

“A guard house, with a prison attached.”

—Dorene B. McMahon



DON'T

... forget the neighbors. Local reaction is generally confused: Modern design is interesting, people say, but why put it right on top of a historic house? The juxtaposition is, in a word, bizarre.

THE ABOMINABLE GARAGE

It's just what it looks like: a recent, industrial-feeling addition to an old stone outbuilding that sits right next to a venerable Pennsylvania stone house of about 1820. But there's more to the story.

Apparently, the property was bought by a contractor who likes to dabble in modern architecture. First he restructured the stone pigpen-turned-garage, adding a workshop and storage over an automobile bay. But then he also built a new house behind the garage, using the remodeling's design vocabulary.

The stone house has, unfortunately, been substantially altered inside in a conversion to three apartments. Had the property been acquired by a preservation-minded owner, the cascade of changes wouldn't have happened. "Many today find the old, eastern Pennsylvania houses too small, so they add on—and not usually in a sympathetic way," says our correspondent.

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