

2010-COA-084 (IRV)	INDIANAPOLIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT	Hearing Date MAY 5, 2010
		NEW CASE
384 S. DOWNEY IRVINGTON		Warren Township Council District: 21 Benjamin Hunter
Applicant BARI WADE mailing address: 5911 Julian Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46219	Owner: Same as above	
CASE		
IHPC COA: 2010 COA 084 (IRV) • Demolish historic one-car garage		
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of Certificate of Authorization		

STAFF COMMENTS

Background of the Property

384 S. Downey Avenue is a single family residence located on the south side of the street between Ritter and Ohmer Avenues in the Irvington Historic District. The 1-story house was built c.1927 and is a bungalow style cottage. There is a small, one-car garage located directly behind the residence with alley access to the west of the house. Based on Baist map research, it was likely built sometime between 1927 and 1956. The Marion County Health & Hospital organization has issued the owner a “repair or demolish” order for this structure. The applicant recently bought the property and requests to demolish the garage.

Existing Garage

The existing 15 ft. x 20 ft. garage is quite modest architecturally. It is sited directly behind the house, only about 3 ft from the rear wall of the house. It has a concrete block foundation, a gable roof, and wood siding. There is a single bay carriage style door made of plywood on the alley side and there is an original pedestrian entry door and window on the east.

Later alterations and neglect by previous owners have affected the building since the original construction. The building is in need of a new roof and the foundation is sagging and requires repair. The siding and trim require repair/replacement and paint. A new auto entry door is necessary. The entire structure is visibly leaning.

Evaluation of Demolition Request / Irvington Preservation Plan

Staff reviewed this request by applying the demolition criteria provided in the Irvington Historic Area Plan, including the criteria specifically created for reviewing garage demolition requests. Our evaluation is as follows.

- ***Historical Significance:*** The Sanborn maps do not reflect this portion of Downey Street. The 1927 and 1941 Baist maps show a house on this property but due to the close proximity of the garage to the house, it is uncertain if the Baist maps are also reflecting the garage. Nevertheless, while the garage appears to be 50 years or older, it has limited historical significance as budget appears to have been a factor in its original design and construction.

- **Architectural Significance:** Again, this was probably the simplest and cheapest garage available in its time. Its close proximity to the house and lack of architectural detail indicate it was more of an afterthought.
- **Architectural Integrity:** The architectural integrity is compromised due to the significant lack of maintenance and the alley side opening is not original.
- **Functionality:** The garage is quite small to be used for modern day car storage. Additionally, the apron on the garage is just 3-4 ft and the adjacent alley is 15 ft wide, making it a difficult site to maneuver a vehicle easily. It could function as additional storage for yard equipment, etc., but its close proximity to the house is awkward. The owner does not presently have any plans or desire to replace the structure.
- **Structural condition:** The owner has received a citation from the Marion County Health Department regarding the poor condition of the structure and requiring that the building be brought into compliance with health and safety laws. Staff's evaluation of the structure's condition revealed the following:
 - average to poor original construction;
 - leaning walls and areas where the sill plate is separated from the block foundation and wall studs are separated from the sill plate;
 - failing foundation (concrete block with rotting sill plates);
 - soft, deteriorated siding, fascia boards and rafter tails;
 - holes in the south side of the roof.
 Repair of the structure would likely involve significant replacement of materials, essentially resulting in a new structure of substandard size.
- **Location on the property:** The garage is located directly behind the house and has very limited visibility from Downey Avenue. Staff believes its removal would have a negligible impact on the streetscape.

Additionally, the preservation objectives of the plan include: *“To prevent the unnecessary loss of architecturally and historically significant structures that contribute to the historic area.”* Having considered all of these issues relative to this request, staff believes that this garage is not completely barren of historical significance, but its removal does not seem unreasonable given limited significance and integrity as well as its present condition.

Certificate of Appropriateness v. Certificate of Authorization

The IHPC's statute states: *“If the commission finds...any application to be inappropriate, but that its denial would result in substantial hardship or deprive the owner of all reasonable use and benefit of the subject property, or that its effect upon the historic area would be insubstantial, the commission shall issue a certificate of authorization.”*

Staff believes that a Certificate of Authorization is justified because of the poor condition and minimal architectural and historical significance, and therefore, the loss of this garage would have an insubstantial effect on Irvington.

STAFF RECOMMENDED MOTION

2010-COA-084 (IRV):

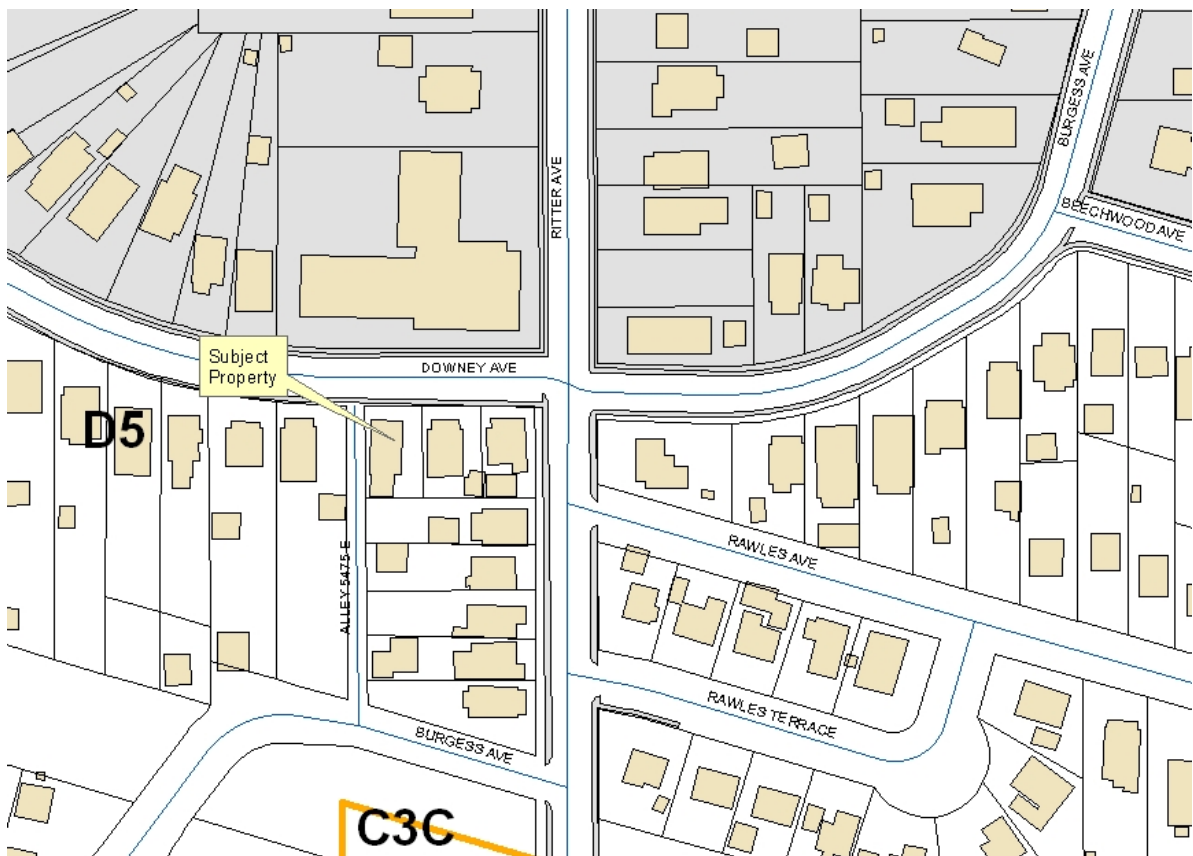
To approve a Certificate of Authorization for removal of a historic detached garage, all per submitted documentation and subject to the following stipulations:

- 1. The structure shall be removed per Section 8-131 of the Code of Indianapolis & Marion County Indiana.**
- 2. All slab and subterranean foundations shall be removed from site unless they are maintained for off-street parking purposes.**
- 3. Site shall be backfilled and graded to match existing grades and seeded with grass.**

NOTE 1: Permits may be required for this work. Please verify by contacting the Permits office at 317-327-8700 to receive any applicable permits prior to commencement of work.

NOTE 2: Off-street parking requirements must be maintained per zoning ordinance. This certificate does not authorize actions in violation to state statutes or local ordinances.

Staff Reviewer: Amy L. Bear





Front of House from Downey Street



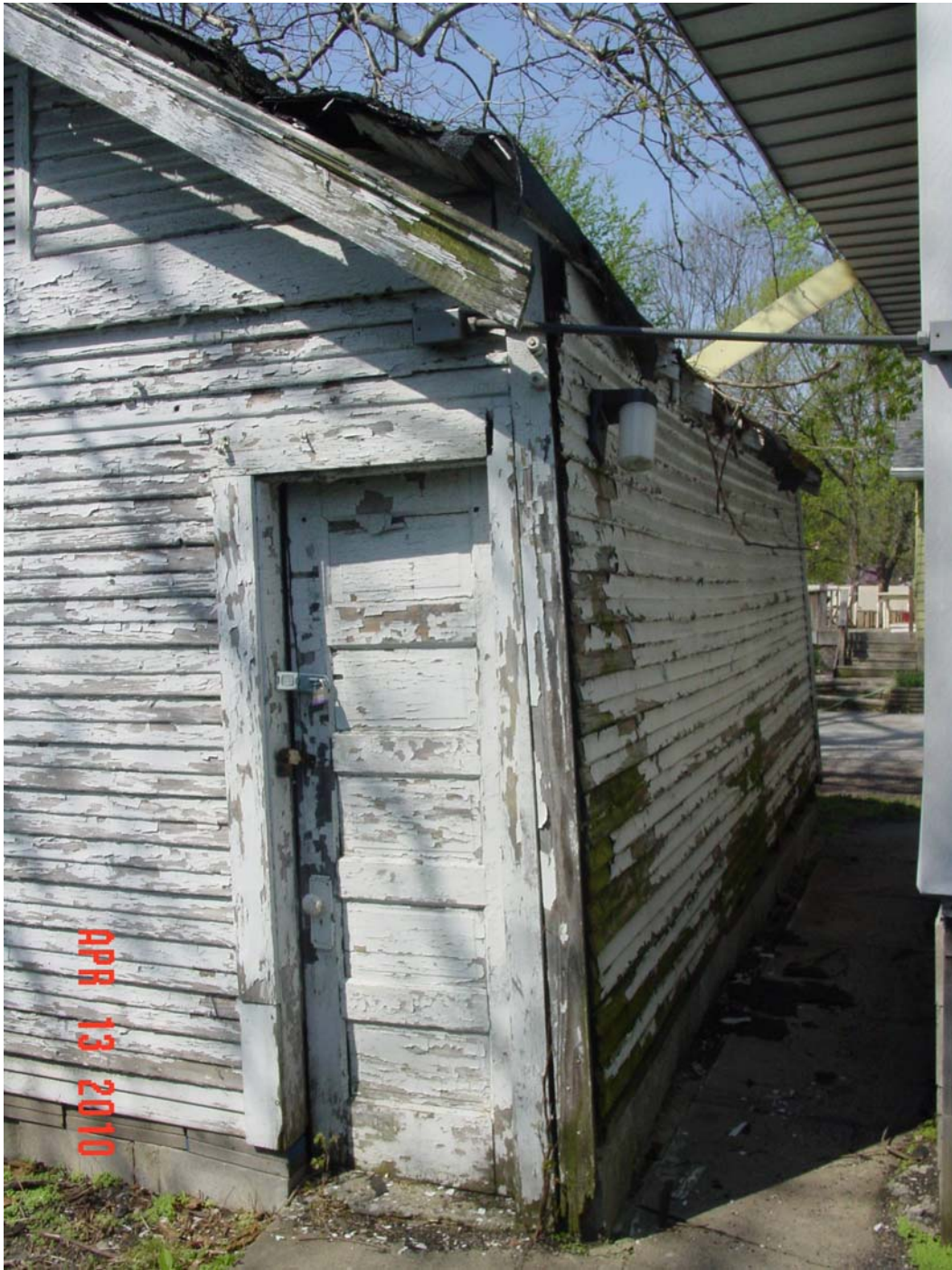
West side of garage fronting alley



East side of garage



South side of garage; note holes in roof



North side of garage



Detail of failing roof



Detail of sill plate and wall studs