Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 4709 Dorset Ave., Chevy Chase

Meeting Date: 1/10/2018

Resource: Primary (Pre-1915) Resource
(Somerset Historic District)

Report Date: 1/3/2018

Applicant: Luke Olson

Public Notice: 12/28/2018

Review: Preliminary Consultation

Tax Credit: N/A

Case Number: N/A

Staff: Michael Kyne

PROPOSAL: Building addition

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the applicant make any revisions based on the HPC’s recommendations and return for a HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Primary (Pre-1915) Resource within the Somerset District

STYLE: Colonial Revival/Queen Anne

DATE: c. 1900

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes a building addition and other alterations at the subject property.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

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

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

(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; 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. 11-59.)

Somerset Historic District Guidelines

- The earliest portion of the Town of Somerset was founded in the late 19th Century as a trolley suburb. This area is significant as one of the first trolley suburbs in Montgomery County and is representative of the beginnings of suburbanization.

- Somerset was developed in 1890 by the Somerset Heights Colony Company. This group purchased approximately 50 acres of farmland with the goal of creating a clean, safe, residential community—far enough away from the dangers and dirt of the city, but close enough to commute to work by trolley.

- Five of the original partners of the Somerset Heights Colony Company were associated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By 1895, four of these five men had built large homes for themselves within the new community. Three of these houses are still standing.

- From the beginning, sales were brisk and, by 1910, there were 173 residences in Somerset.

- Of particular interest are a number of houses built by Richard and William Ough between 1900 and 1915. These structures were early examples of standardization—they exhibit a number of common characteristics: mitred bay corner towers, wrap-around porches, and hipped roofs with a
gable peak visible on the front façade.

- Houses which were built in Somerset during its primary period of architectural importance (1890 to 1915) represent a wide variety of Victorian styles: Carpenter Gothic, Queen Anne, and Italianate. In addition, there are some good examples of the Bungalow style. As a group, the early houses in Somerset represent one of the best concentrated collections of Victorian residential architecture in the County.

- Other important features which create and enhance the historic character of the Somerset community include: the spacing and rhythm of buildings, the uniform scale of existing houses, the relationship of houses to the street, the ample size lots and patterns of open space in the neighborhood, the mature trees and landscaping, and the grid system of streets with clearly defined streetscapes. These elements should be retained and preserved as the area continues to grow and develop.

- A map of the boundaries of the boundaries of the Somerset Historic District is included at the end of this amendment. Important contributing resources built before 1915 are noted on this map. The later structures in the district are mainly mid-20th Century architectural styles—many are Colonial Revival—although some very recent houses have replicated the Victorian styles of the original buildings. As specified in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, applications for new construction in the district or for work on structures in the district which are of little historical or design significance shall be judged leniently, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the district.

**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**

The subject property is a circa 1900 Colonial Revival/Queen Anne-style house within the Somerset Historic District. The house is generally L-shaped, with a main two-story front gable section and a one-story section with gambrel roof at the front/right corner. There is an enclosed porch and deck to the rear of the one-story gambrel roof section of the house, and smaller two-story and one-story structures to the rear of the main house. Although it is unclear which sections of the house are original, records indicate that the one-story gambrel section was present as early as 1931. There is a driveway at the right side of the property, leading to a one-car garage. Records indicate that the existing garage may be original, but it appears to have been altered over the years, with fenestration added to the side elevations.

*4709 Dorset Avenue as it appeared in the 1931 F.H.M. Klinge Property Atlas*
The applicants propose the following work items at the subject property:

- Remove the existing rear structures.
- Remove the non-historic rear deck.
- Extend the roofline of the historic house to the rear.
- Alter and extend the existing enclosed porch at the rear/right side of the house.
- Construct a new two-story rear addition with glass hyphen.
- Construct a new screened porch with deck above at the rear of the proposed two-story rear addition.
- Remove an existing one-car garage at the right of the property.
- Construct a new two-car garage at the rear/right side of the property.
- Extend the existing driveway to the new garage.
- Construct a new pool.
- Install a new pool fence.
- Remove 15 trees.

Staff asks for the Commission’s guidance regarding the following aspects of the proposal:

- While it is unclear which sections of the house are historic and/or original, the applicant only proposes to remove sections at the rear of the house, where the Commission routinely allows alterations to accommodate new additions. In this case, is it appropriate to remove the existing rear structures?

- Is the scale and massing of the proposed addition appropriate? The existing total lot coverage is approximately 1,600 sf, including the 1,370 sf house and 230 sf garage, while the proposed total lot coverage is nearly doubled at approximately 3,044 sf.

- Is it appropriate to extend the roofline of the main section of the historic house, or will this proposal significantly alter the overall shape and form of the historic house, detracting from its character-defining features?

- Is the ridgeline of the proposed two-story rear addition too high? According to the submitted elevations, the roof of the proposed two-story rear addition may be visible when viewing the house directly from the front, altering the way the house is perceived from its primary elevation; however, it is worth noting that, with the proposed glass hyphen, the proposed two-story addition is further from the historic house, and it may not be as visible from the front as the elevations suggest.

- Is the overall design of the proposed addition appropriate and compatible with the subject property and surrounding historic district? The proposed addition is designed in the modern farmhouse style, which clearly differentiates it from the historic house, but may be too much of a departure from the style of the historic house.

- Although the proposed addition is inset 4’-4” from the left side of the historic house, it does include a bay that projects beyond the right side of the historic house. Staff notes that this feature is far removed from the historic house and has minimal potential to detract from the streetscape, but the Commission typically requires additions to be inset from both sides of the historic house to minimize visibility.

- While staff is supportive of the proposed driveway extension and the design and location of the proposed new two-car garage, records indicate that the existing one-car garage may be historic.
Does the Commission support the removal of this potentially historic feature, which has clearly been altered, or should alternatives be explored?

- The applicant has stated that the proposed dormers for new addition take cues from the dormer on the rear of the one-story gambrel roof section of the existing house. Since the existing dormer is not visible from the public right-of-way, are the proposed dormers for the new rear addition too incompatible with the historic house, with the potential to detract from the streetscape?

- Although the applicant is proposing to install a new swimming pool and a swimming pool safety fence at the subject property, few details have been provided for these features. Staff asks the Commission to provide general guidance regarding the appropriate design, location, and materials for these features.

Staff also ask the Commission to consider the following and provide any guidance, where necessary:

- The proposed materials are generally appropriate and compatible, with fiber cement siding, asphalt shingles to match the existing, PVC trim with details to match the historic, and clad wood windows and doors being proposed for the new addition, but the applicant is also proposing to replace the existing siding and trim on the historic house if it cannot be repaired.

- According to the submitted tree plan, 15 trees will need to be removed from the subject property to accommodate the proposed alterations. Most of these trees at the rear of the property, with the only exception being a 13” dbh twin pine tree near the rear right corner of the historic house.

**LAP Comments**

The Town of Somerset LAP reviewed and unanimously supported the applicant’s proposal at their January 2, 2018 meeting (see Circle 2).  

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the applicants make any revisions based on the HPC’s recommendations and return for a HAWP application.
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contract Email: L Olson@GMArchitects.com
Contractor: L Olson (240-333-2531)

Tenant Name: SANFORD BUILDERS CORP.
Tenant Phone: 301-913-5895

Address: 4709 DORSET AVE, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815

Contractor: L Olson
Contractor Registration No.:
Agent for Owner: L Olson
Daytime Phone No.: 240-333-2531

LOCATION OF BUILDING/STRUCTURE

House Number: 4709
Street: DORSET AVE
Nearest Cross Street: CARROLL PLACE
Lot: 8 Block: 3

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

☐ Construct ☑ Expand ☐ Alter/Remodel
☐ Move ☐ Ass't Alter/Remodel
☐ Revision ☐ Repair ☐ Removable Fence/Wall
☐ No Construction cost estimate:

1B. If this is arevision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit #

PART TWO: COMPLIANCE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EFHC'S

2A. Type of sewage disposal:
☐ Septic System ☑ Municipal System
☐ Other:

2B. Type of water supply:
☐ Municipal System ☑ Private Well
☐ Other:

PART THREE: COMPLIANCE FOR EXISTING CONSTRUCTION/REMODEL

3A. Height 5 feet: 0 inches

3B. Indicates whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:

☐ On party 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: 2/19/17

Approved:

Disapproved:

Application/Permit No.: 

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:

   "2-STORY MIDDLE CLASS (PRE-1915) RESIDENCE WITH ADDITIONS TO REAR SIDE & REAR DETACHED ACCESSORY STRUCTURE TO REAR YARD"

   "DECK OF NON-HISTORIC REAR 2-STORY ADDITION TO ALLOW FOR NEW 2-STORY ADDITION TO BACK OF HOUSE"

   "1/2 NEW DETACHED GARAGE IN REAR YARD EXTENSION"

   "EXISTING FENCE & NEW POOL & FENCE"

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

   "DECK OF NON-HISTORIC REAR 2-STORY ADDITION TO ALLOW FOR NEW 2-STORY ADDITION TO BACK OF HOUSE"

   "1/2 NEW DETACHED GARAGE IN REAR YARD EXTENSION"

   "EXISTING FENCE & NEW POOL & FENCE"

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;

   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 resources and the proposed work.

   b. Elevations (facades), with marked dimensions, clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, current. All materials and features 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 label photographic prints of the resource as viewed from the public sight-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 discharge of any tree 5' 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 a complete 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) 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.
SCOPE OF WORK:
REMOVAL OF NON-HISTORIC ADDITION, ACCESSORY STRUCTURE & EXISTING TREES
AS REQUIRED FOR NEW 2-STORY ADDITION TO REAR OF EXISTING HISTORIC
RESOURCE, INCLUDING NEW POOL/DECK AND NEW 2-CAR GARAGE IN REAR YARD
For entire house: investigate & rehabilitate historic siding and trim details as necessary. If existing trim/siding cannot be preserved and rehabilitated, replace "in kind" with new trim/siding matching by scale, texture, material, size and details. New trim/siding to match existing historic details on addition.

- Asphalt shingle roofing to match existing.
- Ex. Masonry chimney to remain.
- Ex. Roofing to remain.
- Ex. Shingle siding to remain.
- Ptd. PVC trim, ATEX or eqq.
- New box bay windows beyond.
- New clad-wood windows & doors, similarly divided.
- New fiber cement siding, colored to be half of existing siding reveal.
- Ex. Stucco siding to remain.

GTM Architects
17.0450 - 4709 DORSET AVE - SSB

GTM ARCHITECTS
4709 DORSET AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815
COPYRIGHT 2017, GTM ARCHITECTS, INC.
7735 OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD, SUITE 708, BETHESDA, MD 20814 - TEL: (301) 333-2000 - FAX: (301) 333-2081
EXISTING RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

EXISTING BUILDING

NEW ADDITION

ASPHALT SHINGLE ROOFING TO MATCH EXISTING

EXG. MASONRY CHIMNEY TO REMAIN

EXG. WINDOWS TO REMAIN, TYP.

EXG. SHINGLE SIDING TO REMAIN

EXG. LAP SIDING TO REMAIN

EXG. STUCCO SIDING TO REMAIN

PROPOSED RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

NEW PTX. FIBERCEMENT MITRED LAP SIDING, REVEAL TO BE HALF OF EXISTING SIDING REVEAL

17,0450 - 4709 DORSET AVE - SSB

GT MARCHITECTS

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Hi Michael,

At its January 2, 2018 meeting, the Local Advisory Panel unanimously supported the application submitted for 4709 Cumberland Avenue in the context of the historic character of the neighborhood. This includes the scope:

- Demolish the existing 1-story rear addition and deck to allow for a 2-story rear addition
- Construct a new detached garage in the rear yard (extension of existing driveway)
- Install a swimming pool and fence surrounding the pool

The applicant will still need to return to the Town of Somerset to obtain final permits, after permits are granted by HPC and Montgomery County.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Happy New Year to you.

Best regards,

Rich Charnovich

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Manager and Clerk-Treasurer
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