

**STAFF REPORT: DECEMBER 10, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: B. SALIE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00666**

**ADDRESS: 2984 IROQUOIS**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: INDIAN VILLAGE**

**APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: MARK A. REYNOLDS**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 11/03/2025**

**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 11/25/2025**

**SCOPE: INSTALL GATE**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Built in 1917-1918, this two-and-a-half story, single family dwelling was designed by Roland C. Gies for Robert T. Herdegen. Located in the Indian Village historic district, the house sits on a 0.295-acre parcel in the middle of the block between Goethe Street and Charlevoix Street. It includes a two-story carriage house built in the same English Tudor Revival Architectural style. Both the buildings feature distinctive thatch-like wooden shingle roofs, stucco cladding, mullioned sash and casement windows, rowlock brick sills, and brick foundations. The rear yard is partially surrounded by a parged masonry wall and its perimeter is completed with a chain link fence.



*Detroit Parcel Viewer*



*Photo taken by staff on 11/21/2025. YELLOW: Chain-link gate (subject of this application).*





*Photos taken by staff 11/21/2025*

## PROPOSAL

The scope of work is as follows:

- Install a chain-link gate
  - The current chain link gate was installed as a temporary gate in 2023 with a two-year allowance. The property owner is returning to the Commission to request a permanent extension for the chain-link driveway gate.
  - The applicant notes, “DHDC 23-8401 allowed a traditional wire mesh driveway gate to contain my dogs; it was temporary for two years. This was a result of my appeal that the HDC proposed wood gate required wheel support due to wide span, and would require manual clearing of snow in winter to operate. I am now 70 years old. I have had numerous health problems with my legs... The current gate can be cleared with a self-propelled snowblower, the wood gate area cannot. I request a permanent HDC extension to accommodate my disability.”





*Photo shared by property owner to the Historical Detroit Area Architecture group, date unknown*



*Photo provided by Historic Detroit. Org, date unknown*



*Designation photo taken August 1971*

## STAFF RESEARCH & OBSERVATIONS

- Building Cards show the existing house and garage were built in 1917, with stucco and hollow tile.

HOUSE NO.	2984
STREET	Iroquois
PERMIT NO.	13401
USE	garage
CONST.	hollow tile
REMARKS	

2984	Iroquois	21
16084	6-6-17	LOT NO
USE	dwelling	DATE
CONST.	stucco & tile	
REMARKS	Stucco garage	O K.

Iroquois	21-22
HOUSE NO.	10679-A
STREET	6-18-24
PERMIT NO.	dwelling
USE	frame
CONST.	

- Indian Village was designated as a historic district in 1970, over fifty years after the original construction of the house. Still, the property retains many of its original historic materials including a historic masonry wall.

- The existing wall is largely parged with concrete or stucco, though some of this material has detached. Staff suggests that the street-facing plane of the wall, now showing exposed brick, was once similarly parged. The use of common brick, combined with the rough nature of the mortar joints, implies that the brick was intended to be concealed, consistent with the other elevation of the wall.



- While the Historic District Commission Resolution 20-03 allows staff to approve new fences, including chain-link fences, “if there is no historic fence present.” In this case, a historic masonry wall exists; therefore, the proposed addition of a gate requires Historic District Commission review. The proposed gate must be evaluated for compatibility with the existing masonry wall.
- The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-103) for Indian Village note that architectural details “*generally relate to style*” and that “*fencing ranges widely in type; fencing in public view was generally designed to complement the style, design material, and date of the residence.*”
  - The proposed gate is thus evaluated with respect to the architectural character of the house and carriage house, in addition to being evaluated for compatibility with the existing wall.
- *A Field Guide to American Houses* (Virginia and Lee McAlester, 2003) identifies the false-thatched-roof house type as a “rare but very distinctive subtype” of Tudor architecture which “attempts to mimic, with modern materials, the picturesque, thatched roofs of rural England.”
  - As a whole, the house and property appear to reference precedents in folk Welsh or English Cottage architecture, a style in which local artisans built and maintained houses using rustic, readily available materials including fieldstone, thatch, and wood. The stucco cladding and parging on both buildings and walls emulate the appearance of traditional cob construction.
- On June 21, 2023, a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for the installation of the gate, with the condition that the proposed chain-link gate be installed for no more than two years.

- While the use of a wooden gate is most suitable for the compatibility of the style and layout of the house, the applicant mentions a concern over the installation of a historically appropriate wood gate. 2551 Iroquois is a good example of a historically appropriate wood driveway gate (*Right Photo*)



- Within the historic district, a wrought iron style aluminum gate set into a masonry wall is also an appropriate treatment.
- Staff observed a consistent pattern of wrought iron or wrought iron style driveway gates at the houses surrounding 2984 Iroquois, including gates abutting masonry walls or piers. Based on Google Street View Images from 2019, the houses directly next to and across from the property, all have wrought iron style gates. This includes 2970 Iroquois, 2965 Iroquois, 2961 Iroquois, 2924 Iroquois, 2910 Iroquois, 2971 Iroquois, 3020 Iroquois, 3015 Iroquois, and 3031 Iroquois.





*Examples of wrought iron or wrought iron style aluminum gates within Iroquois Street, some enclosed by masonry*

- The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation states:
 

*(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.***
- It is therefore staff's opinion that the incorporation of a chain-link gate is incompatible with the historic context, as such a juxtaposition is not supported by historic precedent.
  - The gate should be revised to be either of a wrought-iron-style design or wood.
- However, should the Commission elect to approve the installation of the chain-link gate, Staff recommends an additional extension to the existing gate, as a permanent allowance would be inconsistent with the historic character of the house within the Indian Village Historic District.

## ISSUES

- The proposed chain-link gate is a mass-produced, machine-made product that is visually incongruous with the rustic and picturesque subtype of English Tudor Revival described above, and is not appropriate for the style. A simple, wood gate would likely be the most appropriate option for this particular property.
- A chain-link gate is not appropriate for a masonry wall, in general. A wrought-iron-style aluminum or steel gate, commonly found in connection with masonry walls or piers within Indian Village, would likely be appropriate. Wood designs would also be compatible.

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

### **Recommendation 1 of 1 – Denial – Install chain-link gate at driveway**

Staff recommend 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: Standards #:

*(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.***

*And the **Elements of Design** #: 7*

For the following reasons:

- The proposed modern chain-link gate is not compatible with the parged masonry stucco wall at this property with rustic and picturesque features.