

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	7212 & 7206 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	2/07/18
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	1/31/18
<b>Review:</b>	Preliminary Review	<b>Public Notice:</b>	1/24/18
<b>Applicant:</b>	Manjit and Guru Singh	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Addition and New Construction		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the applicant make alterations based on the recommendations of the HPC and return with a HAWP application.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District  
**STYLE:** Commercial  
**DATE:** C.1920s

The applicant is proposing work that will impact the buildings at both 7212 Carroll and 7206 Carroll Ave. This commercial node within the Takoma Park Historic District is identified as Takoma Junction.

The subject property at 7212 Carroll Ave. is a rectangular one-story brick commercial building with a large, projecting storefront window and a recessed entrance door to the left. Along the long side wall, three large windows have been installed. The three buildings located at 7212, 7214, and 7216 Carroll Ave. all have the same building form, though the storefronts have been altered for their historic form.

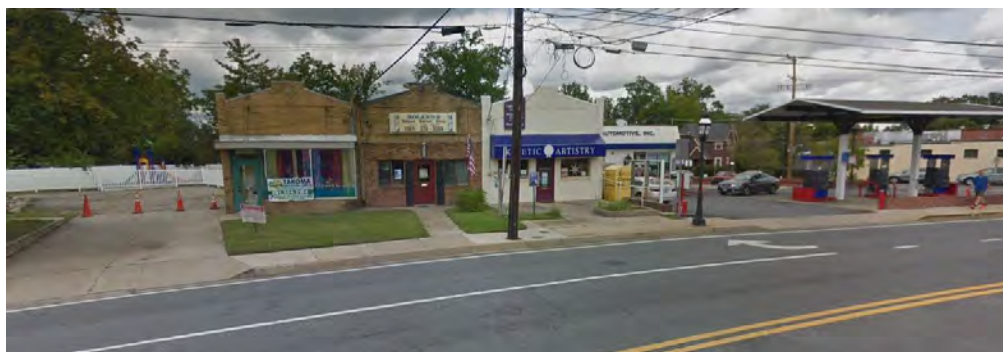


Figure 1: 7212, 7214, 7216 Carroll Ave.

The subject property at 7206 Carroll Ave. is a two-story Craftsman house with a front gable roof, two bays wide, with a stucco ground floor and a shingle siding on the second floor and in the front gable. There is a full-width front porch with a gable roof. The roof is supported by five Craftsman brackets. To the left of the house is a large privacy fence that surrounds the side and rear yard.

## **BACKGROUND**

This property and the Art Deco commercial building located at 7212 Carroll Ave. are operating as a Montessori school. The HPC approved a small rear addition to the commercial building at the May 24, 2017 HPC meeting. While these two buildings are physically separated, they function as a single school and are zoned commercially.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to construct a two story, commercial-style building to the rear of the property where the current playground area is. The playground will be relocated behind the Craftsman house.

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:**

When reviewing alterations and additions for new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District, decisions are guided by the *Takoma Park Historic District Design Guidelines* (Design Guidelines) and *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A* (Chapter 24A).

### *Takoma Park Historic District Design Guidelines*

There are two very general, broad planning and design concepts which apply to all categories. These are:

The design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are at all visible from the public right-of-way, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation (it is expected that the majority of new additions will be reviewed for their impact on the overall district), and,

The importance of assuring that additions and other changes to existing structures act to reinforce and continue existing streetscape, landscape, and building patterns rather than to impair the character of the district.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient review than those structures that have been classified as Outstanding. This design review should emphasize the importance of the resource to the overall streetscape and its compatibility with existing patterns rather than focusing on a close scrutiny of architectural detailing. In general, however, changes to Contributing Resources should respect the predominant architectural style of the resource. As stated above, the design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are *at all visible from the public right-of-way*, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation.

Some of the factors to be considered in reviewing HAWPs on Contributing Resources include:

All exterior alterations, including those to architectural features and details, should be generally consistent with the predominant architectural style and period of the resource

and should preserve the predominant architectural features of the resource; exact replication of existing details and features is, however, not required

Minor alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public right-of-way such as vents, metal stovepipes, air conditioners, fences, skylights, etc. – should be allowed as a matter of course; alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public way-of-way which involve the replacement of or damaged to original ornamental or architectural features are discouraged, but may be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis

Major additions should, where feasible, be placed to the rear of existing structures so that they are less visible from the public right-of-way; additions and alterations to the first floor at the front of a structure are discouraged, but not automatically prohibited

While additions should be compatible, they are not required to be replicative of earlier architectural styles

Some non-original building materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis; artificial siding on areas visible to the public right-of-way is discouraged where such materials would replace or damage original building materials that are in good condition

Alterations to features that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be allowed as a matter of course

All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

*Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8(b)*

(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

**STAFF DISCUSSION**

The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story, commercial style addition to the rear of 7212 Carroll Ave. (the commercial building). The new construction will be connected to the historic commercial building by a one-story hallway. Many of the design specifications and materials are not included with the submitted documents. Staff has encouraged the applicant to discuss those material selections during the preliminary consultation.

After hearing the comments from the HPC and the neighbor concerns at the December 6, 2017 HPC meeting, the applicant significantly revised their proposal. Staff has not included the details from the previous design, as they do not aid in the evaluation of the current proposal.

The combined lots are oddly shaped (see Fig. 2, below), with a niche at the rear that projects out created at the rear of the lot. This niche is adjacent to an alley accessed from Grant Ave. and the rear of the residential lot at 6 Philadelphia Ave.



In evaluating this proposal, Staff feels that it is much more in keeping to the *Design Guidelines*



for the Takoma Park Historic District and the additional Commercial Guidelines. The building will be masonry, which is in keeping with the historic row of commercial buildings. The details for the proposed cornice do not appear to be fully developed, however, Staff feels that a simply detailed cornice is appropriate to the design of the proposed building. Additionally, the belt course breaks up the massing of the building to avoid a two-story horizontal wall plane. Staff feels that a simply details belt course would be more in keeping with the *Guidelines* and Chapter 24(A) than a highly decorative one. These features are found on the other two-story commercial buildings in Takoma Junction.



Figure 3: Two-story commercial buildings in Takoma Junction.

The west façade of the proposed construction will have three windows and a door on the first floor, with four windows on the second. The cornice and belt course carry around from the front. Much of this façade will not be visible from Carroll Ave. as it is nearly perpendicular to Carroll Ave. and will be largely obscured by the residential building at 7206 Carroll Ave. The new building will be pulled away from the lot line so that some trees could be planted to partially screen the view from the residence at 6 Philadelphia Ave. This new construction will be approximately 50' (fifty feet) from the rear wall of 6 Philadelphia Ave. Staff has encouraged the applicant to reach out to the neighbor to address her concerns and discuss potential mitigation measures. To date Staff is unaware if the conversations have occurred.

The north and east facades of the proposed addition will be constructed on the lot line and will be blank facades. The presented renderings show them as raw concrete block. Typically, the side and rear facades of 'main street' commercial-styled buildings are less detailed than the street facing facades. In many cases these facades do have some fenestration, but Staff believes that is more about providing natural light than breaking up the massing of the building. The north façade will only be visible from the rear parking lot at 12 Grant Ave. The east façade will be slightly more visible through the alley accessed off Grant Ave. The two-story house at 6 Grant Ave. would obscure much of the visibility of the proposed construction from the public right-of-way. Using GIS, Staff determined that the distance from Grant Ave. to the east façade of the new construction would be approximately 150' (one hundred fifty feet). Staff would like the HPC to provide guidance on the level of detailing necessary for the north and west facades.



Staff would like the HPC to comment on:

- There are a limited number of two-story commercial buildings in Takoma Junction. Would a two-story building, even one set back 70' (seventy feet) from the street have an adverse impact on the row of historic commercial buildings (7212, 7214, and 7216 Carroll Ave.) or the surrounding district?
- The east and north facades are proposed to be blank. While a lower level of detailing is typical of 'Main Street' commercial buildings, should more of the design carry over? If not, what are the HPC's expectations for the architecture of these facades?
- Material specifications were not included for the street-facing masonry, windows, or doors; does the HPC want these materials to match the historic and if not, what are the preferred materials?
- A fence is shown in front of the building at 7206 Carroll Ave., which appears as though it would fully enclose the front of the property along Carroll Ave. The applicant has not indicated if it is part of this proposal. Please provide guidance as to the appropriateness of enclosing the front yard and what type of gate would be appropriate/acceptable.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the applicant make revisions to the design based on the feedback provided by the HPC.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

DPS-#8

# APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: Gsingh@Worldbank.org Contact Person: GURUSINGH / MANJIT SINGH  
Daytime Phone No.: 240-644 2239  
Tax Account No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property Owner: MANJIT R. SINGH Daytime Phone No.: 240-644 3422  
Address: 7212 CARROLL AVENUE TAKOMA PARK MD 20912  
Street Number City State Zip Code  
Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Agent for Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number: 7212, CARROLL AVENUE Street  
Town/City: TAKOMA Nearest Cross Street: CARROLL AVENUE / PHILADELPHIA  
Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_  
Liber: \_\_\_\_\_ Folio: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

### 1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- ☒ Construct ☐ Extend ☐ Alter/Renovate  
☐ Move ☐ Install ☐ Wreck/Raze  
☐ Revision ☐ Repair ☐ Revocable

### CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- ☐ A/C ☐ Slab ☐ Room Addition ☐ Porch ☐ Deck ☐ Shed  
☐ Solar ☐ Fireplace ☐ Woodburning Stove ☐ Single Family  
☐ Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ \$ 80,000

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

## PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 ☐ WSSC 02 ☐ Septic 03 ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
2B. Type of water supply: 01 ☐ 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 party line/property line ☐ Entirely on land of owner ☐ On public right of way/easement

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

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

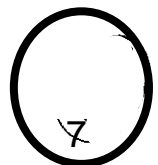
Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Edit 6/21/99

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

819732



**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:

7212, is a Takoma Montessori School

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

The Takoma Montessori School has capacity  
of 22 kids only. It requires more space  
to accommodate more kids.  
Current capacity cannot even break even  
the business.

**2. SITE PLAN**

Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale. You may use your plat. 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 fixtures 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 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.

**HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING**  
 [Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<b>Owner's mailing address</b> 7212 Carroll Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912	<b>Owner's Agent's mailing address</b>
<b>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</b>	
7200 Carroll Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912	6 Philadelphia Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912
7214 Carroll Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912	7211 Carroll Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912









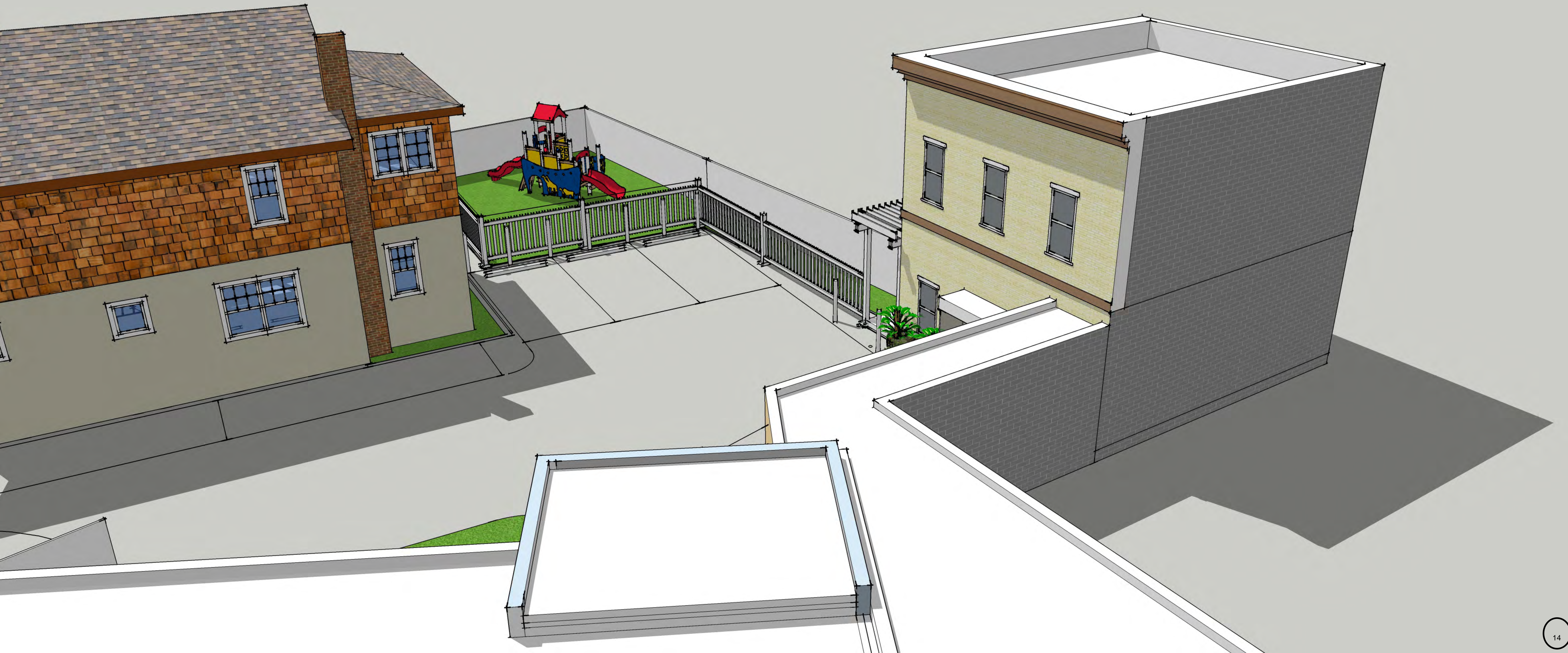
















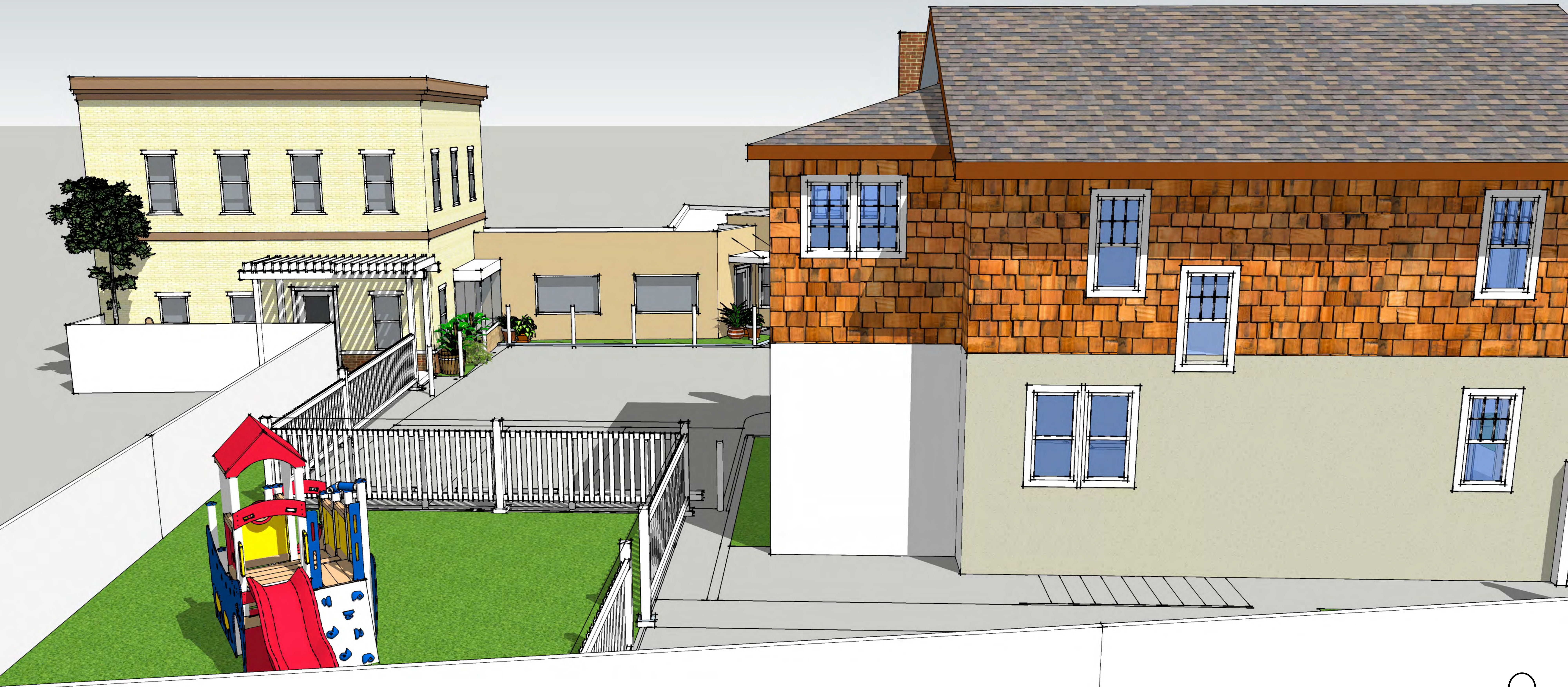














# Z GUIDELINES

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for Commercial Buildings  
in the City of Takoma Park, Maryland



City of Takoma Park  
Facade Advisory Board

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# INTRODUCTION

*THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS*, prepared by the City of Takoma Park's Facade Advisory Board (FAB), are intended to: 1) assist property owners and tenants of commercial buildings in maintaining, preserving and enhancing the architectural character of their properties, and 2) to assist architects, contractors and others with planning and implementing repairs, rehabilitation and/or restoration of those properties. The Guidelines address various issues including new construction, alterations, additions, new construction, setbacks, massing, storefronts, and signage.

These Guidelines are intended to benefit commercial buildings of all types, in all areas of the City of Takoma Park. However, they are especially beneficial for commercial buildings that lie in the Takoma Park Historic District and which are subject to further review by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Designs that are compatible with the existing character of a neighborhood will typically enhance a building and its surrounding neighborhood, while designs that are incompatible will likely detract from a building and the overall neighborhood. Also, good maintenance practices help to retain and preserve the buildings and enhance the character of the neighborhood.



# FACADE ADVISORY BOARD

**THE FACADE ADVISORY BOARD** was established by Ordinance of the City of Takoma Park in 1999 to provide guidance and assistance to commercial building and business owners in the Takoma Junction/Old Town area. It is intended to assist individuals who may be planning to renovate or restore the exterior of a building, or planning to install a sign for identifying their business. Projects of this type typically require permits from Montgomery County Permitting Services and a Historic Area Work Permit from the Historic Preservation Commission. The Facade Advisory Board can greatly help in facilitating the permitting process, and can also assist in identifying potential funds and tax credits to offset the cost of some types of projects.

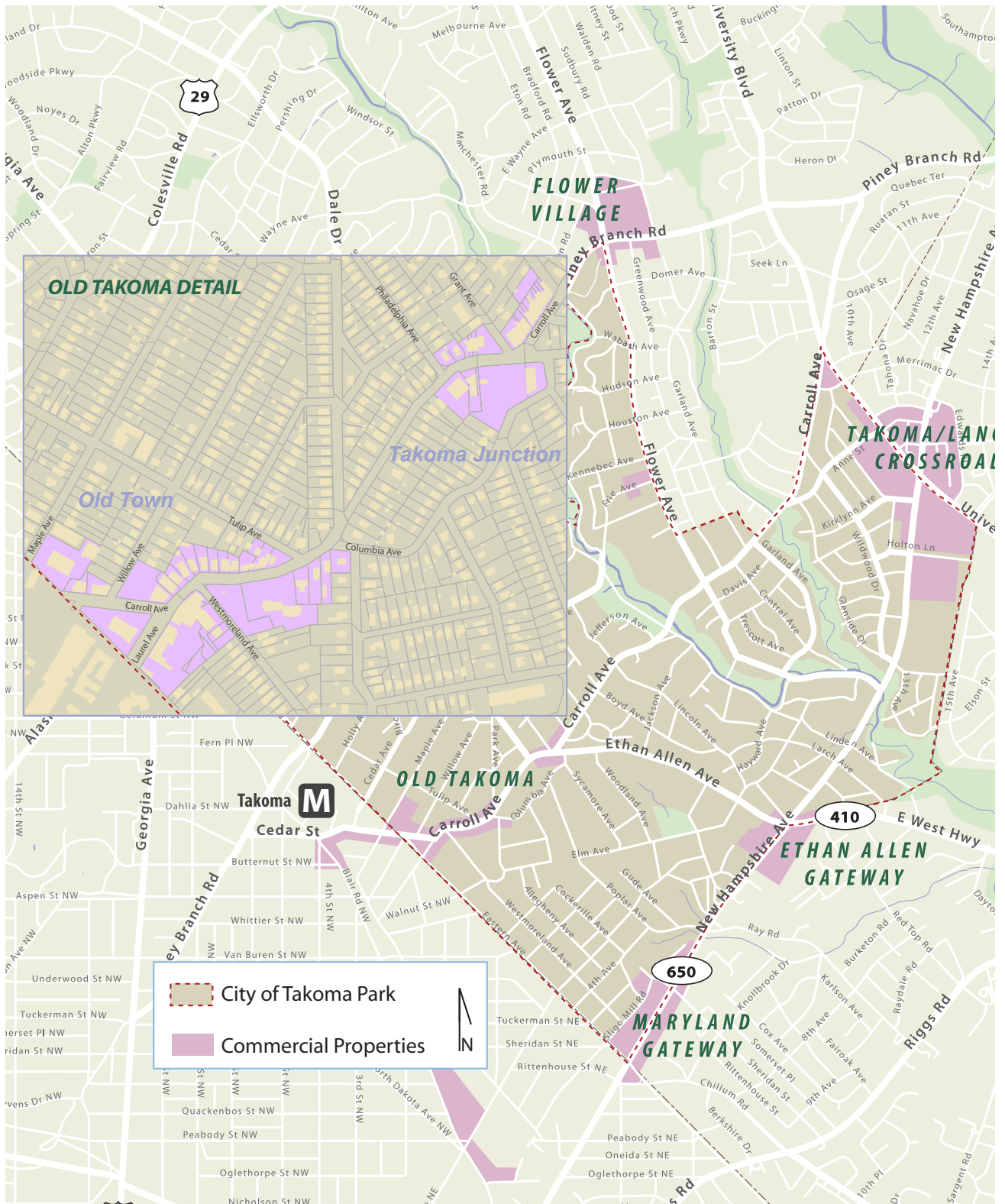
Members of the Facade Advisory Board are Takoma Park residents and property or business owners. Many own and/or operate a business in one of the Takoma Park commercial districts. By Ordinance, Board Members consist of architects, developers, residents, historic preservationists, property and business owners. The Board typically meets at 7:00 P.M. on the second Tuesday of every other month. Additional meetings can be arranged if necessary. The meetings are open to the public.

The purpose of the Board is to help facilitate the completion of projects and enhance the commercial areas of Takoma Park. The Board can often provide recommendations on procedures to obtaining permits, selection of materials, architectural features, sign designs and accessibility. The process is quite simple, just come to one of our meetings and tell us what you are thinking of doing. We can help.

For more information on the activities of the Facade Advisory Board or to be placed on the Board's agenda, please contact the City of Takoma Park at 301-891-7119. We welcome the opportunity to get to know you and to be of assistance.



## Commercial Areas Map





# OWNER & TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

**THE OBJECTIVE** of the Facade Advisory Board (FAB) is to assist property owners and tenants in preserving and improving their commercial property. For example, the FAB has resources to provide guidance for making facade modifications, repairing or adding signage, awnings, roofs, windows, storefronts, lighting, landscaping and additions.

Property owners have a responsibility for informing their commercial tenants when restrictions exist. For example, tenants in historic districts may not modify or remove any building parts or accents without first obtaining the approval of the owner. The project should be reviewed by the FAB and the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission may be required. Also, tenants may not fill storefront windows with an excessive number of signs or overly large signs, change exterior lighting, hang banners, close up existing openings without following the requirements of the City of Takoma Park's Facade Ordinance which is intended to maintain and enhance the overall appearance of the commercial area.

## **General Upkeep**

Owners and tenants of commercial properties are responsible for the upkeep and repair of their commercial properties. Both the design and maintenance of facades and signage on building(s) have a significant impact on the overall character of the commercial sections of our city in Takoma Park.

Furthermore, if you neglect a building over the long term you are subject to a citation for demolition by neglect under the Sec. 24A-9 of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

## **Projects Requiring Design Review by the Facade Advisory Board**

Projects that require Facade Advisory Board review include most exterior alterations to buildings and properties in Takoma Old Town (commercial properties located on Laurel Avenue and Carroll Avenue,



between Eastern Avenue and Columbia Avenue); and within Takoma Junction (Carroll Avenue and Ethan Allen Avenue between Philadelphia Avenue, Lee Avenue, and Sycamore Avenue); for all other projects within the City, the owner is encouraged to consult with the Facade Advisory Board on a voluntary basis. More information may be obtained from the City Housing and Community Development Office at 301-891-7119.

### **Projects Requiring Historic Area Work Permit**

If a resource such as a building or site or part of it or entire district is designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) must be obtained from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) before any changes can be made to it. Changes include actions such as moving, demolishing, or altering the exterior of a structure or other element. Changes that might not be seen from the street also require review. A HAWP is also required for new construction, grading, and removing live trees greater than 6 inches in diameter.

Work for which a HAWP is required includes: construction of additions; removal or enclosure of porches; installation of siding, shingle or masonry facing, or other changes to exterior materials; replacement of window sashes; permanent removal of shutters; the addition removal or other changes to architectural features, including the size, shape, and placement of windows; the painting or removal of paint from masonry; the installation or replacement of fencing; and driveway alterations.

Historically designated structures or sites are not frozen in time and changes are regularly permitted. New construction in historic districts is also permitted and need not replicate a historic style.

In addition, historic designation does not require any type of historic restoration. The HPC cannot require the reinstallation of historic features if they were not there when the property was acquired or when the property was first designated as historic. For example, if a building had a metal roof sometime in the past, an existing fiberglass shingle roof can be replaced with a new one of any color. Also, the HPC does not require certain color selections.

There are several projects that do not require an HAWP. These include interior work, gardening and minor landscaping, ordinary exterior maintenance (painting non masonry surfaces, roof repairs, gutters, trim lights, etc., with materials and design matching what is already in place), paving repairs using matching materials, and general maintenance which does not alter exterior features.

The HPC employs various criteria when evaluating permit requests including the Takoma Park Design Guidelines for Commercial Buildings and the Standards for Rehabilitation issued by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Once the HPC approves a HAWP application, the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS), 255 Rockville Pike, Rockville, 240-777-6260, can issue a building permit. If the HPC denies the application, or sets conditions which are not agreeable with the property owners, an appeal can be filed with the Board of Appeals, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850 (240-777-6600).

### **Building and Sign Permits**

In addition to the HAWP, other permits may be required from DPS or the City of Takoma Park. Some permits must be approved even before seeking a site plan review or a building permit.

The following permits are required by the City of Takoma Park. For more information, please contact the Public Works Department at 301-891-7633.

- **Dumpster:** To locate a dumpster for collection of construction waste on an adjacent road instead of on private property, a Dumpster Permit is required.
- **Driveway Apron:** If constructing or altering a driveway apron, a Driveway Apron Permit is required.
- **Fences:** Constructing a fence in a City right-of-way, requires a Fence Permit along with a signed Fence Agreement that will be recorded in the Land Records of Montgomery County.
- **Rental Housing:** When construction is complete, a Residential Rental License is required. For more information about this license, contact the Code Enforcement division of the Housing and Community Development office at 301-891-7119.
- **Stormwater:** A Stormwater Permit is required for commercial construction.
- **Trees:** A Tree Protection Plan and Tree Removal Permit are required if the work may impact an existing tree or trees on the property.
- **Work in the Right-of-Way:** Alterations to paving, sidewalks, curbs, or other items in the public right-of-way require a permit from the City or State.

A building permit or sign permit from Montgomery County's Department of Permitting Services. For more information, contact the Department of Permitting Services at 240-777-6300.

Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services requires a letter from the City of Takoma Park planning office for any exterior work requiring a County permit and some interior work prior to releasing a permit. For more information,

contact the planning office in Housing and Community Development at 301-891-7119.

## Permit and Design Review Summary

Before beginning any work, the following design reviews and permits may be required:

### Required Design Reviews

One or more of the following may be required:

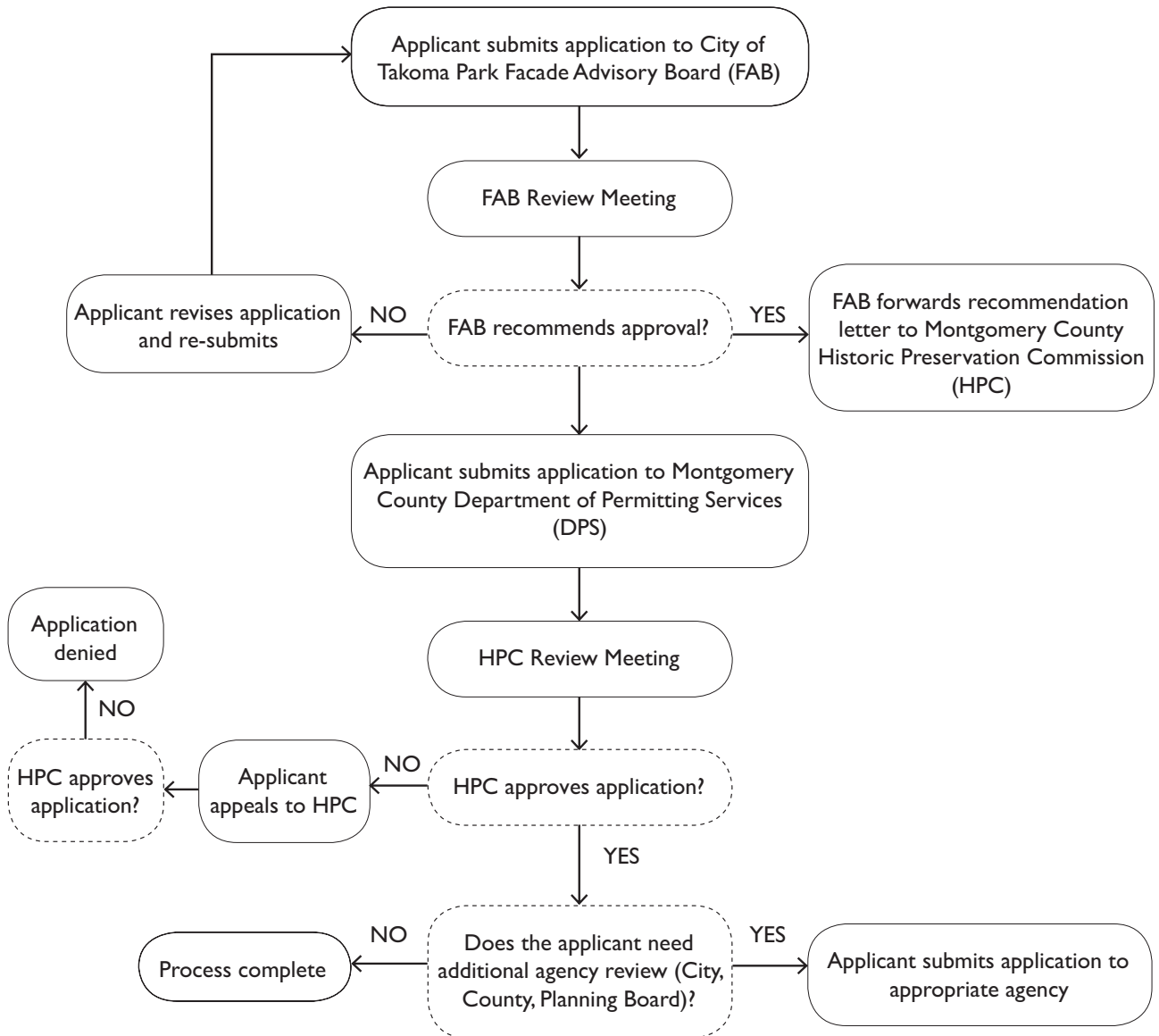
- **Facade Advisory Board Review**  
City of Takoma Park  
Housing and Community Development  
Department  
7500 Maple Avenue  
Takoma Park MD 20912  
301-891-7119  
[www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov)
- **Historic Preservation Commission Review**  
M-NCPPC  
1109 Spring Street, suite 801  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-563-3400  
[www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic)

### Permits

One or more of the following may be required:

- Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP)
- Building Permit
- Electrical Permit
- Sign Permit
- Dumpster Permit
- Driveway Apron Permit
- Fence Permit
- Tree Protection Plan and/or Tree Removal Permit
- Stormwater Permit
- Work in the Right-of-Way Permit
- City of Takoma Park Permit Letter

## Flow Chart



# TYPES OF PROJECTS

AN OBJECTIVE of the Facade Advisory Board is to help assure that the character of historic commercial buildings and neighborhoods are maintained or enhanced. Types of projects typically reviewed by the Board include the following:

## Maintenance, Repair, Replacements

Maintaining the original materials, elements and systems is the preferred and typically best method of preserving the character of a historic commercial building. However, no matter how well maintained, most historic buildings will eventually require repair. If economically and technically feasible, repairs should be done so that the original materials and elements remain intact. If such a repair proves not to be technically or economically feasible, the building owner should attempt to replace the deteriorated portion in-kind, that is, using the same material as the original for replacement. This will help insure that the original character of the building is not altered. If, for technical or economic reasons, replacement in-kind also proves not to be feasible, the building owner may then consider replacing the deteriorated material or element in a compatible substitute material. However, the substitute material should have the same appearance, size, shape, texture, color and other defining characteristics as the original. The substitute material should also be physically and chemically compatible with adjacent materials so that it does not cause future maintenance problems. In summary, it is better to maintain than to repair, better to repair than to replace, and better to replace in the same material than to use a substitute material.



*Maintain the side and rear facades as attractively as the front of the building. This avoids code violations and enhances the appearance of the district.*



## Alterations

Alterations are usually made to improve or change the use of a building. Alterations often extend the functional, economic, and physical life of the building.

Alterations may be confined to the interior, such as upgrading the furnace, replacing electrical wiring or altering the shapes of non-character defining spaces. Alterations may also be made to the exterior of a building or to its site, such as modifying windows to improve thermal efficiency, installing a new sign, or changing the grade of a sidewalk to accommodate persons with disabilities. Alterations that affect appearance or landscape should be done in a manner that does not detract from the character-defining features of the building, the site or the neighborhood.

When designing an addition, its visibility from a public right-of-way and the character of the elevation to which it is attached should be evaluated. Attributes such as height, width, proportion, rhythm of windows and doors, roof shape, ornamentation, projections and materials all contribute to appearance.



*New buildings should not be in argument to those in their vicinity, but should respond to their neighbors by echoing massing, rhythm, openings, and any other defining characteristics to strengthen the overall commercial district and support existing historic resources.*

## New Construction

New construction should follow the same general design principles. Particular attention should be paid to its setback from the street and its alignment with the front facades of neighboring buildings. Achieving compatibility requires that the design first studies the neighboring buildings and landscape features.

Achieving compatibility does not mean duplicating neighboring buildings or environment. A new building or an addition should be seen as a product of its own time. However, by effectively relating to the neighborhood, a new building shows a district's evolution just as the existing buildings show its past. A new building should be a good neighbor, enhancing the character of the neighborhood.



*It is important to consider the effect the location, size and exterior appearance the addition will have on an existing building and its neighbors.*

## Additions

Additions to commercial buildings are sometimes necessary to extend their functional or economic life. It is important to consider the effect the location, size and exterior appearance of the addition will have on an existing building and its neighbors.



# CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

**OBSERVING AND UNDERSTANDING** specific details of design are critical to preserving the character of a neighborhood. Character-defining features include setback, orientation, scale, proportion, rhythm, massing, height, materials, color, roof shape and details, ornamentation, landscape features, such as plants, trees, fences, sidewalks and driveways, and the design and location of secondary buildings, such as garages.

## Setback

The Montgomery County zoning code regulates legal setbacks (the distance a building must be located inside property lines). In some instances, especially in older historic areas, buildings may be built up to the side yard property line (zero setbacks) with setbacks usually required for the front and rear yards. In other locations, setbacks may be required for all sides of a building.

In addition to complying with the required legal setbacks, the designs of additions and new construction should respect the setbacks of the neighboring buildings so as not to detract from the neighborhood. Generally, additions built to the rear of a property in a historic area are not as critical, as the rear portion is usually not visible from the public street.

## Orientation

Most buildings squarely face a street, with their principal facade and entrance in full view. However, some historic buildings may be oriented to a side yard or to two streets. The designs of additions and new buildings should respect the primary orientation of their immediate neighbors.



*Takoma Park has an overlay zone that provides commercial buildings with flexible setbacks. This allows new buildings to be placed in alignment with historic buildings along the sidewalk creating a consistent "street wall" of storefronts that frame the street.*

## Scale

The overall scale of a building is its size relative to its neighbors and people. Other aspects of the scale of a building involve elements such as windows,



*The spacing of repetitive elements, such as projecting bays, story fronts, windows, doors, masonry belt courses and the like, gives an elevation its rhythm.*

doors, cornices, roofs and architectural details. Some buildings are designed to relate to the size of an average human being while others, such as governmental and religious buildings, are designed to be monumental to give a building prominence or symbolic importance.

Scale can be achieved in a variety of ways. For example, the size of an element contributes to the scale of a building. Also, facades can be heavily rusticated, contributing to a sense of monumentality, or of plain materials and treatments, making the building appear more human in scale. In general, the scale of a new building or addition should respect the scale of its neighbors unless the building's use or symbolic importance — such as a church in a residential area — differs from that of its neighbors.

## Proportion

Proportion is the relationship of the size of building elements, such as windows and doors, to each other and to the building elevations. Buildings designed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often employed mathematical ratios and proportions to locate and size windows, doors, columns, cornices and other building elements. The design of an addition or a new building should respect and be compatible with the existing proportions of neighboring buildings.

## Rhythm

The spacing of repetitive facade elements, such as projecting bays, storefronts, windows, doors, masonry belt courses and the like, gives an elevation its rhythm. The space between freestanding buildings, the contiguousness of row houses and other party-wall buildings, and the height of roofs, cornices, towers and other roof projections establish the rhythm of a street. An addition or new building should respect the rhythm of its neighbors and the street on which it is located.



*New buildings should be compatible in scale and massing with their neighbors.*



## Massing

Massing typically involves the articulation of a facade by the use of dormers, towers and other roof projections, as well as facade projections such as bays, porches and steps. Massing significantly contributes to the character of a street, particularly in neighborhoods containing contiguous commercial buildings.

## Height

The height of walls, cornices and roofs, as well as chimneys and towers, contributes to the character of existing buildings, neighborhoods, and commercial areas. While a building does not necessarily need to be exactly the same height as its neighbors to be compatible, it should be designed to respect existing building heights. For example, a new five-story building in a block of two- and three-story buildings will usually detract from the character of a street. Similarly, a new one-story building in a block of four or five-story buildings will likely appear to be out of character. Typically, a building should not be more than one story higher or lower than existing buildings on a street that are all the same height.

## Materials

The selection of materials used for walls, windows, sloping roofs, details and other visible elements of a building should be carefully considered. In areas where most or all of the buildings on a street use the same exterior materials, those or similar materials should be employed when designing an addition or new building. In streets where the existing buildings use diverse exterior materials, a range of exterior materials may be used.

The size, texture, surface finish and other defining characteristics of exterior materials are also

important design considerations. For example, a new building or addition constructed of glazed brick on a street of buildings built of unglazed brick would not likely be compatible.

## Colors

Colors are derived from the materials used in construction. For example, brick, stone, terra cotta, slate, asphalt shingle, copper, lead and other materials that are typically left unpainted give color to a building. Color can also be applied to materials such as wood, stucco, some metals and concrete. As a general rule, no more than three distinct colors should be employed on a building.



*Altering roof shape, materials, and details will impact the appearance of a building.*

## Roofs

The shape of a roof and its details are character defining elements. In a street of houses with gabled roofs, an addition or a new building should have a compatibly designed gabled roof. Introducing a different roof shape, such as a flat roof, would not be in keeping with the existing character of the street. Similarly in a historic district where gable roofs predominate, an addition or a new building with a hipped-roof would not likely be compatible.

Some of the most common roof elements and details include cornices, parapets, eaves, dormers, towers, chimneys, finials, cresting, gutters and down spouts. Parapets are commonly found at flat roofs of commercial buildings. Far less elaborate than cornices, parapets give a building greater visual height, as well as helping to provide a weather-tight junction between the roof and wall. Parapets often have plain or decorative caps, called copings, made of stone, precast concrete, metal or tile.

Chimneys are often prominent character-defining elements. Though commonly made of brick, stone and stucco are sometimes used. A chimney may be located on the front, side or rear walls projecting above the eave, or through roof slopes or ridges.

Gutters and down spouts are the primary means of channeling water from roofs to the ground or directly into storm sewers. Properly maintained gutters and down spouts are critical to providing a watertight building. Their design is often important to the appearance of a building. Historically, exterior gutters and down spouts were made of copper or galvanized steel.

The most common character defining sloping roof materials are metal, slate, clay tile, asphalt shingles, wood shingles and wood shakes. Materials used to cover flat roofs are usually not character defining.

Altering roof shapes, materials, and details will impact the appearance of a building. Adding satellite dishes, communication towers, or solar panels to a roof of an historic building will almost always



*Storefronts invite customers into the building but also take the most abuse from the elements.*

be incompatible with its character and, if needed, they should be located so they are not visible from a public street.

Heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment is often installed on roofs of commercial buildings during rehabilitation and should be located to not be visible from a public street or screened from view. Screens should be designed to be compatible with the proportion, scale, materials, color and other character defining elements of the building. Mechanical penthouses are found primarily on multistory residential, commercial, institutional and government buildings. They are designed to enclose elevator and other building equipment. Alterations to existing penthouses should be compatible with the building design if they can be seen from a street.

### **Storefronts**

The primary purpose of a storefront is to display merchandise or market services to the public. Modern storefronts often consist of simple metal

tubing and glass. Historic storefronts may also include ornate woodwork, or more commonly, architectural metalwork fabricated to simulate wood or plaster work. Before cleaning, painting or repairing storefront architectural components, it is important to determine the physical nature of the components.

A historic storefront may project from the masonry face of the building, thus increasing its exposure to the elements causing it to age faster than other parts of the facade.

Lighting is typically an important element of the storefront, both for display and security purposes. Existing or historic lighting details should be carefully maintained. Visible storefront lighting fixtures should be harmonious with the building. For additional considerations, please see the section titled “Lighting.”

### Details and Ornamentation

Some historic buildings contain elaborate details and ornamentation while others are relatively plain. The design of an addition or new building should consider the details and ornamentation on neighboring buildings. A contemporary interpretation of historic details can be an effective way to differentiate a new building from an historic one.

### Landscape Features

Plants, trees, fences, retaining walls, sidewalks, driveways, decorative retaining walls and fences are important character-defining elements. When possible, existing plant material should be maintained, especially mature trees and shrubs. However, new landscaping with flowers and shrubs can complement the entire commercial area, enhance the structure itself, and improve the appearance of the neighborhood.

New fencing and/or new or repaired retaining walls should match or complement the existing styles of neighborhoods.

### Secondary Buildings

Secondary buildings include structures such as garages, sheds, and other outbuildings. They often impact the scale and texture of the property and present a contrast to the primary structure.

The design of new secondary buildings should respect the location, size, materials and other defining characteristics of the main building. Prefabricated sheds and structures should be used with reservation and if used, should complement the primary structure in color and design. For example, a “barn type” shed may not be appropriate for a federal style commercial building, whereas



*Use landscaping to attract the eye and increase the comfort of shoppers in the area.*

a simple rectangular structure might be more complementary. Also, overhead garage doors are now available in designs that mimic the hinged garage doors of the past.





*Do light window display cases: light spilling from windows onto the sidewalk at night creates a warm, inviting atmosphere.*

## Lighting

Exterior lighting fixtures should be in harmony with the character of the buildings. Visible lighting fixtures should be mounted in entrance ways and on the front facade of the building. Concealed flood lighting may be used to light facades. Lighting fixtures should be inconspicuous. Electrical elements such as wires, conduits, junction boxes, transformers, ballasts, switched, and panel boxes should be concealed.



*The sign band is efficiently and attractively lit by shielded goose neck fixtures.*

The following lighting methods are recommended:

- Fully recessed downlights or wall washers
- Shielded fluorescent lamps with diffusers
- Gooseneck incandescent or bent tube arm to prevent glare at pedestrian level

The following lighting methods are not recommended:

- Exposed fluorescent lighting
- Exposed high power lamps such as quartz or mercury vapor lamps or flood lights that cause “over lighting” and excessive glare on the street.
- Exposed incandescent lamps or bulbs
- Lights that blink, black out, flash or have mechanical motion

# SIGNAGE

**VIRTUALLY ALL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS** require some form of distinctive signage. Designing these signs often poses a challenge to maintaining the architectural integrity of the building and neighborhoods.

In general, the design of signs should neither obscure nor detract from architectural details of a building and should help to emphasize any unique shapes or details of the facade; to draw attention to the building's entrance; or to emphasize a display window. Signs may be wall mounted, project from the face of the building, or located on the grounds. They may also be incorporated as part of an awning or canopy. Once installed, signs must be maintained with respect to graphic characters, paint, fading, and other types of deterioration. Damaged and obsolete signs, as well as related posts, wiring and structures, are required to be repaired or removed.



*Blade signs extend perpendicular from the face of the building and attract people walking on the sidewalk.*

## Materials

Signs should be constructed of materials that are durable and easy to maintain such as painted or carved wood, aluminum, stone, acrylic, neon, glass, and stained glass.

## Illumination

Light sources external to the sign surface and directed toward the sign are preferred. The light level should not detract from the building facade or other elements along the streetscape. The source of external lighting should be shielded from pedestrian view. Individually lit or internally lit characters and back lit or neon characters are acceptable. Flashing or moving signs, other than barber poles, are not permitted.



## Shape

Signs should consist of simple, straightforward shapes that convey their message clearly.



*Window pane signage should not sacrifice style or obscure the view of pedestrians into the store.*

## Graphics

Lettering or font styles should be properly proportioned, simple, and easy to read. In most instances, a simple sans serif typeface is preferred to an overly ornate style. The number of character styles and fonts are recommended to be limited to two per sign. As a general rule, the character forms should occupy not more than 75% of the total sign panel. Finishes should be matte or non-glare with graphics in high contrast to their background.



# RESOURCES

## **Submittal Checklist for Facade Advisory Board Project Review**

### **1. Several copies of a completed Historic Area Work Permit application.**

Historic Area Work Permit applications are available on [www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic) and from the Historic Preservation Commission Staff at 301-563-3400.

This application, depending upon the scope of the proposal will require most or all of the following:

- a) A written description of proposed alterations, the approximate age of the property and any materials or features to be removed or replaced.
- b) Site plan of property showing location of proposed changes.
- c) Plans of improvements showing all dimensions, materials, and colors.
- d) Elevation showing a full view of each facade of each building on the property that the proposal will affect. Photos may be substituted for drawings with the alteration drawn in.
- e) Material specification information regarding materials and products to be used in the project.
- f) Photographs showing views of the property and building in current state and any historic photos. If material is to be removed a close-up is also desirable.
- g) A tree survey where trees are proposed for removal.
- h) Addresses for adjacent and confronting property owners.

### **2. Schedule a review with the Facade Advisory Board by calling Housing and Community Development Staff at 301-891-7119.**

When a recommendation is not required and only advice or direction is sought from the Board, project proposals may be reviewed with less information.

## Review and Regulatory Agencies

Takoma Park Facade Advisory Board, established by Ordinance of the City of Takoma Park, provides recommendations to the Historic Preservation Commission on behalf of the City Council, and guidance and assistance to commercial building and business owners in the Takoma Junction/Old Town and throughout the community.  
([www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov))

Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission hears cases relating to specific projects in historic districts. It also works with its staff to speak to public groups, testify before the Planning Board and County Council, answer questions from individual residents, and visit proposed historic sites and historic properties where owners want to make changes.  
([www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/))

Department of Permitting Services reviews projects for conformance with the Montgomery County Building and Zoning Code.  
(<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov>)

## Preservation Organizations

### Historic Takoma, Inc.

([www.historictakoma.org/](http://www.historictakoma.org/)) is a citizens' group dedicated to protecting the historic districts in Takoma Park, Maryland and in the Takoma neighborhood of the District of Columbia.

### Main Street Takoma

([www.mainstreettakoma.org/](http://www.mainstreettakoma.org/)) is a volunteer non-profit dedicated to the revitalization of the historic commercial district.

### Preservation Maryland

(<http://www.preservemd.org/>) provides advocacy, outreach and funding efforts to protect and use the State's historic resources.

### Maryland State Historic Preservation Office

(<http://mht.maryland.gov>) studies and helps to protect Maryland's historic and pre-historic resources.

### Montgomery Preservation, Inc.

([www.montgomerypreservation.org/](http://www.montgomerypreservation.org/)) works with organizations, public officials, and businesses to ensure that historic preservation plays a role in the revitalization and development challenges of the 21st century.

### The National Trust for Historic Preservation

([www.nationaltrust.org/](http://www.nationaltrust.org/)) promotes preservation around the country through community development initiatives, providing leadership training, managing Trust Historic Sites, and promoting heritage tourism. It also occasionally sponsors events in the Washington DC area.

### **The National Main Street Program**

([www.mainstreet.org/](http://www.mainstreet.org/)) an initiative created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provides information and resources for downtown revitalization efforts.

### **The National Building Museum**

([www.nbm.org/](http://www.nbm.org/)) has a lectures series that often includes events relevant to preservation.

### **Tax Credits and other Financing Tools**

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits are available for income-generating properties, including commercial buildings and apartment buildings that are located in the national historic district.

([www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/))

Maryland Historic Preservation Tax Credits are available for all types of properties located in the Montgomery County historic district and/or in the national historic district.

(<http://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits.html>)

Montgomery County Historic Preservation Tax Credits Program provides tax credits against the county's real property taxes for structures included either individually or within a historic district in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

([www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/instructions/info\\_tax.shtm](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/instructions/info_tax.shtm))

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development provides a variety of technical and financial assistance including low interest loans to businesses throughout the state.

([www.dhcd.state.md.us/Website/programs/programs\\_main.aspx](http://www.dhcd.state.md.us/Website/programs/programs_main.aspx))

### **General Information**

Montgomery County's Locator Wizard can assist in locating specific historic properties throughout the county.

([www.montgomeryplanning.org/wizard](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/wizard))

Preserve net is a collection of resources related to funding for historic preservation projects, federal regulations, and scholarly research.

([www.preservenet.cornell.edu/](http://www.preservenet.cornell.edu/))

National Register of Historic Places web site provides a wealth of information on a variety of historic preservation topics.

([www.cr.nps.gov/nr/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/))

Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Real Data Search a searchable database with address and ownership information for all properties in Maryland.

([http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp\\_rewrite/](http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/))