



Department of Planning and Development

Staff Report to the Historic Districts Commission

August 4, 2025

1568 W. Avon, remove barn lean-to	
REQUEST	Certificate of Appropriateness remove a lean-to between 2 barns
APPLICANT	Linda Peterson, owner
FILE NO.	PHDC #2025-006
PARCEL NO.	15-16-377-037
ZONING	R-1 – One family residential
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Corwin House, 1568 W. Avon Road
STAFF	Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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Request

This is an application requesting to demolish a collapsing 1-story lean-to that is located between two barns on the property.

Historical Information

1568 W. Avon Road, which is an individual historic district, was designated by the City of Rochester Hills in 1978. The house was constructed sometime prior to 1872 by A.D. Corwin as part of a 187-acre property named Mineral Farms. In 2000 the house was moved back 125' from Avon Road, the aluminum siding replaced with fiber cement siding, a rear addition was constructed, and two porches were reconstructed. The survey sheet estimates the barn construction date of 1936, and the rear barn is called a tool shed in the rural property inventory. No mention is made of the connecting lean-to.

From the 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts* survey, “Relatively few farm buildings other than farmhouses survive to represent the agricultural landscape that once constituted nearly the whole of Avon Township. Therefore, most farm buildings that retain the greater part of their historic appearance are considered significant. Most common are barns: a total of twenty-five

buildings historically used as barns are extant in the survey area. This is likely the total or very close to the total for Rochester Hills.”

Review Considerations

The applicant is requesting approval to remove a collapsing lean-to between the barn and tool shed on the property. The lean-to appears to have been part of the silo that was previously in front of the lean-to. It is unknown when the silo was removed, but it was sometime before 2000.

The owner states that the barns were constructed in the 1920s, and that the insurance company is requiring the lean-to be removed due to the unsafe condition. The owner consulted with the “Barn Doctor” Ted Micka who stated that the lean-to serves no purpose. The condition of the adjacent barn and tool shed walls where the lean-to is attached is unknown. From the photographs provided it does not appear that the lean-to is structurally connected to either adjacent building.

Summary

1. The property is an individually designated historic district and contains a house, barn, tool shed, and pumphouse.
2. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove a collapsing 1-story lean to between the barn and tool shed;
3. The owner states that the barns were constructed in the 1920s and there was previously a silo in this location. The insurance company is requiring the lean-to to be removed.
4. Staff Comments: Based on the photos it appears that the lean-to went around the rear of the silo that was previously located here. The existing lean-to is collapsing and appears to be deteriorated beyond repair. The lean-to is not mentioned in the historic survey sheet and is not a character defining feature of the property. The proposed removal meets The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, in particular standard number 2 on the condition that the adjacent walls of the tool shed and barn are repaired to match the existing after the lean-to is removed.
5. It is unknown if the applicant has submitted the proposed plans to the City’s Building Department for a formal review. Any work performed in connection with this project will be required to meet all zoning and building codes, rules and regulations.

Potential Motion

(Subject to adjustment based on Commission discussion)

MOTION, in the matter of File No. PHDC 2025-006, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES/POSTPONES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the collapsing 1-story lean-to between the barn and tool shed, Parcel Identification Number 15-16-377-037, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The collapsing lean-to is deteriorated beyond repair and is not a character defining feature of the property. The work as proposed **is/is not** appropriate for the property, provided that the adjacent barn and tool shed walls are repaired to match the existing after the lean-to is removed; and
- 2) The proposed lean-to demolition as proposed **is/is not** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard number 2 as follows:
 2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*