



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

SR-2 – ADVISORY STAFF REPORT (09-04-2026)

This advisory report, prepared by staff, represents the opinion and advice of professional staff, and does not represent nor direct the separate review and decision of the Historic District Commission. This report serves as an addendum to SR-1, an objective staff summary of the proposal and property.

ADDRESS: 1120 SEMINOLE

MEETING DATE: 09-09-2026

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2026-00401

SCOPE: ERECT GREENHOUSE (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

ADVISORY STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY: E. THACKERY

STAFF OBJECTIONS TO APPROVAL:

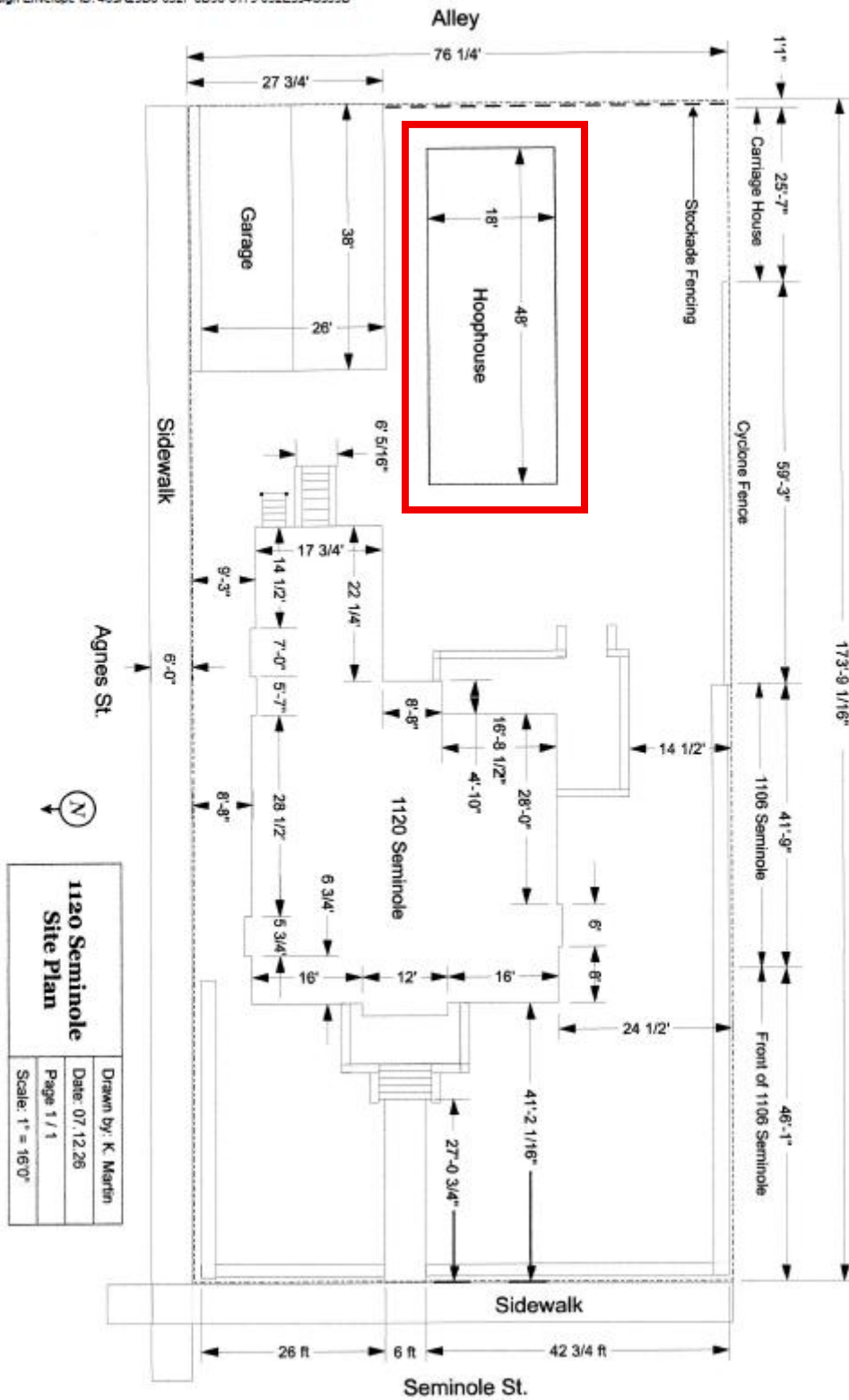
This first section describes itemized conclusions/concerns, which, in staff's professional opinion, would prevent the issue of an unconditional Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). "None" means staff has no objections and believes a COA is warranted, with no conditions. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

1. The scale of the hoophouse is not deferential to the scale of the house and size of the lot.
2. Design elements, such as the 12-foot-high Gothic arch roof, and the materials, such as plastic and metal tubing, are not compatible with the historic Colonial Revival house or the district.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This second section expands on the reasoning and analysis leading to staff's conclusions given in the first section above. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

- The proposal is a retroactive application to erect a hoophouse/greenhouse in the backyard, comprised of metal tubing and plastic sheeting and measuring 48' long x 18' wide x 12' tall.
- A Certificate of Appropriateness had been issued for the temporary erection of the greenhouse in 2023. It was to be removed by August 30, 2024.
- The 2023 staff report described that the hoophouse, according to the applicant, had been erected in 2016. It was reported as a violation in 2023.



Site plan from the applicant's materials, with staff's mark-up indicating the greenhouse.



Subject property shown on the City's Base Unit Tools. The greenhouse is visible behind the house and next to the garage.



Photo of the hoophouse framing without the plastic sheeting, from applicant's materials.



Photo of the constructed hoophouse with the plastic sheeting, from applicant's materials.

- The Indian Village Historic District's Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-103) provide the following guidance for new construction and the landscape:
 - (7) *"Relationship of materials. The majority of the buildings are faced with brick, while many are partially or totally stucco. There are some stone buildings; clapboard is rare, and almost never the sole material. Wood shingle is occasionally used as a wall covering, usually at the second floor level, and never as the sole material. Roofing includes slate, tile, and wooden and asphalt shingles. Stone trim is common. Wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim, and is used in many examples for all trim."*
 - (8) *"Relationship of textures. The most common relationship of textures in the district is that of the low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted to the smooth surface of wood or stone trim. The use of stucco or concrete, with or without half-timbering, as a contrast to brick surfaces is not unusual..."*
 - (11) *"Relationship of roof shapes. Roofs with triangular gables and hip roofs predominate..."*
 - (13) *"Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatment. The typical treatment of individual properties is a flat front lawn area in grass turf, often subdivided by a walk leading to the front entrance, and sometimes with a walk at the side leading to the rear... Straight side driveways leading from the street to rear garages exist, but alley-facing garages are common... Side lots are not uncommon in the district, and a number of these form a part of the original site"*

plan for the residence. Such side lots are usually landscaped, often fenced at or near the setback line, and very occasionally contain paved areas... Alleys are frequently paved with brick, particularly where alley-facing garages are common.”

- (14) *“Relationship of open space to structures. Open space in the district occurs in the form of vacant land... and side lots. Where an original or early arrangement of a house and grounds included and still includes landscaped lots which form part of the landscaping plan for the residence, such landscaped lots are significant landscape features.”*
 - (18) *“Relationship of lot coverage. Lot coverage ranges from 50 percent to 12 percent or less in the case of homes with large yards. Most homes are in the 20 percent to 30 percent range of lot coverage.”*
- The 13,148-square-foot lot currently contains a 2,374-square-foot house and a 988-square foot garage, which equals approximately 26% of Lot Coverage, which falls within the 20-30% range as described for most homes in the Elements of Design. The addition of this hoophouse (864 SF) would increase the lot coverage by these structures to 32%, which is slightly outside of this range. The scale of this hoophouse exceeds the appropriate size for this lot and does not meet the *Relationship of lot coverage* as described in the Elements of Design.
 - It is staff’s opinion that the 12-foot-tall, Gothic-style roof form and plastic materials are not appropriate for a new structure as they conflict with the “*Relationship of roof shapes*” and “*Relationship of materials*” Elements of Design as listed above.
 - Because of the structure’s height and massing, it is publicly visible from the front yard, as well as from the side (from the sidewalk) and the rear, despite the 6-foot-tall privacy fence along Agnes and along the rear property line.
 - In addition to the Elements of Design, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation include the following relevant guidance:
 - Standard 2 states: “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.”
 - Standard 9 states: “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.”
 - Additionally, the associated *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* recommend, “Designing a new addition [or related new construction] that is compatible with the historic building.” Also recommended is, “Ensuring that the addition is subordinate and secondary to the historic building and is compatible in massing, scale, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color,” and “Considering the design for a new addition in terms of its relationship to the historic building as well as the historic district, neighborhood, and setting.”
 - It is typical for houses in Indian Village to have backyards with lawns and often a garage at the rear of the lot. It is staff’s opinion that the new greenhouse alters the house’s characteristic backyard space by decreasing the open lawn area and by adding a structure that is not typically seen in the district. It is staff’s opinion that the new greenhouse structure is not compatible with the house’s size, scale, architectural features, or materials; as a result, the

new structure diminishes the house's historic character. Permanent greenhouses or conservatories of wood or metal with glass are a building type (or an addition type) that would have been known and seen historically in the district, but a free-standing hoop house covered in plastic would not.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This third and final section takes staff's itemized "objections" identified in the first section, and presents them in the form of "conditions" in support of a proposed approval recommendation or "reasons" in support of a proposed denial recommendation, in the form required by Section 21-2-78 of the City Code. The Historic District Commission is not required to accept staff opinions or recommendations.

Section 21-2-78, Determinations of Historic District Commission

Recommendation 1 of 1, Denial

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Indian Village Historic District's Elements of Design, specifically:

- Standard 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.*
- Standard 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.*
- Elements of Design 7, 8, 11, and 18.

For the following reasons:

1. The scale of the hoop house is not deferential to the scale of the house and size of the lot.
2. Design elements, such as the 12-foot-high Gothic arch roof, and the materials, such as plastic and metal tubing, are not compatible with the historic Colonial Revival house or the district.