



***LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT***

**PUBLIC HEARING: 18 JANUARY 2012
AGENDA ITEM 6B**

**THLP-2012-0093
124 Harrison Street NE, H-1 Overlay District
Joyce Muse Griffith, Applicant
Gentry Dowell Muse & M. Carpenter Muse. Owners
Architect/Contractor, N/A**

ISSUE

Following approval of the demolition of the garage at 124 Harrison Street NE in case TLHP-2011-0063, the applicant requests approval to install a pre-fabricated shed that is 8-feet by 8 feet with a gambrel roof clad in asphalt shingles. The walls of the shed are clad in T1-11, and the structure features double-leaf doors on one end.

The shed will be located near the northeast corner of the dwelling and will project no farther north than the northern elevation of the house. The shed will be located in a corner of the house created by the intersection of the shed addition behind the main block of the building.

The guidelines that staff used—and the BAR should refer to—in evaluating the appropriateness of the application are the Guidelines for Outbuildings, Garages, Pools, and Other Site Features, located on page 44 of the Old and Historic District Design Guidelines. The guidelines state:

Many properties in the Leesburg Old and Historic District retain their original outbuildings. The most common outbuildings are sheds and garages. Other site features may vary considerably and may include fountains, pools, trellises, and recreational spaces.

1. Retain and Repair historic outbuildings, garages and other site features following the *Guidelines for the Preservation and Modification of Existing Structures* found in *Chapter IV*.
2. Design new outbuildings and other site features to be compatible with, but subordinate to, the style of the primary building on the site, especially in materials and roof slope. Refer to the *Guidelines for New Construction and Additions* for additional information on materials and other considerations.
3. Place new outbuildings to the rear of lots. Alternatively, an outbuilding may be placed to the side of the main dwelling without extending in front of the centerline of the house.

4. Design new outbuildings to be subordinate to the primary structure so they do not overpower the primary structure or the size of the lot.
5. Relate the design and location of any new site feature to the existing character of the property.

In evaluating the appropriateness of the project, staff used—and the BAR should refer to—Chapters 8 and 4 of the Old and Historic District Design Guidelines. Chapter 8 deals with the demolition and relocation of existing structures. It states, in part:

Demolition of Primary Buildings and Structures

For the purpose of reviewing applications for the demolition of any primary building, such as a house or commercial building, the BAR uses the Certified Local Government (CLG) grant-funded building surveys for properties in the Old and Historic District. A building listed in the survey forms as “historic” is considered to contribute to the historic character and integrity of the Old and Historic District unless it is determined to be a non-contributing resource in accordance with the steps below.

The buildings listed as “non-historic” in the building surveys are considered non-contributing to the district’s historic character. On a case-by-case basis, the BAR will evaluate whether or not the demolition of any primary building or structure will have a detrimental effect upon the immediate context of the Old and Historic District. The BAR will review requests for demolition in accordance with the following steps

1. Is the building or structure designated historic in the architectural survey for the property?
2. If the building or structure is designated as historic in the architectural survey, is it a resource that contributes to the architectural and historic integrity of the property, neighborhood, and historic district? A property is considered to be non-contributing if it does not have or retain integrity of any of the following:

- a. Location. By being able to interpret the structure in its original location, it is possible to understand why the property was created and its contribution to the broader history of the area.
 - b. Design. Defined as a combination of the elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Integrity of design is applied to historic districts through the way in which buildings, sites, and structures relate to one another and the rhythms of the streetscape.
 - c. Setting. The physical character of the property in which the building is situated, and the building's relationship to surrounding features, open space, and adjacent structures.
 - d. Materials. The choice and combination of materials reveal the preferences of those who created the property and the availability of particular types of materials and technologies and help define an area's sense of time and place. It is necessary that buildings retain key exterior materials dating from the district's period of significance in order to properly convey the history of the district's development.
 - e. Workmanship. This aspect can apply to a structure as a whole or to its individual components and provides evidence of the building's labor, skill, and available technology.
 - f. Feeling. Results from the presence of physical features that, when considered together, convey the district's historic character. The original materials, design, workmanship, and setting can, for example, either convey the feeling of a mid-nineteenth-century working-class neighborhood or a warehouse district of the same time period.
 - g. Association. The presence of physical features that remain sufficiently intact to link a district's historic character to an important historical event or person and to convey such to an observer.
3. If the resource has been determined to be a structure that contributes to the architectural and historic integrity of the property, neighborhood, and historic district, does the building retain structural integrity? In order to document the building's structural condition, the BAR may:
- a. Require a site visit by the BAR members to more closely inspect and evaluate the building.
 - b. Require the applicant to submit an unbiased structural engineering report that documents the building's physical condition.
 - c. Require the applicant to submit an economic and structural feasibility study for rehabilitating or reusing the structure.
 - d. Require the applicant to submit a feasibility study for the relocation of the building as an alternative to demolition.
 - e. Require the testimony of expert witnesses at the public hearing at which the demolition request is being considered.

Demolition of Secondary/Accessory Structures

Demolition of secondary or accessory buildings such as sheds and garages; and structures such as fences and walls, that are historic may be appropriate if they are substantially deteriorated.

The guidelines also state on page 117 that the BAR may, when approving a request for demolition, include certain conditions, such as:

- a. The applicant must conduct a reconnaissance or intensive-level survey in accordance with the Virginia Department of historic Resources' Guidelines for Conducting Cultural Resource Surveys in Virginia (1999, revised 2000).
- b. The applicant must conduct a Phase 1 archaeological study to determine if the property yields information important in Leesburg's history.
- c. The applicant must demonstrate that the site will be prepared and maintained in accordance with a landscape plan once the building has been demolished.

- d. The demolition may occur only following receipt of a building permit for the new construction.

Finally, the guidelines for driveways, walkways, and parking areas, on pages 34-37 of Chapter 4, may also inform the evaluation of the proposed demolition. They state:

Walkway, driveway and parking area conditions vary within the OHD neighborhoods and are largely defined by the lot size and building coverage. On smaller, traditionally residential lots on streets with no sidewalks, some parallel parking areas have been surfaced in gravel between the right-of-way and the front yard fence line. These dwellings often retain a walkway placed perpendicular to the street and in line with the front door. As lot sizes and setbacks increase, driveways and walkways become part of the rhythm of Leesburg's historic residential areas. Walkways usually connect the public right-of-way to the front stoop or front porch of a residence while a driveway will often lead to the rear of a lot where it may terminate at a historic outbuilding. Parking for commercial uses in the historic district varies from on-street and alley parking at the core, to structured parking serving the courthouse and government complex, to surface parking lots of differing sizes adjacent to or behind established professional and service businesses and multi-family residential complexes. Strategically placed landscape screening can help to reduce the strong visual impact that on-site parking areas can create. Pedestrian walkways through larger lots can often be enhanced with lighting and plantings. *Note:* During the project planning phase, be sure to cross-reference applicable regulations in the *Leesburg Zoning Ordinance and Design and Construction Standards Manual*. Changes to existing driveways must be reviewed and approved prior to beginning work. Do not alter existing paving without review and approval by the Preservation Planner.

Existing Driveways, Walkways and Parking Areas

1. **Retain** existing historic paving materials used in driveways including brick; stone; patterned, scored, exposed aggregate and ribbon concrete.
2. **Retain** existing historic walkway materials including brick, concrete, and stone.
3. **Repair** existing historic materials in-kind by matching the materials and pattern of the historic paving.
4. **Replace** damaged areas of paving with materials that match the original.
5. Widening or changing the configuration of existing driveways, walkways, and parking areas is appropriate when the new design respects and retains historic materials and character.
6. Improvement of the existing paving materials of driveways, walkways, and parking areas is appropriate when the new material respects and retains the historic character of the property.

New Driveways, Walkways and Parking Areas

7. Locate driveways and parking to the side and/or rear of new and existing buildings.
8. Ensure that new paving materials are compatible with the character of the area.
9. Ensure that the design of any new parking area or structure has the least impact on adjacent properties and adheres to *Guidelines for New Construction* found in *Chapter V* of this document.
10. When designing a large parking area or the placement of parking next to residential properties, use a combination of screening methods, including fencing, walls, trees, and shrubs to soften the impact.
11. When lighting parking areas, use shielded lights that illuminate the road surface, and use historically appropriate pedestrian-scaled walkway lighting. Select fixtures that reflect the character and period of significance for the district. See *Section C* of this chapter for more information on appropriate lighting.

Inappropriate Treatments for Driveways, Walkways and Parking Areas

- Do not place areas for driveways and parking in the front yard.
- Do not use large expanses of bright white or gray concrete surfaces and asphalt in visible areas.
- Do not demolish historic buildings for any parking areas or facilities. See *Chapter VIII* for more information on the demolition of historic structures.

STAFF ASSESSMENT

In evaluating the proposed demolition, staff first considered the fact that the garage is a secondary or accessory structure on the property. That the building is documented in the 1998 architectural survey as non-historic was also a significant factor in the evaluation. Although the survey does state that the buildings are “compatible with the rest of the district,” this is not the same as a building that contributes to the architectural and historic integrity of the district. It simply means that the non-historic structures do not adversely impact the historic district’s overall character. Though related architecturally to the dwelling at 124 Harrison Street NE, and of a similar construction period as the adjacent dwelling to the south and other buildings along this section of Harrison Street, the garage is not, in staff’s opinion, a contributing resource in the Old and Historic District.

The guidelines for the demolition of secondary or accessory structures state that their removal may be appropriate “if they are substantially deteriorated.” In staff’s opinion, the review standard in this case does not need to rise to this level. Of critical importance is the retention and preservation (if not outright restoration or rehabilitation) of secondary buildings that are historic and contributing. The Old and Historic District once features many barns and other larger outbuildings in addition to many small garages and sheds. Over the years, Leesburg has lost many of these buildings. The need for substantial deterioration in an outbuilding is established to prevent the unnecessary loss of any more of these structures. But if the building is considered to be non-historic and non-contributing to the character of the district, regardless of its condition, the removal is likely to have no impact so long as the post-demolition plans for the site also meet the standards of the Old and Historic District Design Guidelines. It is for this reason that staff believes that the demolition, in and of itself, is not inappropriate.

In place of the garage, the applicant proposes a slight reconfiguration of the existing asphalt driveway, which was evaluated in accordance with the guidelines for driveways, walkways and parking areas. The guidelines are broken up into two main sections: those for existing paving and those for new paving. Because the driveway already exists, but the parking area is new, staff considers the post-demolition plans to fall into both categories. The project does not result in the widening of the existing driveway, although the new configuration for the parking area is generally appropriate, for it is consistent with the existing materials and character of the property. In addition, the new parking area that is created will be located to the side/rear of the existing building. Although it will be visible from the public right-of-way, the fact that there is an existing asphalt-paved driveway, with only a short expansion of that driveway to the east property line, is a mitigating factor in the evaluation. So is the fact that, while visible, the extended driveway and parking area are at a distance from the street and sidewalk and so do not have as significant an impact as if they were located closer to the street or right in front of the dwelling. Finally, the guidelines recommend against the demolition of *historic* buildings “for any parking areas or facilities.” They make no similar statement for non-historic, non-contributing buildings, which is the status of the garage.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/DRAFT MOTION

(Based on the BAR's discussion at the meeting, any changes to the language of either part of the motion should be incorporated as necessary.)

Based on the findings that:

- The garage is documented in the 1998 architectural survey as a non-historic resource dating to 1965, and the BAR has interpreted "non-historic" to mean that it is not considered to contribute to the historic architectural character or integrity of the Old and Historic District; and
- The applicant proposes demolition of the garage and its replacement with an elongated asphalt driveway that reaches from Harrison Street to the east property boundary, with a parking area that is roughly 18 feet square located to the southeast of the dwelling; and
- The demolition of the garage is appropriate because it does not have an impact on historic resources; and
- The extension of the driveway is not considered to have an impact on surrounding resources because it will be done in the same materials as currently in place and is of limited area that is at a distance from the public right-of-way; and
- The guidelines for driveways, walkways, and parking areas state that new parking areas should be located beside or behind the main building.

I move to approve TLHP-2011- 0063 as submitted.