MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 3537 Spencerville Rd., Burtonsville
Meeting Date: 02/08/17

Resource: LIBERTY GROVE METHODIST CHURCH
Master Plan Site
Report Date: 02/01/17

Applicant: Walter Sadler
Public Notice: 01/25/17

Review: HAWP
Tax Credit: n/a

Case Number: 34/02-17A
Staff: Dan Bruechert

Proposal: Ramp, stair, entrance replacement and window changes

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve with three (3) conditions the HAWP application:

- Window details for the new bathrooms and sanctuary space will be submitted, with final review and approval delegated to staff;
- Door details will be submitted, with final review and approval delegated to staff; and
- Wood column details will be submitted, with final review and approval delegated to staff.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION
SIGNIFICANCE: Master Plan for Historic Preservation Site (Liberty Grove Church)
STYLE: Traditional
DATE: c. 1863 with later additions

Excerpted from Places from the Past:
34/2 Liberty Grove Methodist Church (c1863; 1921) 3537 Spencerville Road

Liberty Grove Church represents the evolution of a rural community church. Methodist farm families in the Spencerville area first met at Frog Pond School, a log building named for a nearby marsh. The congregation acquired land and, in 1863, engaged Charlie Richter to build a frame church. Nicknamed Frog Pond Church, the original building was a front gable structure with center entrance flanked by double sash windows. After a fire damaged the church in 1900, it was rebuilt. In 1921, the distinctive bell tower with vestibule was added. A rear wing was built in 1927. Twenty years later, the still expanding congregation built a new church across the road. The historic church was then used for Sunday School classes. Currently the building houses commercial offices.

The core of the historic church bay is a front gable, two-bay by three-bay, one-and-a-half story building. The church was historically wood clad, but is now covered by vinyl siding. A three-story bell tower with a pyramidal roof was added to the north elevation. At the primary elevation, a large lancet window has been partially blocked in with a plywood insert in the arch and tripled casement windows below. A small, non-historic portico covers the front entrance, which is accessed by several degrading concrete steps. The church roof is covered in asphalt shingles. Most of the windows found throughout the church and its later
addition are six over-six-sash windows. Documentation provided is not sufficient to effectively evaluate the materials and condition.

A two-story, rectangular cinderblock addition was constructed to the southwest of the church sometime in the 1970s.

**PROPOSAL**
The proposal calls for the installation of an accessibility ramp at the front of the church and new door, stairs and porch to make the church building accessible.

The plan will construct a cement and block ramp in front of the sanctuary space that will provide access through the front door. The railing for the ramp and the front stairs will be painted steel with ½" (one-half inch) balusters at 4" (four inch) increments. The porch will be painted white to blend in with the church building, while the balusters will be painted black.

The porch will be enlarged to accommodate the necessary turning radius for a wheelchair and the non-historic doors will be replaced with ADA conforming doors.

Along with the new ramp and enlarged porch, the non-historic aluminum porch supports will be replaced by wood columns and the contemporary hollow-core front doors will be replaced with ADA compliant front doors.

In addition to the changes to the entrance, the following changes will also be made:
- The lancet window opening will be exposed by removing the plywood cover and casement windows and a stained-glass window will be installed.
- Two one-over-one windows will be installed on the south side of the historic church building.
- Three six-over-six windows behind the pulpit in the sanctuary space will be removed and replaced.

**APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

*Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24A Historic Resources Preservation*

(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.

*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*

1. A Property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that has acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

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

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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**

This site is a simple and plain vernacular rural county church in a greatly altered, developed context. The current proposal will allow a new congregation to move into this historic church building. Given the nature of the context and previous alterations to the site, staff welcomes this proposal that will support the reuse of this building consistent with its original use (Secretary of the Interior’s Standard #1) and will support the purposes of the Historic Preservation Chapter of the County Code.

**Entrance:**

Typically, it is preferable to place an accessibility ramp in a less conspicuous location than in front of the primary façade of the building. This is especially the case when the building is as small and simply detailed as this one. However, after a discussion with the applicant and a site visit, Staff has determined that the current proposal is the best placement for a ramp. A ramp that extends to the left of the front entrance would project well beyond the building envelop and result in a new feature that would detract from historic core of the church building and a loss in historic character (Standard 2). Using the rear of the building as a primary means of egress would require paving the gravel parking lot and introducing and interior lift.

The front porch, which is not historic, will need to be enlarged to meet the applicant’s needs to make the front entrance of the building accessible. As this element is not historic its removal and replacement is an appropriate treatment that will not result in the loss of historic fabric or character. The supports for the portico will need to be removed as part of this replacement and the applicant is proposing wood columns to support the portico. Staff is supportive of the removing the non-historic supports; however, the Staff does not feel it has the level of detail necessary to make a determination on the appropriateness of the replacements. Staff recommends that the Commission adopt a condition delegating to staff final review and approval authority for the columns.
The front doors are not historic, in poor condition, and are not accessible. Their removal will not result in a loss of historic material or character. The proposal calls for replacing the doors with a pair of full lite doors that will provide the desired accessibility. There were no material specifications provided with the door replacement proposal nor with the door schedule in the provided drawings. While there is not sufficient documentation to identify specific design of the historic doors, a vernacular designed church from the late 19th century would have had solid wooden doors. Because full lite doors can result in an appearance that is either too residential or too commercial, Staff encourages the HPC to condition any decision to include more extensive details for replacement doors, delegating to staff final review and approval authority.

**Lancet Window:**
The lancet window was removed and covered prior to the designation of the historic church building. The proposal to uncover and install a stained-glass window in its place will only enhance the historic character of the church building and will uncover a character defining feature of the building. The applicant has indicated that the window frame is still in place and will be utilized with new glass in its location. Staff encourages this change. Details of the replacement window were not included in the application. Staff recommends that the Commission delegate to staff final review and approval authority for the replacement window.

**Bathroom Windows:**
Two new window openings will be installed along the south façade of the church near the obscured historic opening. These small windows (2’ x 5’7”) are on a secondary elevation and will have a minimal impact on the historic core of the church. Staff has not been able to fully evaluate the proposal windows, as the proposed window model does not appear on the company website. As the remainder of the windows in the building appear to be wood, Staff recommends that wood or wood-clad windows be used. Staff recommends that the Commission approve a condition delegating to staff final review and approval authority for the replacement windows.

**Windows in the Sanctuary:**
The rear of the sanctuary space will have three windows replaced behind the pulpit. Much like the windows proposed for the bathrooms, the details are not sufficient for Staff to fully evaluate the proposal. However, Staff believes that these windows can be replaced, provided the replacement is an appropriately detailed wood or wood clad window. Staff recommends that the Commission approve a condition delegating to staff final review and approval authority for the replacement windows.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**
Staff recommends that the Commission approve with the three (3) condition the HAWP application:
- Window details for the new bathrooms and sanctuary space will be submitted, with final review and approval delegated to staff;
- Door details will be submitted, with final review and approval delegated to staff; and
- Wood column details will be submitted, with final review and approval delegated to staff.

and with the general condition applicable to all Historic Area Work Permits that the applicant will present 3 permit sets of drawings to HPC staff for review and stamping prior to submission for permits (if applicable). After issuance of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) permit, the applicant will arrange for a field inspection by calling the DPS Field Services Office at 240-777-6370 prior to commencement of work and not more than two weeks following completion of work.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contractor: 
Contact Person: Walter Saddler
Contract #:

Tax Account No.:
Name of Property Owner: Southern Bethlehem Church
Address: 3537 Spencerville Pl, Burtonsville, MD 20866

Contractor Phone No.:
Daytime Phone No.:

Constructor Registration No.:
Agent for Owner:

LOCATION OF WORK/STRUCTURE
House Number: 3537
Street: Spencerville Road
Town/City: Burtonsville
Subdivision:
Lot:
Block:

LAT/lon:
Fence:
Fenced:
Porch:
P197

FACTORS: TYPES OF ALTERATION AND USE

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE
Architectural/Structural
Alter/Remodel
Move/Install
Other:

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE
Air Conditioning
Garage
Fireplace
Woodburning Stove

Other:
ADA Ramp/Window

PROJECT: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITION

2A. Type of present use: O1 O2 O3 Other:

2B. Type of present use:
O1 O2 O3 Other:

PROJECT: COMMISSION FOR FENCING/TILING/REPAIR:

3A. Height feet inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or masonry wall is to be constructed in one of the following locations:

☐ On property line/property line
☐ Entirely on land of owner
☐ On public right of way/abasement

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 title to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent

Date

Approved: 
Signature:
Date:

Disapproved: 
Signature:
Date:

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

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS
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:
   This is an existing 4-story building adjacent to Spencerville Road, with access from Old Columbia Pike. It sits on a 1.09-acre site. The exterior consists of wood siding & steel.

   b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource(s), the environmental setting, and, where applicable, the historic district:
   This project is an interior rehabilitation along with an exterior ADA ramp. This project is intended to help the structure up to ADA standards, making it accessible by wheelchair.

2. SITE PLAN
   Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale. This 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 dumpers, 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 8.5" x 11" copies are preferred.
   a. Drawings illustrating plan view, with marked dimensions, indicating location, size and general type of walls, windows, doors, and other structural features of both the existing resources and the proposed work.
   b. Elevations (facade), with marked dimensions, clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, content. All materials and finishes proposed for the exterior must be noted on the elevation 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 manufacturing items proposed for incorporation in the work of the project. This information may be included on your design drawings.

5. PHOTOGRAPHY
   a. Clearly labeled photographs of each existing resource, including details of the affected property. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.
   b. Clearly label photographs 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 distance 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 at least that diameter.

7. ADDRESSES OF ADJOINING AND CONTRIBUTING PROPERTY OWNERS
   For all projects, provide an accurate list of adjoining and contributing property owners (not tenants), including names, addresses, and zip codes. This list should include the owner(s) 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.
# HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING

[Owner, Owner’s Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner’s mailing address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carl Truitt</td>
<td>Carl Truitt</td>
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<td>Loughlin Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park 29 Professional</td>
<td>15316 Spencerville Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>Burlingame, MD 20866</td>
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<th>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sandy Speig Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Owusu</td>
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<td>3535 Spencerville, RD</td>
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November 30, 2016

**Cost Breakdown for Interior Tenant Alterations**

**Project Name:**
Southern Bethany Baptist Church

**Project Address:**
3537 Spencerville Road  
Burtonsville, MD 20866

**Estimated Cost of Construction:**  
$95,000

**Cost Breakdown:**

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<th>Cost (Material and Labor)</th>
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