



## Agenda Item #5

### Application 2023-46-CA

#### DETAILS

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**Location:**

1050 New St. Francis Street

**Summary of Request:**

Demolish garage structure at rear of property

**Applicant (as applicable):**

Alton Miller, Jr.

**Property Owner:**

Geoffrey and Anna McGovern

**Staff Reviewer:**

Meredith Wilson

**Historic District:**

Old Dauphin Way

**Classification:**

Contributing

**Summary of Analysis:**

- The garage structure proposed for demolition is a much later addition of inferior quality to the main structure. It is also in a state of disrepair.
- The demolition of the subject structure at the rear of the lot would have little visual impact on the surrounding historic district.

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## PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

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Old Dauphin Way Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1984 under Criterion C for significant architecture and community planning. The district includes most nineteenth-century architectural styles and shows adaptations of middle-class domestic designs of the nineteenth century to the regional, Gulf Coast climate. It includes “fine examples of commercial, institutional, and religious structures as well as 20th-century apartments.”

The property at 1050 New St. Francis Street is a single-story cross-gabled frame cottage set on brick piers. The property is a corner lot with open sightlines from both New St. Francis and Pine Streets. The dwelling was likely constructed in 1893 by John Rondeau. The house features minimal ornamentation in keeping with the modest “folk Victorian” style of the late 19th Century, including a simple wood cornice with decorative molding, original 6-over-9 box-head windows, and the four-panel wood main entry door with rectangular transom above.

The two-bay garage addition is a simple wood frame structure with a slab-on-grade foundation. It is approximately 20 feet wide by 20 feet deep with a gabled roof in line with the cross-gable of the house. Each of the car bays features a double-leaf door made of vertical wood boards nailed to a wood frame. The automobile bays are the only openings into the garage. The exterior is clad in horizontal wood clapboards.

The garage is located behind the structure and abuts the north elevation of the west cross-gable wing. Given its placement, the garage is not visible from New St. Francis Street. However, it is partially visible from Pine Street.

This property previously appeared before the ARB in 2008, when the board approved installation of the existing 5-V-Crimp metal roof.

## SCOPE OF WORK

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1. Demolish garage located at rear of property.

## APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*)

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### *Guidelines for Demolition*

1. Consider the current significance of a structure previously determined to be historic.
2. Consider the condition of the structure in question. Demolition may be more appropriate when a building is deteriorated or in poor condition.
3. Consider whether the building is one of the last remaining positive examples of its kind in the neighborhood, county, or region.
4. Consider the impact that demolition will have on surrounding structures, including neighboring properties, properties on the same block or across the street, or properties throughout the individual historic district.
5. Consider whether the building is part of an ensemble of historic buildings that create a neighborhood.
6. Consider the future utilization of the site. **(12)**

## STAFF ANALYSIS

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The subject property is a contributing resource within the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. The application under review includes the proposed demolition of an existing non-original rear garage addition.

The *Guidelines* require that the following be considered when a demolition is proposed: the architectural significance of the building, the impact the demolition will have on the streetscape, and the nature of future utilization of the site.

### **Significance**

The garage structure proposed for demolition is not original to the existing historic home and is likely less than 50 years old. It does not appear on the 1956 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. Aerial photographs from 1960 and 1967 do not show a convincing outline with the same footprint as the extant garage. The first known documentation of the garage is a site plan in a 1977 encroachment dispute. It is believed the garage was constructed about this time.

The simple structure is not indicative of a particular architectural style and does not represent a rare or unique building typology in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. An attempt was made to relate the addition to the main dwelling, as evidenced in the gable roof and horizontal clapboard siding. However, the garage lacks the same refined, if modest, ornamental details of the main structure. Instead of the wood cornice molding found on the main house, the garage features a flat soffit made of plain sawn boards. Apart from the double-leaf garage doors, the building features blank clapboard walls with no window openings or ornamental details.

### **Condition**

The Guidelines state that “demolition may be more appropriate when a building is deteriorated or in poor condition.” The garage addition at 1050 New St. Francis Street is in an advanced state of deterioration that would require considerable replacement of existing materials and reconstruction of sections of one or more walls to rectify. The wood siding and corner boards sit directly on the concrete pad at grade level, making them vulnerable to rising damp. There is evidence of rot at several areas of the wood siding and corner boards at and immediately above grade. Most significantly, the west wall of the structure is falling outward and separating from the north wall and the roof framing. The northwest corner of the structure is, therefore, entirely open to the elements.

### **Impact on the Street and District**

Given its lack of architectural detail and modern date of construction, the garage does not contribute significantly to the historic context or appearance of the property at 1050 New St. Francis Street. Demolition of the garage therefore will not detract from the architectural or historic integrity of the property or the district as a whole. On the contrary, demolition would improve visibility of the original structure from Pine Street. As it stands today, the non-historic garage addition obscures the view of the rear of the historic dwelling from Pine Street. Removal of the garage structure would, therefore, reestablish historic sightlines to and from the rear of the dwelling.

### **Nature of Proposed Development**

The applicant has not provided concrete plans for the site after demolition of the garage structure. The applicant has discussed with staff the possibility of relocating the exterior HVAC condenser unit from the side yard to the rear within the footprint of the garage structure. This relocation of the HVAC equipment would lessen its visual impact from the public right-of-way. It should be noted that, regardless of its location, the condenser unit will be screened behind wooden pickets to match the existing wood fence.

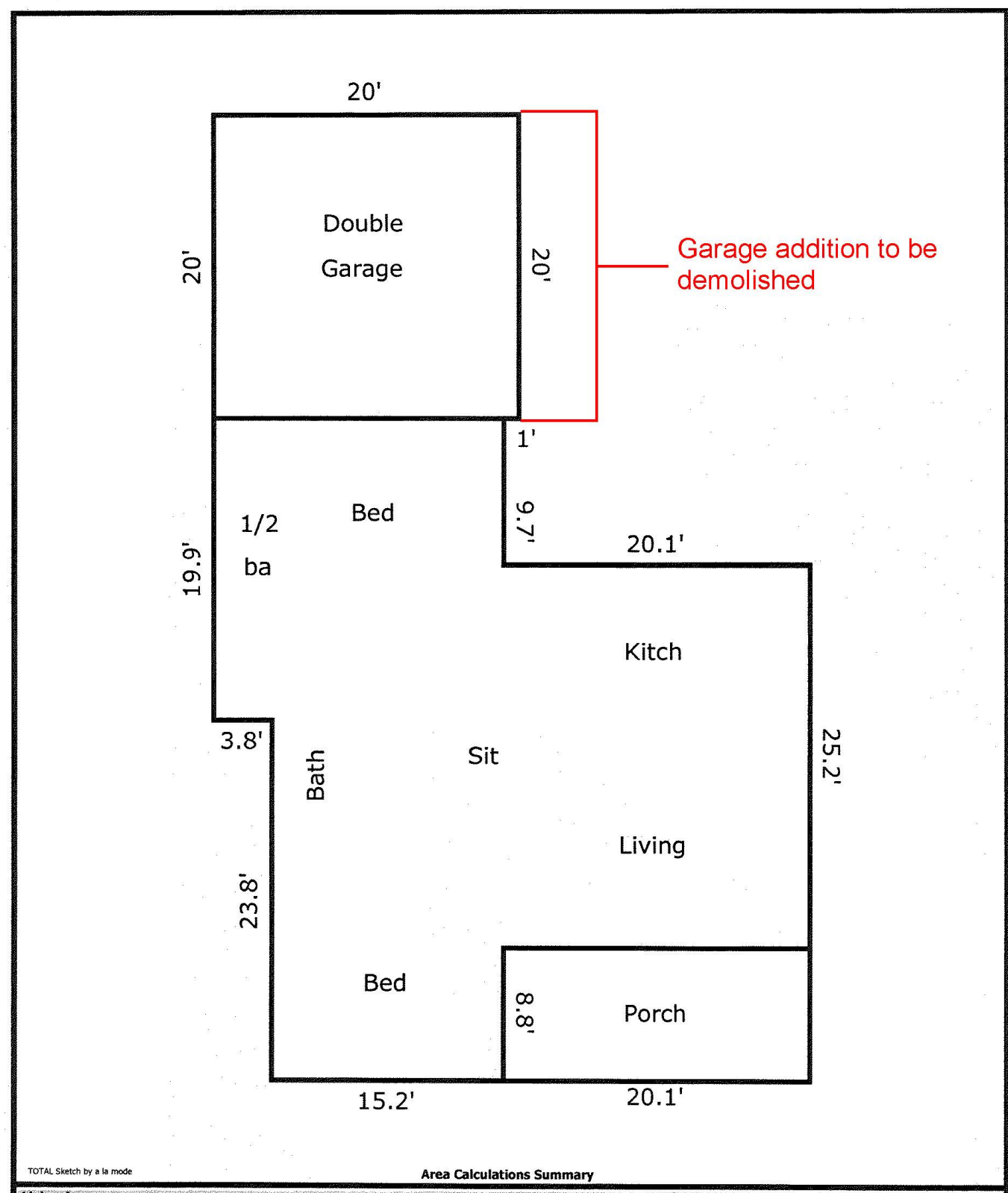
The garage structure at 1050 New St. Francis Street is a non-historic addition believed to be younger than fifty years old. While efforts were made to unify the form and materials of the addition with the historic home, the garage structure is of inferior construction and lacks the refinement of detailing found on the main dwelling. The garage has also deteriorated such that the west wall is collapsing outward, exposing the interior of the building to the elements. Given the lack of architectural significance, the deteriorated condition, and the modern construction date of the garage addition, its demolition will not have a significant impact on the historic or architectural integrity of the property, the street, or the district as a whole.

## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD VICINITY MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 5 DATE 9/6/2023  
APPLICANT Scott Miller  
PROJECT Demolish non-historic garage







## Site Photos – 1050 New St. Francis Street



1. East (front) elevation



2. East (front) elevation



3. North (rear)



4. East elevation, garage addition



5. North elevation, garage addition



6. Detail of damage at northwest corner, garage addition

