts Study Committee Meeting