

4th Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	5419 Mohican Rd., Bethesda	Meeting Date:	12/18/2019
Resource:	Master Plan Site 35/29-2 R.A. Charles Castle	Report Date:	12/11/2019
Applicant:	J. Ross McNair	Public Notice:	12/4/2019
Review:	4 th Preliminary Consultation	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	New Construction		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the applicant make any revisions based on the HPC's recommendations and return for a HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individual Master Plan Site (35/29-2)
 STYLE: Vacant
 DATE: N/A

From *Places from the Past*:

"This residence was built the same years as the more elaborate and larger scale Baltzley Castle, yet was also built of locally quarried stone, continuing the theme envisioned Rhineland on the Potomac. Both residences were built to take advantage of a dramatic view of the Potomac River. With its multi and diamond pane windows, hipped roof and polygonal wing, and turned porch posts, the Charles Castle is essentially a Queen Anne style house sheathed in stone. R.A. Charles, an employee of the Treasury Department, bought land from Edward Baltzley in February 1890 and built the house soon thereafter. The *Manufacture's Record* of 1891 stated that Mindeleff designed a Glen Echo Heights house for Edwin Baltzley for \$7,000."



Figure 1: The proposed house will be constructed on the lot to the southeast of the R.A. Charles Castle, but within the established environmental setting.

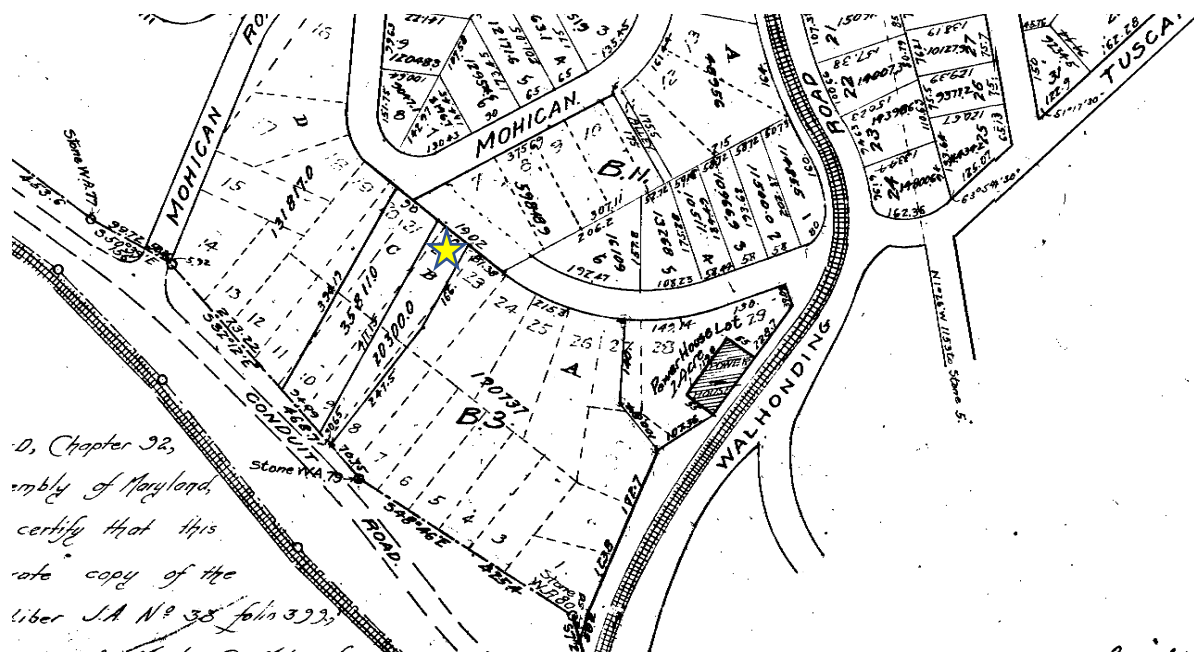


Figure 2: 1892 plat map showing the platted lots for the R.A. Charles Castle and the subject property (starred). Note: the dashed road to the north of the subject property was never constructed.

BACKGROUND

A first preliminary consultation was held on May 21, 2019.¹ The questions and comments from the HPC generally focused on the impact the proposed house would have on the R.A. Charles Castle and requested additional information and perspective views. There were additional questions about the hardscaping/landscaping and the compatibility of the size of the proposed construction compared to the historic house. The applicant provided additional information, made minor revisions to the house design and returned for a second preliminary consultation for feedback on the design moving forward.

Public comments were also provided both in writing and in person at the hearing. The comments were focused on preserving the views of the historic buildings from Mohican, the size of the proposed building and its compatibility with zoning requirements, preservation of the trees on the site, and consideration that the Mohican Rd. elevations are the primary views of the historic house.

A second preliminary consultation was held on August 14, 2019.² The applicant included updated perspective renderings of the property from both Mohican Rd. and Macarthur Blvd. The HPC's feedback was that the proposal was too large and detracted from the historic character of the R.A. Charles Castle. The HPC also voiced support for breaking up the massing of the proposed new construction to make the proposal more compatible. A staff write-up of the comments made by the HPC is attached to the application materials.

A third preliminary consultation was heard at the September 25, 2019 HPC meeting.³ The proposed construction at that meeting was narrowed by 5' (five feet), lengthened by 5' (five feet), and was relocated 5' (five feet) to the north on the lot. The HPC was virtually uniform in finding that the proposed construction was too large to be compatible with the Master Plan Site and the proposal needed to be revised for a reduction in size and scale.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to construct a new house with a detached garage on the undeveloped Lot B shown in Figure 2 (above).

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

Proposed alterations to individual Master Plan Sites are reviewed under Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (*Standards*). Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through

¹ The Staff Report from the May 21, 2019 Preliminary Consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/II.B-5419-Mohican-Road-Bethesda.pdf>. The audio of this hearing can be found here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=b1ece58c-7caa-11e9-a084-0050569183fa.

² The Staff Report from the August 14, 2019 2nd Preliminary Consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/II.A-5419-Mohican-Road-Bethesda-complete-report.pdf>. Audio of the hearing can be found here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=9a9748eb-bf66-11e9-b703-0050569183fa.

³ The Staff Report from the September 25, 2019 3rd Preliminary consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/III.B-5419-Mohican-Road-Bethesda.pdf> and the audio recording of the meeting can be found here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=231fd517-e062-11e9-9542-0050569183fa. The hearing begins at 1:32:00

repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

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
- (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 will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportions, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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

The applicant proposes constructing a new house on the existing, narrow, wooded, steeply sloped lot to the southeast of the R.A. Charles Castle. The Baltzley and R.A. Charles Castles are positioned high on a bluff overlooking the Potomac River.⁴ The proposed construction is also placed on this bluff to take advantage of this vista. This viewshed is likely why the houses were constructed in this location in the first place and is a significant feature of the environmental setting and should be preserved. The historic houses are accessed from Mohican Rd. and have Mohican Rd. addresses. They do not have direct access to Macarthur Blvd. However, the more elaborate, architecturally significant elevations of both historic houses face south, toward the river.

In the previous submission the applicant narrowed the house by 5' (five feet) and lengthened it by the same amount to maintain the square footage of the proposal. Dimensions were not included with this submission, but it does not appear to Staff that there have been any changes to the overall size of the footprint of the proposal. The changes to the design appear to be limited to the alterations of the roofline to limit the size of the principal hipped roof, fenestration changes, and introduced an inset to the main entrance on the north elevation.

House Placement

⁴ The R.A. Charles Castle and the Baltzley Castle were constructed as part of a larger development scheme called "Rhineland on the Potomac" which was abandoned shortly after these two houses were complete. The two houses are each individually listed Master Plan Sites; and the proposed new construction is within the environmental setting of the Charles Castle Site.

The house appears to be in the same location as the previous submission. The house is placed to the north on the lot while avoiding the large sycamore tree shown on the illustrated elevation drawings. This aligns the front of the proposed house with the rear of the R.A. Charles Castle.

In order to reinforce the primacy of the R.A. Charles Castle, Staff recommend that the applicant place the house towards the northern end of the lot to the greatest extent practicable so that the new construction will not visually compete with R.A. Charles Castle from the primary MacArthur Blvd. vista. This location will help to preserve the historic character of the property (Standard 2) and the viewshed when viewed from MacArthur Blvd. In discussion with Staff and as mentioned at the August 14th HPC meeting, moving the house any further to the north would require the removal of a 50" (fifty inch) d.b.h. pine tree. Staff finds the house placement to be generally appropriate for infill construction on this lot.

House Size and Design

As with the previous submission, Staff finds the revisions to the design to only be considered as minor changes. The drawings do not have notations for size, however, based on the fenestration the house appears to be the same dimensions as the previous submission. The applicant has eliminated the tower proposed for the northwest corner of the house and has recessed the entrance on the north elevation. A room in the southwest corner has been reduced and there is now a one-story screened-in porch in that corner. Additionally, on the west elevation, the applicant proposes a series of hipped metal roof at a lower slope than the principal hipped roof. This has the effect of a creating slightly smaller roof over the larger portion of the house with smaller sections projecting to the west.

The HPC recommended significant reductions to the mass and footprint of a construction proposal on this lot, determining that the September 25, 2019 proposal was not compatible or sufficiently deferential to the R.A. Charles Castle. While dimensions for the proposal were not provided, based solely on the number of bays in each elevation, it does not appear that the mass or footprint of the proposed construction has been significantly reduced as recommended. The removal of the tower in the northwest corner and the room in the southwest corner do make the house appear a little bit smaller, however, the overall dimensions remain the same.

At the September 25, 2019 preliminary consultation, the HPC had some specific recommendations for alterations in an attempt to determine the proposed construction was compatible with the Master Plan Site. Those recommendations were:

- A smaller footprint;
- Reduction in the mass; and,
- Utilize the grade to take advantage of the topography to conceal some of the mass.

Based on Staff's review of the documents provided, it does not appear that those recommendations have been undertaken in a meaningful way. The HPC was reluctant to place numbers on the amount of reduction required before the design would be considered compatible, because there are many methods that could be employed to make the house appear smaller while retaining its overall size. In Staff's estimation, a reduction of 25% - 33% to the footprint will be necessary to make the house proposed compatible and sufficiently deferential to the R.A. Charles Castle. Some of the changes have slightly reduced the apparent mass of the house, but Staff does not find these changes to be in any way "significant."

Utilizing the height comparison provided in the submitted plans, Staff finds that the height of the proposed new construction is compatible and deferential with the R.A. Charles Castle.

Staff finds that the placement and height of the proposed building all help to make the new construction appear subservient to the R.A. Charles Castle when viewed from Macarthur Blvd. Even though Staff

maintains that the most significant view of the historic house is from Macarthur Blvd., Staff finds that the proposed house still appears too wide to be compatible with the R.A. Charles Castle when viewed from the Mohican elevation. At the August 14th Preliminary Consultation, several of the Commissioners recommended “exploding the box” to help break up the massing of the house, which could help to make the house appear less massive, even without a reduction in the overall dimensions. While small portions of the massing are under a smaller roof, the massing of the house remains largely unchanged. Other Commissioners suggested revising the design with a narrower, longer house. While the current proposal is both longer and narrower than the prior submission, Staff finds that these revisions are merely nibbling around the edges and do not constitute the substantive change recommended by the HPC.

Staff request guidance from the HPC regarding the size, placement, and massing of the proposed construction.

Garage and Hardscaping

A new hardscape/landscape plan was not submitted with this proposal. Staff has elected to retain these sections in the Staff report for the HPC to refer back to if necessary. Generally, Staff finds the three-car garage and proposed hardscaping appropriate for the Master Plan Site. Staff notes the HPC has indicated that storm water management plans will be necessary with a HAWP submission to fully evaluate other changes to the site. These plans were not included with this submission.

The applicant proposes to construct a gravel drive edged in cobblestones from the ingress/egress easement to the area adjacent to the garage and the walkway to the house. This treatment matches the existing drive at the R.A. Charles Castle and Staff finds it to be appropriate in this instance as well. The submitted tree survey shows a 24” d.b.h (twenty-four inch) hickory tree in the area of the proposed driveway. In testimony provided by the applicant at the August 14th Preliminary Consultation, this tree will need to be removed as part of the site work associated with the new construction. Staff finds that the site limits the placement of the drive to this location and the tree needs to be removed to provide access to the site. Staff would recommend removal of this tree at the HAWP stage.

The proposed detached garage is a three-bay, hipped roof garage constructed approximately 7’ (seven feet) from the east property boundary. It appears that this garage will be set back from the north property boundary by 33’ (thirty-three feet). The garage will have the same textured concrete foundation, fiber cement clapboard siding, and architectural shingle roof proposed for the new construction. No dimensions were included on the drawings, but the garage appears to be approximately 35’ × 20’ (thirty-five feet wide by twenty feet deep) and 16’ (sixteen feet) tall. The garage will be 37’ (thirty-seven feet) to the north of the proposed house. The applicant indicated in discussions with Staff that the placement of the garage was driven, in part, to avoid a 50” d.b.h. (fifty inch) pine tree to the north of the proposed house site. Commission members questioned the need to reinforce the garage to the east, but the applicant stated that no retaining walls would need to be constructed to support the garage.

Staff finds the proposed garage is far enough away from the R.A. Charles Castle so as to have virtually no visible impact on the historic building either from the right-of-way or from within the site. While the proposed garage is larger than what the HPC would usually consider in many of the County’s historic districts, the size is consistent with the non-historic garage constructed to the north of the Baltzley Castle and the approved, but unbuilt garage to the north of the R.A. Charles Castle. Staff requests any input on the proposed garage from the HPC.

Tree Impact

In response to the request by the HPC at the May 21, 2019 preliminary consultation, the applicant has

provided a tree survey with the current submission. The survey was undertaken in August 2013 and updates are notated in green (for planted trees) and red (for trees removed). The tree survey includes LOD but does not have the outlines of the proposed buildings, nor does it identify trees proposed for removal as part of this development project. Staff has identified two trees that will likely be impacted by the proposed work, an 18" d.b.h. (eighteen inch) hickory in the northwest corner of the lot and a 24" d.b.h. (twenty-four inch) hickory along the western edge of the lot discussed above.

In the Staff Report for the August 14th Preliminary Consultation, Staff asserted that the heavily wooded lot was a character defining feature of the Master Plan site. It has since been brought to Staff's attention that immediately following the construction of the Baltzley and R.A. Charles Castles, the site – at least adjacent to the buildings – had been de-forested, likely to provide maximum views of the river below (see figure below). In the intervening century and a quarter, a mature tree canopy has grown around these houses and, while not historically significant, Staff finds should be retained to the maximum extent possible and notes that all trees in excess of 6" (six inches) d.b.h. need to be submitted for review and approval by the HPC. The HPC has the discretion to require additional plantings on the site to mitigate for removal as part of the development.



Figure 4: Historic photo of the Baltzley Castle, with R.A. Charles Castle in the background (date unknown). Note: the trees near the house had been removed for a more pastoral, less forested character.

Staff request the HPC provide feedback on:

- The revisions to the size and placement of the proposed construction;
- The appropriateness of the proposed massing; and
- Any other concerns or additional considerations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the applicant make any revisions based on the HPC's recommendations and return for a HAWP application.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

DPS - #8

APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: ROSSMCMANIS1@GMAIL.COM Contact Person: ROSS MCMANIS
Daytime Phone No.: 301-219-0380
Tax Account No.: 00508312
Name of Property Owner: J. ROSS MCMANIS Daytime Phone No.: 301-219-0380
Address: 5415 MOLLICAN RD Bethesda MD 2086
Street Number City State Zip Code
Contractor: MANAGE BUILDERS Phone No.: 301-228-8343
Contractor Registration No.: 426545
Agent for Owner: _____ Daytime Phone No.: _____

LOCATION OF BUILDING PREMISE

House Number: 5417 Street: MOLLICAN RD
Town/City: Bethesda Nearest Cross Street: MACARTHUR BLVD
Lot: PART C Block: 3 Subdivision: 91st AVE HEIGHTS
Liber: 40953 Folio: 265 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: GARAGE + FENCE

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 28,000

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 6' feet 0 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.

J. Ross McManis
Signature of owner or authorized agent

10-26-15
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

735175

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING

11/20/2019

OWNER'S MAILING ADDRESS

J. Ross McNair
5417 Mohican Rd
Bethesda Md 20816

HISTORIC SITE ADDRESS

5419 Mohican Rd
Bethesda Md 20816

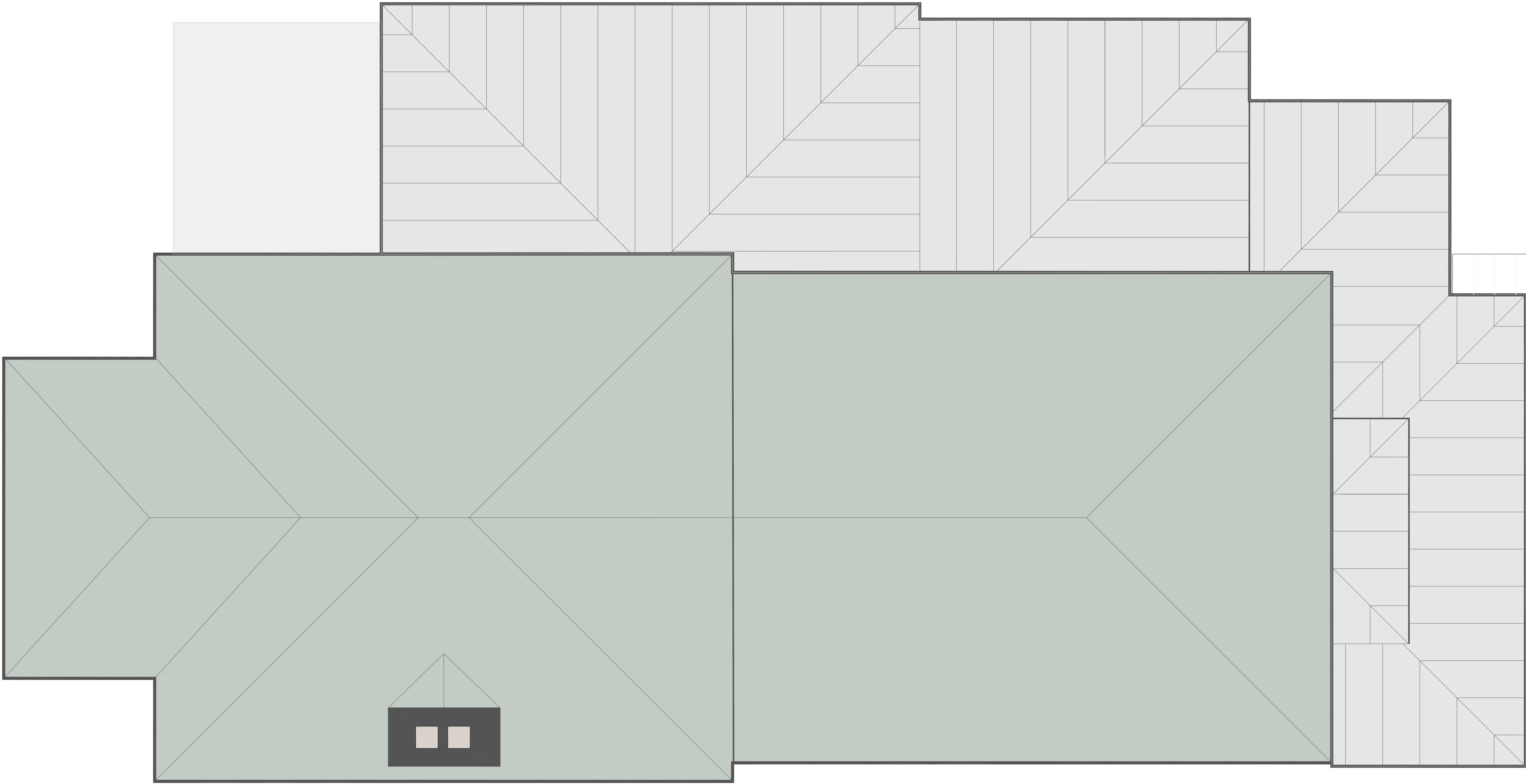
ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS MAILING ADDRESSES

Ned Miltenberg
5410 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

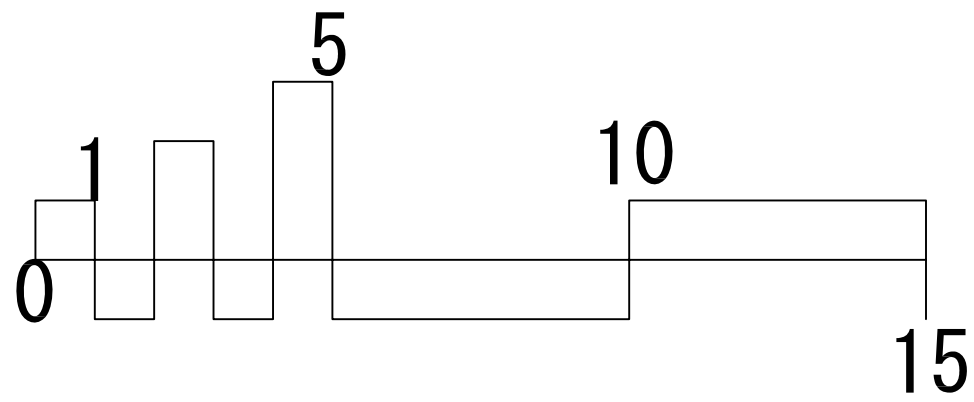
Patrick Gates
5421 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Jan-Marc Vander Schee
5415 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Miklos Gaal
5407 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816



North
Actual
Reference



Roof Plan

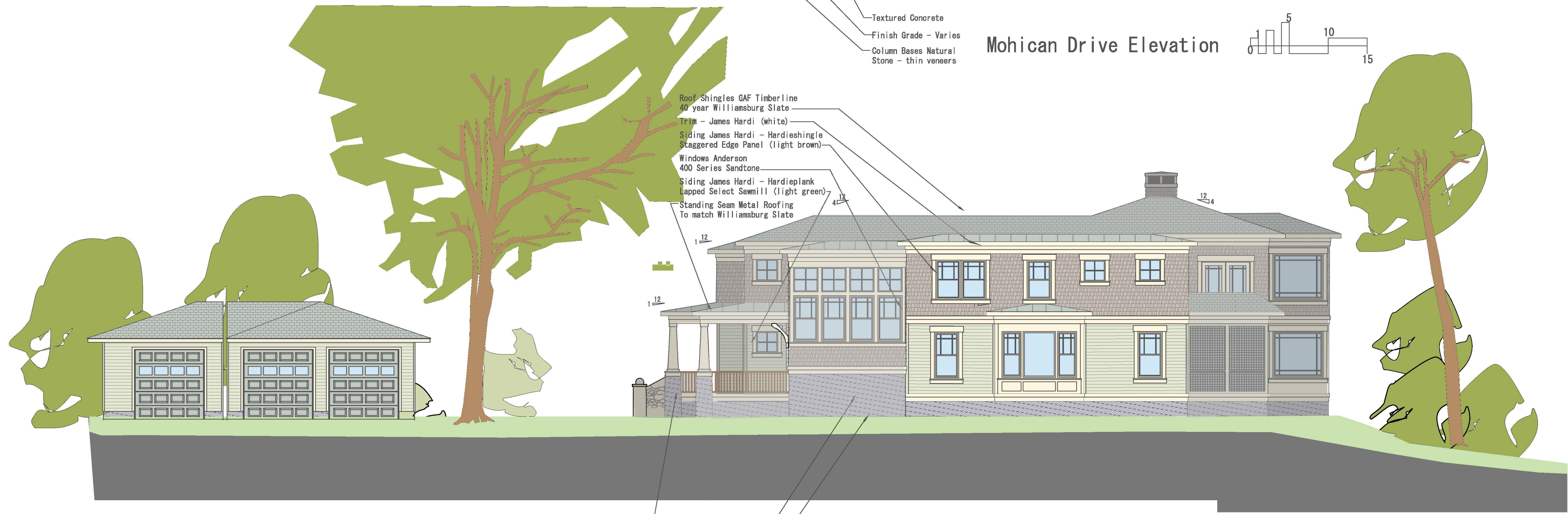
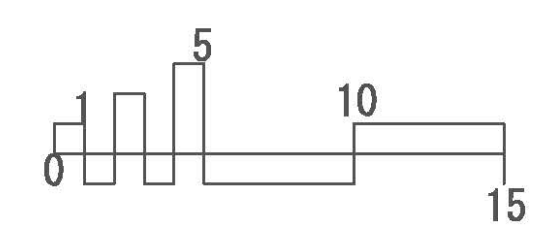
PROJECT: MCNAIR RESIDENCE		5419 Monican Drive, Bethesda MD 20816		STAMP:		CERTIFICATION: Professional Certification. I hereby certify that these drawings were prepared by me, and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Architect under the Laws of the State of Maryland License No. 8168R. Expiration Date: June 9, 2020		McNAIR BUILDER'S INC. GENERAL CONTRACTORS 5417 Monican Drive, Bethesda, Maryland (301) 229-4343	
DATE: 11/20/19		DRAWING TITLE: Roof Plan							
DESIGNED: RM		DRAWN: JES							
JURISDICTION: Montgomery Co.									
REVISION:		DATE:							
SCALE:									
DRAWING NUMBER: A-3									
PROJECT NUMBER: RM-1-2019_01									



- Roof Shingles GAF Timberline
40 year Williamsburg Slate
- Trim - James Hardy (white)
- Siding James Hardy - Hardieshingle
Staggered Edge Panel (light brown)
- Windows Anderson
400 Series Sandtone
- Siding James Hardy - Hardieplank
Lapped Select Sawmill (light green)
- Standing Seam Metal Roofing
To match Williamsburg Slate

- Textured Concrete
- Finish Grade - Varies
- Column Bases Natural
Stone - thin veneers

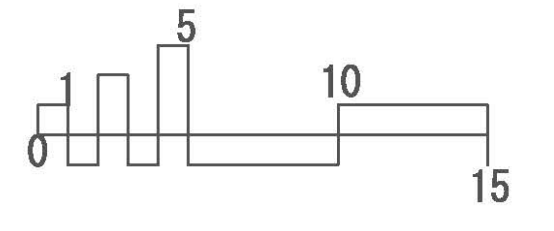
Mohican Drive Elevation



- Roof Shingles GAF Timberline
40 year Williamsburg Slate
- Trim - James Hardy (white)
- Siding James Hardy - Hardieshingle
Staggered Edge Panel (light brown)
- Windows Anderson
400 Series Sandtone
- Siding James Hardy - Hardieplank
Lapped Select Sawmill (light green)
- Standing Seam Metal Roofing
To match Williamsburg Slate

- Textured Concrete
- Finish Grade - Varies
- Column Bases Natural
Stone - thin veneers

West Side Elevation



Proposed Garage

McNAIR BUILDER'S INC. GENERAL CONTRACTORS 5417 Mohican Drive, Bethesda, Maryland (301) 229-4343	
<small>CERTIFICATION: I am a duly Licensed Professional Architect under the laws of the State of Maryland, License No. 81668, Expiration Date: June 9, 2020.</small>	
<small>STAMP:</small>	
PROJECT: McNAIR RESIDENCE	5419 Mohican Drive, Bethesda MD 20816
DRAWING TITLE: Elevations	
DATE: 11/20/19	
DESIGNED: RM	DRAWN: JES
JURISDICTION: Montgomery Co.	
REVISION:	DATE:
SCALE:	
DRAWING NUMBER: A-4	
PROJECT NUMBER: RM-1-2019_01	



East Side Elevation

Proposed Garage

Textured Concrete
Finish Grade - Varies



MacArthur Blvd. Elevation

Textured Concrete
Finish Grade - Varies

CERTIFICATION: I, the undersigned, a duly Licensed Professional Architect, certify that I am the author of the design and drawings herein, and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Architect under the laws of the State of Maryland, License No. 81668, Expiration Date: June 9, 2020.

STAMP:

PROJECT: MCNAIR RESIDENCE 5419 Mohican Drive, Bethesda MD 20816

DRAWING TITLE:

DATE: 11/20/19

DESIGNED: RM DRAWN: JES

JURISDICTION: Montgomery Co.

REVISION: DATE:

SCALE:

DRAWING NUMBER:

A-5

PROJECT NUMBER: RM-1-2019_01

13

MCNAIR BUILDER'S INC.
GENERAL CONTRACTORS
5417 Mohican Drive, Bethesda, Maryland
(301) 229-4343









