MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 7106 Poplar Avenue, Takoma Park
Meeting Date: 10/9/2019

Resource: Contributing Resource
Report Date: 10/2/2019
(Takoma Park Historic District)

Public Notice: 9/25/2019

Applicant: John and Mary Corke

Tax Credit: No

Review: HAWP

Staff: Michael Kyne

Case Number: 37/03-19NN

PROPOSAL: Front step alteration

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the HPC approve the HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District

STYLE: Vernacular

DATE: c. 1885-1900

Fig. 1: Subject property.
**PROPOSAL:**

The applicants propose the following work items at the subject property:

- Install limestone treads on the existing concrete front steps.
- Install grey stone veneer on the risers of the existing concrete front steps.
- Install iron handrails on both sides of the existing concrete front steps.

**APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

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

**Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines**

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

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 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 historic district.

A majority of structures in the Takoma Park Historic District have been assessed as being “Contributing Resources.” While these structures may not have the same level of architectural or historical significance as Outstanding Resources or may have lost some degree of integrity, collectively, they are the basic building blocks of the Takoma Park district. However, they are more important to the overall character of the district and the streetscape due to their size, scale, and architectural character, rather than for their particular architectural features.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient level of design 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.

The *Guidelines* that pertain to this project are as follows:
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.

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

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation:

2. The historic character of a property [or, as in this case, the historic district] shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided; and

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.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The subject property is a c. 1885-1900 Vernacular-style Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District. The applicants propose the following work items at the subject property:

- Install limestone treads on the existing concrete front steps.
- Install grey stone veneer on the risers of the existing concrete front steps.
- Install iron handrails on both sides of the existing concrete front steps.

Staff finds that the applicants’ proposal is compatible with the character-defining features of the subject property and surrounding streetscape. The proposal will not remove or alter character-defining features of the subject property, in accordance with Standards #2 and #9. Additionally, staff finds that the proposal is be generally consistent with the predominant architectural style and period of the resource and respects the existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space, in accordance with the Guidelines.

After full and fair consideration of the applicant’s submission staff finds the proposal as being consistent with the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-(b) 1 and 2, having found the proposal is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation #2, and #9, and Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines outlined above.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), having found that the proposal, as modified by the condition, is consistent with the Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines identified above, and therefore will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the district and the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation #2 and #9;
and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the 3 permit sets of drawings, if applicable to Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff for review and stamping prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff’s discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make any alterations to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact the staff person assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or michael.kyne@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: jrcorke@gmail.com  Contact Person: John (Randy) Corke

Tax Account No.: 01075864  Daytime Phone No.: 978-337-0393

Name of Property Owner: John & Mary A. Corke  Daytime Phone No.: 978-337-0393

Address: 7106 Poplar Ave, Takoma Park  20912

Contractor:resco  Phone No.:

Contractor Registration No.:

Agent for Owner:

Daytime Phone No.:

LOCATION OF BUILDING PREMISES

House Number: 7106  Street: Poplar Ave

Town/City: Takoma Park  Nearest Casa Street: Columbia Ave

Lot: 24  Block: 20  Subdivision: 0025

Liber: 51055  Fols: 435  Parcel: 0000

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT/ACTION desired

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

Construct  Extend  Alter/Renovate  Additions

Move  Install  Knock Down  Remove

Reinforce  Repar  Renew

1B. Construction cost estimate: $7,500

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit No.:

PART TWO: COMPLETE NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTENSIONS

2A. Type of frame/blueprint:

WSSG  Other:

2B. Type of building:

S  Other:

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCING ADDITION

3A. Height:

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is in or adjacent to one of the following locations:

On property line  Property line

Entirely on land of owner  On public right of way/maintenance

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 hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

John C. Corke  Sept 10, 2019

Signature of owner or authorized agent  Date

Approved:  For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved:  Signature:  Date:

Applications/Permit No.:  Signature:  Date Filed:  Date Issued:

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
7106 POLAR AVE, TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912
APPLICATION TO RE-COVER FRONT STEPS TO CORRECT PITCH OF STAIRS, AND TO ADD METAL RAILINGS
APPLICANT: JOHN & MARY CORKE

WRITTEN DISCISSION OF THE PROJECT:
1 a. description of existing structures and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance: The house at 7106 Poplar was built in 1883 and is one of the oldest houses on the street. It was built when the street was still a country lane that led to the spring at what is now Spring Park. Early residents enjoyed the shade (it is at the bottom of a hill) and access to fresh water. Over the years the front porch and steps have settled because houses were built on either side, redirecting the flow of water down the hill to right next to the foundation. The front steps are now pitched forward at a dangerous angle and are also deteriorating because of the use of ice melt chemicals that have been put on the steps over the years. The steps also have a slippery surface. In the winter there is no direct sun on the steps so we often get a thin layer of ice which makes them more treacherous.

b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resources, the environmental setting and historic district: Our plan is to cover and resurface the steps using a veneer of historically correct stone. By putting stone on top, we can correct the pitch of each step with a thin layer of mortar underneath. The surface will also have more texture which will give better traction in the winter. The stucco sides will remain. We will also add a metal railing on either side, consistent with what we have seen on the street. This approach has been recommended as the most prudent and least destructive since the steps that are there are 136 years old. We will add additional support under the porch to prevent the steps from moving further. This approach will preserve the building and simply reinforce what is there while correcting the 10% pitch now existing on the steps. The flagstone will be veneer and colors will be dove gray and natural limestone.
Current front steps at 7016 Poplar (shown at below) have an unsafe angle of almost 10% and have a slippery surface making the very unsafe.

We would like to make the steps safer by putting a historically consistent limestone top onto the steps at the correct/safe angle as shown at the right. There are numerous houses on Poplar Ave that have similar treatment to their stairs.
## HAWP Application: Mailing Addresses for Notifying

[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner's mailing address</th>
<th>Owner's Agent's mailing address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John + Mary Corke</td>
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<tr>
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### Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners mailing addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juliana + Philip Andonian</th>
<th>Ken Wright</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7107 Poplar Ave</td>
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<tr>
<th>Hagen + Doreen Morency</th>
<th>Sharon Beth Fortier, Terry Ruby + Bonnie Watson</th>
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John + Mary Corke