

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	10217 Menlo Ave., Silver Spring	Meeting Date:	9/23/2020
Resource:	Nominal (1936+) Capitol View Park Historic District	Report Date:	9/16/2020
Applicant:	Drew Dunn	Public Notice:	9/9/2020
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	n/a
Case Number:	31/07-20L	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
PROPOSAL:	Siding replacement		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC approve the HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Nominal (1936+) Resource to the Capitol View Historic District
STYLE: Craftsman
DATE: 1938

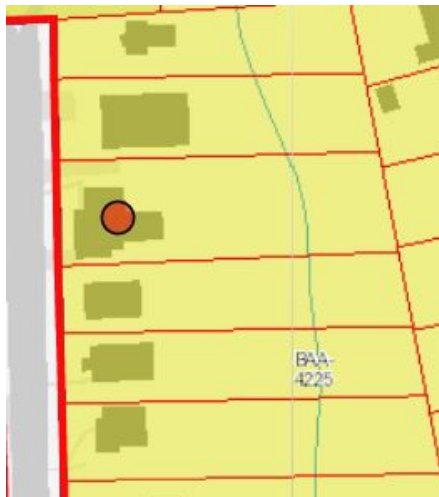


Fig. 1: 10217 Menlo Ave. is in the northeast corner of the historic district.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove the existing wood siding and replace it with fiber cement board.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Capitol View Park Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the *Approved & Adopted Sector Plan for Capitol View & Vicinity (Sector Plan)*, *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.

Capitol View Historic District

Nominal (1936-1981): These houses of themselves are of no architectural significance of (sic) historical significance, but through their contiguity to the significant resources have some interest to the historic 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
- (d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. (*Ord. No. 9-4, § 1; Ord. No. 11-59*)

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 relevant *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.
- 5. 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

The subject property is a one-and-a-half story gable-L house with clapboard siding. There is a square, flat-roofed addition to the rear that was constructed in the latter half of the 20th century. The siding has degraded and, after years of piecemeal repair and replacement, the applicant now proposes to remove all of the wood siding and replace it with fiber cement siding in a matching color.

Staff would typically discourage the removal and replacement of the original siding material because natural wood siding creates a deeper profile and casts a stronger shadow line than the much thinner, proposed fiber cement siding. This depth creates a historically appropriate texture. Additionally, the wood will warp slightly and the grain will rise over time developing a patina that a synthetic product cannot. Even in new construction where the HPC has deemed fiber cement siding to be an appropriate material, a general requirement is that the siding is installed with the smooth side facing out because the faux wood grain does not appear natural when installed. Staff also notes that replacing the existing wood siding with wood is work that is eligible for the County Historic Preservation Tax Credit, a 25% credit for eligible work applied to County real property taxes. [Replacing the wood siding in-kind does not require a HAWP, so no further review would be required.]

The Capitol View Park Historic District classifies the subject property as a ‘Nominal’ resource that is of “no architectural [or] historical significance.” It is only through the subject property’s proximity to the significant resources that it has an interest in the surrounding district. Ordinarily, Standard 5 of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards would require the repair or replacement in-kind of exterior siding, a feature generally found to be historically significant. But as the district nomination identifies the resource as having no historical and no architectural significance, staff finds that this Standard is not applicable in this instance. The administrative regulations to Chapter 24A state, “Where guidance in an applicable master plan, sector plan, or functional master plan is inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, the master plan guidance shall take precedence.” Based on requirements in the regulations, none of the features of the subject property should be evaluated as historic. Additionally, 24A-8(d) directs the HPC to be lenient in its evaluation of proposals to structures that are of little historical or design significance.

The primary consideration in evaluating the proposed change to Nominal (and resources constructed after 1981) is: how will the proposed change impact the size, scale, and massing of the subject property and, by extension, the surrounding significant resources from the two earlier periods of construction? The answer, in this case, is it will not. Even though preservation orthodoxy requires the retention or replacement in-kind of the wood siding, under the requisite guidance, Staff can only recommend the HPC approve the siding replacement as proposed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

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 dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.