

EDIS.019 HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
CRBIS # 401132 PART I

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ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

ON

GARAGE

Edison National Historic Site

National Park Service, Eastern Office, Design and
Construction, Division of Architecture

Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

H30-H

August 12, 1964

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region
From: Chief Architect, EODC
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Architectural Data Section,
Part I, Garage, Edison

Enclosed for your review and distribution are three copies of the
subject report which was recommended by Chief Hall this date. A
copy has been retained by this office.

ROBERT E. SMITH

Robert E. Smith

Enclosure

cc:

Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Superintendent, Edison

Chief Architect, EODC

Norman M. Souder, Historic Structures w/c of report
Historic Structures w/c of report (2)

SREvins:arc

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I
ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION
ON
GARAGE
Edison National Historic Site

Prepared by
Norman M. Souder
Architect
August 1964

for

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Division of Architecture

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

ON

GARAGE

Edison National Historic Site

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Superintendent

Date _____

Robert G. Hall
Chief, EODC

Date 8-12-64

Regional Director, Northeast Region

Date _____

APPROVED

Director

Date _____

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I. FOREWORD

The Garage at "Glenmont," the estate of Thomas A. Edison in Llewellyn Park, is one of the earliest examples of monolithic concrete construction developed by Edison. It was erected in 1908, at a cost of \$12,000.00. The combined concrete Gardener's Cottage and Potting Shed also on the grounds of "Glenmont," pre-dates the Garage by two years. It is of similar design, but varies in ornamental details.

Concrete building construction as pioneered by Edison, marked an important step forward in architecture and the building industry. The preservation of these buildings is important as early examples of this type of construction, and as the structures related to the life of Thomas Edison.

The building is structurally sound, but in need of a new roof and general repairs which are noted in this report.

We wish to acknowledge the cooperation and assistance received in the gathering of material for this report from Superintendent Melvin Weig and his staff and from Exhibits Specialist Gordie Whittington.

Norman M. Souder
Architect
August 1964

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. Exterior

1. Walls

The Garage is two stories high, with a partial basement. The foundation walls, floor and roof slabs, parapet and decorative features are constructed of reinforced concrete. The exterior treatment is an attempt to adapt the material to a modified classic mould.

The east and west facades are divided into five bays with two corner pilasters and two flat pilasters framing the central bay. The north and south sides have corner pilasters only. The areas between the water table and window sills on the first floor and between the window sills and the lower cornice on the second are treated with recessed panels.

The flat areas between the pilasters at the first floor level are divided into simulated stone courses, as is the arch over the entrance door.

The greater portion of the walls are at present heavily covered with vines.

2. Roof and Parapet

The roof is basically flat with a slight pitch to provide a slope to the roof drains located within the parapet. The leaders are located inside the building.

2.

The present covering is of built-up roofing which has been in very poor condition for a long time, as evidenced by the leakage onto the walls and slab below.

The parapet follows the building wall, with pedestals over the pilasters below and is capped with asphalt covered concrete. Inset panels decorate the exposed surface, repeating the bays below.

3. Cornices

Wide, moulded, reinforced concrete cornices are placed at the floor and roof slab lines. The lower cornice is composed of ovolo curves and is decorated with dentils at the lower wall line. The upper cornice is a repeat of the lower, but omitting the dentils.

4. Fenestration

The west facade has a central double door with two balancing windows on either side at the first floor level. At the second floor level there are five windows.

The east facade has five windows on both the first and second floor levels.

The north and south sides have four windows at each floor level.

The central door on the west facade provides the only entrance to the building. A pair of wood doors, with

3.

windows in their upper portion and crossed braces over beaded boards below, is set in an arched opening.

Lighting fixtures in the form of lions heads holding torches are located on either side of the door. The torch portion of the cast concrete fixtures have white globe shades.

The windows throughout are twenty four light over one large light sash, set in wood frames. The twenty four lights of the upper sash are achieved by means of diagonal muntins crossing the vertical and horizontal muntins resulting in triangular panes of glass.

The doors, windows and frames are painted dark green.

5. Chimney

A large reinforced chimney is located on the north side within the structure, with the portion above the roof partially concealed from view by the parapet.

B. Interior

1. Basement

A steel subway-grating stair leads from the first floor to the basement, at the north end of the Garage. The area is divided into two rooms, a boiler room and a coal bin.

2. First Floor

The first floor is the garage area. The flooring is concrete. Just inside the door is a 14'-4" turntable for turning cars. In the southwest corner a concrete stair rises to the second floor. An electrical panel for charging the batteries of the early electric cars is placed in front of the windows on the north end.

3. Second Floor

The second floor is divided into a long hall, eight rooms and bath. Some of the earlier partitions are made of concrete tile and plastered. Most of the partitions are later and are of dry-wall construction. The flooring in the hall and in some of the rooms is wood laid over the concrete slab, in other rooms the concrete floor slab is exposed. The interior face of the exterior walls are exposed concrete.

A brick fireplace is located in the northeast corner room, one of two rooms once used by Mr. Edison's son Theodore as a laboratory.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The rehabilitation of the Garage includes the following recommendations:

1. New roofing material
2. Repair concrete cornices and parapet coping
3. Repair chimney
4. Waterproof basement
5. Repair or reconstruction of window frames
6. Repair of concrete electric torch lighting fixtures on either side of door
7. Repairs to exterior walls
8. Supply new electric and water services
9. Provide new heating system

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

The Garage at "Glenmont" from the northwest.
Note the moulding of the concrete, simulating stone
jointing. The upper section of the double hung sash
is unusual in design.

Photo by: National Park Service, EODC
Boucher, April 1959

HABS photo



ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

The reinforced concrete Garage at
"Glenmont," from the southeast.

Photo by: National Park Service, EODC
Boucher, April 1959

HABS photo

