MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 3948 Washington St., Kensington  
Meeting Date: 8/16/2017

Resource: Outstanding (Primary One) Resource  
Report Date: 8/9/2017
Kensington Historic District

Applicant: James Cooper  
Public Notice: 8/2/2017

Review: HAWP  
Tax Credit: Partial

Case Number: 31/06-17H  
Staff: Michael Kyne

PROPOSAL: Handrail installation and storm door replacement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve with conditions the HAWP application.

1. The front porch step handrails will be differentiated from the porch railings, with final review and approval delegated to staff.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Outstanding (Primary One) Resource within the Kensington Historic District
STYLE: Colonial Revival Eclectic
DATE: 1893

PROPOSAL:

The applicant proposes the following work items at the subject property:

- Wooden handrail installation on each side of the front porch steps, with design to match existing porch railing.
- Retroactive approval for replacement of a non-historic basement-level storm door on the right side of the house.
- Repair of an existing non-historic storm door on the left side of the house.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Kensington Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Kensington Historic District (Amendment), Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan (Vision), Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A), and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation
(Standards). The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

**Vision of Kensington**

In accordance with Section 1.5 of the Historic Preservation Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures (Regulation No. 27-97), the Commission in developing its decision when reviewing a Historic Area Work Permit application for an undertaking involving a resource within the Kensington Historic District may use the Vision to determine the appropriateness of a proposal. The goal of the Vision “was to establish a sound database of information from which to produce a document that would serve the HPC, M-NCPCC, their staff, and the community in wrestling with the protection of historic districts amidst the pressures of life in the 21st century.”

In addition, the Vision provides a specific physical description of the district as it was at the time of the study, an analysis of character-defining features of the district, a discussion of the challenges facing the district, and a discussion of proposed strategies for maintaining the character of the district, while allowing for appropriate growth and change.

The Vision identifies the following, as those features that help define the character of Kensington’s built environment:

- Building Setbacks: Residential and Commercial Patterns
- Rhythm and Spacing between Buildings
- Geographic and Landscape Features
- Scale and Building Height
- Directional Expression of Buildings
- Roof Forms and Materials
- Porches
- Dominant Building Material
- Outbuildings
- Integrity of Form, Building Condition, and Threats
- Architectural Style

The Amendment notes that:

*The district is architecturally significant as a collection of late 19th and early 20th century houses that exhibit a variety of architectural styles popular during the Victorian period including Queen Anne, Shingle, Eastlake, and Colonial Revival. The houses share a uniformity of scale, setbacks, and construction materials that contribute to the cohesiveness of the district’s streetscapes. This uniformity, coupled with the dominant design inherent in Warner’s original plan of subdivision, conveys a strong sense of both time and place, that of a Victorian garden suburb.*

**Sec. 24A-8. Same-Criteria for issuance.**

(a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
(b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
3. The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
4. The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
5. The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; [emphasis added] or
6. In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.

(c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.

(d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. (Ord No. 9-4, § 1; Ord No. 11-30)

Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” The Standards are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in
design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**STAFF DISCUSSION**

*Handrailing*

The applicant proposes to install wooden handrails on each side of the front porch steps, with details to match the existing porch railings. The existing front porch steps are not original to the house, but are in the original location/configuration. The applicants have indicated that there is no evidence that handrails previously existed at the front porch steps.

*Standard #2* states that the “The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.” Due to its location and visual prominence, staff suggests that the front porch with central porch steps is a character-defining feature of the subject property. Because the proposed handrails will alter this character-defining feature, the proposal should be reviewed with greater scrutiny.

*Standard #3* states that “Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.” While the handrails are compatible with the existing features and they are being proposed for safety purposes, there is a potential for handrails that match the porch railings to be misconstrued as original to the house.

In accordance with *Standard #9*, the proposed alteration should be differentiated from the original features to protect the historic integrity of the house and allow the original features to be discerned.

Staff recommends a condition of approval, stipulating that the front porch step handrails will be differentiated from the porch railings, with final review and approval delegated to staff. Appropriate options might include simple black metal handrails that recede from view when viewing the house from the public right-of-way.

*Storm Door Replacement*

The applicant is seeking retroactive approval for the replacement of a non-historic basement-level storm door on the right side of the house. Because the storm door is non-historic, at the basement-level, and
toward the rear of a secondary elevation, its replacement should be reviewed with lenient scrutiny. Staff suggests that the proposal has negligible potential to alter features that characterize the property or to detract from the surrounding historic district.

*Storm Door Repair*

Staff supports the repair of the existing storm door on the left side of the house, as the proposal will result in no visual change.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with the condition specified on Circle 1** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), (1), (2) & (d) having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the district and the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the 3 **permit sets of drawings, if applicable to Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff for review and stamping** prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff’s discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans.

Once the work is completed the applicant will **contact the staff person** assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or michael.kyne@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: JCooper_99@yahoo.com
Contact Person: James Cooper
Daytime Phone No: 301 953 8325

Tax Account No: _______________________________________

Name of Property Owner: James Cooper
Daytime Phone No: 301 933 8323

Address: 3748 Washington St, Kensington, MD 20895
Street Number: Street: City:
Zip Code: Kensington:

Contractor: _______________________________________
Contractor Registration No: _______________________
Agent for Owner: ______________________________________
Daytime Phone No: _______________________

LOCATION OF BUILDING PREMISES

House Number: 3748
Street: Washington St.

Town/City: Kensington
Nearest Cross Street: Prospect St.
Lot: 57 Block: 13 Subdivision: Kensington Park

Area: _______ Felt: _______ Parcel: _______

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:
☐ Construct ☐ Extend ☑ Alter/Rebuild
☐ Move ☐ Install ☐ Wreck/Raze
☐ Revision ☐ Repair ☐ Revacable

1B. Construction cost estimate: $_________

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit #

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 Sect WSSC 02 Septic 03 Other:
2B. Type of water supply: 01 Sect WSSC 02 Well 03 Other:

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height _______ feet _______ inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
☐ On property line/property line ☐ Entirely on land of owner ☐ On public right of way/assessment

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent: ___________________________
Date: 7/10/17

Approved: ___________________________  Disapproved: _____________
For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission
Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Application/Permit No: ___________________________ Date Filed: ___________________________
Date Issued: ___________________________

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

806 049
THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION.

1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT
   a. Description of existing structure(s) and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance:
      Existing structure is a primary resource in the Kensington Historic District built in 1893. Parochial configuration is original, but the wood steps have been reconstructed many times.

   b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource(s), the environmental setting, and, where applicable, the historic district:
      See Addendum

2. SITE PLAN
   Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale. You may use your plot. Your site plan must include:
   a. the scale, north arrow, and date;
   b. dimensions of all existing and proposed structures; and
   c. site features such as walkways, driveways, fences, ponds, streams, trash dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and landscaping.

3. PLANS AND ELEVATIONS
   You must submit 2 copies of plans and elevations in a format no larger than 11" x 17". Plans on 8 1/2" x 11" paper are preferred.
   a. Schematic construction plans, with marked dimensions, indicating location, size and general type of walls, window and door openings, and other fixed features of both the existing resource(s) and the proposed work.
   b. Elevations (facades), with marked dimensions, clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, context. All materials and finishes proposed for the exterior must be noted on the elevations drawings. An existing and a proposed elevation drawing of each facade affected by the proposed work is required.

4. MATERIALS SPECIFICATIONS
   General description of materials and manufactured items proposed for incorporation in the work of the project. This information may be included on your design drawings.

5. PHOTOGRAPHS
   a. Clearly labeled photographic prints of each facade of existing resource, including details of the affected portions. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.
   b. Clearly labeled photographic prints of the resource as viewed from the public right-of-way and of the adjoining properties. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.

6. TREE SURVEY
   If you are proposing construction adjacent to or within the dripline of any tree 6" or larger in diameter (at approximately 4 feet above the ground), you must file an accurate tree survey identifying the size, location, and species of each tree of at least that dimension.

7. ADDRESSES OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS
   For all projects, provide an accurate list of adjacent and confronting property owners (not tenants), including names, addresses, and zip codes. This list should include the owners of all lots or parcels which adjoin the parcel in question, as well as the owner(s) of lot(s) or parcel(s) which lie directly across the street/highway from the parcel in question.

PLEASE PRINT (IN BLUE OR BLACK INK) OR TYPE THIS INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
PLEASE STAY WITHIN THE GUIDES OF THE TEMPLATE, AS THIS WILL BE PHOTOCOPIED DIRECTLY ONTO MAILING LABELS.
Addendum 1. b

Description of Project

1.b.1. For safety reasons, we seek to add handrails on both sides of the stairs to match the existing porch rail in profile and materials. As far as we know, the stairs were built originally without handrails.

b. 2. We seek retroactive approval for the replacement of a wood and glass storm door at the basement entrance in the addition to the house built in 1987. In 2016, I applied for historic preservation tax credit for a number of different 2015 repair projects, one of which included a replacement of this storm door to the below ground level basement door which is obstructed from street view. The entrance is on the north side of the house and is accessed by concrete stairs down to a concreted-bottomed stairwell, which takes a lot of water during storms. The wood and glass storm door took on rot and eventually eroded due to constant splash and exposure to the rain, and began in 2015 to erode the existing interior wooden door. Thus, I replaced the rotten storm door with a high-quality Anderson metal and glass door [see attached pictures and specs/bill] that is identical in appearance to the storm door that it replaced, both for reasons of weather-tightness and for better security.

In December 2016, I received a call from Michael Kyne telling me that HPC was disallowing these repairs because I hadn't gotten HPC approval prior to purchasing and installing the new storm door. However, he suggested that if I presented this work to the HPC in 2017 and explained that I wasn't aware that the storm door replacement needed prior HPC approval for tax credit consideration, that the HPC might consider the issue for review now and possible approval for a future tax credit.

b. 3. We now have a wood and interchangeable glass/screen storm door [see attached pictures] on the side entrance to the house on the south side, which has similarly rotted and has broken open this year. We have removed the broken storm door and are seeking HPC approval prior to repair of the existing door including the glass and screen insert frames.
Note: This property does not lie within the limits of a flood hazard area as delineated on the maps of the national flood insurance program.
COOPER RESIDENCE
3940 WASHINGTON ST., KENNINGTON
EXISTING PORCH STAIR

STAIR PLAN, EXISTING
\[ \frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0'' \]

STAIR ELEVATION, EXISTING
\[ \frac{1}{2}'' = 1'-0'' \]
COOPER RESIDENCE
PROPOSED STAIR RAIL

PROPOSED HANDRAILS & POSTS, RAILS & BALUSTRADES TO MATCH EXISTING.

PLAN, PROPOSED
\[
\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'-0''
\]

ELEVATION, PROPOSED
\[
\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'-0''
\]
Sides Elevation, Proposed

1/2" = 1'-0"
B 2

Replaced Anderson Storm door.
B2

Replaced Anderson Storm door.
B.3: Broken Storm door - South Side
ORDER ID: 2558-697716
RECALL AMOUNT 669.08

SUBTOTAL 669.08
SALES TAX 40.15
TOTAL $709.23

AUTH CODE 06739G/4973294

AUTH CODE: 06739G/4973294

P.O.#/JOB NAME: StormDoor

ANDERSEN STORM DR
25 x 78 1/2

Qty 1

648 3.1:T

51528450 BX:2:1:1:53

SU14 02:53
CUT > TEMPER > SHIP

607393 132799-0034

296646

607393 132799-0034

Questions on installation?
Missing or damaged parts?

Please DO NOT return to the store.

Please call 1-800-933-3626
for consumer/homeowner service.

Before calling, please locate the serial number on the inside hinge of the door.

¿Dudas sobre la instalación?
¿Faltan piezas o están dañadas?

NO devuelva el producto a la tienda.

Comuníquese al 1-800-933-3626 para solicitar el Servicio al consumidor/propietario.

Antes de llamar, ubique el número de serie que se encuentra en el interior de la bisagra de la puerta.
Name: Cooper
Address: 3948 Washington St., F讪sington
Phone:

- Power wash
- Wash exterior windows and storm
- Caulk where needed
- Scrape and sand peeling paint
- Prime bare wood
- Paint —— coat finish paint

1. Prep and repair siding on chimneys and entire house where needed
2. Prime and repaint North and South siding
3. Repair Chime, prime and repaint two
4. Repair rotten wood on 4 storm windows, prime and repaint
5. Replace rotten office storm

Trim
Siding
- Doors
- Garage door
- Downspouts
Windows — chime, soffits and paint
- Shutters
Others

*Cover side walks and bushes
* Cleanup work area
Additional work will be discussed and priced
Deposit required prior to starting work ———— Remainder due upon completion
Labor and materials $17,251.2

Signed (Handwritten) Date 11/12/15
**HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING**
[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner's mailing address</th>
<th>Owner's Agent's mailing address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Cooper</td>
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<tr>
<td>3941 Washington St.</td>
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<td>Kensington, Md. 20895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hal &amp; Annie Frazier</td>
<td>Kristen &amp; Mike Hernham</td>
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<tr>
<td>3942 Washington St.</td>
<td>3951 Baltimore St.</td>
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<td>Kensington, Md. 20895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patricia Metzger</td>
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<td>3947 Washington St.</td>
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<td>4900 Prospect St.</td>
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