



# Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 9/12/2022**  
**Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4**  
**Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala**  
**PTS #115325**

**Property** 3001 W. MCKINLEY

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

**Proposal** This project came before the HPC in July 2022 but was denied based on the architectural importance of the historic garage and the proposed design of the replacement garage. The applicant has returned with a new design for the replacement garage.

## Staff comments

The house at this address was constructed in 1904 for Frederick Westfahl, the head of 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. Note: the mortar joints are treated like actual stone, with a beaded joint, and is a quality feature not all concrete block buildings share.

The first part of this application is the demolition of the existing garage constructed in 1912. The garage is very high style, made of rusticate block to mimic stone, 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. The portion of the garage facing 30<sup>th</sup> Street has a single upward rolling garage door. One of the concrete blocks has been struck by a car and the lintel above the garage door is sagging.

**This proposal will require two actions.**

**The approval/disapproval of the garage demolition**

**The approval/disapproval of the new garage design.**

**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 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 joins 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 GARAGE**

The earlier submission in July looked too much like a suburban garage and the commissioners did not approve it.

The current proposal for a new garage follows a design from 2012 approved by the HPC and designed by Paul Jakubovich. It has 12/12 roof pitch, shingles in gable end, window in gable end and a traditional trim package.

### **Recommendation**

Staff still finds that the 1914 garage has architectural merit beyond what most property owners were constructing at the time. It faces 30<sup>th</sup> Street and has high visibility. However, staff also understands the need of the owner to have a secure structure for two vehicles. The design for the new garage is one that has already been built in Brewers Hill and was designed by Paul Jakubovich.

Staff recommends approval of the new garage if the HPC finds that the demolition of the original is justified.

### **Conditions**

Applicant's contractor has drawn up plans for a new garage based on his visual inspection of the property at 124 W. Lloyd. His designs vary slightly from the designs for the built garage. It is recommended he follow the Paul Jakubovich plans for the built garage. Details like garage door style and wood windows manufacturer can be worked out with staff.

### **Previous HPC action**

Reviewed in July 2022 and denied

### **Previous Council action**