

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☐ no ☒

Property Name: Prestige Exceptional Fabricare Inventory Number: M: 36-89
Address: 9420 Georgia Avenue Historic district: ☐ yes ☒ no
City: Silver Spring Zip Code: 20910 County: Montgomery
USGS Quadrangle(s): Kensington
Property Owner: Aileen Herbert Tax Account ID Number: 0963393
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): P135 Tax Map Number: JP11
Project: MD 97: Forest Glen Road to 16th Street (MO224M11) Agency: SHA
Agency Prepared By: EHT Tracerics
Preparer's Name: John Liebertz Date Prepared: 3/7/2013
Documentation is presented in: _____

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: ☒ Eligibility recommended ☐ Eligibility not recommended
Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property: _____

Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: ☐ yes ☒ no Listed: ☐ yes ☒ no

Site visit by MHT Staff ☐ yes ☒ no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Set back approximately 35' from Georgia Avenue, the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building, formerly Prestige Super Cleaners and Prestige Cleaners, is located at 9420 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. The property is bound by Seminary Place to the north, Georgia Avenue to the east, Selway Lane and a one-story concrete block building to the west, and an alley and Montgomery Hills Shopping Center (M: 36-23) to the south. Parking spaces wrap around the building on its northern and eastern elevations. Separating the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare's parking lot from Montgomery Hills Shopping Center, a brick wall extends from the southeast corner of the dry cleaners to the sidewalk along Georgia Avenue.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Constructed in 1958, the one-story dry cleaner is representative of Googie architecture, a subset of the Modern Movement. Set on a concrete slab, the building's structural system is composed of steel columns and beams and concrete block. The use of modern materials allowed the architect to place large expanses of glass windows set in stainless steel sashes on the north and east elevations facing Georgia Avenue and Seminary Place. The steel and glass elements are contrasted by the roughness of an

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MHT Comments:

John Liebertz
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

Bluntz
Reviewer, National Register Program

6/6/2013

Date

6/7/13

Date

201301972

uncoursed, ashlar-cut stone veneer on the primary elevations. Partially visible from Selway Lane and Seminary Place, the west elevation (rear) is faced with stretcher-bond brick and the south elevation's concrete block structural system is exposed. The structural system supports a steeply pitched, cantilevered, shed roof, sloping from the south to the north. The roof projects approximately 4 feet from the building on all but the south elevation. The use of sheet glass windows allows the roof to "float" above the structure, giving a sense of movement and fluidity. The roof is pierced by a small, exterior end, brick chimney with a pierced, square brick cap towards its southwest corner and numerous HVAC units providing ventilation for the dry cleaners.

The east and north elevations function as the primary elevations of the building due to their orientation towards Georgia Avenue. The east elevation is composed of a brick faced foundation painted white, jalousie-styled windows with a blue-painted brick sill, and large expanses of sheet glass windows set within a stainless steel frame. Offset toward the north, a set of double-leaf, glass doors set within a metal frame puncture the east elevation. The southern end of the east elevation features a solid structural support (likely reinforced concrete) faced with a narrow, uncoursed, ashlar-cut stone veneer. The structural element is further obscured by a brick privacy wall extending from the corner of the building towards Georgia Avenue. The north elevation largely repeats the form and materials of the east elevation. A set of double-leaf, metal-framed glass doors are located toward the eastern end of the glass wall. On the western end, there is a solid wall faced with uncoursed, ashlar-cut stone veneer that is punctured by a single-leaf metal door.

Accessed by a narrow alley, the six-bay west elevation is composed of a stretcher-bond brick veneer. The wall is punctured by a large infilled opening with a metal grille on its southern end. To the north are two single-leaf metal doors with a row-lock brick lintel separated by two fixed 12-light metal windows (the lower six-panes were removed and an operable sash is located behind it) with brick sills and stretcher-bond brick lintels protected by metal grilles. A small projecting metal louvered opening pierces the northern end of the elevation.

Not visible from the public right-of-way, the south elevation consists of the exposed concrete block structural system and features no fenestration.

The interior of the building is partially visible from the public right-of-way. On the east elevation, a double-leaf door accesses a small lobby and service counter. Original interior finishes have been replaced or are covered with new elements. The floor is covered with carpeting; the interior wall surfaces are faced with bead board and have a cyma recta cornice with dentils and a drop-ceiling contains halogen florescent tube light fixtures and fan units. The mechanical equipment for processing the fabric/laundry is located to the west (rear) of the service counter. Along the solid western wall is the location of restrooms and other employee spaces.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Property History

Part of the Division of the Childs Estate, George and Aileen Herbert acquired the future property of Prestige Exceptional Fabricare from Anna D. Coale on June 9, 1952. (1) Based on Plat Number 8907 of the 1950 State Roads Commission of Maryland, the property consisted of a concrete block garage, kerosene pump, air pump, and Amoco sign. (2) In 1958, the Herberts demolished the garage and associated elements in order to construct "Prestige Super Cleaners." (3) Recording the first located reference to the business, a 1959 Washington Post classified advertisement for an assistant manager position stated "Permanent position with new modern valet shop." (4) While the dry cleaning business has been owned over the years by numerous individuals, the Herbert family has continued to own the land and building. (5)

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Googie Architecture

In 1952, Douglas Haskell, an architectural editor for House and Home, wrote an article titled "This is Googie architecture." He selected the name "Googie" from Googie's restaurant in Los Angeles, California, a building that represented his assessment of the new style. (6) Defined by California coffee shops in the late-1940s, Googie is an exaggerated Modern architectural style that reflected American futurism and optimism after World War II. The style is representative of the technological advancements and possibilities promised to Americans that were withheld during World War II. In the 1950s, Americans' obsession with atomic energy, space travel, rocket ships, automobiles, plastics, television, new technology, and exponential progress drove the design of Googie-styled buildings. (7) Architects of the movement capitalized on these popular elements, creating primarily roadside buildings such as coffee shops, restaurants, motels, and bowling alleys with movement, dramatic acute angles, diagonals, free forming boomerang and amoeba shapes, upswept roofs, cantilevered elements, exposed steel, and large expanses of glass. In order to add further architectural interest, the buildings mixed structural materials, contrasted modern materials with traditional building materials, juxtaposed solid walls and transparent glass walls, and blurred the line between indoor and outdoor space. (8)

Googie architecture represents the foremost importance of the consumer. Responding to the prevalent automobile culture, architects refined the siting, scale, and planning of roadside buildings to cater to their clientele. (9) One of the main reasons for the style's flamboyant designs and exaggerated forms was to catch the eye of motorist traveling on freeways. These independent, detached small businesses had to attract attention of drivers traveling at speeds of approximately 35 miles per hour. As a result, the architects utilized the entire building as a sign to attract consumers, transforming the buildings into individual landmarks along a commercial strip. As stated by Allen Hess, author of Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture, the architect's response to advertisement "...often started with a highly visible roof. Boldly scaled, it was frequently an expression of a new engineering idea... The coffee shop architects began laying out roofs whose planes, angles, jutting, textures, and colors couldn't possibly coincide or blend with anything else around them, and which would dominate the skyline and beckon the customer." (11) Googie-styled buildings became living billboards, as the tall expanses of glass windows allowed commuters to peer into the daily activity of the businesses.

Further, Googie-styled buildings emphasized the drive-in concept by arranging the site to accommodate the movement and parking of customer's automobiles. These buildings served the automobile in their site plan and design, allowing for efficient movement, ease of access, and quick service. (12) Architects considered the placement of parking an essential component in the siting of roadside buildings to accommodate motor vehicles of customers, staff, and delivery personnel.

Georgia Avenue

Between 1940 and 1960, Montgomery County's population dramatically increased from 83,912 to 340,928. (13) The expansion of Montgomery County resulted from an increase of federal employees and military veterans following World War II, a nationwide construction boom, a rise in automobile ownership that allowed for settlement of undeveloped areas outside of the nation's capital, and white flight from Washington, D.C. for idealized suburban living. (14) Nationally, the car decentralized the American city, removing businesses from the city core and into more modest structures in the suburban landscape. (15)

The planning and construction of Interstate 495 (I-495), located to the north of the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building, led to the widening of Georgia Avenue in order to continue to "serve as an adequate artery for the heavy traffic volumes from eastern metropolitan Montgomery County to the District of Columbia." (16) The completion of I-495 (1961-1964) opened new land for development and spurred the creation of "Early Freeway Suburbs," resulting in mass-produced residential subdivisions and apartment complexes in close proximity to these high-speed networks. (17) As a result, Georgia Avenue became a highly traveled area, acting as a pass-through for commuters living in the freeway suburbs beyond I-495. Commercial businesses responded in-

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Date_____
Reviewer, National Register Program_____
Date

kind, serving the commuter as its primary consumer and embracing aspects of the Modern Movement emblematic of the mid-century suburb.

EVALUATION

The Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building, located at 9420 Georgia Avenue, is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It retains a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The Googie-styled building is reflective of its period of construction and has not been substantially altered over time. Further, the building retains its integrity of setting and location as it remains in its original location along the commercial corridor of Georgia Avenue, demolition and development of the surrounding area has been limited since the building's construction, and its relationship to the major thoroughfares including I-495 is intact. As a result, the dry cleaning building has integrity of feeling and association as a mid-twentieth-century commercial building. The Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building retains sufficient integrity to represent the property's period of significance, 1958. This incorporates the construction and opening of the business.

The Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, design and construction. The building embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Googie style, a subset of the Modern Movement that reflected American optimism, futurism, and culture in the 1950s. The architect (unknown) of the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building utilized the key design elements of the Googie style to create a dramatic icon along the busy commercial corridor of Georgia Avenue, contrasting the existing Tudor Revival-styled, pre-suburban shopping centers and rows of commercial strips. The design of the building, particularly its steeply pitched, cantilevered, shed roof distinguishes it from the surrounding built environment. Keeping with the stylistic trend, the building blends interior and exterior spaces and features a mix of modern materials, steel and glass, with traditional materials, brick and stone veneer. Further, the architect encapsulated popular culture's fascination with technology and the Space Age by seamlessly "floating" the heavy roof above the transparent wall of sheet glass, imparting a sense of movement and flight.

The style of the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building became an instant landmark to commuters, suggesting a clear technological improvement from the 24 other dry cleaners located in Silver Spring, Maryland. Five of these dry cleaners were located on Georgia Avenue including Blue Banner Cleaners at 9323 Georgia Avenue and Leeman's at 9320 Georgia Avenue. (18) In addition, the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building's design and its shed roof allowed for taller windows, permitting the interior activity of the dry cleaners to function as a living billboard to passing automobile traffic traveling south towards Silver Spring and the District of Columbia. During its period of significance, commercial activity along Georgia Avenue became more oriented towards the commuting automobile rather than the surrounding suburbs. In this respect, the design of the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building responded to the burgeoning automobile culture. The siting of the building in the southwest corner of the lot, set back from the building line of Montgomery Hills Shopping Center to the south, indicated the importance of including a parking lot for the business. Void of landscaping and other embellishments, the open lot is an essential component to the "drive-in" dry cleaning service. (19)

The Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building is the first known Googie-styled building located in Silver Spring. Weller's Dry Cleaning, located at Fenton and Thayer streets in downtown Silver Spring, is representative of the Googie-style, but was constructed in 1960. For these reasons, the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building is eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Located at the southwest corner of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Seminary Place, the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building is

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located 1.5 miles northwest of the center of Silver Spring in Montgomery County, Maryland. The building is sited on 10,171 square feet or .23 acres. The legal boundaries of the property include the one-story commercial building at 1910 Seminary Place to the west as it was owned by a singular individual, but the buildings were not associated with one another. This building and the western portion of the property is not included in the proposed National Register of Historic Places' boundary for the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building. Accounting for .16 acres of land, the dry cleaners' property is bound to the north by Seminary Place, to the east by Georgia Avenue, to the west by a one-story commercial building at 1910 Seminary Place, and to the south by an alley and the Montgomery Hills Shopping Center.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Anna D. Coale to George A. Herbert and Aileen Herbert," June 9, 1952, Liber CKW 1685, Folio 58, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed January 20, 2013).
- (2) State Roads Commission of Maryland, "Georgia Avenue Extended Colesville Road to Seminary Avenue," August 29, 1950, Plat No. 8907, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed January 21, 2013).
- (3) Washington Post, "Classified Advertisement," Washington Post, March 13, 1959, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- (4) Washington Post, "Classified Advertisement."
- (5) Department of Assessments & Taxation, "9420 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Montgomery County," <http://www.date.state.md.us> (accessed March 7, 2013).
- (6) Alan Hess, *Google Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004), 68-69.
- (7) Matt Novak, "Google: Architecture of the Space Age," *Smithsonian Magazine*, <http://www.blogs.smithsonianmag.com> (accessed March 6, 2013); Hess, 46-50.
- (8) Hess, 68.
- (9) Hess, 24.
- (10) Hess, 42.
- (11) Hess, 106.
- (12) For more information regarding drive-in commercial businesses, Richard Longstreth, *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914-1941* (Boston: MIT Press, 2000), xii.
- (13) Richard L. Forstall, "Maryland Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990," United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov> (accessed January 20, 2012).
- (14) At the same time, Maryland's number of registered vehicles increased from 494,141 to 1,001,714, an increase of 102 percent. Anne E. Bruder, *Tomorrow's Roads Today: Expressway Construction in Maryland, 1948-1965* (Baltimore, Maryland: Maryland State Highway Administration, 2010), 6.
- (15) David L. Ames and Linda McClelland, "Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places," National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov> (accessed March 5, 2013).
- (16) State Roads Commission, Report of the State Roads Commission of Maryland: Operating Report for the Fiscal Years 1951-1952 (Baltimore, 1952), 137.
- (17) David L. Ames and Linda McClelland, "Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places," National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov> (accessed March 5, 2013).
- (18) Ancestry.com, Polk's Silver Spring, Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Kensington, Takoma Park, and Wheaton Directory (Richmond, Virginia: R.L. Polk & Company, 1958), 162-164; Ancestry.com, Polk's Silver Spring, Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Kensington, Takoma Park, and Wheaton Directory (Richmond, Virginia: R.L. Polk & Company, 1960), 166.
- (19) A classified advertisement for the business stated that it was a "drive-in valet shop." Washington Post, "Classified Advertisement 27," Washington Post, March 14, 1961, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

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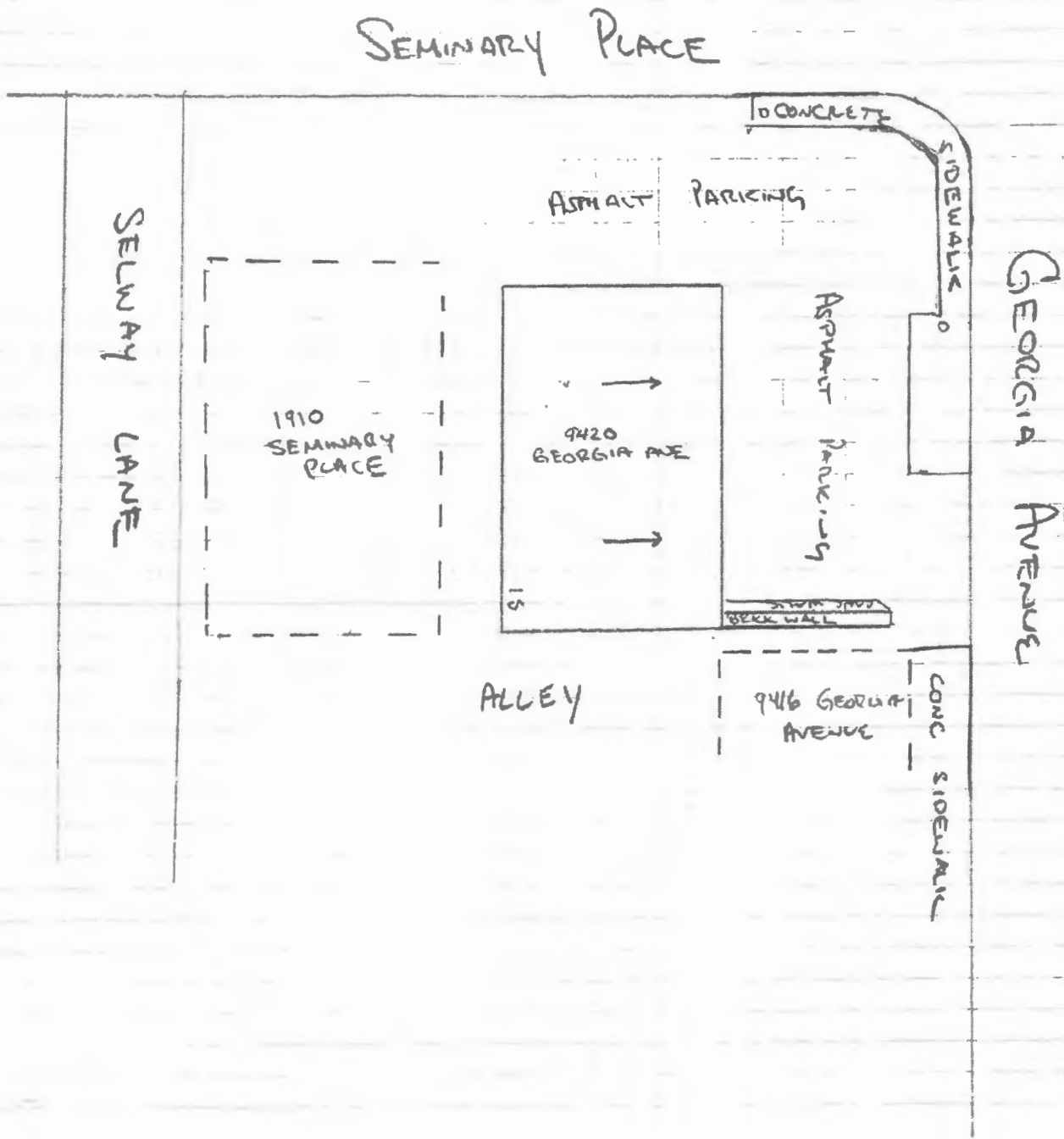
Reviewer, National Register Program

Date

Date 3/20/13
I.D. # M: 36-89

Address 9420 Georgia Ave

Not to Scale





Prestige Exceptional Fabricare (M: 36-89)

Montgomery County, Maryland

Kensington Quadrangle, USGS Topographic Map, 1965, Revised 1979

EHT Traceries, 2013

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| <p>PROJECT NO. MO224A11 DIGITAL PHOTOLOG*</p> <p>MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND</p> | <p>M: 36-89, Prestige Exceptional Fabricare</p> <p>Photographer: EHT Tracerics</p> <p>Date: March 19, 2013</p> |
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|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. M 36-89_2013-02-20_01 | View of streetscape, 9420 Georgia Avenue, looking W |
| 2. M 36-89_2013-02-20_02 | View of east and north elevations of 9420 Georgia Avenue, looking SW |
| 3. M 36-89_2013-02-20_03 | View of east and north elevations of 9420 Georgia Avenue, looking SW |
| 4. M 36-89_2013-02-20_04 | View of north and west elevations of 9420 Georgia Avenue, looking SE |
| 5. M 36-89_2013-02-20_05 | View of south elevation of 9420 Georgia Avenue, looking NE |
| 6. M 36-89_2013-02-20_06 | View of west elevation (rear) of 9420 Georgia Avenue, looking NE |

*All photographs printed on Epson Ultra-Premium Photo Paper with Epson Ultra Chrome K3 Ink.



M: 36-89

PRESTIGE EXCEPTIONAL FABRICARE

9420 GEORGIA AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

EHT TRACERIES, INC.

2/20/2013

MD SHPO

VIEW OF STREETSCAPE, 9420 GEORGIA AVENUE, LOOKING W
1 OF 6

M 36-89-2013-02-20-01



M: 36-89

PRESTIGE EXCEPTIONAL FABRICARE

9420 GEORGIA AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

ENT TRACERIES

2/20/2013

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VIEW OF EAST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS OF 9420 GEORGIA
AVENUE, LOOKING SW

2 OF 6

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PRESTIGE EXCEPTIONAL FABRICARE

9420 GEORGIA AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

EHT TRACERIES

2/20/2013

MD SHPO

EAST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS OF 9420 GEORGIA AVENUE
LOOKING SW

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M36-89_2013-02-20_03



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PRESTIGE EXCEPTIONAL FABRICARE

9420 GEORGIA AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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NORTH AND WEST ELEVATIONS OF 9420 GEORGIA AVENUE
LOOKING SE

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M 36-89-2013-02-20-04



M: 36-89

PRESTIGE EXCEPTIONAL PAPER

9420 GEORGIA AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

ENT TRAILER

2/20/2013

MD SHPO

SOUTH ELEVATION OF 9420 GEORGIA AVENUE,
LOOKING NE

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M 36-89_2013-02-20-05



M: 36-89

PRESTIGE EXCEPTIONAL FABRIANE

9420 GEORGIA AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

EHT TRACERLES

2/20/2013

MD SHPO

WEST ELEVATION OF 9420 GEORGIA AVE, LOOKING NE

M 36-89_2013-02-20_06