

**STAFF REPORT:** 04/10/2024 REGULAR MEETING

**PREPARED BY:** D. RIEDEN

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** HDC2024-00054

**ADDRESS:** 3669 LINCOLN

**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** WOODBRIDGE FARM

**APPLICANT:** TIM LOUGHRIN, 3701 LINCOLN LLC/

**PROPERTY OWNER:** ANNETTE COVINGTON

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 03/25/2024

**DATES OF STAFF SITE VISITS:** 03/20/2024

**SCOPE:** REMOVE BRICK CARRIAGE HOUSE/BRICK WALL RUINS, ERECT FENCE

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built c. 1873, the property at 3669 Lincoln, is considered the oldest remaining house in Woodbridge Farm Historic District. This 2-story residence faces east and displays Italianate detailing hood molds and sills, brick exterior cladding, and a front gable that sweeps over an arched window. The front façade also features a central bay and a front door under an arched, partial-porch columned entry. The front yard is enclosed in a black painted picket fence, which changes from wood to metal, to enclose the side lot on the south side of the property. The north edge has a driveway that leads toward but stops short of the former carriage house at the rear of the property. Sanborn images reveal that this 2-story brick building once had its own address (3669 ½ Lincoln), and featured slate or metal roof construction. Today, only the first story of the north wall segment remains standing along with the building's foundation and segments of its brick walls along the west property line at the alley.



Site Photo 1, by Staff March 20, 2024: (East) front elevation.



Site Photo 2, by Staff March 20, 2024: (Facing east) showing existing conditions of carriage house/brick wall ruins at alley.

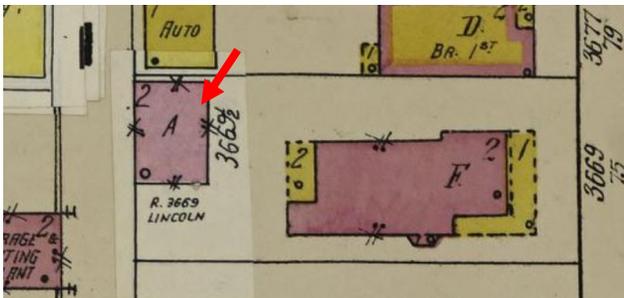


Figure 1 by 1921-1950 Sanborn Vol 2, showing original carriage house (arrow).



Aerial 1 of Parcel # 06005785 by Detroit Parcel Viewer, showing the former carriage house location (arrow).

# PROPOSAL

The applicant proposed the following work:

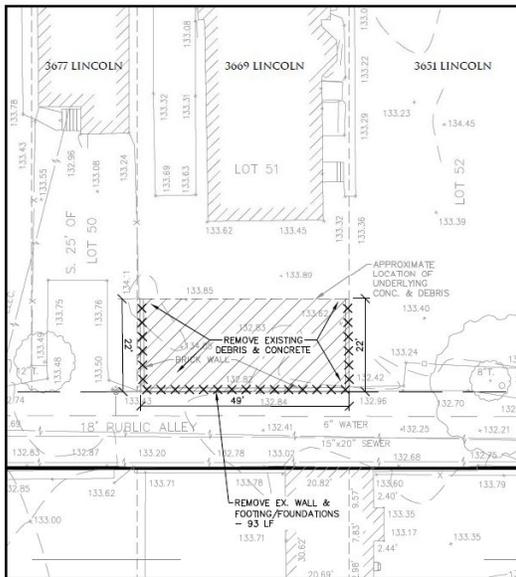
## REMOVE BRICK CARRIAGE HOUSE/BRICK WALL RUINS

- Demolish and remove existing carriage house wall, footing, and foundation.
- Remove all excess concrete and debris within 22'x49' area as shown in site plan.
- Add clean dirt and topsoil as needed, fine grade area as shown in site plan.
- Seed area with grass seed.

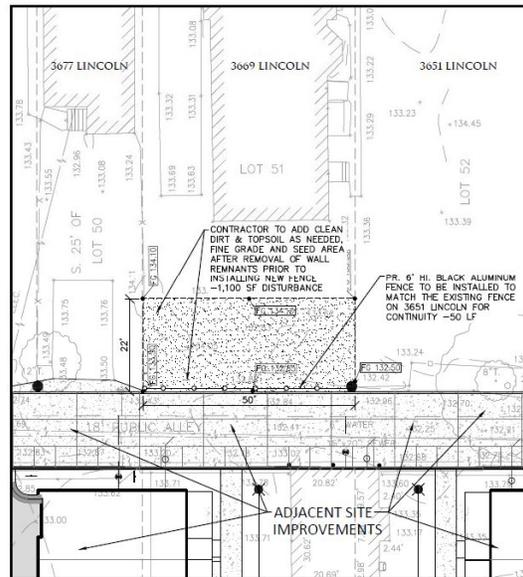
## INSTALL FENCE

- Install 6' aluminum fence, painted black to match existing fence along alley.

3669 LINCOLN ST.  
PROPOSED FENCE/WALL REMOVAL PLAN



DEMOLITION DETAIL



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Figure 2 by Applicant showing proposed work and location.



Site Photo 3, by Staff March 20, 2024: (Facing northeast) showing remains of north wall of the carriage house.



Site Photo 4, by Staff March 20, 2024: (Facing southeast) showing existing conditions of carriage house/brick wall ruins along the alley.

## STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Woodbridge Farm Historic District was established in 1991.
- The Historic Designation Advisory Board (HDAB) report states that this is the oldest house standing in the district (c.1873). This property is described as “The Isbell House”, where Milo H. Isbell, a merchant tailor, purchased this home from the Hodges Brothers, who had purchased a large portion of Woodbridge Farm north of Grand River: “The house originally started as an Italianate style house as evidenced by the proportions of its original sections, their fenestration, original window hoods and the south side porch. The rustic front was added sometime later, as were rear additions. The building was converted into 8 apartments and 6 rooms; later into 3 apartments.”
- Per Sanborn maps, the carriage house was likely built contemporaneous to the house.
- City building permit cards indicate that the carriage house may have had modifications done in the 1950s to the second floor. Sanborn maps indicate other modifications have been made over time.
- The applicant provided access to the site for staff. Staff walked the site and took photos and observed existing conditions. After review, it is staff’s opinion that the structure has suffered severe damage and is beyond feasible repair.
- While the carriage house was a contributing structure to the property and the historic district, at some point, it lost integrity necessary to convey its historic significance, because of its ruinous condition. Given the marginal contributing status of the current state, staff finds it is reasonable to approve demolition rather than require a complex and expensive repair. Demolition of a contributing structure that has lost its historic integrity due to catastrophic damage would meet the Standards. (See also attached document *National Park Service Best Practices Review “Evaluating Garages and Outbuildings in Historic Districts”*.)
- Staff has the opinion that the proposed aluminum fence along the rear property line is appropriate as it provides continuity to existing conditions and follows the HDC guidelines.
- The applicant obtained a letter from the owner that authorizes the work as shown in the application.

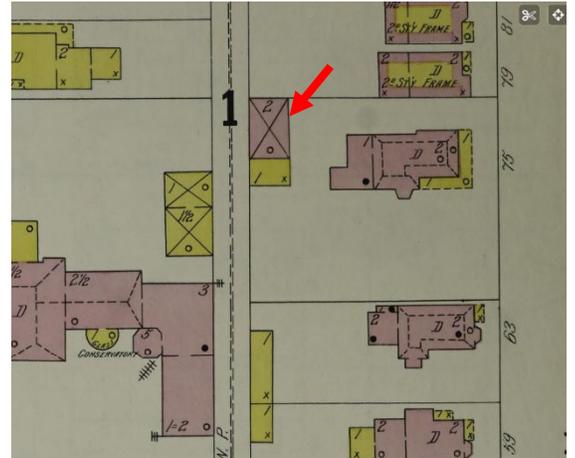


Figure 3 by 1897 Sanborn Vol 2, Sheet 107, showing original carriage house (arrow).

## ISSUES

- It is staff’s opinion that the garage’s structure is severely compromised, and the building has lost its historic integrity. Given these conditions, staff finds it reasonable to approve demolition.
- Staff have no issues with the proposed remaining work in this application.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

#### Recommendation: Remove Brick Carriage House/Brick Wall Ruins, Erect Fence

It is the staff’s opinion that the demolition of the carriage house and the remaining proposed work are appropriate. Staff therefore recommend the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed and completed because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Woodbridge Farm Historic District Elements of Design.