
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District:	Mount Pleasant Historic District	(x) Agenda
Address:	1843 Park Road NW	
Meeting Date:	June 23, 2016	
Case Number:	16-386	(x) Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	(x) Permit

The applicant, property owner Alice Davis, requests the Board's review of a permit application to construct a driveway perpendicular to the alley in the rear yard of a 1907 detached, frame Colonial-Revival house. The driveway would be made of pervious pavers.

Park Road is unusual in Mount Pleasant for having a collection of important large frame homes on the north side of the 1700 through 1900 blocks in the Queen Anne, Shingle, Free Classic Revival, Colonial Revival and Arts and Crafts styles. The alley behind is the most important in the historic district, characterized by two-story garages that were designed to complement the main houses and which contrast with the simple, boxy, one-story brick and frame garages of later decades found on other alleys. The subject property has a lovely stuccoed two-story garage.

Another important alley feature is the granite retaining walls which, although constructed over decades, are remarkably consistent in appearance among themselves and with walls bounding front yards at this property and elsewhere in Mount Pleasant. This project would require the demolition of a portion of the granite wall that bounds the property, a historic feature constructed two years after the house. The driveway opening would measure twelve feet wide.

The design guidelines for landscapes discourage the removal or alteration of character-defining features such as historic walls. The obvious solution to parking demand is to utilize the historic garage, which is now used for the storage of items other than automobiles. That has the advantages of permitting auto storage under cover, and it is set back from the alley allowing for a more comfortable turning radius.

But a one-car driveway perpendicular to the alley is typical for Mount Pleasant, and an existing three-foot-wide pedestrian gate at the alley means that the net loss of wall will be nine feet, meaning that about four fifths of the wall will be retained.

Also proposed are two vehicular swing-gates in the wall. These should be solid, rather than open, in order to retain the wall's sense of enclosure and to preserve the illusion of a mostly green rear yard by obscuring alley views of paving and parked car(s).

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation law, with the condition that the gates be solid, to be reviewed by staff.