



**Project Name & Address:** 1318 Williamson  
**Application Type(s):** Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and exterior alterations  
**Legistar File ID #** [79572](#)  
**Prepared By:** Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division  
**Date Prepared:** September 13, 2023

## Summary

**Project Applicant/Contact:** Brandon Doll  
**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a garage after it was already demolished.

## Background Information

**Parcel Location/Information:** The subject property is located in the Third Lake Ridge 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.

## Analysis and Conclusion

The proposed project is for the demolition of a garage that was demolished ca. 2019 by the previous property owner. The current property owners are working to resolve several work orders from Building Inspection, which conveyed with the property as unresolved by the previous owner. One of those items was related to the demolition of a structurally unsound garage that the previous property owner had refused to submit a complete application to the Landmarks Commission in order to legally demolish the accessory structure. The garage was a historic Trachte, which is a rare remaining resource and a loss to the historic district. However, due to lack of maintenance, it was likely beyond feasible repair. The deterioration and the demolition without approvals was through no fault of the current owners. The application materials include the original incomplete application from the previous property owner in 2019 and the resulting correspondence in an attempt to complete the approval process. The previous location of the garage has been reseeded with grass.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

### 41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

- (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 historic Trachte structure is a historically significant style of structure, but the infeasibility of repair made its salvage unlikely and therefore its demolition was in keeping with the purpose of this ordinance.
  - (b) N/A
  - (c) Trachte's as outbuildings and garages are a part of the distinctive character of the Third Lake Ridge historic district and of the City's history, but this structure was likely beyond repair.

- (d) The demolition of a structure that is beyond repair is not contrary to the purpose of this ordinance.
- (e) The structure was a rare remaining resource and its conservation would have been beneficial and a reproduction would be expensive to accomplish, but again, it was likely beyond repair.
- (f) The retention of the Trahcte would not likely have promoted 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) While the condition o the property was due to self-created failure to maintain of the previous property owner, the condition of the property and the demolition of the garage was not the fault of the current property owners.
- (h) No new structure is currently proposed.

As the structure has already been demolished, there is nothing further to document.

## **Recommendation**

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