

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0287

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2025-0005 - to construct a storage building for Yates Cider Mill at 1950 E. Avon Rd., located on the south side of Avon and west of Dequindre, zoned NB Neighborhood Business with the MR Mixed Residential Overlay, Parcel No. 15-13-427-002; Mike Titus, Yates Cider Mill, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 7-1-25, Location Map, CBI Letters dated 7/7/25 and 5/8/25, HDC Application, Plans, and Historic Mill-Canal Photo had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Thompson introduced this item and noted that it was a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a storage building at Yates Cider Mill. He invited the applicants forward and asked for the Staff Report.

Present for the applicant were owner Mike Titus and Robert Clark, CBI Design Professionals.

Ms. Kidorf noted that this is a fairly straightforward application and is a compatible addition to the Historic District.

Mr. Clark stated that he is the architect for the Yates project, and noted that they are anxious for this addition as it will improve the busy fall season and provide storage for the amount of equipment and apple bins that are required for the process.

Dr. Stamps thanked the applicant for mixing historic preservation with a successful business model. He commented that Yates has become a pillar of identifying the City of Rochester Hills, and stated that photos of Yates Cider Mill are used to reference the city often in the news. He added that recently the County was putting together a strategic plan on how to capture tourism and historic preservation, and Yates was nicely represented. He noted that he liked the way that the architectural approach was not to totally mimic the old but have it compatible and contributing appropriately to the shape with gable roofs and other features.

Ms. Lyons commented that the retaining wall which is also the foundation feels a little imposing and asked the applicant to comment on the challenges of the contours of the site.

Mr. Clark responded that the difficulties of the site topography are significant. He explained that between the old mill building and the fudge shop is a service drive that cannot really be adjusted based on topography, and it leaves a vertical rise of about six feet in a very short distance. He added that the elevation of the building itself cannot change because of a steep slope condition on the north side of the building. He stated that they went round and round with the civil engineers about all kinds of issues including accessibility, and noted that the Fire Department had a few issues that had to be resolved as well.

Ms. Lyons stated that the foundation wall is showing up as very stark and concrete and asked if there could be something else done to change the feeling.

Mr. Clark responded that there is not a lot that can be done with grading because it would violate the retaining wall height requirements from the City. He suggested that the only thing they could do is paint it to tone down the new concrete feel or perhaps add landscaping.

Ms. Lyons questioned how the side elevation shown on Page 21 of the plans depicts how the retaining wall drops down, and stated that she was not clear as to the surface between the retaining wall and the building foundation.

Mr. Clark responded that this is basically a series of tiered small landscaping walls. He noted that there is a cut through grade so that the slope coming up is earth and agreed that this could be planted.

Mr. McGunn complimented the applicants, noting that it is a difficult process and their solution is very impressive. He thanked them for building a compatible structure as opposed to throwing up a pre-engineered building to hide things.

Ms. Lyons asked what would be going on in the attic space.

Mr. Titus responded that it would be for dry goods storage such as napkins, pallets for the donuts and other inventory. He explained that this storage would hopefully replace trailers that they have for storing inventory. He noted that they have five semi-trailers in the fall and keep three over the summer for the inventory, and commented that it should be a huge gain in aesthetics.

Ms. Lyons asked if they will regret not having an elevator.

Mr. Clark responded that they have a unique situation with big barn doors on the north side that will allow things to be moved by a high-low from that spot.

Ms. Lyons asked if they would be using a pallet jack upstairs.

Mr. Titus responded yes.

Vice Chairperson Granthen made the motion in the packet to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lyons.

After calling for a roll call vote, Chairperson Thompson announced that the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Granthen, seconded by Lyons, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 3 - Altherr-Rogers, Tischer and Lemanski

Resolved, in the matter of File No. PHDC2025-0002, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the

construction of a storage building and related parking lot and landscaping changes at 1950 E. Avon Road, Parcel Identification Number 70-15-13-427-002, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The Yates Cider Mill Historic District is a non-contiguous historic district; and
- 2) The proposed construction of the storage building and associated parking lot expansion and site changes **ARE** appropriate in materials, massing, size, location, and scale; and
- 3) The proposed project **DOES NOT** destroy any historic or character defining features of the historic district; and
- 4) The proposed construction of the new storage building and associated landscape changes as proposed **IS** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 9 and 10 as follows:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

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