



Department of Planning and Development

Staff Report to the Historic Districts Commission

July 1, 2025

1950 E. Avon – New Storage Building	
REQUEST	A Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new storage building with associated parking lot and landscape changes
APPLICANT	Mike Titus, property owner
FILE NO.	PHDC2025-0002
PARCEL NO.	70-15-13-427-002
ZONING	NB
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Yates Cider Mill Historic District
STAFF	Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

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Request

This is a request for a certificate of appropriateness to construct a new 1-story tall, 70' by 40' storage barn to the northeast of the existing mill building. As part of the new construction the existing paved parking area is proposed to be expanded, and some retaining walls will be reconstructed. There is no work proposed to the existing mill, raceway, or dam.

The subject property is located on the east side of Avon Road. The historic district has two parts – on the east side of Avon Road is the mill building and part of the race. On the west side of Avon Road is the dam and mill pond, the mill race runs under Avon Road to reach the mill building. The mill building, mill race, mill pond, and dam are all considered contributing resources to the district.

Historical Information

The Yates Cider Mill Historic District is a non-contiguous historic district at 1950 East Avon Road. The 2002 *Rochester Hills Historic Districts Survey* describes the district as containing the only mill building surviving in Rochester Hills. The first mill was built on the site in 1863, and the existing mill building was constructed in 1894 and was powered by a water turbine. “The three-story gambrel roof building has a brick lower level and frame upper levels. The mill race and dam survive also, in association with the Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal,

part of which used to power the mill. The undershot water wheel on the exterior of the mill was built in 1961.”

Review Considerations

Site

The applicant proposes to remove an existing retaining wall on the north side of the property and expand the paved parking lot to allow for fire truck turn around. A new stone gabion basket retaining wall will be constructed along the edge of the expanded parking lot. An accessible parking space is proposed next to the new building. New stone gabion basket retaining walls are proposed between the new building/expanded parking area and the existing driveway to the south. To the east of the existing mill building a portion of an existing crushed stone trail will be reconfigured. New wood timber landscape walls are proposed along the re-routed trail. Thirty-seven of 110 existing trees on the property are proposed to be removed from the property to accommodate the new construction. Twenty-four new trees will be planted to replace the removed trees.

Building

The proposed building will have a 40’ by 70’ footprint, will be 17’6” to the eaves and approximately 34’ to the peak of the roof. The building will have a barn like appearance with a cross-gambrel roof clad in a metal standing rib roof. The walls are proposed to be clad in vertical v-grooved wood siding that is painted red, with wood trim, sliding doors, wood shutters, and Anderson windows that appear to be vinyl. A 6’ tall wood fence to screen mechanical equipment is proposed at the rear of the building. Gooseneck light fixtures are proposed on the exterior.

The applicant states that the following materials will be used for the project:

1. Asphalt paving for the parking area, crushed stone for the trail, stone gabion basket for the retaining walls, timber landscaping walls, wood screening fence.
2. Standing rib metal roof, vertical v-grooved wood siding, wood plank shutters, painted metal half round gutters, gooseneck light fixtures.

Summary

1. The property is a single-property historic district, Yates Cider Mill. The property contains five contributing resources, the mill building, mill race, dam, mill pond, and Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal.
2. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new storage building, expand the asphalt paved parking area, relocate stone retaining walls, re-route a trail, and add timber landscaping walls. No work is proposed to the mill building, mill race, dam, pond, or canal.
3. The staff has the following comments on the application. The setback, massing, size, and materials of the proposed building are compatible with the district. The new building is behind and smaller than the existing mill building and uses compatible materials. The stone retaining wall proposed to be moved and reconstructed is not a historic/contributing feature to the district. The proposed timber retaining wall matches other non-historic timber walls on the site. Although some of the trees proposed for removal are large, they are not contributing elements to the district. In staff’s opinion the proposed project will meet The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

4. 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. PHDC2025-0002, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES/POSTPONES** 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/are not** appropriate in materials, massing, size, location, and scale; and
- 3) The proposed project **does/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/is not** 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.