

STAFF REPORT: 9/13/2023 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2023-00049

ADDRESS: 3769-3777 STURTEVANT

HISTORIC DISTRICT: RUSSELL WOODS-SULLIVAN

APPLICANT: FRANK MASTROIANNI (ITALY AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION)

OWNER: ERIC RAGLAND

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 9/18/2023

DATE OF STAFF VISIT: 9/28/2023

SCOPE OF WORK: DEMOLISH GARAGE, ERECT GARAGE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Erected ca. 1935, 3777 Sturtevant is a two-story, single-family dwelling that is located in the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District. The dwelling features a central hipped asphalt shingle roof with projecting gabled wings at the front façade. Exterior walls are clad primarily with brick with stone at front façade window surrounds and first-story bay window. Windows are steel casement units, some which include decorative stained glass with lead coming. Aluminum storms are visible at all windows. The parcel also includes a detached, hipped-roof, single-car garage, which is located to the rear of the house. The garage is one-story in height and is clad with brick which matches that found at the home's exterior walls. A single, steel overhead door is at the garage's front façade. The parcel addressed as 3769 Sturtevant is an empty lot located to the east of 3777 Sturtevant.



3769 Sturtevant (vacant lot to the left) and 3777 Sturtevant (house and garage), current condition. Staff photo taken on 9/28/2023



3777 Sturtevant garage, current condition. Staff photo taken on 9/28/2023

PROPOSAL

With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval for the following:

- Demolish the existing historic-age, two-car garage at 3777 Sturtevant
- Erect a new six-car garage to the rear of the home per the submitted drawings. The garage's footprint will extend into the adjacent parcel to the east/3769 Sturtevant. Brick which is salvaged from the existing/historic garage will be installed at the new garage's front façade. Fiber cement siding will be installed at the exterior of the side and rear walls.
- Replace the existing 9'-0" wide driveway and curb cut with a new 18'-0" concrete driveway and curbcut. Also, a new 57'-0" wide concrete apron will be added to the front of the new garage.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Per the below aerial image, vacant lots are located to the direct east (3769 Sturtevant) and west (3783 Sturtevant) of 3777 Sturtevant. The applicant has indicated that 3777 Sturtevant's owner also owns these two adjacent vacant lots. A review of available Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and the property's designation slide indicate that this condition existed at the time of the district's designation. The lack of curbcuts at 3769 and 3783 Sturtevant suggest that these lots have been vacant since the Sullivan subdivision was platted.



Google Streetview, 3769-3783 Sturtevant. Yellow box indicates location of proposed new garage and blue box indicates location of new driveway, curbcut, and parking apron

- The field visit revealed that the majority of homes within the 3700-3800 blocks of Sturtevant retain their original two-car, historic-age garages
- It is staff's opinion that the garage proposed for demolition is contributing to the subject parcel and the wider neighborhood/historic district. The design of the garage, with its red brick cladding

and hipped roof, reflects that of the property's home. Also, the current garage's modest scale is in keeping with the extant historic garages in the general vicinity.

- Per the submitted information, the project proposes to replace the current 9'-0" wide driveway and curbcut with a new 18'-0" concrete driveway and curbcut.

ISSUES

- Per the above, it is HDC staff's opinion that the existing garage proposed for demolition is contributing to the subject parcel and the wider neighborhood/historic district.
- In re: to the condition of the existing garage, the applicant has stated that "the roof is not in great shape and the garage has settled. The option to expand the garage was discussed, but after inspecting the garage, we concluded that the foundation and roof are compromised. The rear wall of the garage is also missing brick, but it is hard to see right now because of the foliage. There is no way to enlarge the existing garage without tearing off the entire roof, since the existing roof line will not allow for a hip style at this enlarged size. The garage has had small repairs throughout the years to try and keep it as is, but it has reached a point where it may be beyond repair." The applicant has also provided some exterior photos to support their assessment. Staff did review the submitted exterior photos and visit the site to assess the condition of the existing garage from the public right-of-way (ROW) and noted that it did appear to be in good condition/it is not deteriorated beyond repair. It is staff's opinion that the current application does not provide sufficient documentation that the current deteriorated conditions could not be successfully addressed via repair versus demolition. The proposal to demolish the garage is therefore not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards because it would destroy a contributing building that can be repaired.
- The new garage and driveway footprints will extend into 3769 Sturtevant/the vacant lot to the east of 3777 Sturtevant. Also, note that the new garage, driveway, and curbcut will be considerably wider than those which exist within the near vicinity of 3777 Sturtevant. Due to the adjacent vacant lots, these new elements will be highly visible from ROW. It is staff's opinion that the proposed work does not conform to the district's historic character because the garage's extension into the adjacent parcel and the width of the new driveway is inconsistent with extant properties within the district.
- Please note that the district's Element of Design # 12 indicates that common setbacks of buildings along the residential streets create very strong walls of continuity:
 - *Walls of continuity.* The common setbacks of the houses on the residential streets and the placement of commercial buildings on Dexter at the front lot line create very strong walls of continuity.

The extension of the proposed new garage into the adjacent lot is inconsistent with this element of design/the strong walls or continuity typical along residential streets as it will result in an open lot with a portion of an auxiliary building that sits to the rear of the parcel.

- Also, the district's Element of Design #13 indicates that the typical treatment of individual properties includes a home and a "...single width side driveway leading to a garage at the rear of the lot":
 - *Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatments.* The typical treatment of individual properties is a flat front lawn area in grass turf, subdivided by a straight or curving walk leading to the front entrance and a single width side driveway leading to a garage at the rear of the lot.

The proposed extension of the new garage and driveway into the adjacent vacant parcel as well as the proposed doubling of the driveway width is inconsistent with this element of design.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-73, DENIAL

It is staff's opinion that the proposed project does not meet the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation and is not consistent with the district's Elements of Design for the following reasons:

- The existing garage proposed for demolition is contributing to the subject parcel and the wider neighborhood/historic district.
- The current application does not provide sufficient documentation that the current deteriorated conditions of the contributing garage could not be successfully addressed via repair versus demolition.
- The proposed new garage's and driveway's extension into the adjacent parcel as well as the width of the new driveway is inconsistent with extant properties within the district.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial of the proposed project because it does not meet the Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District's Elements of Design or the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically, Standards #:

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
- 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic*