

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION REPORT**  
Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work- 10<sup>th</sup> & Cass Historic District.  
Section 115-319(d)(2)  
CARRIAGE HOUSE – Ordinance 115-390(1)(d)(2)

**TO:** Heritage Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Staff  
**MEETING DATE:** March 23, 2023

**PROPOSAL:** The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing detached garage.

**PROPERTY OWNER:**

Nancy Gerrard  
600 3<sup>rd</sup> St N  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**APPLICANT:**

Aaron Wickesberg  
Reliant Real Estate Services

**BACKGROUND:** The 10<sup>th</sup> and Cass Historic District was established by Ordinance in May 2007 along with design standards that are specific to the styles of architecture found within. The local district designation of the Tenth and Cass Neighborhood Historic District was created to encourage preservation of the historic resources of the district, which was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. The design standards and review procedures are used to guide preservation, rehabilitation, new construction, relocation and demolitions. Plans or requests must be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission prior to any building/demolition permit being issued.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The applicant is requesting to demolish the existing detached garage that serves 905-907 Cass Street. The existing garage is a one-story, two car structure and is approximately 20x20sqft in size. The applicant's plan is to remove the structure and convert the area to greenspace. They also plan on repaving the two existing driveways from Cass St and 9<sup>th</sup> Street S.



Northwest corner



Cass Street Driveway



9<sup>th</sup> Street S Driveway



**SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**ANALYSIS:**

Per Municipal Code the following standards apply to requests for demolition of structures in the 10<sup>th</sup> & Cass Historic District:

*(3) Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition.*

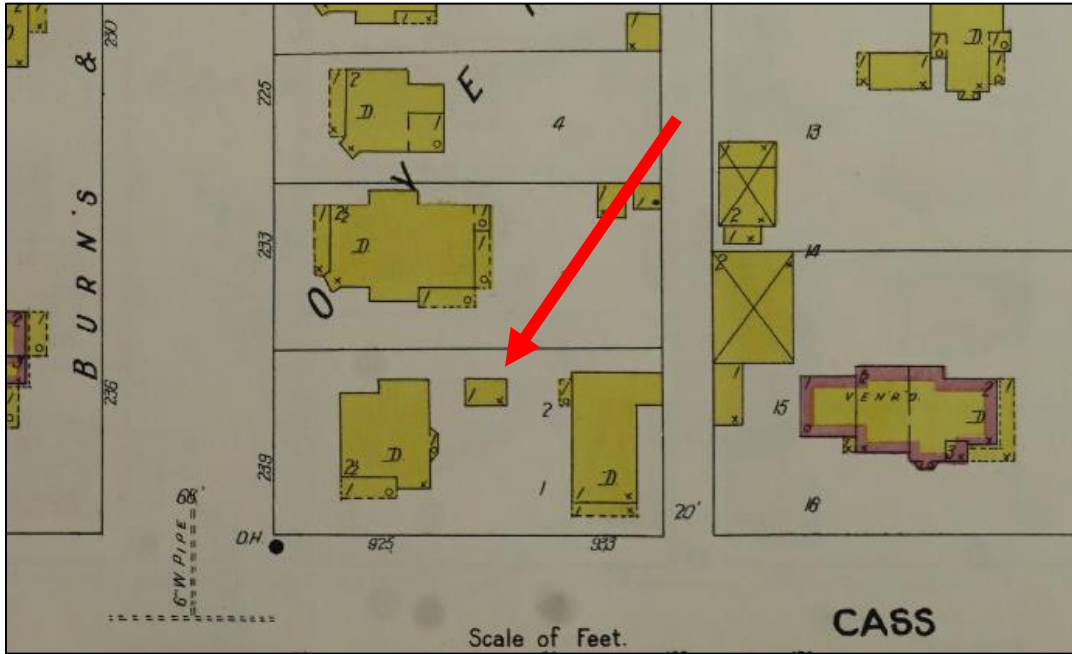
*c. In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition, the HPC shall:*

*1. Consider factors such as whether the structure is of historical significance, the state of repair of the building, and whether denial of a permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner.*

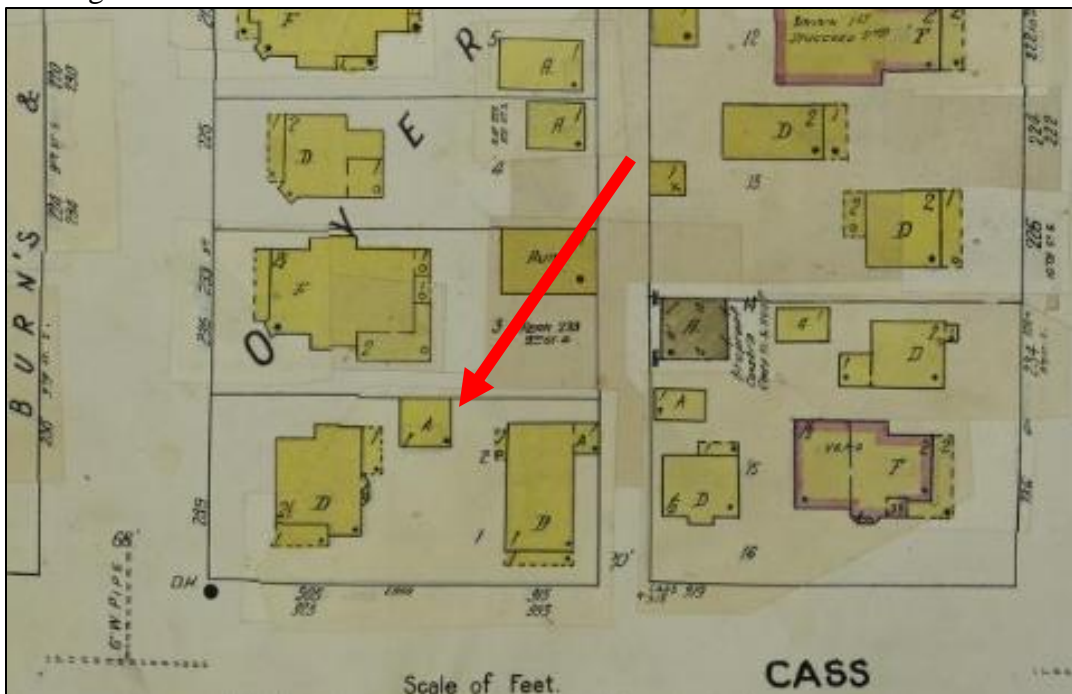
2. Issue the certificate only if the owner can demonstrate that the building is structurally unsound and/or that denial of a demolition permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner

Historic Significance

The 1906 Sanborn Map (pictured below) depicts a structure that is not the same shape and size of the existing structure.



1949 Sanborn Map- This map does depict that there was a garage of similar shape and size of the existing one at this location.



In 1969 a 12ft x 20ft addition was added to the south façade of the building in order to install overhead doors.

These maps indicate to staff that the existing structure was likely constructed between 1906-1949 and was not the original structure serving the primary house. While the time period that this garage was built likely falls within the district's period of significance (1858-1940) the current structure has undergone several changes, including an addition, that has significantly altered any historic fabric that may have existed.

### Economic Hardship

The applicant has cited several reasons for proposing demolition of the existing structure without repair it or constructing something new. They include:

- Existing garage has not been used as a garage for many years.
- Roof is in need of replacement. Contractors have stated to the applicant that they recommend the roof pitch be reconstructed prior to re-roofing.
- Asbestos siding needs to be abated and replaced.
- Garage concrete floor needs to be replaced.
- Building a new garage would have to conform to existing zoning and setback requirements that would not allow it to be constructed in the same footprint. Meeting the setback requirements would reduce the footprint and not make it a viable endeavor.

The applicant has also stated that they feel that the removal of a dilapidated accessory structure for green space and repaving the two dilapidated driveways add more value and character to the historic district then keeping it and making any cosmetic repairs.

### **FINDING**

Based on the information above staff has determined that the existing garage does not provide any historic significance/value to the district. Staff does believe that a detached garage would add value to the neighborhood and property but not in its current form. Staff also acknowledges the reasons citing economic hardship for repairs or for building a new structure. Rather than making band-aid cosmetic repairs staff feels it is more valuable to remove the structure, add green space for the tenants, and replace the driveways while waiting for the current, or future, owner to consider building a new one.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION BY STAFF:** This Certificate of Appropriateness is recommended for approval.