LOCAL HISTORIC AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Application for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

Demolition of a Contributing Building in a Conservation District

Ardmore Conservation District

307 E 51st St

Shed / wood-garage by back alley: 18' x 10' = 180 SF

Index:

Page 2: Demolition Application

Page 5: Application Checklist

Page 6: Receipt for payment of application fee

Page 7: Project Description - Demolition

Page 8: Images of structure

Page 16: History & Background

Page 18: Why Demolition Needed

Project Description

The shed at the back of the property 307 E 51st St is built of wood; it is rotting and tilting sideways dramatically, and the homeowner would like it removed for safety, visual, and usability purposes. The shed is 18 feet by 10 feet,180 square feet in area. Given the history of the property, it appears the shed was originally a small car garage.

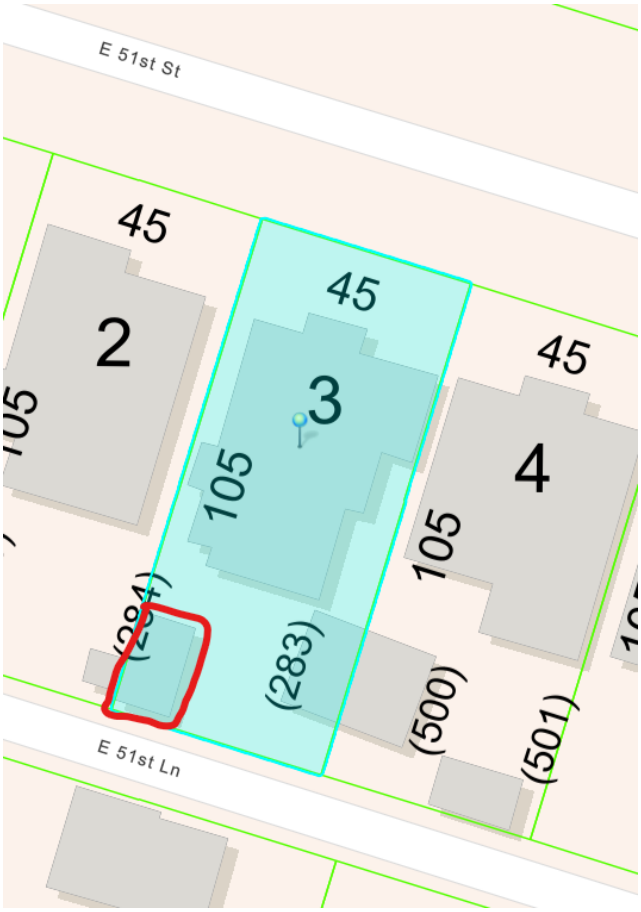
The wood around the base of the shed, especially near the soil, has rotted and deteriorated so much that the shed is tipping and leaning sideways. The top of the shed wall, about 7 feet in the air, leans 12 inches over the base. The shed, with its rotting base and lean, is beginning to tip over and rest on the neighbor's fence. The rotting base has not only led to the shed leaning but the uneven sag of the wood has twisted the whole frame, leaving the shed beyond reasonable repair in multiple aspects. It appears the previous owners of the property had a large concrete base poured on one side of the shed to help prop up the shed against leaning/falling over.

The homeowner does not want the shed to fall on the neighbor's fence and property, or to be a potential threat to them if they go inside and use it. The shed presents a substantial visual disrepair aspect to the property. While the outside surface has consistently been painted and upkept, the rotting base and substantial lean cannot be counteracted with painted sides. The property owners would like to have a shed to use for their lawn mower and similar equipment, that is safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing to their property.

We therefore request approval to demolish the current shed down to the base.

Images (5 exterior, 6 interior)

Location of shed/garage on back of property by alley (traced in red line)



View of shed from a distance in the back alley



South side, view from alley, showing strong tilt sideways



North and east sides, twist of building visible



South-west corner, again showing strong lean, as rotten base does not support the building



Concrete base poured on south side to help prop up the shed, closing off the big doors



Rotten base of boards not able to support the shed (north west corner)



More rot on the base (north side)



Rot on base (west side)



Northwest corner



Northeast corner, notice the base board more intact on the east side, thus the shed tipping to the more decayed side.



North side, upper section, strong lean compared to upright level



Corner and wall view, showing make of shed, and the leaning wall



Inside view up in rafters



History & Background

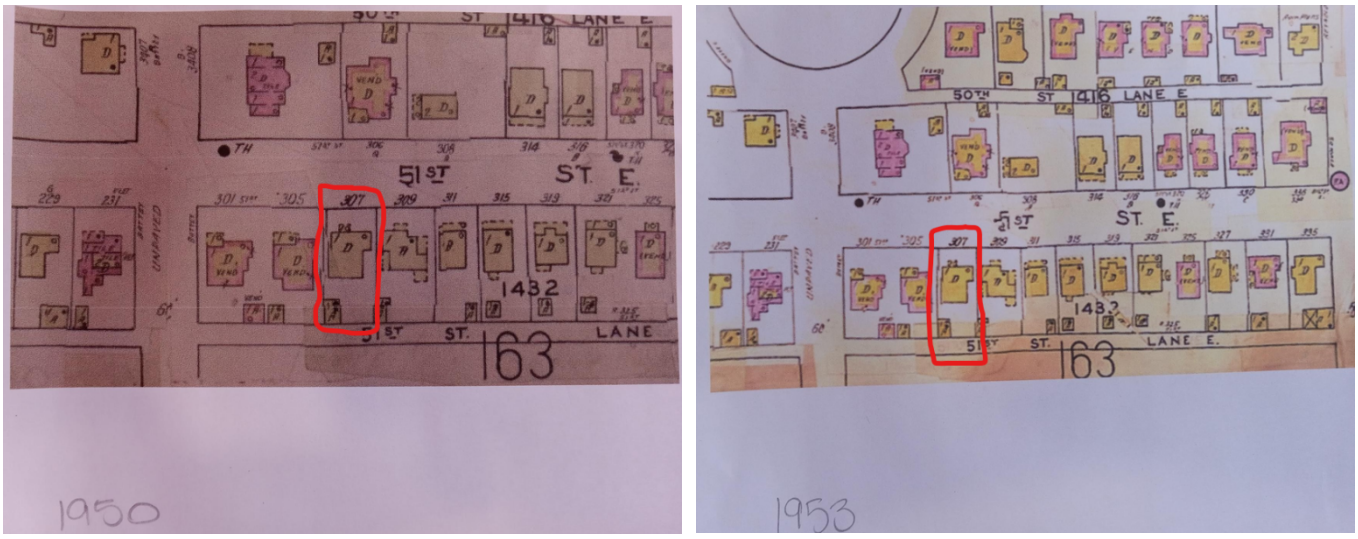
This property is part of the Ardmore Conservation District. The MPC website states that:

[This district was established in 2018 and was designed in the 1920s-1930s as a "highly restricted residential subdivision" with amenities such as city sewers and parks. The purpose of the district is to preserve the character of Savannah's older and historic neighborhoods. Proposed demolition of contributing buildings is reviewed by The Planning Commission to ensure historic buildings are preserved and the character of the district is maintained.]

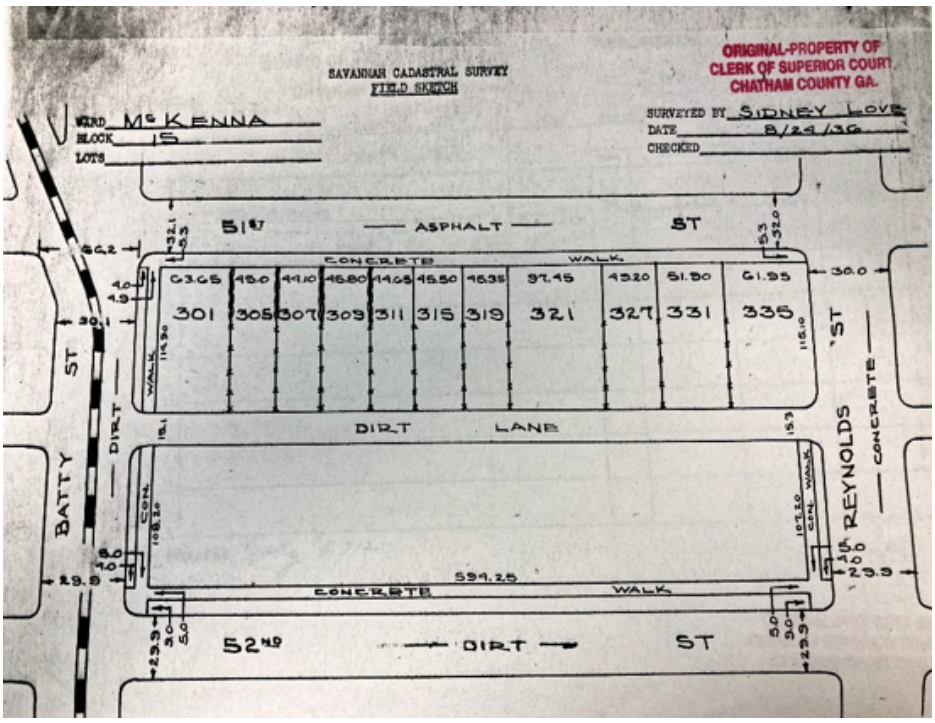
The neighborhood was planned and developed starting in 1925 by William Lattimore and Harry Hays Lattimore.

According to the first Sanborn maps after 1925 (1950 -see images below) the shed structure appears to have been in place, so it is believed to have been built about the same time as the house. Given the date of construction and the design of the neighborhood, the structure is believed to have been built as a car garage, accessible by the back alley. Some similar type structures appear in the neighborhood, but most have presumably decayed and been removed in lots where they existed.

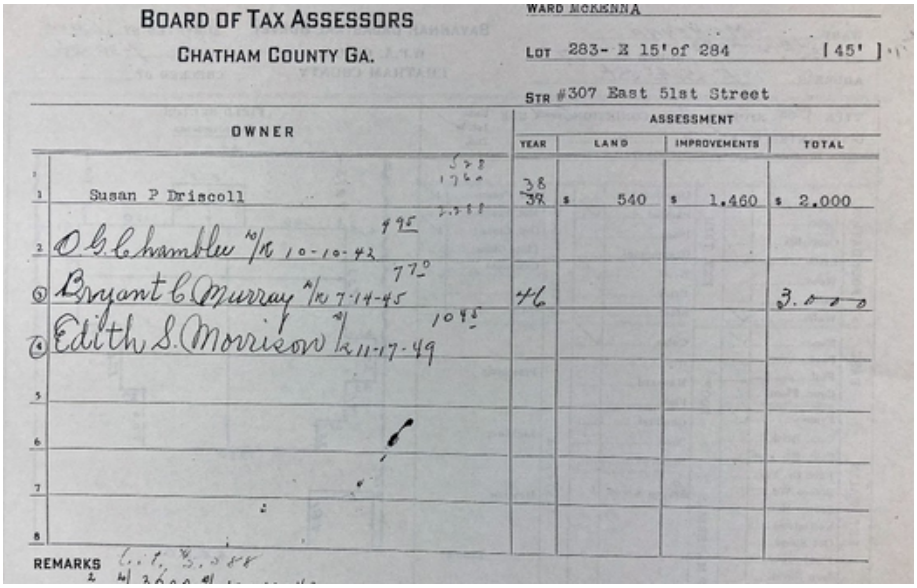
This property is in the Mckenna Ward. The Board of Tax Assessors records, for Chatham County, housed in the courthouse at 133 Montgomery St (see images below) show that there were improvements to the lot as early as 1938, but do not give more insight on the garage/shed structure in back.



Sanborn maps: 1950 and 1953



Board of Tax Assessors records housed in the Courthouse



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Why Demolition Needed

The shed/garage at the back of the property 307 E 51st St is built of wood; it is rotting and tilting sideways dramatically, and the homeowner would like it removed for safety, visual, and usability purposes. Repairing is not a reasonable option.

The wood around the base of the shed, especially near the soil, has rotted and deteriorated so much that the shed is tipping and leaning sideways. The top of the shed wall, about 7 feet in the air, leans 12 inches over the base. The shed, with its rotting base and lean, is beginning to tip over and rest on the neighbor's fence. The rotting base has not only led to the shed leaning but the uneven sag of the wood has twisted the whole frame, leaving the shed beyond reasonable repair in multiple aspects. It appears the previous owners of the property had a large concrete base poured on one side of the shed to help prop up the shed against leaning/falling over.

The homeowner does not want the shed to fall on the neighbor's fence and property, or to be a potential threat to them if they go inside and use it. The shed presents a substantial visual disrepair aspect to the property. While the outside surface has consistently been painted and upkept, the rotting base and substantial lean cannot be counteracted with painted sides. The property owners would like to have a shed to use for their lawn mower and similar equipment, that is safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing to their property.

Repairing the shed at this point would require extensive, creative engineering and work, in a process more intense than rebuilding the shed. This would require resources well beyond the value the structure ever represented. The process would likely include lifting the shed in the air, with lift points being built-in somewhere other than the bottom edge, replacing and securing new timbers all around the bottom edge of the shed, and in other parts of the building, and at the same time finding some way using pressure to twist the shed frame back square.

Given the nature of the structure and the limited options, we request approval to demolish the current shed down to the base.