

MINUTES
Joint Meeting of the
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION & ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
January 19, 2022

The City of Wyoming Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Architectural Review Board (ARB) met on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 in the City Building Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mark Browning, Chair of the meeting. Attendance was as follows:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Gene Allison (via Zoom)
Maureen Geiger
LaBecca Hall
Rachel Kennedy
Melissa Monich
Cathy Ramstetter (via Zoom)
Jim Walton

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS:

Gene Allison (via Zoom)
Mark Browning, Chair
Scott Kyle
Dean Lutton, Alternate

STAFF:

Tana Bere, Community Development Specialist

OTHERS:

Rod Sidley, Architect, 436 Springfield Pike
Felicia Bourbon, Owner of 122 East Mills Avenue
Gale Bason, 126 East Mills Avenue

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Browning moved to approve the October 11, 2021 ARB meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Lutton. Mr. Browning and Mr. Lutton voted yes. Mr. Kyle abstained. Mr. Allison did not vote since he was participating remotely. The motion passed.

Ms. Geiger moved to approve the December 15, 2021 HPC meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Walton. All members voted yes. Mr. Allison and Ms. Ramstetter did not vote since they were participating remotely. The motion passed.

122 EAST MILLS AVENUE: APPLICATION TO CONSTRUCT AN ATTACHED TWO-CAR GARAGE LOCATED IN THE VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ms. Bere introduced the request which is to demolish the detached one-car garage and construct an attached two-car garage. The property is located in the Village Historic District and is classified as a contributing property to the District. The home was constructed in 1890 and is an outstanding example of late Victorian architecture with Queen Anne influence. It is located on a wooded street comprised of similar scale but mixed period architecture. Its sister house is located next door at 126 East Mills Avenue. The Inventory Form references an old one-car garage to the right rear of the house. The Inventory Form does not provide additional information on the garage.

Mr. Browning asked if the applicants received a variance for this project. Ms. Bere said they were granted a side yard setback variance by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) at their December 14, 2021 meeting. The proposed garage is roughly 1'6" from the east property line. A detached garage is held to a 5' minimum setback from the side and rear property lines, and 5' from the house. Mr. Browning asked what the discussion was at the BZA hearing and said it appeared the existing garage met the setback requirements. Ms. Bere explained the main reasons for the request was that the neighbor to the east and most impacted by this project was in support, and the other alternatives would diminish the series of unobstructed backyards. The variance was approved by a 2-1 vote.

Ms. Bere said she received one comment on the Historic Review application from Charles and Julia Schartung at 127 East Mills Avenue. She read their comment into the record as follows: "We were primarily concerned about the setback and appearance of the garage. The replacement garage looks to be generally in the same place as the original garage and the appearance looks to be consistent with the rest of the house. As long as the final construction looks the same as the drawings, we don't see any problems with the garage. However, we do live across the street and our angled view will not be impacted much by these changes. We would encourage the homeowners to plant a replacement tree somewhere on the property as there's an evergreen that will be likely taken down if the garage is built".

Mr. Sidley added that the garage is too small to park a modern car and it is in very poor condition. There is no doubt the existing garage should to be demolished.

Mr. Allison commented on some of the technical aspects of the design. He said he believes the proximity of the garage to the property line means the wall has to be one-hour fire rated, and he does not know how the soffit, gutter, and edge of the roof can meet that rating. Assuming it is 2x4 framing construction, it does not appear the front right corner of the garage is structurally sound enough to brace that portion. The front design would likely have to change to meet the Building Code. Based on the dimensions of the garage, a second car could not be accessed if there was another car parked in the garage and questioned its functionality. Mr. Sidley confirmed the joint on the side of the garage door would need to be reinforced and the one-hour rating with the gutters and soffits can be met. He said there is

not room to make the garage any wider to better accommodate two cars. Mr. Lutton questioned the function of the garage door at the right wall and how put it on a track if there is not a return. Once they get into the details, they will need a return and the design will have to be modified.

Mr. Browning said the height of the garage seems tall and asked if there is storage space above. Mr. Sidley said there is no space above the garage and it is challenging to do a one-story addition to a two-story house. The garage height was designed to keep a reasonable scale and tied into the eaves in the back. Mr. Kyle stated he did not have any issues with the height of the garage compared to the rest of the building.

Mr. Lutton referenced the Historic Review of 18 Wyoming Avenue which had ample discussion regarding if it was appropriate for the garage to be attached or detached to the house. The design was revised to make the garage appear detached and only connected to the house by a breezeway. The same line of thinking in regards to maintaining the historic integrity of the house should be applied to this application. Mr. Browning added that during the review of 18 Wyoming Avenue their biggest concern was the location of the garage and it being located too far forward. The review resulted in the applicant redesigning the project and pushing the garage back considerably. Mr. Kyle stated that garages should not only be detached but located to the rear of the house from a historic standpoint.

Ms. Ramstetter asked what the biggest issues from a historical perspective are. Mr. Browning said he has an issue with the building located nearly on the property line and that the adjacent house is in such close proximity. This almost creates a wall visually from the street. He would prefer the garage moved to the rear. Mr. Lutton added the neighbor to the east has a double lot with a large detached garage, and the neighbor to the west has an attached carport. The subject lot is narrower than the adjacent lots. Ms. Ramstetter stated they are small lots, the neighbor to the east has not voiced any concerns, and the BZA has approved the side yard variance. Mr. Sidley shared the neighbor to the east, Ms. Bason, gave strong support at the BZA hearing and is opposed to a detached garage located in the rear yard.

Ms. Kennedy said that when she reviewed the *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties*, on page 12 it references general design standards. There are two guidelines of particular importance. The second guideline states that "The historic character of the property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided". The ninth guideline states that "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment". She said the significant change in the spatial relationship between 122 and 126 East Mills Avenue should be a concern. She understands that the current neighbor

supports the project but their purpose is to preserve the historic district which looks beyond the current residents.

Ms. Kennedy said that although the garage does not have historical significance, it appears the addition does not meet guideline nine referenced above. She asked Mr. Sidley to explain how this design guideline is met. He said they are not removing any distinctive features from the façade of the house, and there are no defining characteristics in the rear portion. The proposed garage addition would be attached to a previous rear addition. Ms. Kennedy asked how the new work is differentiated and compatible with the existing building. Mr. Sidley stated there is no way to do that and it is either going to look compatible with the building as it should or it is going to look like a modern addition to a historic building. The garage materials will consist of fiber cement siding and in every way try to mimic the materials on the house.

Ms. Kennedy asked if the proposed addition is only attached to the previous rear addition. Mr. Sidley said only the roof will be attached to the house. Mr. Kyle responded that a third of the garage attaches to the side of the existing house and it is not just the roof structure. Ms. Monich asked if they differentiate between attached to original house or the subsequent addition. Mr. Kyle said that technically the entire house is considered historic. Mr. Lutton added that the addition is to the rear of the house and did not change how it presents from the street.

Ms. Geiger asked Ms. Bourbon if she thought about what happens if hypothetically a tree needs to be cut down and there is no way for equipment to access the backyard. There would be 1.5' between her property and the proposed garage, and it also appears there is little room along the west property line. Ms. Bourbon said would access her backyard by encroaching on the neighboring properties. In the last 28 years, she has not had an issue with accessing the rear of her property and it is currently tight because of the existing tree. Mr. Lutton said there is a reason for spacing between the property line and the house.

Mr. Lutton referenced page 38 of the *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties*, which says that "The setback and spacing of houses in Wyoming is controlled by the Zoning Code. New construction and additions, including coverage of the rear yard, should be compatible in scale with other houses on the block". He believes the BZA should not have granted the variance and there is a reason for the minimum setback requirements. The size and scale of the neighborhood is not one which has continuous buildings and zero lot lines. It is unfortunate the house is on a narrower lot than the houses on either side and cannot fit an attached two-car garage.

Ms. Kennedy said she thought part of the reasoning the BZA granted the variance is because another configuration would block the views to the backyards. The neighboring garage is setback further into their rear yard so it seems it would be feasible to move this garage back. If the goal is having a two-car garage it makes the most sense to push it back unless the main

priority is for it to be attached. The members agreed that if it was placed in the rear yard then it could easily meet the Zoning Code. Mr. Sidley said when they went to the BZA they presented different options, including a detached garage in the rear yard. The problem with that design, from the point of view of the owner and abutting neighbors, is that an unobstructed series of backyards become obstructed. Ms. Bere added that fences do not require Historic Review and only have to meet the zoning requirements.

Ms. Ramstetter stated that the BZA has already approved the variance to allow the addition close to the property line. The HPC and ARB are meeting to consider the current design and does not understand why the BZA approval is still being discussed. Ms. Kennedy clarified that her concern is about the garage being an attachment and the spatial relationship that is addressed in the Design Guidelines. Additionally, allowing the garage as proposed would create a façade that is almost the full width of the property which is not compatible with the other houses on the block. Mr. Browning added he believes the spatial relationship is the biggest issue. Although the BZA granted the variance, Historic Review considers the application separately.

Ms. Hall asked if the purpose is to have a two-car garage or a useable garage. Ms. Bourbon said the proposed garage is set back quite a bit and it is uphill from the street. The existing garage looks bad and is not in proportion to the house. The new garage will be a substantial improvement which will not affect the charm of their house or its sister house. The members questioned if the house is currently contributing or noncontributing. Ms. Bere confirmed the property is classified as contributing to the Village Historic District.

Mr. Allison asked why Mr. Sidley is matching the garage to the house when the Design Guidelines clearly state that the new design should be similar to but should not try to match the existing house. Mr. Sidley completed garage project at 27 East Mills Avenue and it does not match the existing house. Mr. Sidley said the house at 27 East Mills Avenue was constructed of brick made locally and matching them would be nearly impossible. He does not agree with the recommendation that a new design should not match the existing and in the long run it is a mistake. Mr. Browning said he suspected the materials could be the same but there will still be some differences.

Mr. Lutton referred back to page 38 of the *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties* which states "New construction should be oriented toward and compatible with the streetscape. Additions should be located to the rear of the original structure when practical. A side yard should be as wide as those of other houses on the particular block". He said the proposed design is going from property line to property line and that is not the rhythm, repetition, or scale of the historic neighborhood. The design, materials, and proportions are fine but the lot is too narrow for this addition. Mr. Sidley said they are trying to live in the present and have what neighboring properties have. Ms. Bourbon said the addition is behind her house. When viewing from the street, the space between the addition to the neighboring house does not look unproportionable because the planes are far from each other. Mr. Lutton

responded that there will no longer be a gap between the house and garage which does change how it presents from the street. Ms. Bourbon said the large pine tree will be removed and will add more visibility between properties.

Ms. Hall asked that if the review is about enhancing the home and doing right by the homeowner, why is everyone so caught up on the details. If the neighbors on either side believe the project will enhance the home and from the street it will be an improvement from the dilapidated garage, it cannot be a negative. Mr. Kyle said that the argument of something is going to fall down so we will build something bigger and better is not necessarily sound reasoning when considering the guidelines in place. He does not have any problem with the architecture but two buildings so close to each other is inconsistent with the rest of the neighborhood.

Mr. Browning stated that the charge of the ARB is greater than if the property owners or neighbors like the design; they need to look at whether it is a positive or negative for the neighborhood and the historic district. There are a few reasons why he cannot support this project. The proximity is too close to the adjacent property and would have a negative impact. Additionally, the applicants presented their preferred concept but there are other options for the placement and size of a garage which would meet zoning and the design guidelines. He has no concerns with the design from an architectural standpoint but rather with the proximity. Ms. Kennedy agreed there are better options from the historic standpoint for the size and placement of a garage.

Mr. Allison said he shares Mr. Browning's comments and is concerned about the scale. He asked if the plans had been shared with the Fire Department prior to the BZA hearing. Ms. Bere explained that residential plans are not typically shared with the Fire Department. They are reviewed for compliance with the Residential Code of Ohio. Mr. Allison is concerned about the proximity to the adjacent house and would like input from the Fire Department from a safety perspective. Ms. Bason stated she believes having a two-car garage would enhance the house and therefore enhance her property. It is unfortunate the houses are so close to each other but she has no windows on that side of her house and is in support of the project.

Mr. Allison said on the elevation it appears the garage hipped roof is taller than the one on the front of the house. He wondered if Mr. Sidley used the scale of the gable on the front of the house and put it on the garage, if it would not diminish the overall height and decrease the mass and visibility. He said since fire rating will be required for the east wall of the garage and the garage door needs to be shifted to the left, those changes to the design would require it to come back to the HPC and ARB.

Ms. Bere reminded the members that the recent amendments to Chapter 1336 allows the joint HPC and ARB to decide on this request. Only total demolitions require a recommendation from the HPC and ARB and a decision from City Council. She explained that

Ms. Ramstetter and Mr. Allison are participating remotely and therefore cannot make a motion or vote. Ms. Hall owns the adjacent property and therefore should not make a motion and abstain from the vote.

Mr. Lutton moved to deny the application for an attached two-car garage as presented. Ms. Geiger seconded the motion. Mr. Lutton, Mr. Kyle, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Geiger, and Mr. Browning voted yes. Ms. Monich and Mr. Walton voted no. Ms. Hall abstained. The motion passed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Ms. Bere provided an update on the multi-family building located at 4 Worthington Avenue. She had toured the building and the fire damage was more extensive than what the City originally thought. She displayed pictures of the fire and water damage. The owners of the property are still exploring their options and will apply for Historic Review once a direction is chosen.

Ms. Ramstetter discussed a potential training opportunity and explained that Wyoming residents, Becky Johnson and Sue Moriarty, have offered to give a presentation or tour on Wyoming's History. The members said they are very interested and Ms. Ramstetter will coordinate next steps.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kyle moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Lutton. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Allison and Ms. Ramstetter did not vote since they were participating remotely. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tana Bere,
Community Development Specialist
Secretary of the January 19, 2022 HPC-ARB Meeting

Mark Browning,
Chair of the January 19, 2022 HPC-ARB Meeting