

STAFF REPORT: APRIL 9, 2025 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00070
ADDRESS: 3417 SEMINOLE

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: INDIAN VILLAGE

APPLICANT: NICOLE RODRIGUEZ

PROPERTY OWNER: NICOLE RODRIGUEZ

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: MARCH 17, 2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: MARCH 26, 2025

SCOPE: DEMOLISH GARAGE, ERECT GARAGE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

3417 Seminole is located near the northwest corner of Seminole and Goethe. The 2-1/2 story structure, designed as a two-family home, was erected circa 1914. The width of the structure fills the majority of the lot – sitting at the north property line and setback only a few feet from the south property line.

The dwelling was erected with a raised foundation and the front, two-story porch is supported at-grade by walls faced with stone. Metal posts support the second floor porch, and it is partially covered by a flat roof, supported by large wood brackets. Low metal railings run the perimeter of the entry porch, and the upper porch is enclosed by a half-wall covered in vinyl siding. The adjacent two-story bay window culminates with a castellated roofline.

Vinyl siding covers the exterior walls and the historic wood windows, mostly comprised of double-hung sash with a nine-over-one or a six-over-one pattern, remain in the window openings. The chimney retains its historic stucco finish.



Facade, east-facing wall. Staff photo, March 26, 2025.

A one-story, three-bay garage is located at the rear of the property and fills the majority of the lot's width. The structure is constructed of cast-concrete blocks with a cobblestone pattern and the flat, minimally sloped roof is covered with rolled roofing material. Currently two single-opening overhead doors face Maxwell Street, and two pedestrian doors and single-opening double-hung windows (six over-one pattern) are located on the east wall, facing the house. The northernmost bay is missing the east wall, a portion of the north wall and roof, and the automotive door opening has been enclosed with historic concrete blocks.



This aerial view shows the structure functions as a two-car garage. April 2022. EagleView.



Staff photo, March 26, 2025. The garage doors face west and open onto Maxwell Street.



East wall of garage facing the rear yard and back of house. The third bay is essentially missing, with only one wall fully intact. Applicant photo.

PROPOSAL

- Demolish one-story concrete block garage.
- Erect a three-car, two-story garage.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Indian Village Historic District was enacted on June 15, 1971.
- The house was covered with vinyl siding at the time of the district's designation. The installation of vinyl siding on the house altered the material and architectural relationship between the dwelling, historic garage and the district at-large. At some point in the future, the vinyl siding on the house will need to be replaced and will give the owner the opportunity to repair the house's stucco finish as well as the decorative details within the gables that likely remain intact, thus reclaiming the historic design of the two-family house.

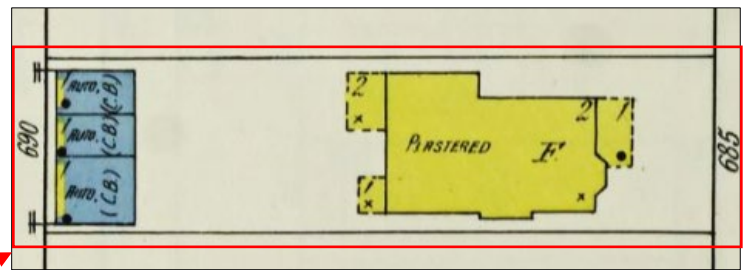


Above: Historic Designation Advisory Board photos, 1971. At time of designation, the front porch had been altered, and the vinyl siding was in place.

Left: Staff photo, March 2025. There don't appear to be any further alterations to the house, besides the color changes to the vinyl siding and asphalt roof.



Circa 1914 photo shows the historic house had a stucco finish, large square porch columns and half-timber detailing in the gables. Burton Collection.



Sanborn map, Vol. 8, 1915, Image 51.

The full view of the map confirms 3417 Seminole (original address was 685 Seminole) was the only dwelling erected on the west side of Seminole between Goethe and Mack by 1915 (and only three houses were erected on the east side of the same block- not shown on this map). The garage is not visible in the ca. 1914 photo; therefore, it was erected after the house, but in time to be included on the 1915 Sanborn map.

Garage: The blue color and "CB" identify the walls as concrete block, and the yellow area denotes wood door openings. Interestingly, the southern bay (and door opening) was larger than the middle and northern bays. The dark circle identifies composite roofing.

- Staff's review of the structure for the June 2024 meeting stressed the distinctive design of the concrete block garage, which clearly identifies the structure as an early 20th century building. The materiality, natural concrete finish and rectangular-and otherwise unadorned-massing directly related to the stucco-finished and minimally adorned house. As the garage was a contributing structure to the district, staff exercised caution when reviewing the initial proposal to demolish the structure, as the following Standards directly relate to this review:

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 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.*

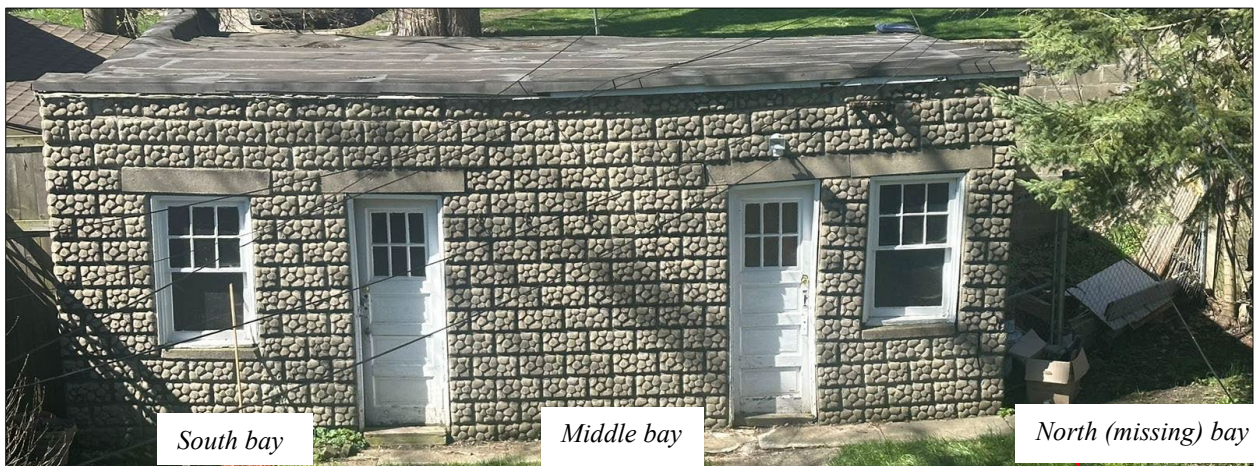
- The structural challenges and missing north bay of the existing garage were noted in the June 2024 staff report. However, due to the architectural and historic significance of the garage, HDC staff recommended, and the Commission requested, an estimate to rebuild the historic three-bay garage before its demolition would be considered. Two estimates were submitted:

Unique Construction Company - \$168,723

Van Sickle Construction & Repair - \$182,769 (a detailed scope of work was also provided).

Upon review of both company's websites, Van Sickle has examples of residential restoration work.

- Staff conducted another site visit and physical assessment of the existing garage in preparation for this staff report. Listed below is a recounting of the structural challenges with the existing garage as discussed in the June 2024 staff report coupled with additional photos and staff comments from the March 2025 site visit.

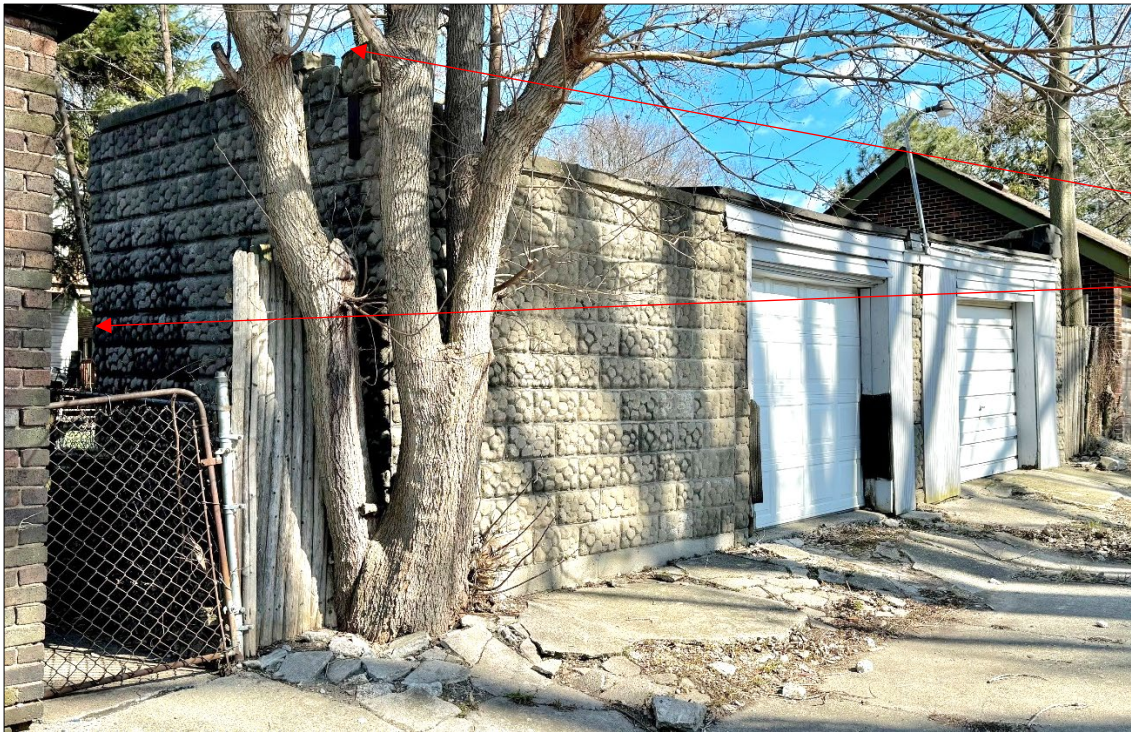


Above and right: Applicant photos.

As shown on the Sanborn map on the previous page, the south bay (left side) was the largest of the three bays; the middle and north were about the same size.

At an unknown time, the roof and east wall of the northern bay were removed, and the overhead door opening was filled in with matching concrete block (likely reused from the now-demolished east wall). Staff didn't find Commission approval for this alteration.





This view of the northwest corner of the garage shows that portion of the north wall's parapet is missing as well as the jagged edge of the partially destroyed wall.



This alternative view of the northwest corner shows how the growth of this tree and its root system caused the pavement to buckle, as well as undermine the stability of the north wall, as it has begun to lean away from the west wall.

It is also possible the northern bay's roof deteriorated at a faster rate due to the tree's overhanging branches.



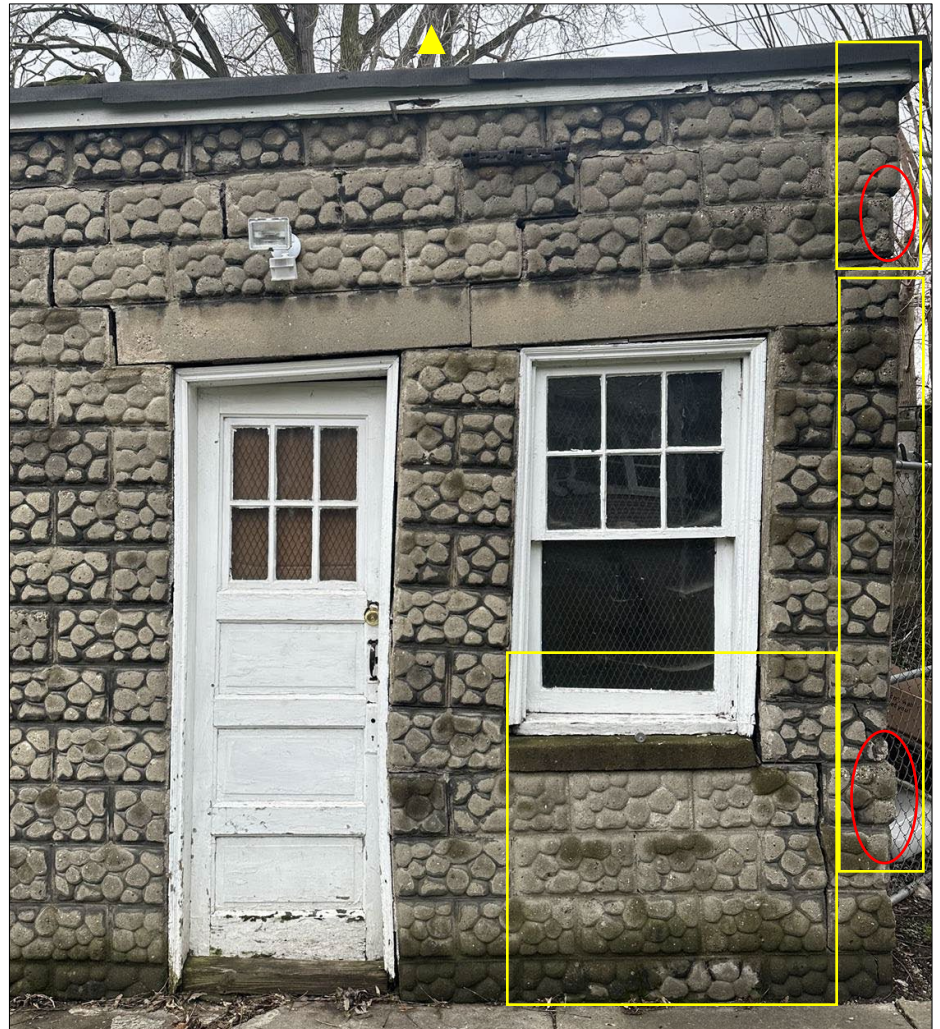
East wall facing the house. Applicant photo.



These close-up photos clearly show the impact of the long-standing issue with settlement, which has caused the lintels and door and window frames to become unlevel.

Staff wonders if the building is deconstructed, additional blocks may show signs of structural failure due to compressed weight of the shifted walls.

Applicant photos



The areas adjacent and below the window show wood and stone deterioration which has created holes in the walls, further exacerbating mortar and block deterioration between the window to grade.

Also, this view shows how the top of the wall is leaning to the left and the block at the third course is inward of the upper two courses. Whereas the lower part of the wall is leaning towards the right and fourth block up from grade is outward from the upper and lower courses of blocks.

- The photos of the interior walls were included in the June 2024 staff report. These walls were erected of standard concrete blocks and could be rebuilt with new blocks without any architectural impact to the historic structure. However, staff notes the stress cracking and broken blocks further gives evidence to the overall instability of the historic structure, and how this could have impacted the structural integrity of the outer walls that were erected with cobblestone-style blocks.

Middle bay - north interior wall (this interior wall is the exterior southern wall of the missing bay as seen on page 5 of this report).



Step crack and cracked block

Step cracks

Middle bay – east outer wall



Exterior view of wall at right.



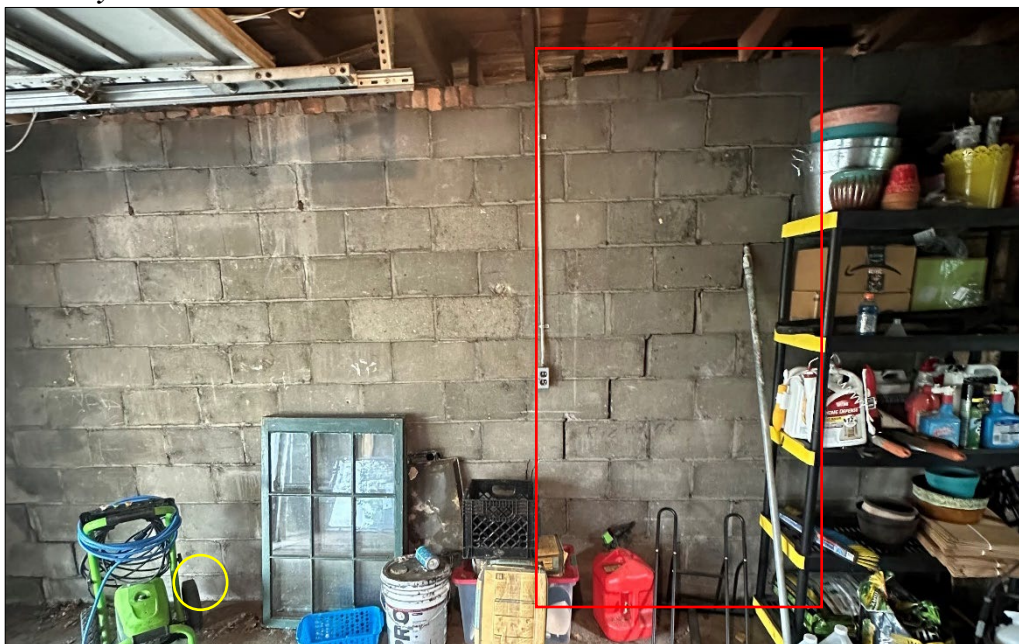
Middle bay - south interior wall



Large step crack, broken blocks at top and near middle of wall

Broken block

South bay - north interior wall



This is the other side of step crack, shown on page 8 (middle bay-south interior wall).

South bay - east outer wall (cobblestone block)



Step cracks above the window and door. Cracked tile below window.

This section of the east wall doesn't appear to be as severely deflected as the adjacent portion of the wall discussed on page 8, but it still has unlevel lintels and door/window frames.



Exterior view of wall at left.

- Staff agrees with the repair/rebuilding estimates that in order to retain the historic structure, it would need to be deconstructed, a new foundation poured, and then rebuilt, reusing the historic concrete blocks and wood pedestrian doors and double-hung windows. The remaining garage elements - concrete floors, flat roofing material and overhead doors can be replaced because they are either interior components, non-visible (flat roof) or non-original/non-historic age (overhead metal doors). Staff also recognizes that it might not be possible to locate and fabricate matching cobblestone-style blocks to complete the missing walls and/or replace broken blocks.

- Therefore, based on staff’s recent physical assessment, coupled with the applicant’s submitted assessment and estimates to deconstruct and rebuild the three-bay, cobblestone-style concrete block garage, staff recommends that the existing structure be found to be beyond reasonable repair, taking into account economic and technical feasibility.

Review of Proposed Garage

- Before reviewing the revised garage design, the context of the streetscape where the new structure would be erected should be considered.

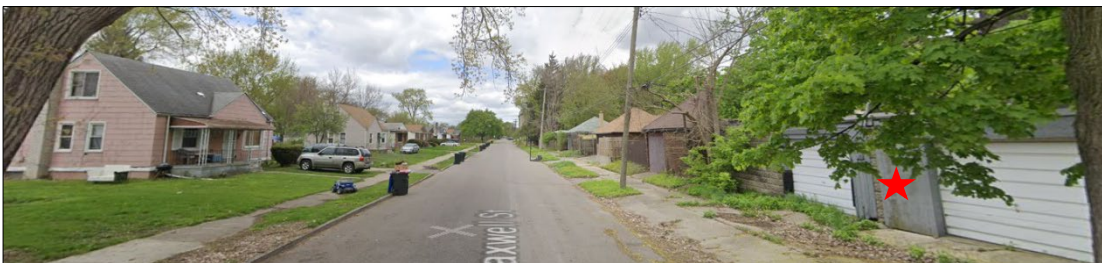


Looking southeast on Maxwell. From left to right: Garages for 3421 Seminole, 3417 Seminole and 8215 Goethe (3 car garage). Staff photo, March 2025.

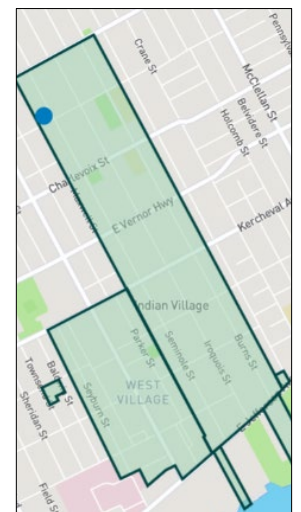


Looking southeast on Maxwell. From left to right - Garages for 3449 Seminole (flat roof), 3439 Seminole, 3431 Seminole, and 3421 Seminole. Google street view.

- The photo survey shows the garages were designed within a similar time period and reflect the massing and roof designs popular in the early 20th century: reverse gable (8215 Goethe), flat/minimal slope roof (3417 and 3449 Seminole) and pyramidal hip roof (3439, 3431, and 3421 Seminole). They were also designed with minimal articulation and wall materials that match the materials on the respective houses.
- The garages that face Maxwell are also at the east boundary of the Indian Village Historic District.

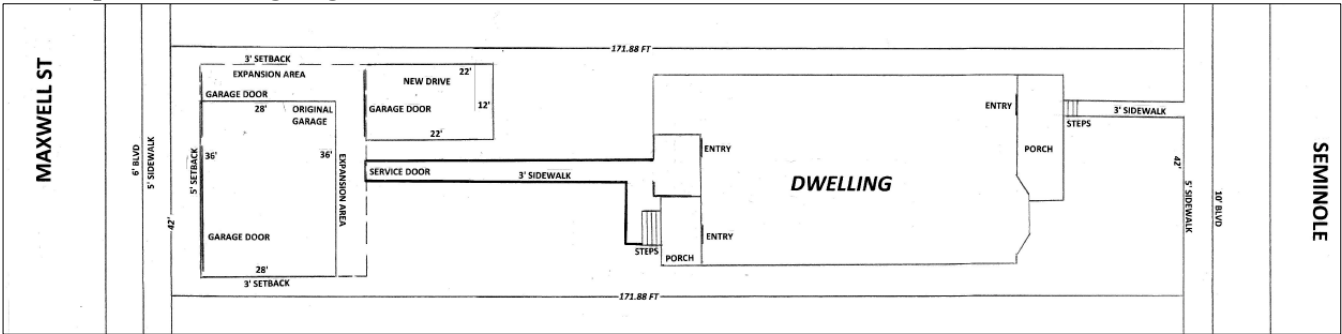


Google streetview, looking north. 3417 Seminole garage (★). The houses on the west side of Maxwell are 1-1/2 story dwellings clad in wood, aluminum and/or vinyl siding. Right: Indian Village Historic District boundary, blue dot identifies location of 3417 Seminole.

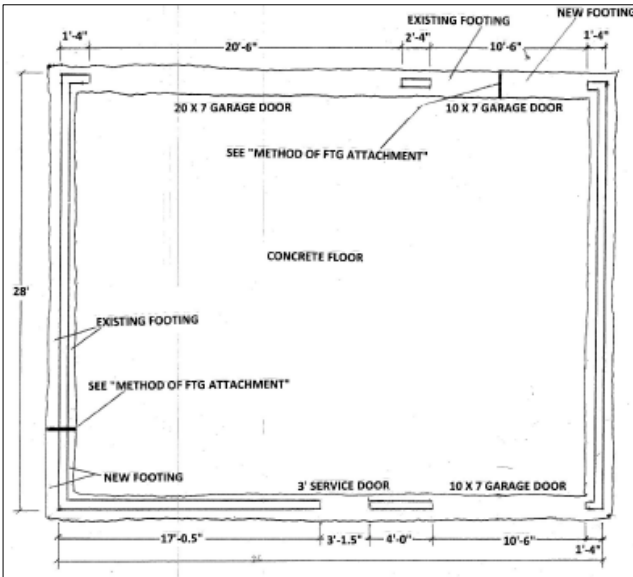


- Standard 9 discusses compatibility of new construction to the integrity of the property and its environment. If a new garage is considered for any of these lots, including 3417 Seminole, it is staff’s opinion compatibility requires similar massing, contextual materiality, roof lines, window and door openings and minimally applied decorative details.

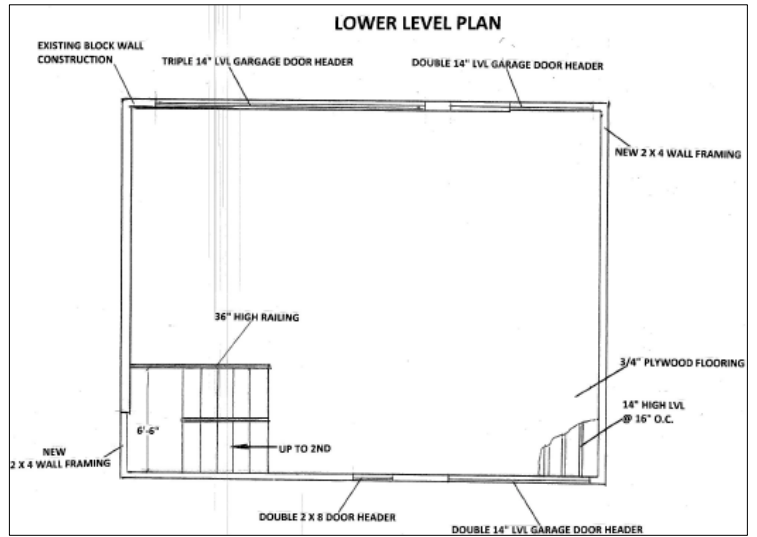
Proposal for new garage



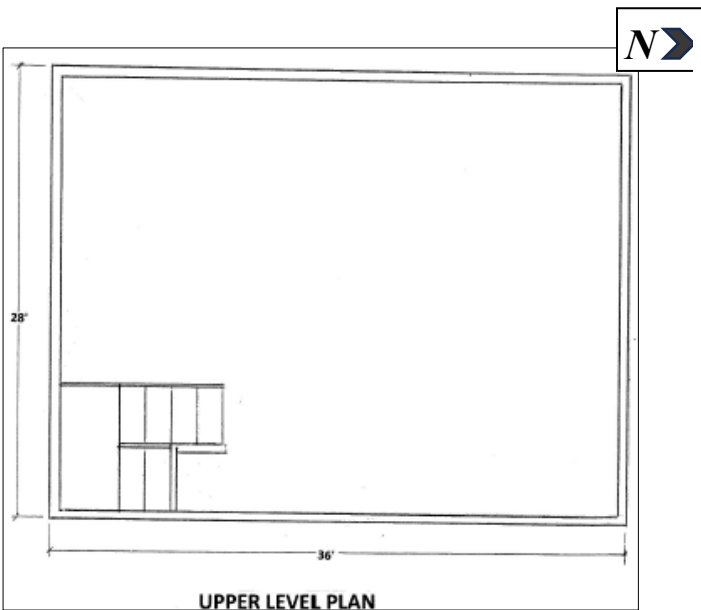
Applicant's site plan. The outline of the original/existing garage is shown, as well as the footprint of the proposed garage (identified as "expansion area"). A new concrete drive (22' deep x 12' wide) is also shown extending into the rear yard.



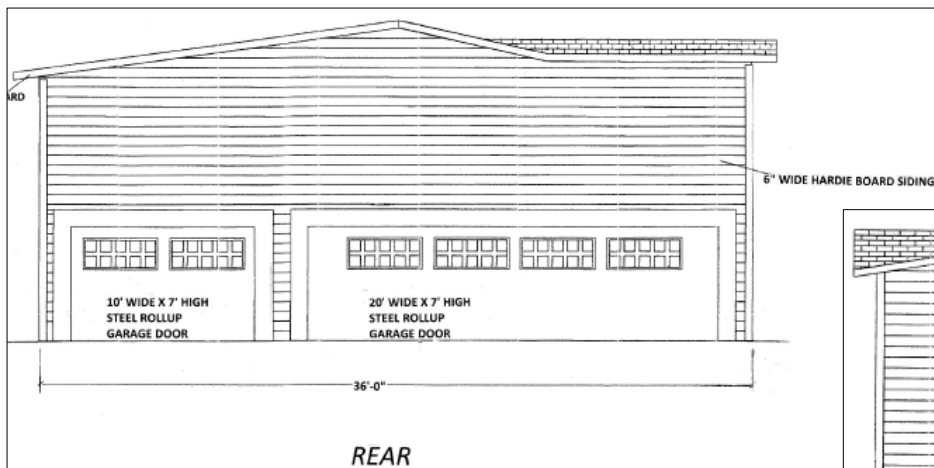
Unidentified drawing - staff believes it is a foundation plan.



Floor plan for first level of garage. Window openings are not shown.

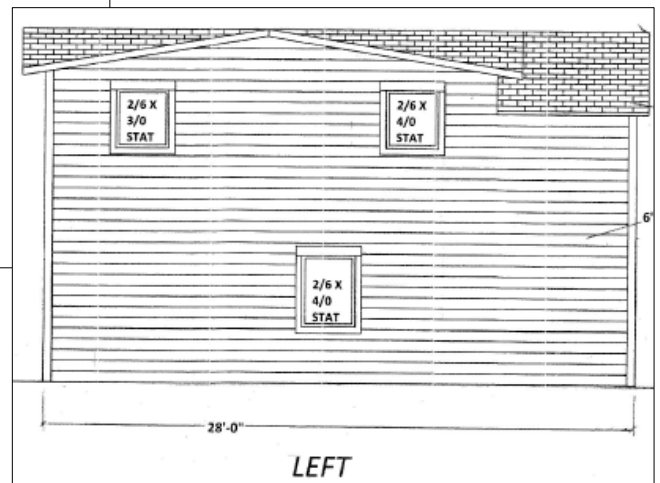


Floor plan for second floor, window openings are not shown.



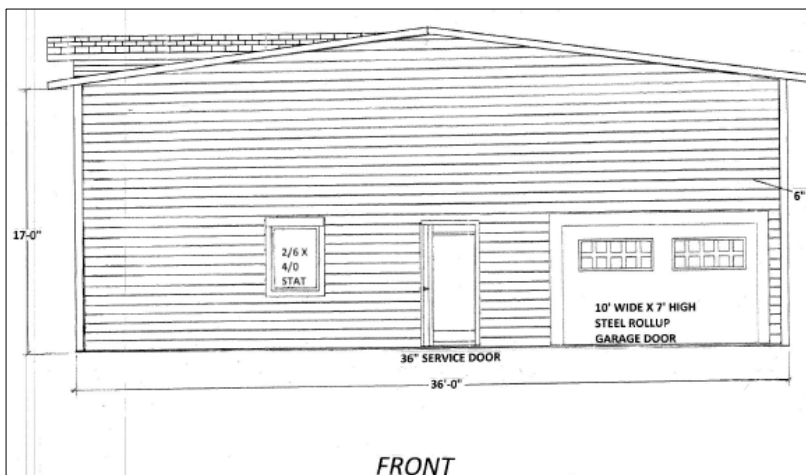
REAR

West elevation that faces Maxwell street. The double- single garage door arrangement is identical to the adjacent garage at 8215 Goethe.



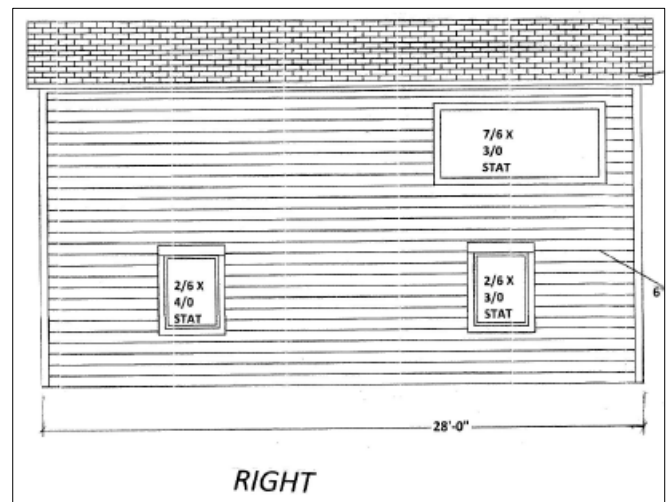
LEFT

South elevation.



FRONT

East elevation of the garage that will face the back of the house/rear yard. The additional overhead door leads to the 22' x 12' driveway/parking pad.



RIGHT

North elevation.

- The application for new construction lacks details and additional drawings necessary for a complete review. However, staff can offer the following comments at this time:
 - A design devoid of applied ornament is compatible with the property and surrounding garages.
 - Staff suggests a side-gable roof to mimic the house's roof.
 - Traditionally-designed dormers could be appropriate (rather than the extended height wall as shown on the south elevation) and would offer additional interior space.
 - An overhead garage door facing the house, without it being the primary opening which leads from the driveway, is not appropriate for this urban, early 20th century residential lot/historic district.
 - Most appropriate wall cladding for this property and location would be brick or stucco, however cementitious siding may not be demonstrably inappropriate for a new construction building.
 - Windows should more closely match the operation and grouped/mulled windows (for wider openings) on the house.

Indian Village Elements of Design

Staff identified the following Elements to consider when designing and reviewing new construction, staff underlining for emphasis.

7. Relationship of materials

The majority of the buildings are faced with brick, while many are partially or totally stucco. There are some stone buildings; clapboard is rare, and almost never the sole material... Wood is almost universally used for window frames and other functional trim, and is used in many examples for all trim...

8. Relationship of textures

The most common relationship of textures in the district is that of the low-relief pattern of mortar joints in brick contrasted to the smooth surface of wood or stone trim. The use of stucco or concrete, with or without half-timbering, as a contrast to brick surfaces is not unusual....

9. Relationship of colors

Natural brick colors (red, yellow, brown, buff) predominate in wall surfaces. Natural stone colors also exist. Where stucco or concrete exists, it is usually left in its natural state, or painted in a shade of cream.... Paint colors often relate to style...

10. Relationship of architectural details

These generally relate to style. Neo-Georgian buildings display classic details, mostly in wood, and sometimes in stone. Areas commonly, but not always, treated are porches, shutters, window frames, cornices, and dormer windows. Details on Mediterranean style or vernacular buildings are often done in stone, brick, tile, and sometimes in stucco...

11. Relationship of roof shapes.

Roofs with triangular gables and hip roofs predominate. A few examples of the gambrel-type roof exist. Complex arrangements of the gabled and/or hip types, with subsidiary roofs, are not unusual. Dormers are common. Flat roofs exist primarily on porches and sunrooms, and other minor elements; large hip roofs sometimes have relatively small flat sections in the center.

ISSUES

- The proposed garage is not compatible with the house and property, due to its massing/roof forms, incompatible window openings, inappropriate garage door opening to the rear yard and excessive concrete driveway surface.
 - Staff suggests a side-gable roof to mimic the house's roof.
 - Traditionally-designed dormers could be appropriate (rather than the extended height wall as shown on the south elevation) and would offer additional interior space.
 - An overhead garage door facing the house, without it being the primary opening which leads from the driveway, along with additional concrete driveway/parking pad, is not appropriate for this urban, early 20th century residential lot/historic district.
 - Most appropriate wall cladding for this property and location would be brick or stucco, however cementitious siding may not be demonstrably inappropriate.
 - Windows should more closely match the operation and grouped/mulled windows (for wider openings) on the house.
- The future application needs to include fully detailed drawings that show the dimensionality of the design – including the roof, capture all window and door openings, changes to the landscape, and cut-sheets for all materials and building components.

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

Recommendation 1 of 2, Denial: Erection of two-story garage

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be inappropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Indian Village Historic District's Elements of Design, specifically:

Standard 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 integrity of the property and its environment.

And Elements of Design 7, 8, 9 and 11.

For the following reasons;

- The proposed garage is not compatible with the house and property, due to its massing/roof forms, undivided and large window openings, inappropriate garage door opening to the rear yard and excessive concrete driveway surface.
 - A side-gable roof to mimic the house's roof should be considered.
 - Traditionally-designed dormers are appropriate to create additional interior space.
 - An overhead garage door facing the house, without it being the primary opening which leads from the driveway, along with additional concrete driveway/parking pad, is not appropriate for this urban, early 20th century residential lot.
 - Most appropriate wall cladding for this property and historic district would be brick or stucco.
 - Windows should more closely match the operation, and grouped/mulled windows for wider openings, on the house.
- The future application needs to include fully detailed drawings that show the dimensionality of the design – including the roof, capture all window and door openings, changes to the landscape, and cut-sheets for all materials and building components.

Recommendation 2 of 2, Certificate of Appropriateness: Demolition of one-story concrete block garage

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Indian Village Historic District's Elements of Design.