I.

EXPEDITED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 10701 Colesville Rd., Silver Spring

Meeting Date: 2/12/2020

Resource: Master Plan Site #33/22

Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Complex

Report Date: 2/5/2020

Applicant: Montgomery County Dept. of Parks

(Julie Mueller, Agent)

Public Notice: 1/29/2020

Tax Credit: No

Review: HAWP

Staff: Michael Kyne

Case Number: 33/22-20A

PROPOSAL: Sidewalk construction

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

☑ Approve

☐ Approve with conditions

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

SIGNIFICANCE: Master Plan Site #33/22, Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Complex

STYLE: Georgia Revival

DATE: c. 1929-36

Fig. 1: Subject property, as marked by the yellow star.
PROPOSAL:
The applicants propose the following work items at the subject property:

- Install new sections of concrete sidewalk along the west side of Colesville Road.
- Modify the end treatment of an existing W-style guardrail.

Other proposed work, which is not subject to a HAWP, includes installation of a concrete retaining wall outside of the environmental setting and painting/striping crosswalks.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

Policy On Use of Expedited Staff Reports for Simple HAWP Cases

IV. The Expedited Staff Report format may be used on the following type of cases:

2. Modifications to a property, which do not significantly alter its visual character.

11. Construction or replacement of walkways, parking areas, patios, driveways or other paved areas that are not readily visible from a public right-of-way and/or are compatible in material, location, and design with the visual character of the historic site or district.

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 ensure 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.

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.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), (1), (2) & (c) having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the **Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation #2 and 9**;

and with 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.
1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

a. Description of existing structural and environmental setting, including historic features and significance.

Originally built for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, the Robert E. Morse Water Treatment Plant is located at 10700 and 10701 Columbia Pike, straddling both sides of the road in Silver Spring (M: 33/22). The proposed project is located on the west side (10701), today known as Burnt Mills West Special Park. This portion of the park consists of the former treatment plant building, a dam, and small ancillary structures. Originally constructed on the site of former mills, the treatment plant was decommissioned in the early 1960s. At that time, equipment was removed and hardscape elements, such as curbs, sidewalks, and parking areas were extensively altered. The site on both sides of Colesville Road was purchased in 1996 and 2000 by M-NCPPC for parkland. The west building served as office space for some time until it was vacated more than 10 years ago.

The site is individually listed on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. In 2008, it was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record (https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/md1796/).

b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resources and environmental setting.

The project proposes to install concrete sidewalks along Colesville Road to provide hikers on the Northwest Branch trail system with a paved connection between the trails on either side of the road. Currently the trail on the west side ends at a sidewalk that does not extend northward all the way to the south paved driveway to Burnt Mills West Special Park. It ends in a grassy area that includes a steep slope which extends to the curb. This makes walking along the edge extremely difficult. Furthermore, there is no sidewalk going north from the park’s north driveway to the paved bus stop and pedestrian crosswalk leading across Colesville Road to the east side where hikers can reconnect to the trail system in Burnt Mills East Special Park.

A sidewalk is not planned in front of the building facing Colesville Road as there is not enough space between it and the street to install one without compromising the historic setting more than already happened when Colesville Road was widened many years ago. Pedestrians will have to walk around the back of the building on the paved parking lot to get from one end of the park to the other.

The project entails the following per the attached plans:

• Installing new concrete sidewalks
• Installing concrete retaining wall at northern section outside of the historic boundary.
• Modifying the existing guardrail at the southern end to allow the sidewalk to connect safely to the existing sidewalk that crosses the bridge.
• Painting crosswalk striping across existing driveways to alert drivers to possibility of pedestrians at this location.

The work will not adversely affect the historic integrity of the site and will help pedestrians more safely access the natural and cultural resources in this park.
2. SITE PLAN: see attached

3. PLANS AND ELEVATIONS: see attached

4. MATERIAL SPECIFICATIONS: see attached

5. PHOTOGRAPHS: see attached

6. TREE SURVEY: N/A

7. ADDRESS OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS: The historic environmental setting of this site is surrounded by MNCPPC-owned property. There are no other adjacent property owners.
Burnt Mill West – Sidewalk South of Building
Burnt Mill West – Sidewalk Northside of Building

New Sidewalk

New Crosswalk