

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	5 Columbia Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	7/10/2019
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	7/3/2019
Applicant:	Annie Kneedler & Sam Bryson	Public Notice:	6/26/2019
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	partial
Case Number:	37/03-19A (REVISION)	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	Window Replacement		

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission **approve** the HAWP application

1. Measured drawings of an existing sill and trim pieces need to be submitted with the final windows for stamping to demonstrate the sills and trim are replaced exactly.
2. Measured drawings and dimensions for each window need to be submitted for review to ensure conformance with this approval.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Vernacular
DATE: c.1880s

The subject house is a two-story, T-shaped house, with shiplap siding, original two-over-two wood sash windows, a brick foundation throughout, and an asphalt shingle roof. The house has been heavily modified including alterations to the front porch, a small addition in the southwest corner of the house and a two-story addition to the south. As the house sits at the intersection of Columbia Ave. and Pine Ave., it is highly visible from two elevations.



Figure 1: 5 Columbia Ave. is located at the southeast corner of Pine and Columbia Aves.

BACKGROUND

On January 23, 2019 the HPC approved a HAWP for this project to rehabilitate the historic building, demolish a non-historic addition, and add an addition to the rear. In beginning the demolition process the applicant uncovered extensive termite damage. Much of the interior framing on the first floor and floor joist, and additional structure on the second floor has been replaced to ensure the building's survival.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove all twenty-one of the historic windows and install new wood windows in matching dimensions.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations and additions for new construction to Contributing Resources 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) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (*The Standards*).

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.

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,

Original size and shape of window and door openings should be maintained, where feasible,

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 Historic Resources Preservation

(b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

(1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or

- (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; 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

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

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.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Prior to submitting the application materials, the applicant reached out to staff to discuss the known problems with the house. Staff can attest to the degraded conditions of the house interior and exterior finishes; however, the condition of the house structure was not what Staff expected at all. The applicant's contractor removed the lath and plaster along with the finished floor to uncover massive amounts of termite damage (see the attached application materials. Much of the work related to the repair of the termite damage including framing and replacement clapboards has been reviewed and approved at the Staff level, because the replacement is occurring in-kind or is interior structural work. This work is, however, eligible for County Historic Preservation Tax Credits.



Figure 2: Detail of the termite damage done to the house framing and window frames.

Typical corner showing extensive termite damage to corner framing as well as siding.



Figure 3: Termite damage at the exterior corner of the house showing the termite damage.

Removal of Existing Windows

In addition to the interior structure and the clapboards, the windows also showed extensive signs of termite damage. In addition to the termite damage, there is additional damage caused by deferred house maintenance caused largely by water infiltration. The applicant has conducted a full examination of the windows and Staff can confirm the photos submitted accurately portray the typical damage caused to the windows sills, jambs, and frames. Upon viewing the extent of the damage to the windows and the estimate from a well-known window restorer, Staff determined that a full window survey was unnecessary in this instance.

The applicant proposes to replace 21 damaged historic wood windows, their frames, and sills with new wood windows and wood sills to match the appearance of the historic.

In consultation with Staff, the applicant reached out to a well-known window restorer in the area.¹ The restorer indicated that while it was technically possible to ‘restore’ the windows, the windows would need to have at least half of the window sash and frame members newly fabricated. The result would be ‘historic wood windows’ constructed out of new materials.

The HPC does not have a policy determining when windows have satisfied the “deteriorated beyond repair” requirement of Standard 6, so Staff has looked at other sources to determine when that threshold has been crossed. Preservation Brief #9: *The Repair of Historic Wood Windows*², directs how to conduct a physical window evaluation and categorizes window repair into three classes: Class 1, routine maintenance; Class 2, structural stabilization; and Class 3, parts replacement. All of the windows at the subject property are Class 3. In the discussion of Class 3 work, the Preservation Brief identifies sash replacement as a practical response to a prohibitively expensive window repair. If the frames and jambs had not deteriorated beyond repair, Staff would recommend sash replacement as a method of retaining historic fabric. The Preservation Brief goes on the state, “there is a point when the condition of a window may clearly indicate replacement.” Additionally, in the “Evaluating Historic Window for Repair or Replacement” section of the “Planning Successful Rehabilitation Projects,”³ the National Park Service states:

“Determination as to when deterioration is sufficiently severe to justify replacement must be based on documentation of the condition of the windows. What constitutes effective documentation may vary with the circumstances of the project, but at minimum must include enough good quality photographs to clearly depict the full range of conditions. When a project involves a great many deteriorated windows, general quantification of the specific aspects of the deterioration may substitute for photographs and descriptions of every window. A full window survey should only be needed in limited instances.

Questions about the feasibility of repair or the quality of the repaired window can usually be best answered by doing a sample repair. The appearance, the cost of the repair, and other factors may be considered. Where particular performance levels are critical, testing of the repaired window may provide information useful in evaluating the viability of repair.”

Staff finds that based on its site visits, the submitted photographs, and costs of replacement, the applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that the windows at 5 Columbia Ave. clearly indicate replacement (per Standard 6, 24A-8(b)(2) and (4)).

New Windows

In place of the existing windows, the applicant proposes to install new wood Lincoln Windows (specifications attached) and frames in the existing openings, and new wood sills. The window sills will be replaced in a matching material and dimensions and are a replacement in kind and do not require HPC review and approval, but this work is eligible for County Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

¹ The applicant was given an estimate of \$1675/window, plus the cost of newly fabricated parts, plus \$750-1000 for jambs and sills. The total costs of window restoration would be more than \$75,000. In addition to the window repair, the applicants planned on installing appropriate storm windows, which would result in another \$10,000 for the house.

² <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/9-wooden-windows.htm#evaluation>

³ <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/windows-evaluating.htm>

In the existing window openings, the applicant proposes to install new Lincoln wood windows in the existing openings in a two-over-two configuration to match the configuration, dimensions, and materials of the existing windows. Unlike a window sash replacement that would require jamb liners, the wholesale replacement of the existing windows and frames allows the applicant to install a window unit into the opening that will match the existing dimensions more accurately. Unlike the historic window, which is true divided lites, the proposed replacement window will be a simulated divided lite window with fixed, exterior and interior mullions with an internal spacer bar. This is a standard HPC requirement for new and replacement windows.

In order to ensure that the work proposed is in conformance with the approval Staff recommends the HPC include two conditions for approval. First, that the applicant provides a measured drawing of an intact sill to demonstrate that the replacement sills are being replaced exactly. Second, that the dimensions of each replacement be submitted for Staff Stamping to ensure the replacement windows are in conformance with the HPC's approval.

Staff finds that the replacement window is appropriate and recommends approval of this HAWP.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with two (2) conditions** the HAWP application;

1. Measured drawings of an existing sill need to be submitted with the final windows for stamping to demonstrate the sills are replaced exactly.
2. Measured drawings and dimensions for each window need to be submitted for review to ensure conformance with this approval;

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