

DEMOLITION OF HISTORIC GARAGES



The preservation of historically significant garages is a key component of maintaining the historic character of the individual property, and the historic integrity of the collection of properties that merit protection as a local historic district. An historic garage is one that has been designated as “Contributing” on the “Site Inventory Form” for the particular property. The City Council has established one local historic district, the Old Town Historic District (District), designated in 1989. In 2003, a new inventory of the historic significance of structures in the District was completed, as part of a nomination to list the District on the National Register of Historic Places. The 2003 inventory includes “Site Inventory Forms” for all houses, carriage houses, and garages in the District. Approximately 50% of the garages surveyed were classified as “Contributing Garages” (see the map of “Contributing Garages,” gray shading).

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) may permit the demolition of a “Contributing Garage” only after considering certain factors and determine that the either the garage is not “Contributing,” or it is not practicable to retain the garage on site. See *Section 31.10(6), Demolition of Contributing Garages*.

There are six (6) factors the HPC will consider in making their decision of whether to allow the demolition of an historic (Contributing) garage. The factors are:

1. **Historical Significance.** Does the garage contribute to the historic character of the house, or district?
2. **Architectural Significance.** Does the garage exhibit stylistic detailing that contributes to its historic significance? Is the garage individually significant for its construction method? Does it represent a variation, evolution, or transition of construction practices?

3. **Architectural Integrity.** Has the architectural design of the structure been altered and/or has sufficient historic material been removed in such a way that it compromises the overall integrity of the building?
4. **Functionality.** Can the structure be put to any reasonable use? For example, a one-car garage may be too small to accommodate a modern-day vehicle, but may still function as a place for storage. When assessing reasonable use, the Commission may consider the quality of the original construction, bowing walls, lack of a foundation, extensive siding repair, termite damage, rotted wood, and the integrity of the roof system.
5. **Structural Condition.** What are the significant structural problems that exist and would rehabilitation of the garage replace most of the historic materials, resulting in essentially a new building?
6. **Location on the Property.** Is the garage visible from the public street, or alley? What impact will demolition have on the historic district? Location, as the only factor, typically does not justify demolition.