

new

To: Department of Planning and Development
City of Little Rock, AR

August 5, 2025

This is to advise you concerning the background and project overview of demolition and replacement construction of an accessory building located at 1116 Rock Street, MacArthur Park Historic District, for which a variance request is being filed.

Property Background - 1116 Rock St. Little Rock AR 72202

Historical Significance: Earliest abstract entry for Lot 9 Block 46 is from the United States to Roswell Beebe, October 1838. The ninth subsequent entry is October 1894. The house is estimated to be circa 1890, with the carriage house being original. My research many years ago indicated it was a stagecoach or mail stop and eatery.

Current History: My family purchased in 1962 for family and rental occupancy as original interior.

Two structures were added to the carriage house: a concrete driveway 210 SF circa 1940, and an enclosed workspace 189 SF circa 1980.

In 1985, the house was converted into a duplex as a result of a one-room fire.

Front apartment is 750 SF, 1 bedroom retains high ceilings, moldings

Back apartment rear entry is 900 SF, 1 bedroom, remodeled in 2024.

Project Overview

Original carriage house - no structural, interior or exterior changes

Concrete driveway and workspace are to be demolished and rebuilt in the same exterior style and location. The Historical Committee approved the project scope and materials to be used to retain the historical element and continue the spatial integrity of the surrounding historical area, which includes numerous accessory buildings along the alleys.

Current Conditions

Structural and roofing sections of the Driveway and workspace were damaged by a large portion (1/3) of the diseased oak tree on property owned by ARdot ROW.

The two accessory buildings incurred major roof damage when a one-third section of a large oak tree located west of the buildings on property owned by ARdot ROW.

The lower four-foot portion of the is decayed and rotten. It continues to be a hazard to the surrounding area and the carriage house and accessory buildings.

Variance Request

I am requesting to rebuild the accessory building of 399SF (combination of 1940 and 1980 add-on structures) in the original location and alignment to the 1890 carriage house.

The exception I am requesting is variance approval to construct the west wall of the accessory building on the original property line in line with the carriage house, and at the same location as the accessory building was from the time of its construction. This would result in conflict with subsequent current property setback requirements, which were noted by the Historical Commission at the time of my project approval.

Compliance with current regulations would create several impractical, problematic and safety situations as a result of the current environment and changes to the surrounding areas:

Rationale Considerations

The alley in the 1100 block is no longer a "through alley with a north and south opening onto a street. The south end of the alley dead ends onto the ARdot ROW property, which is directly behind the carriage house and accessory structures. The north entrance is used by my next-door neighbors to enter their garage, the tenants of 1107 Cumberland rear tenant parking, and the dumpster pick up for the four plex at the corner of 1100 Rock.

The asphalt paving ends at the south end of the neighbor's garage, i.e., there is no alley pavement behind the carriage house and accessory buildings.

Alleys in the surrounding blocks have fences and accessory buildings that appear to have no required setback distance from the alley pavement.

There is a 5-foot width of ground from the property line of the carriage house and accessory building to what would be the pavement edge of the alley, if there were pavement that extended south.

The 1890 carriage house is a prominent structure that is seen from what was originally 10th and Cumberland, the Main Street west-bound exit off 630, the elevated sidewalk on the embankment ROW to MacArthur Park, and the cul-de-sac past 1116 Rock Street.

The two accessory buildings provide a physical barrier to the area on the southwest end boundary, which at the ground level serves as a walkway, trash disposal, and resting area for the homeless people who frequent the area. The structures serve as a screen from the exit traffic, which now gets additional traffic volume, including semi trucks, since I-30 exits for downtown were rerouted. The buildings create a security and privacy element to the backyard, and they connect to the privacy fence along the south side of the property.

Here are examples of foot traffic situations I have had to deal with in the location along the outside south section of the privacy fence closer toward the accessory buildings where a very large ash tree creates a "nook" space between the tree trunk and the fence and provides some protection. Upon making one of my back property checks I encountered a homeless man and woman who had created their resting area with their meager belongings. It was a sad sight, and I said, "I am sorry but you cannot stay here you will need to leave" which they did. After several instances of picking up the discarded drug paraphernalia, I had barbed wire installed on either side of the tree which eliminated use of the nook and storage area. The next incident consisted of a medical walker, suitcase with stewn about clothes and drug use supplies, which I picked up and relocated at the cul de sac and reported to 311 for city pick up. While waiting for the pick up, the belongings were once again strewn out in front of the drain and had to be gathered up.

A major concern is that if the accessory building were to be setback, that would create a section of the southwest end of the carriage house to be exposed to the weather and elements. The south wall has been protected for many, many years. If there were a setback for the accessory building, the roofline would not extend to cover a section of that wall. The inset would also create a potential security issue due to people who inhabit the area trying to pry their way into the building, damage the siding trying to see inside, or utilize a cubby space to rest or leave belongings or other stolen things.

One of my main considerations is to maintain the historical character of the area and contribute to and support the designation of the MacArthur Park Historic District. I have had a connection to that area since 77 years ago at 2108 Rock, 1608 Rock, 1600 Rock, and 1116 Rock.

I believe a look of continuity is created when the building lines up with the carriage house. By allowing the two structures to have one continuing wall, it maintains the historical look. I think having a setback would call attention that the new construction is a recent addition. The guidance and approval of the Historical Committee for the use of appropriate building material was to have the new construction blend but not stand out.

Thank you for your consideration of this variance request.

Sincerely,

Linda Pollock