Second Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 4807 Dorset Ave., Chevy Chase  Meeting Date: 8/15/2018
Resource: Contributing Resource, (Secondary/Post-1915)  Report Date: 8/8/2018
(Somerset Historic District)  Public Notice: 8/1/2018
Applicant: Maya Weil  Tax Credit: No
(Adam Greene, Agent)
Review: 2nd Preliminary Consultation  Staff: Michael Kyne
Case Number: N/A

PROPOSAL: Pedestrian access construction

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: Contributing Resource within the Somerset District, (Secondary/Post-1915)
STYLE: Eclectic-Craftsman
DATE: c. 1918

The subject property is a c. 1918 Contributing Resource within the Somerset Historic District. The historic house was originally constructed as a “Siberian cedar log home,” and, while it has experienced additions and alterations throughout the years, it retains a high level of integrity and an eclectic architectural vocabulary that contributes to the significance of the Somerset Historic District. The front elevation of the house faces Dorset Avenue, which is more than 200’ from the house, with two side-by-side platted lots between the house and Dorset Avenue. The house is currently accessed via a long, shared driveway off of Surrey Street. According to the 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (see image in Staff Discussion), the subject property has always had a Dorset Avenue address.
BACKGROUND

The applicant previously appeared before the Commission for a preliminary consultation at the May 23, 2018 HPC meeting. The previous proposal was for the construction of a pedestrian access with stone and concrete entry walls adjacent to the public sidewalk at Dorset Avenue. The Commission did not support the applicant’s proposal, finding that the scale of the proposed pedestrian access was too large and more visually consistent with a parking pad or driveway. There were specific concerns about the size of the proposed gate/aperture, which was 7’-10”.

The Commission found that the proposal was inconsistent with the streetscape of Dorset Avenue and with the Somerset Historic District as a whole, and they stated that any pedestrian access in this location should be more consistent with existing walkways in the historic district. The Commission also found that the materials of the proposed pedestrian access had the potential to compete with the historic house and that the design should be simplified.

PROPOSAL

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

- Construction of a pedestrian access gate with corten steel and stone entry walls adjacent to the public sidewalk at Dorset Avenue.

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**

(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.

**Somerset Historic District Guidelines**

- 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.

**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:
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.

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:**

**1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Subject Property Circled in Red)**

**Previous Proposal**

At the May 23, 2018 preliminary consultation, the applicant proposed a 10’-4” W x 12’-6” L pedestrian access, consisting of bluestone pavers set on gravel, a 3’-2” H concrete wall at its left side, and a 3’-3” H stacked stone wall at its right side. A 7’-10” W x 2’-11” H pivoting gate constructed from horizontal steel rods and wood slats was proposed between the two walls, and a backlit address plate was proposed on the concrete wall facing Dorset Avenue. The pedestrian access was designed to take cues from the historic house and a 2014 left-side addition, which was approved by the HPC.
Current Proposal

The applicant has made the following revisions to their proposal, in response to the Commission’s comments at the May 23 preliminary consultation:

- The overall size of the pedestrian access has been slightly reduced, going from 10’-4” W x 12’-6” L to 8’-6” W x 12’ L.
- The design of the pedestrian access has been simplified, with a 3’-2” H x 6” W x 6’-6” L corten steel wall being proposed in place of the previously proposed concrete wall at the left side, and the wood slats being removed from the proposed pivoting gate.
- The width of the proposed pivoting gate has been reduced from 7’-10” to 7’-6”, and the height has increased from 2’-11” to 3’.
- The height of the proposed stone wall at the right side has decreased from 3’-3” to 3’-2”, and the design of the wall has been slightly changed (see attached plans).

Staff finds that the revised pedestrian access remains more characteristic of a parking entrance than a walkway, due to its prominent location and the size of the proposed hardscape, the gate, and the tall, flanking entry walls. As noted in the previous staff report, many of the other properties on Dorset Avenue have short driveways and or walkways at the front, but those features are generally consistent in their proximity to the house, material, and respective dimensions.

As proposed, the pedestrian access is incompatible with the streetscape of Dorset Avenue and has the potential to detract from the character-defining features of the historic district. Staff concurs with the Commission’s previous finding that a pedestrian access in the proposed location should be more consistent with other existing walkways on Dorset Avenue, ensuring that the proposal does not alter or remove character-defining features of the subject property and/or surrounding historic district, in accordance with Standards #2 and #9.

Since the first preliminary consultation, the applicant has provided information regarding existing walkways within the historic district. The submitted information does not provide specific measurements, so staff is unable to determine an average walkway width in the historic district; however, the submitted information does indicate that most properties within the historic district, including those on Dorset Avenue, have no walkways or have walkways that are 5’ wide or less. Staff recommends that the dimensions of the proposed pedestrian access be generally consistent with the established pattern within the Somerset Historic District and not exceed 5’ in width.

Regarding design, staff continues to find that the proposed pedestrian access has the potential to detract from and compete with the historic house, especially given the house’s distance at over 200’ from Dorset Avenue. Staff recommends that the design be further simplified with fewer materials. There were some concerns at the May 23 preliminary consultation about the use of original stone from the historic house in the construction of the right-side wall, as this could create confusion regarding historicity. The design of the proposed right-side stone wall has been revised, and the applicant proposes to reuse the original stone from the historic house, differentiating the wall by cutting the stones and stacking them in a more contemporary regular configuration, as opposed to the irregularly stacked stones of the historic house.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the applicant explore compatible and appropriate alternatives and return with a revised HAWP application, based upon the Commission’s comments.
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: AGREENE@BONSTRA.COM
Contact Person: ADAM GREENE
Tax Account No.: 00537256
Daytime Phone No.: 202-328-5715
Name of Property Owner: MAYA WEIL
Daytime Phone No.: 703-409-3832
Address: 4807 DORSET AVE. CHEVY CHASE MD 20815
Street Number: Street City State Zip Code
Contractor: TBD
Contractor Registration No.: 
Agent for Owner:
Daytime Phone No.: 

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE
House Number: 4809, 4813 (AKA 4807) Street DORSET AVENUE
Town/City: SOMERSET/CHEVY CHASE Nearest Cross Street: SURREY STREET
Lot: 40, 41 Block: 2 Subdivision: 0044
Lot: 15135 Block: 0061 Parcel: N/A

PART ONE: TYPE OF PROJECT AND USE
1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

☑ Construct ☑ Extend ☑ Alter/Renovate ☑ A/C ☑ Slab ☑ Room Addition ☑ Porch ☑ Deck ☑ Shed
☑ Move ☑ Install ☑ Wreck/Raze ☑ Solar ☑ Fireplace ☑ Woodburning Stove ☑ Single Family
☑ Revision ☑ Repair ☑ Revocable ☑ Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) ☑ Other:

1B. Construction cost estimate: $50,000

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

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTENSIONS

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

FRONT WALL: 39" FROM GRADE TO T.O. WALL
WALL AT TOP OF DRIVEWAY: 48" FROM GRADE TO T.O. WALL

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/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 4/18/2018

Approved: ___________________________ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

Application/Permit No.: ___________________________ Date Filed: ___________________________

Edit 6/21/99

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS
4807 DORSET AVE. - PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

COVER SHEET

HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

COVER SHEET

HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

HAWP APPROVAL
AUGUST 15, 2018
© 2018 Bonstra | Haresign Architects

DRAWING INDEX

0  COVER SHEET
1  KEY PLAN
2  PRIOR HPC APPROVALS
3-5  HOME ALTERATIONS
6  FRONT ENTRY EXISTING CONDITIONS
7  STREET FRONT PRIOR TO FENCE REMOVAL
7.1-9  EXISTING ENTRYWAYS IN HISTORIC DISTRICT
10  MONTGOMERY COUNTY PROPERTY MAP
11  5712 SURREY - SIDE YARD STREET VIEWS
12  EXISTING SURREY STREET ENTRYWAY
13  PROPOSED ENTRYWAY
14  STREETSCEPE DRAWING
15  PLANTING PLAN
16  PLANT PALETTE BOARDS
17  AREA PLAN
18  STREET ELEVATION
19  ENTRY COMPARISON DIAGRAM
20  ENTRY ELEVATION
21  PROPOSED ENTRY STREET VIEW

4807 DORSET AVE.
PRIOR HAWP APPROVALS

August 15, 2018

© 2018 - Bonstra | Haresign Architects

HOME ALTERATION: 10/22/2014

SHED INSTALLATION: 2/22/2017

REAR STAIR AND TRASH ENCLOSURE: 5/9/2018
BEFORE

AFTER

HAWP APPROVAL

HOME ALTERATIONS 2014-2017 - HPC APPROVED 10/2014

4807 DORSET AVE.
EXISTING DORSET AVE. PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE

LOCATION OF PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE
HAWP APPROVAL

HISTORIC DISTRICT PEDESTRIAN PATH WIDTHS

4807 DORSET AVE

AUGUST 15, 2018

NTS

7.2

LEGEND

- 6'-0" +
- 5'-0" TO 6'-0"
- LESS THAN 5'-0"
- NO PEDESTRIAN PATH TO SIDEWALK/STREET
- ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION
PEDESTRIAN PATH WIDTHS ON DORSET AVE

4807 DORSET AVE

AUGUST 15, 2018

ONLY 5 OTHER HOUSES ON DORSET HAVE PEDESTRIAN PATHS; OF THOSE, THE TWO CLOSEST TO 4807 ARE OVER 5'-0"

7.3

HAWP APPROVAL

LEGEND

- 6'-0" +
- 5'-0" TO 6'-0"
- LESS THAN 5'-0"
- NO PEDESTRIAN PATH TO SIDEWALK/STREET ON DORSET AVE

nts
EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ACCESS WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICT

4719 CUMBERLAND: 8'-0"; NARROWS DOWN TO 4'-0"

4811 CUMBERLAND: 6'-0"; NARROWS DOWN TO 4'-0"

4721 CUMBERLAND: 9'-4"; NARROWS DOWN TO 6'-0"

4807 CUMBERLAND: 6'-0"

5806 WARWICK: 6'-0"

5816 SURREY: 4'-6"
EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ACCESS WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICT

4712 CUMBERLAND: 4’-6"

5808 WARWICK: 5’-0"

5810 WARWICK: 6’-0"

4727 ESSEX: 4’-0"

5800 WARWICK: 4’-0"
EXISTING HOUSE

PROPOSED ENTRYWAY
MATERIAL USE PRECEDENT

- **CORTEN STEEL WALL**
- **3/8" STEEL RODS WITH METAL FRAME; POWDER COATED**
- **STACKED STONE WALL; REUSE ORIGINAL STONE FROM HOUSE RENOVATION PROJECT; NEW STONE TO MATCH IF REQ'D**
- **LATCH**

**ENTRY ELEVATION**

- **SCALE:** 1/2" = 1'-0"

**HAWP APPROVAL**

AUGUST 15, 2018

© 2018 - Bonstra | Haresign Architects

- **4807 DORSET AVE.**
- **1/2" = 1'-0"**