

Historic District Review Committee

Staff Report

Date of Meeting: October 17, 2011

CAPP2011-0008

Historic District: Goose Creek

Project Planner: Lauren Murphy

Action Item

CAPP 2011-0008 Murley: Demolition of Existing Garage and Construction of New Garage. PIN # 455-38-3143. Third Review.

Background



Figure 1: Subject Property, 18165 Sands Road

The subject property is located at 18165 Sands Road in the Goose Creek Historic District. The demolition of the existing one-car garage and construction of a new two-car garage is proposed with this Certificate of Appropriateness (CAPP) application.

The property is assessed at approximately .46 acres. The primary building on the lot is a 1940's stucco Cape Cod with dormers. The existing garage is not visible on the County mapping system but is located to the north of the existing dwelling and is approximately 240 square feet¹.

At the May 9, 2011 meeting, the HDRC deferred action on the proposed garage citing that the scale and mass of the garage was not compatible with the existing house, the surrounding historic district or the Historic District Guidelines. At the meeting, the HDRC offered the applicant several suggestions to bring the proposed garage into compliance with the Guidelines. These suggestions included but were not limited to:

1. Relocating the structure to the rear of the property as far as possible
2. Modulating the façade through the use of different materials/textures to help break up the mass of the structure.
3. Removing the exposed pipe chimney.
4. Investigating the possibility of repairing the existing structure.
5. Redesigning the proposed building to reflect more common accessory buildings of this mass and scale (such as a barn).

¹ Based on data from the Loudoun County Real Estate, Tax Assessment and Parcel Database

On July 8, 2011, the applicant submitted revised elevations and a revised statement of justification. This application was scheduled for review at the August 2011 meeting, however as the applicant did not attend the meeting; the HDRC again deferred action on the proposal. In the August 8, 2011 motion to defer the application, the HDRC reiterated their recommendations from the May 9, 2011 meeting to bring the application into conformance with the Guidelines.

The garage location, dimensions, and fenestration have not been changed since the August meeting. However, in the current submission, the applicant proposes to remove the metal pipe chimney from the design of the garage.

According to the zoning referral letter dated July 25, 2011, there are no zoning issues with this application.



Photo 1: Subject Property, general area of garage as viewed from Sands Road

Analysis

This application is evaluated under the Historic District Guidelines: Goose Creek (“Goose Creek Guidelines” or “Guidelines”), Chapter 4, *Guidelines for New Construction*, and Chapter 3, *Guidelines for Site Elements*, with references to Chapter 7, *Guidelines for Materials*, and Chapter 10, *Guidelines for Demolition and Moving*, where appropriate.

This application has been reviewed comprehensively in two previous staff reports (May 9, 2011 and August 8, 2011). The current submission does not address the issues of scale, massing and siting that have been consistently cited by the HDRC and by staff since the May 9, 2011 meeting as the over-arching outstanding issues with this application. Staff notes that there are other aspects (garage doors and foundation) of the application that do not meet the Guidelines which have been evaluated in the previous two staff reports. However, the visual impact of these design details could be mitigated by addressing the larger issues of scale, mass and siting. Given this context, the following analysis is limited to the demolition proposal, the single design change submitted in the current

application and the aspects of the application that do not meet the Goose Creek Guidelines and therefore remain as outstanding issues.

I. Demolition of Existing Garage:

The garage is constructed of cinderblock with wood siding in the gable ends. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles and the structure rests on a concrete slab. The date of construction on the existing garage is not known. The house was constructed in the 1940s (based on the assessment records) and it is possible, although not formally determined, that the garage was constructed around the same time (mid 20th century). The applicant's statement of justification (SOJ) indicates that the existing garage is structurally unsound and in disrepair.



Photo 2: Existing Garage

The Guidelines for Demolition provide the HDRC with 13 criteria to consider when reviewing applications for demolition (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Demolition and Moving, Demolition, page 146, Demolition Criteria). The existing garage was built in the mid-20th century and may be considered a contributing structure to the historic district given its age. However, given the mid 20th century date of construction, the construction method and materials and its deteriorating condition, it is unlikely that demolition of the garage will significantly impact the existing dwelling or the character of the Goose Creek District. **The request is generally consistent with the Guidelines for Demolition. However, staff notes that the mass and scale of the existing garage is more consistent with the Guidelines and more in keeping with the scale of the house and surrounding accessory buildings than the proposed garage.**

II. Construction of New Garage:

The Guidelines state that historic outbuildings should be retained and repaired (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 46, Guideline 1). However, as indicated above, demolition of the existing garage may be appropriate.



Figure 2: Aerial View of Property

A. Building Placement & Massing:

The proposed garage remains detached from the main dwelling, which is the preferred design for garages in the Goose Creek District (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 46, Guideline 3a). However, given the mass and siting of the new garage, it will not be discernible from the road as a separate building (see sheet A-2 of the revised drawings).

The HDRC may wish to view the proposed garage as an addition to the existing structure rather than as an accessory structure. The Guidelines state that where accessory garages are included in a structure “*its doors should not face the right-of-way and [it] should be screened from view*” (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 46, Guideline 3c). As detached garages are the preference of the Guidelines and the prevailing condition of most garages in Lincoln, staff continues to evaluate the proposed garage as a detached building. It is also unlikely that the currently proposed garage could be rotated to shield the doors from view and would still need to be reduced in mass and scale in order to meet the Guidelines for attached garages. **While the applicant has slightly reduced the width of the garage from the first submission, the proposed structure continues to challenge the mass of the existing building.**

The proposed property is within the Lincoln Village Conservation Overlay District (LVCOD). The Guidelines state that new garages should be “*to the rear of village lots that are large enough to accommodate them, following the applicable zoning requirements*” (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 47, Guideline 4). While the new garage is ten feet further from the road than the existing garage, the new garage will be significantly larger than the current building (with the slight reduction in width, the proposed garage is still almost three times the size of the current structure) and is located only five feet from the nearest side property line. The garage would have less visual impact from Sands Road if it were located further back towards the rear of the lot, consistent with the Guidelines. The siting of the garage was an issue of concern during the HDRC meetings on May 9, 2011 and August 11, 2011. **While the applicant has amended the garage design, the siting remains in conflict with the Guidelines for accessory building placement in the Village.**

The Guidelines indicate that accessory structures should be “*subordinate to the main historic structure in scale, mass, and siting*” (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 46, Guideline 2). The gable end of the proposed garage will face Sands Road which will help to reduce the perceived mass of the structure from the street. However, the massing of the proposed garage is disproportionate to the scale of the modest house which does not help to establish the garage as a subordinate structure.

The garage remains 32 feet deep, which is deeper than the main block of the house (approximately 28 feet deep), and 22 feet wide (reduced from the originally submitted 24 feet wide), which is almost as wide as the main block of the house (approximately 34 feet wide). The substantial proportions of the garage continue to increase the perceived mass of the structure when compared to the dwelling. The scale and mass of the proposed building also continues to be out of character with other accessory structures in the Village of Lincoln. **As currently proposed, the massing and scale of the proposed garage, combined with the siting, are not consistent with the Guidelines.** Staff notes that the proportions of the existing garage are more consistent with the scale and mass of the house as well as the surrounding Village of Lincoln.

B. Chimney:

After the August meeting and in response to a recommendation from the HDRC, the applicant has proposed to remove the exposed metal pipe chimney. This removal is consistent with the Guidelines.

Findings

1. Demolition of the mid 20th century garage is generally consistent with the criteria for demolition delineated in the Guidelines and will not significantly impact the Goose Creek District or the subject property.
2. The Guidelines specifically state that detached accessory structures should be located to the rear of Village lots. The proposed siting of the garage is not consistent with the Guidelines. Relocation of the proposed garage as far as possible toward the rear of the lot would lessen the visual impact of the building from Sands Road and would help to bring the application into conformance with the Guidelines for siting.
3. The Guidelines state that accessory structures must be subordinate in mass, scale and location to the principle building on a property. The mass and scale of the proposed garage, in the context of its proposed location, would result in a structure that is not clearly subordinate to the existing dwelling and therefore does not meet the Guidelines for accessory structures. Further reduction to the scale and mass of the proposed garage is necessary to bring the application into conformance with the Guidelines.
4. The treatment of the foundation and garage door design does not meet the Guidelines. However, the visual impact of these design details could be mitigated by addressing the larger issues of scale, mass and siting.

Recommendation

At the May 9th meeting, the HDRC provided the applicant with multiple suggestions to reduce the perceived mass and scale of the proposed garage. These suggestions were again reiterated at the August 8th meeting. The revised submission does not address any of the recommendations relative to the siting, scale or mass of the garage. While staff notes that the applicant has agreed to remove the chimney, per

the HDRC's recommendations, the siting/scale/mass continue to be the most significant design issues that conflict with the Guidelines.

As the current design in the current location is not consistent with the Guidelines, staff is unable to recommended approval of this application.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee deny Certificate of Appropriateness 2011-0008 for the demolition of the existing one-car garage and construction of a new two-car garage at 18165 Sands Road in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Goose Creek Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 5 of the staff report dated October 17, 2011.*
2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2011-0008 for the demolition of the existing one-car garage and construction of a new two-car garage at 18165 Sands Road in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Goose Creek Historic and Cultural Conservation District with the following conditions ...*
3. *I move ... (any alternative motion).*