



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

May 1, 2026

3861 S. Adams Road House Repairs, New Construction, and Landscaping

REQUEST	Certificate of Appropriateness to construct new multi-family development on the east portion of the lot and new parking, drives, and landscaping on the entire site, including repairs and new windows for the existing stone house.
APPLICANT	Tony Perez, O'Brien
FILE NO.	PHDC # 2026-002
PARCEL NO.	15-31-301-011
ZONING	R-4 with a FB Flexible Business overlay
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Salmon Matthews House - 3861 S. Adams Road (aka the Lorna Stone House) – a Noncontiguous Historic District
STAFF	Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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Request

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to repair the exterior of the existing stone house and install new windows. It is also proposed construct a new multi-family development with associated driveways and parking on the east two-thirds of the property as well as on an additional parcel to the south of the district.

Historical Information

The subject site is a single-resource historic district located on the east side of South Adams Road north of South Boulevard. The stone house is an upright and wing in the Greek Revival style. It is the only stone Greek Revival style house in Rochester Hills. It is significant for its architecture. The original two-room wood frame structure was constructed in 1824 by Salmon Matthews. In 1840 the stone upright and wing

section was constructed on the west end of the frame structure, possibly by Daniel Grey. The house underwent a major renovation in the 1950s, including the aluminum sided addition to the second floor of the south wing of the house. A second addition was constructed in 1985, and a detached garage was constructed in 1983.

The original survey sheet states that the house was used as part of the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. The original survey sheet states that the windows are of hand-blown glass. As of 2017 the windows had all been removed from the house, some of the wood frames remained. The 1983 detached garage did not contribute to the property and was demolished prior to 2017.

Previously a PUD was approved for the property to construct the Lorna Stone Village, a mixed-use development that never took place. The property is currently for sale, and the applicant is in the due diligence process for purchasing the property. In December 2011, the Commission approved the demolition of the rear addition and front porch and remodeling of the garage. A site visit in 2017 indicated that the additions as well as the garage have been demolished. The previous owner tuckpointed the stone house and has stabilized the interior of the building as well as replaced the roof with new asphalt shingles and restoration of the wood soffit, fascia and cornice returns. In 2017 the Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the windows, reconstruction of a rear wall and blocking in of four existing window openings, installation of a new rear door, construction of a barrier free ramp, and the installation of cementitious siding on the portion of the building with aluminum siding. The only portion of that work completed was the replacement of the aluminum siding with cementitious siding. The soffit, fascia, and cornice returns have deteriorated since being repaired in 2017.

Review Considerations

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness make repairs to the existing house, including installing new windows, and construct a multi-family development consisting of four 1-story tall “cottage” buildings; four 2-story tall townhouse buildings; and two 3-story tall apartment buildings with associated parking and driveways on the east two-thirds of the parcel.

Site – the applicant proposes to eliminate the existing driveway on the north side of the house and construct a new driveway from Adams Road with a new, wider curb cut located along the south edge of the property. Quarter round planting beds are proposed on both sides of the driveway entrance. The new drive will extend past the house to the proposed parking lot for the new complex. Light poles are proposed along the driveway. A 6’ wide crushed stone pathway is proposed to meander through the front and side yard from the Adams Road public pathway to the new driveway. A picnic table seating area is proposed along the gravel path in front of the house. Lights are proposed along the path. The existing concrete patio will remain. New bushes and perennials including hydrangeas and roses are proposed around the base of the house. Numerous new trees are proposed along the Adams pathway and the south lot line as well as the yard area to the south of the house.

To the north and east of the house it is proposed to construct a 6’ deep oval shaped detention pond with a water treatment structure on the west edge of the new parking lot to the east. The pond expands an existing depressed area in that corner of the site. The pond will be a dry pond and will only have water when needed for run off. Trees and landscaping are proposed around the detention pond. Just east of detention pond the parking lot for the two-story townhouse buildings is proposed. Shrubs are proposed between the house and the new parking lot.

House – The applicant proposes to stabilize the existing house by repairing the box-eaves, repairing the rake boards, and tuckpoint the masonry as needed. New windows are proposed for the existing openings.

New Buildings – Three types of multi-family buildings plus a clubhouse are proposed for the site.

Cottages – Four 1-story tall cottage buildings are proposed along the new driveway that leads from South Boulevard to the north part of the site. Each building has an overall footprint of 150.5' by 48.79'. The top of the roof line is 21'8" above grade. The buildings will have gable roofs clad in asphalt shingles, the walls will be a combination of field stone veneer and horizontal lap siding of an unknown material. Overhead garage doors are proposed for the front elevation and patio doors are proposed for the rear elevation.

Townhouses – Four 2-story townhouses are proposed along the west of the parking lot that is located east of the existing house. Each building has an overall footprint of 103.41' by 52.41'. The top of the roofline is 31'7" above grade. The front elevations that face the existing house are proposed to have tan brick cladding the first floor (the renderings show fieldstone but the notes say brick masonry); dark gray James Hardie siding at the second floor; and cedar shake cement board siding in the gable peaks. The gable roofs are proposed to be clad in asphalt shingles. Each building is proposed to have five entrance doors with gable front porch roofs over them. The rear elevations will have overhead garage doors.

Apartment buildings – Two 3-story tall apartment buildings are proposed to the east of the townhouses. Each building has an overall footprint of 251.4' by 64.82'. The top of the gable roof is 40' above grade. The base of the building will be clad in stone veneer with cement board lap siding above. Some sections of wall, including the ends of the building will have cement board cedar shake siding. Balconies are proposed on all four elevations. The roof will be clad in asphalt shingles.

Clubhouse – A 1-story tall clubhouse is proposed between the apartment buildings and cottage buildings. It will have an overall footprint of 83.27' by 26.27'. The top of the gable roof will be 18'11" above grade. The base of the building will be clad in stone veneer with cement board lap siding above. The gables will be clad in cement board cedar shake siding and the roof will be clad in asphalt shingles.

The applicant indicates the following materials will be used for the project:

1. Existing house – materials were not specified but it is assumed that by repair the applicant intends to use wood for repairing the box eaves and rake boards, window materials were not specified, tuckpointing details were not provided;
2. Site – gravel pathway through the yard; Adams driveway apron and drive will be asphalt with concrete curb and gutters; new parking area and circulation drive around the new building will be asphalt with concrete curb and gutter; various deciduous and evergreen trees, bushes, and perennials throughout;
3. New buildings – stone veneer, tan brick, cement lap siding and cedar shake; asphalt shingles.

Summary

1. The house is a single resource historic district, the Salmon Matthews House. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following: stabilize the existing house by repairing the box eaves and rake boards, installing new windows, and tuckpointing the stone walls; eliminate the existing driveway; construct a gravel path from Adams Road to a new roadway; construct a new asphalt road along the south edge of the property from Adams Road; construct four 1-story cottage buildings; four 2-story townhouse buildings; two 3-story apartment buildings; a 1-story clubhouse; two detention ponds; and associated parking lots, drives, and landscaping.
2. Staff comments:

- A. The proposed house stabilization scope is appropriate. More details are needed on the repair materials for the box eaves and rake boards, as well as the proposed mortar for the tuckpointing. The replacement windows should be wood or aluminum clad wood with “true” divided lights. The details of the specific windows must be provided to the Commission.
 - B. The detention pond proposed to the north of the existing house is compatible as long as it is a dry pond, the 15’ buffer is maintained between the house and the edge of the pond, and the trees and landscaping is planted between the house and the edge of the pond as proposed.
 - C. The landscape section shown on sheet L-2.0 of the site plan drawings may not be an accurate depiction of the existing grading as there is a slope upward toward the house from Adams Road that does not appear to be reflected in the section.
 - D. The added gravel path, picnic tables, and plantings surrounding the house appear to be compatible with the property. The proposed roadways, parking lots, landscaping, and new buildings are generally compatible in size and massing to the historic property as they are far enough away with sufficient landscape screening to retain the existing setting of the historic house.
 - E. Mature trees on the property should be retained wherever possible.
 - F. Care should be taken to avoid the historic stone well located south of the house. The well does not have to be operational but the stone wall surrounding it and a cover should be maintained.
3. The applicant is in the process of submitting the proposed plans to the City’s Planning and Building Departments 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 2026-002, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following: stabilize the existing house by repairing the box eaves and rake boards, installing new windows, and tuckpointing the stone walls; eliminate the existing driveway; construct a gravel path from Adams Road to a new roadway; construct a new asphalt road along the south edge of the property from Adams Road; construct four 1-story cottage buildings; four 2-story townhouse buildings; two 3-story apartment buildings; a 1-story clubhouse; two detention ponds; and associated parking lots, drives, and landscaping as proposed for the single-resource historic district located at 3861 South Adams Road, Parcel Identification Number 15-31-301-011, with the following Findings and Conditions:

Findings:

1. The property is a single resource historic district, and the following work is proposed: stabilize the existing house by repairing the box eaves and rake boards, installing new windows, and tuckpointing the stone walls; eliminate the existing driveway; construct a gravel path from Adams Road to a new roadway; construct a new asphalt road along the south edge of the property from Adams Road; construct four 1-story cottage buildings; four 2-story townhouse buildings; two 3-story apartment buildings; a 1-story clubhouse; two detention ponds; and associated parking lots, drives, and landscaping **destroys/does not destroy** any character defining features of the property provided the following conditions are met:

- A. The stone walls around the existing well and cover must be repaired and maintained;
 - B. The detention pond north of the house is primarily a dry pond, containing water only when needed for runoff;
 - C. The materials for the box eave and rake boards, details including materials and design of the proposed windows; and final building and site design must be submitted for approval by **staff/Commission**.
2. The proposed stabilization of the existing house by repairing the box eaves and rake boards, installing new windows, and tuckpointing the stone walls; eliminating the existing driveway; constructing a gravel path from Adams Road to a new roadway; constructing a new asphalt road along the south edge of the property from Adams Road; constructing four 1-story cottage buildings; four 2-story townhouse buildings; two 3-story apartment buildings; a 1-story clubhouse; two detention ponds; and associated parking lots, drives, and landscaping **is/is not** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular, standards 2, 9 and 10 as follows:
- 2) *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - 9) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - 10) *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*