

STAFF REPORT: 09/11/2024 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00354

ADDRESS: 14846 ASHTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT: ROSEDALE PARK

APPLICANT: DEANNA FRIES, ITALY AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION

PROPERTY OWNERS: SPENCER, JOSEPH W JR & C D

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 07/22/2024, REVISED 8/19/2024

DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS: 07/25/2024, 08/27/2024

SCOPE: DEMOLISH GARAGE AND ERECT GARAGE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1949, the property at 14846 Ashton is a 1 1/2 story, single-family residence facing west, where the backyard is along the service drive of the Southfield Freeway. The side-gabled asphalt shingled roof of the house features a large, front gable that overhangs the front entrance and features a bay of three windows which have been replaced with vinyl before the time of designation. The house is clad in stone at the front face along with vinyl siding and red brick at the side elevations. Staff learned that the house and garage's vinyl siding was also installed prior to the district's historic designation. The front entrance is recessed under a metal awning with stone cladding on each side. A modest porch steps down between a raised garden bed to the centrally placed concrete walkway. A concrete drive leads to the front gabled, asphalt shingle roof garage in the backyard. According to the owners, the garage has been hit a few times by cars coming off the free service drive, striking the northeast corner of the garage, causing the garage's slight southward lean. This wood-framed structure likely featured wood-lap siding, which has since been covered with vinyl siding, matching the house. The front man door and side window have been covered, as evidence by internal photos. The backyard has a modest concrete patio. This property has a 2020 Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) on file for replacing non-historic sliding doors at the rear porch. There are no violations.



Site Photo 1, by Staff Aug. 27, 2024: (West) front elevation of house.



Site Photo 2, by Staff July 25, 2024: (West) front elevation of the existing garage.

PROPOSAL

This proposal initially appeared at the August 14, 2024 Regular HDC Meeting. During the meeting the applicant elected to withdraw the proposal to produce a structural condition assessment of the garage and to update the design of the proposed garage based on feedback from that meeting's staff report.

The applicant proposes to demolish the original garage, construct a new 24 ft. x 22 ft. (528 SF), two-car garage with new concrete footing/floor slab and install a driveway that retains its existing 9' width until it approaches the garage where it flares to a 27' width. Note that the current garage is located inside 1' of the public easement and the new garage would be located outside of this easement, 6 feet from the rear property line.



Aerial#1 of Parcel # 22075026, showing original garage (red arrow) and driveway behind the house.

This proposal also includes the construction of a new 12'6"x10' (126 SF) concrete patio adjacent to the rear porch entrance and northeast corner of the house.

Demolition of Garage and Driveway

- Demolish original garage and driveway, dispose of materials.

Construction of New, Two-Car 24'x22' Garage (528 SF):

- At the new location, slightly offset from the original location, 3' from the south (side) property line and 6' from the rear property line, pour concrete pad 24'x22' foundation with concrete rat walls.
- Build new 24' x 22' wood framed garage on new cement floor, with a front gable that protrudes 2' in front of the front face of the garage. The 5/12 pitch of the roof reaches a 14' height at its peak.
- Roof materials are Landmark dimensional asphalt shingles, color "Reshawn Shake" with two (2) vents. Perforated wood soffits, paint to match aluminum gutters, color: Wicker.
- Siding is LP Smartside 8" lap primed wood siding. (The applicant notes that the owner may change this material to James Hardie plank instead of wood.) Owner will paint to match house color.
- Install 16'x8' steel sectional garage door on west elevation, color white.
- Install two (2) coach lights on the exterior, either side of the main garage door.

Install New Driveway and Patio:

- Install 9' wide concrete driveway from the front yard to the new garage location, where it flairs to a 27' width.
- Install new 12'6"x10' (126 SF) concrete patio adjacent to the rear porch entrance and northeast corner of the house.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Rosedale Park Historic District was established in 2007. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-199) provide the following guidance for new construction and the landscape:
 - "Height... Additions to existing buildings shall be related to the existing structure. Garages are generally one-story tall..."

- *“Relationship of materials. Masonry is the most significant material in the majority of houses in the Rosedale Park Historic District in the form of pressed or wire cut brick, often combined with wood, stone, and/or stucco. Wood is almost universally used for window frames, half-timbering, and other functional trim...Aluminum siding and aluminum canted windows on later buildings are sometimes original; vinyl siding and vinyl windows, where they exist, are replacements... Roofs on the majority of the houses in the Rosedale Park Historic District are asphalt shingled... Garages, where they are contemporary with the residential dwelling, often correspond in materials.”*
- *“Roofs of houses built later in the period of development of the district, such as those of modern inspiration, tend to have significantly lower slopes.”*
- *“Relationship of open spaces to structures... All houses have ample rear yards as well as front yards. Wider lots in Rosedale Park permitted side drives with garages at the rear of the lots. Where dwellings are located on corner lots, garages face the side street. Garages, when original, often correspond in materials to the main body of the dwelling, but are of modest, one-story, simple box design with single- or double-doors...”*
- *“Relationship of lot coverages. The lot coverage for single-family dwellings ranges generally from 25 percent to 35 percent, including the garage, whether freestanding or attached.”*

- Staff offers the opinion that the publicly visible original garage, even though of modest scale and utilitarian use, conveys an era of mid-century design that illustrates a strong relationship with the house with a complementary front facing gable, low pitched roof, and modest scale as described by the Elements of Design and as reflected by its presence at the time of historic designation. Staff believes that this structure is a contributing historic resource to the property despite its humble appearance.
- Despite the lean and easement conflict, staff has the opinion that the presence of the garage likely predates the easement, which is not grounds for dismantling the structure. (The Southfield Freeway



Figure 1, Sanborn vol 26, 1938-1950: showing garage presence of garage and house (red outline) at time of widening of Southfield Rd.

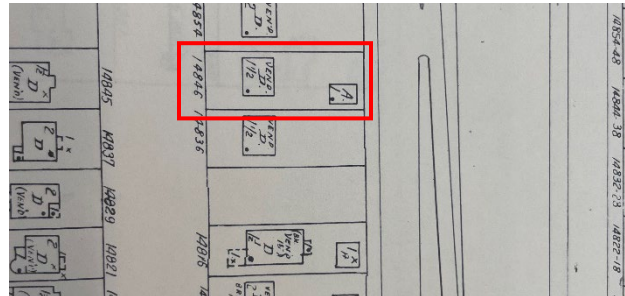
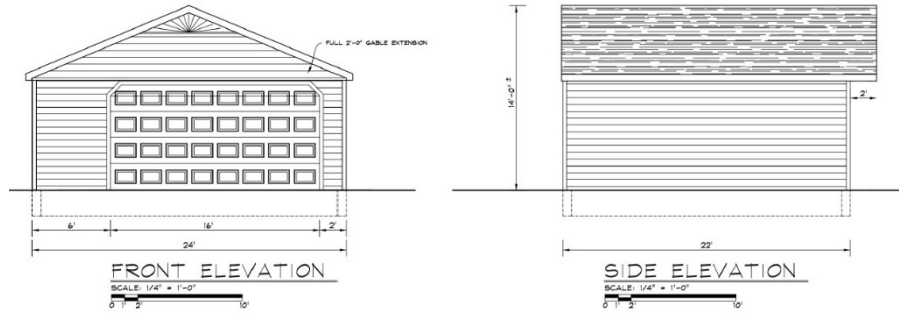


Figure 2, Sanborn 1983: showing garage presence of garage and house (red outline) with Southfield Freeway present.



Site Photo 3, by Applicant, 2024 showing interior garage entrance and boarded up man door.

was constructed in 1959, 10 years after the construction of the house. Staff was not able to identify the precise construction date of the garage but assesses that its construction is likely close to the construction of the house in 1949. *See figures 1-2)*



Figures 1&2, by Applicant: showing proposed front and side elevations of the garage, which has been updated since August 2024.

- While the existing vinyl siding was present on the garage and house at the time of designation, it is likely covering original wood lap siding for both structures.
- The owner permitted staff to observe the garage up-close and inside the structure on July 25, 2024. The owner stated that the garage has been hit 3 times by vehicles coming off the service drive while they have had residence there. The garage has a slight lean from the impact hitting the northeast corner according to the owner. However, staff observed that the garage was stabilized and not in a state of deterioration. The concrete floor is cracked in several areas, but not irreparable, in staff’s opinion. Staff also noticed from the interior, that a window and man door have been boarded in and the vinyl exterior siding hides these previous openings. *(See Site Photos 3&4.)*
- Initially staff had the opinion that the structure was not beyond repair. However, the applicant provided additional documentation from a licensed engineer regarding the structural integrity of the garage. The principal, Zack Ostroff from Zack M. Ostroff Associates, PLLC, who’s statement and observations are certified by engineer Yogindra Anand, observed the following:
 - **Foundation:**The garage has been hit by vehicles several times and is not sitting on its foundation.
 - **Structure:** The entire structure is no longer square, and “Due to its condition of being repaired over and over again, has compromised its structural integrity.”
 - The engineer states their support of demolishing the garage.
- It is staff’s opinion that based on the garage’s reported structural issues, the building’s historic integrity is endangered, and therefore finds it is reasonable to recommend demolition rather than require a complex and expensive repair. However, the new garage should seek to complement the house in a manner similar to the old one.

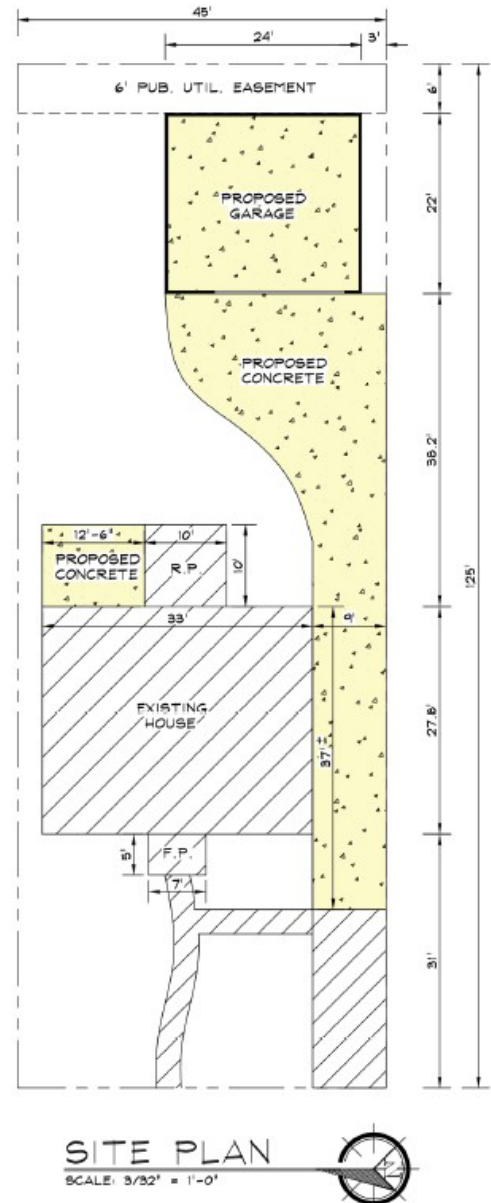


Figure 3, by Applicant: proposed site plan showing garage, driveway and rear patio locations.

- The applicant has modified the design of the garage seen by the Commission at the last meeting by removing the proposed octagonal window and incorporating a full gable extension. Staff has the opinion that the proposed height, scale and materiality of the proposed garage, with its protruding front gable and lower roof pitch, is an appropriate redesign that is deferential to the primary structure, i.e., the house, and follows the Elements of Design, where “Garages, when original, often correspond in materials to the main body of the dwelling, but are of modest, one-story, simple box design ...”
- According to Detroit Parcel Viewer, the 125’x45’ (5,625SF) lot currently contains a 37’x33’ (1,221SF) footprint for the house and 24’x22’ (528SF) new garage, which is approximately 31% of lot coverage, which falls within the 25-35% range as described in the Elements of Design.
- Staff has no issue with the proposed concrete patio or driveway. (See Fig 3 and Site Photo 5.)



Site Photo 4, by Applicant, showing north side of the existing garage. The arrow indicates the location of past vehicle impact.



Site Photo 5, by Staff, July 25, 2024, showing location of proposed concrete patio.

ISSUES

- Staff offers the opinion that if a cementitious siding be used instead of wood, the surface of this material be smooth and of a color that matches HDC color guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Recommendation: Demolish Garage, Erect Garage, Install Patio and Driveway

It is staff’s opinion that the demolition of the garage, construction of a new garage, and installation of the new driveway and patio is appropriate. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Rosedale Park Historic District’s Elements of Design.

Staff recommends the COA be issued with following conditions:

- The siding be either wood or smooth cementitious siding.
- The color of the siding follows HDC color guidelines.