

## PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

June 16, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



**Project Name & Address:** 413 S Brearly Street

**Application Type(s):** Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition and new construction

**Legistar File ID #** [88408](#)

**Prepared By:** Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

**Date Prepared:** June 11, 2025

### Summary

**Project Applicant/Contact:** Elizabeth Cwik

**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the existing garage, construct a new garage, and rehabilitate the front porch

### Background Information

**Parcel Location/Information:** The subject property is located within the Third Lake Ridge local historic district

#### Relevant Ordinance Sections:

#### 41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.

A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.

- (1) New Construction or Exterior Alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
  - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction on any property located in a historic district, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
  - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a certificate of appropriateness is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.
- (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
  - (a) Whether the structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition or removal would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
  - (b) Whether a landmark's designation has been rescinded.

- (c) Whether the structure, although not itself a landmark structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the historic district as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
- (d) Whether demolition or removal of the subject property would be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and/or to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable historic district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
- (e) Whether the structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
- (f) Whether retention of the structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.
- (g) The condition of the property, provided that any deterioration of the property which is self-created or which is the result of a failure to maintain the property as required by this chapter cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for demolition or removal.
- (h) Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the historic resources of the historic district in which the subject property is located, or if outside a historic district, compatible with the mass and scale of buildings within two hundred (200) feet of the boundary of the landmark site.

Prior to approving a certificate of appropriateness for demolition, the Landmarks Commission may require the applicant to provide documentation of the structure. Documentation shall be in the form required by the Commission.

#### **41.25 STANDARDS FOR ALTERATIONS.**

- (1) General
  - (a) Alterations are defined as any change to any portion of the exterior of a building or site that replaces existing materials or changes its appearance. This section provides standards for building alterations.
  - (b) Materials and Features
    - 1. Alterations shall be in keeping with the original design and character of the building.
  - (c) Replacement
    - 1. Existing features shall be replaced in-kind if they are too deteriorated to repair.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
  - (a) Replacement
    - 1. An entire entrance or porch that is too deteriorated to repair shall be replaced using any available physical evidence or historic documentation as a model to reproduce the porch features.
  - (b) Porch Elements
    - 1. Where physical evidence of the overall historic form and detailing are not evident, porch elements shall be of a simple design found on similar historic resources within the district.
    - 2. Accessible graspable railings may be added to stair railings and should be painted to match the associated railing.
    - 3. Spaces beneath porches and stairs shall be enclosed with a framed lattice of crisscross design, narrow vertical boards, masonry, or other approved openwork design to allow ventilation.
    - 4. All wood on exterior porches shall be painted or opaquely stained.

#### **41.27 STANDARDS FOR NEW STRUCTURES.**

(1) General

(a) Primary Structures

The design for a new structure in a historic district shall be visually compatible with other historic resources within two hundred (200) feet in the following ways:

1. Building Placement. When determining visual compatibility for building placement, the Landmarks Commission shall consider factors such as lot coverage, setbacks, building orientation, and historic relationships between the building and site.
2. Street Setback. When determining visual compatibility for street setbacks, the Landmarks Commission shall consider factors such as the average setback of historic resources on the same block face within two hundred (200) feet, and the setback of adjacent structures.
3. Visual Size. When determining visual compatibility for visual size, the Landmarks Commission shall consider factors such as massing, building height in feet and stories, the gross area of the front elevation (i.e., all walls facing the street), street presence, and the dominant proportion of width to height in the façade.
4. Building Form. When determining visual compatibility for building form, the Landmarks Commission shall consider factors such as building type and use, roof shape, symmetry or asymmetry, and its dominant vertical or horizontal expression.
5. Architectural Expression. When determining visual compatibility for architectural expression, the Landmarks Commission shall consider factors such as the building's modulation, articulation, building planes, proportion of building elements, and rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the façade.

(b) Accessory Structures

1. Comply with requirements for new primary structures with other historic accessory structures serving as comparables.
2. Minimally visible from the developed public right-of-way, or be minimally visible from the front of the property for corner lots.
3. Clearly be secondary to the primary structure.

(3) Exterior Walls

(a) General

1. Materials used for new structures shall be similar in design, scale and architectural appearance to materials that date to the period of significance on historic resources within two hundred (200) feet, but differentiated enough so that it is not confused as a historic building.

(4) Roofs

(a) Form

1. Roof form and pitch shall be similar to the form and pitch of the roofs on historic resources within two hundred (200) feet.

(b) Materials

1. Roof materials shall replicate materials found on historic resources within two hundred (200) feet.

(5) Windows and Doors

(a) General

1. Door and window styles should both match the style of the new structure and be compatible with those on historic resources within two hundred (200) feet.

(f) Garage Doors

1. Garage doors shall be similar in design, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities prevalent within the historic district.

(7) Building Systems

(c) Lighting and Electrical Systems

1. Decorative light fixtures shall be compatible in style and location with the overall design of the building.

## Analysis and Conclusion

The proposed project is to demolish an existing garage and replace it with a similar garage structure. Included in this proposal is also some alterations work to repair damage to the front porch of the house. For the garage, it is a simple, utilitarian structure that is not historically or architecturally significant. The proposed replacement is more of an open concept where the side door and back window openings will not contain doors or windows. The design of both of those entrance features will replicate the design of door and window openings, but remain open voids. For the front porch, the replacement of the railings and columns will replicate the existing and the new metal graspable railings for the front steps will replace a nonhistoric wood railing with a simple and compatible design.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

### **41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.**

A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.

- (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
  - (a) The existing garage is not of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition or removal would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
  - (b) N/A.
  - (c) The existing accessory structure does not contribute to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the historic district as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
  - (d) The demolition and replacement of the garage would not be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and/or to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable historic district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
  - (e) The structure is not of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
  - (f) Retention of the structure would not promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.
  - (g) The condition of the existing garage is not due to a failure to maintain the structure.
  - (h) The new accessory structure is visually compatible with other accessory structures within 200 feet and with the existing accessory structure on this property.

Staff does not believe that additional documentation for the existing garage is necessary.

#### **41.25 STANDARDS FOR ALTERATIONS.**

- (1) General
  - (a) Alterations are defined as any change to any portion of the exterior of a building or site that replaces existing materials or changes its appearance. This section provides standards for building alterations.
  - (b) Materials and Features
    - 1. The proposed alterations to the front porch are in keeping with the original design and character of the building.
  - (c) Replacement
    - 1. The porch railings and columns will be replaced in-kind.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
  - (a) Replacement
    - 1. The proposal is to replace deteriorated elements based upon the existing decorative porch railing and columns and substituting a simple metal railing to replace the nonhistoric wood railing for the front steps.
  - (b) Porch Elements
    - 1. The proposal is using physical evidence for the porch railings and columns, but will use a simple design that is compatible with historic resources for the accessible railings for the front steps.
    - 2. The proposed accessible graspable railings are proposed to be painted to match the associated railing.
    - 3. The spaces beneath the existing porch show that they will maintain the current screening design.
    - 4. All wood on exterior porches shall be painted or opaquely stained.

#### **41.27 STANDARDS FOR NEW STRUCTURES.**

- (1) General
  - (a) Primary Structures

The design for a new structure in a historic district shall be visually compatible with other historic resources within two hundred (200) feet in the following ways:

    - 1. Building Placement. The new garage will be located where the current garage is located.
    - 2. Street Setback. There is no proposed change to the street setback for the new garage.
    - 3. Visual Size. The new garage will be of a similar visual size to both the current garage and other accessory structures in the vicinity.
    - 4. Building Form. The new garage replicates the building form of the existing garage.
    - 5. Architectural Expression. The new garage replicates the simple architectural expression of the current garage.
  - (b) Accessory Structures
    - 1. Comply with requirements for new primary structures with other historic accessory structures serving as comparables.
    - 2. As a corner property, this garage is located where other corner properties have a garage and where this property currently has a garage. It is as minimally visible as it can be for this type of property.
    - 3. The new garage is clearly be secondary to the primary structure.
- (3) Exterior Walls
  - (a) General
    - 1. The proposed materials appear to be similar in design, scale and architectural appearance to materials of the current garage and on the historic house on this property.

- (4) Roofs
  - (a) Form
    - 1. The pitch of the gable roof replicates the appearance of the current garage and is similar to the roof pitch of other accessory structures in the vicinity.
  - (b) Materials
    - 1. The proposal is for asphalt shingles, which is typical of historic structures in the vicinity.
- (5) Windows and Doors
  - (a) General
    - 1. The door and window openings and their trim match the style of the new accessory structure and of the historic house on the property.
  - (f) Garage Doors
    - 1. The garage doors appear to be similar in design, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities found on other accessory structure in the district and replicates the appearance of the existing door system on the current garage.
- (7) Building Systems
  - (c) Lighting and Electrical Systems
    - 1. The proposed light fixtures for the new garage are a simple and architecturally compatible design.

## Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness are met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project as proposed.