



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 7/11/2022
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala
PTS #115280
CC FILE # 220269

Property 3001 W. MCKINLEY

Owner/Applicant BRIAN D KENNER
DONNA KENNER
3001 W MCKINLEY BLVD
MILWAUKEE WI 53208
American Garage Builders LLC
1003 W. Devonshire Rd.
Delafield, WI 53018
Phone: (608) 712-5217

Proposal Applicant wants to demolish his 1912 garage because of its age, its location at the alley and its condition. The garage is very high style, made of rusticated block and has a steeply pitched roof with rafter tails. A pedestrian door and window are located on the house-facing elevation with additional windows on the west and south. One of the concrete blocks was damaged from being hit by a car and the lintel above the garage door is sagging.

The proposed new garage is based on the neighbor's garage which is post-WWII and is not compatible with the Cold Spring Park Historic District.

Staff Comments

The house at this address was constructed in 1904 for Frederick Westfahl, the head of F. Westfahl & Co. File Makers. Westfahl died on April 11, 1911. Members of his family remained on the premises and built the garage in 1914 at a cost of \$642. State Concrete Block Company was the builder. If you note, the mortar joints are treated like actual stone, with a beaded mortar joint, and is a quality feature not all concrete block buildings share.

**This proposal will require two actions:
The approval/disapproval of the garage demolition
The approval/disapproval of the new garage.**

DEMOLITION: The historic preservation ordinance (320-21-11-h) provides guidance for the HPC to follow.

Criteria for demolition are as follows:

h. Criteria; Certificates to Allow Demolition. In determining whether to grant, grant with conditions, deny or defer action on a certificate of appropriateness to allow partial or complete demolition, the commission shall consider any of the following:

h-1. Whether the structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the city.

This garage is an example of high style design for this kind of accessory structure. The rusticated blocks were used to convey the image of stone and the steep roof was in keeping with the design of the house.

h-2. Whether the structure, although not itself an individually-designed historic structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the district as a whole and should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the city.

McKinley Blvd. is graced with a number of beautifully detailed coach houses as well as some prominent garages that date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These add to the special character of McKinley Blvd. The bulk of the remainder of the garages appear to be post WWII and lack detail and fine materials.

h-3. Whether demolition of the structure on a historic site or within a historic district would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this section and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable district as duly adopted by the common council.

The removal of a garage that was built in a high style would be contrary to the purpose and intent of the historic preservation ordinance.

h-4. Whether the structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture or material that it could not be reproduced without great difficulty or expense.

In this instance the garage is in a highly visible location where its design and materials can be readily appreciated, and was given features like well-tooled rusticated block and rafter tails that raised it above average garages. Could the building be replicated? There is a company today producing rusticated block, using old molds, that could furnish the materials for a reproduction but the cost is unknown.

h-5. Whether retention of the structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the city and state by encouraging the study of American history, architecture and design, or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.

The original garage is a symbol of the growing prominence of the automobile and due to its visibility was fitted out with fine detail like the beaded mortar joints and the steeply pitched roof with rafter tails.

h-6. Whether the structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve, restore or use it, provided that any hardship or difficulty claimed by the owner which is self-created or a result of demolition by neglect cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness

It is not known when the garage was last repaired. Staff has not been inside the garage. From the exterior there is car damage to one of the concrete blocks along the alley. It is not major. There is a company that replaces historic rusticated block and rebuilding the lintel above the garage door opening is feasible. These two areas that need repair do not justify the structure's demolition.

NEW CONSTRUCTION: The new garage will be in a highly visible location at the rear of this corner property. The design does not meet the character of the historic district. It lacks

1. steep roof pitch characteristic of the district
2. it proposes vinyl siding
3. it lacks a water table
4. it lacks a frieze board
5. it lacks corner boards
5. it lacks moldings above garage door and pedestrian door
6. it lacks open gable ends.

These above features have been the minimum features required of garages for historic properties.

**Staff
Recommendation**

Deny the demolition of the original garage

Deny the construction of a new garage.

**Previous HPC
action**

**Previous Council
action**