

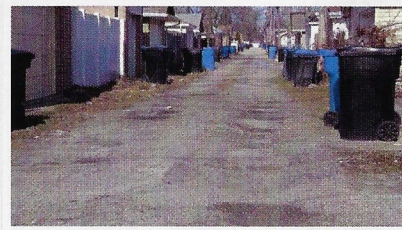
Take Back our Alleys & Garages!

living spaces

Article contribution courtesy of Amy Lauerhass,
Bexley resident, owner of Lauerhass Architecture

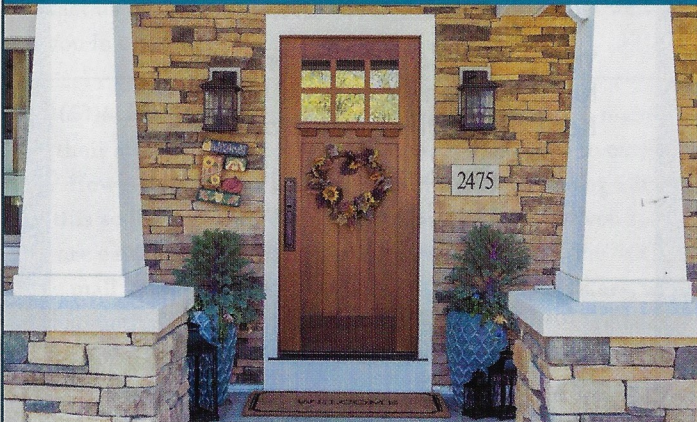
WHY ALL PARTS OF OUR PROPERTIES MATTER

More than a century ago, the Village of Bexley was founded. At that time, cars were becoming widely available, thanks to the world's first moving assembly line for cars, developed by Henry Ford. The city of Bexley was originally laid out with the majority of the streets being separated by alleys. These alleys contain not only detached garages, but our utility lines, as well



as access for refuse collection. In turn, this provides a lovely front streetscape of green lawns, front porches and large trees.

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Our alleys are a critical part of the fabric of our neighborhoods. Many of us come and go from our homes this way each and every day. Lots of residents ride their bikes or walk their dogs down alleys as well. However, when we are working on our yards and homes, it is easy to overlook this part of our property.

Now that summer is here, and we are all looking to get outside more, here are some tips to improve this important area.

Spruce up the Exterior of the Garage

The garage photos are a face-lift of my own garage a few summers ago. We spent a few hundred dollars to remove the (badly-done) vinyl siding, scrape and paint the existing wood, and install a new vent, shutters and a window box. Small improvements like this can go a long way towards making your garage a charming addition to your property.

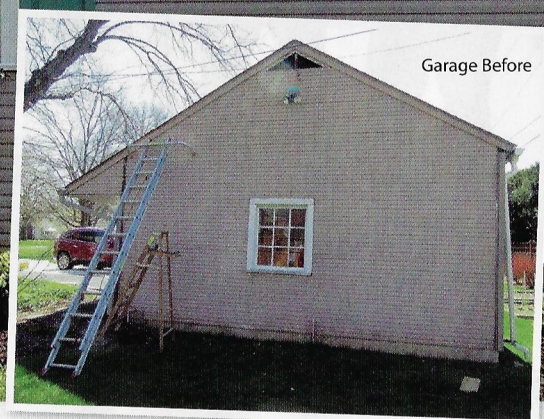
Clean out the Inside of the Garage

Do you have boxes of stuff in your garage that haven't been opened in years? Decades? What about old furniture?

Take a weekend and clean it out! Donate what you can – there are many area residents in need. Put those too-small clothes, unused toys, and old table set to a better use than taking up space in your garage. Perhaps you may even be able to fit a car or two in there afterwards! That means fewer cars parked in our streets and driveways.



Garage After



Garage Before

Add Some Green

Many of us have our yards fenced, and there is a “leftover zone” between the back fence and alley. This often becomes a forgotten area, and before long is filled with overgrown weeds. Pull out all those weeds and plant some resilient perennials. That way, there is no grass to cut, and no yearly pruning to be done with trees or shrubs. If your area is shady, try some different varieties of hosta, Lenten rose, or woodland poppies. If it is sunny, go with day lilies, sedum, or black-eyed susan. All these plants are low-maintenance, easy to find at the local nursery, and come back year-after-year.

Keep it Clean

Make sure your trash cans are put away each week, so they aren’t damaged or blown around. Also, pick up any litter than happens to land on your property. Even if you don’t access your garage from the alley, many of your neighbors use the alley, and they thank you!

Each year, Bexley has a “Love your Alley” contest, to see which block gets bragging rights for the nicest alley. Per the city’s Facebook page:

The Love Your Alley initiative encourages residents and families to take part in the cleanup and beautification of Bexley. The contest bolsters cooperation amongst neighbors to help maintain their alleys and sidewalks.


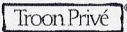
Winners of the contest will win a catered alley block party!

As a community, let’s have more entries in this year’s contest than ever before! Treat your garage and alley with the care and time it deserves, and make it an asset to your property.


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