

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	13 Grafton Street, Chevy Chase	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	10/14/2020
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Chevy Chase Village Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	10/7/2020
<b>Applicant:</b>	Norah & Diogo Coelho (Doug Mader, Architect)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	9/30/2020
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Case Number:</b>	35/13-20DD	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	n/a
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Porch Alterations, Building Addition, Hardscape alterations including new curb cut and parking pad.		

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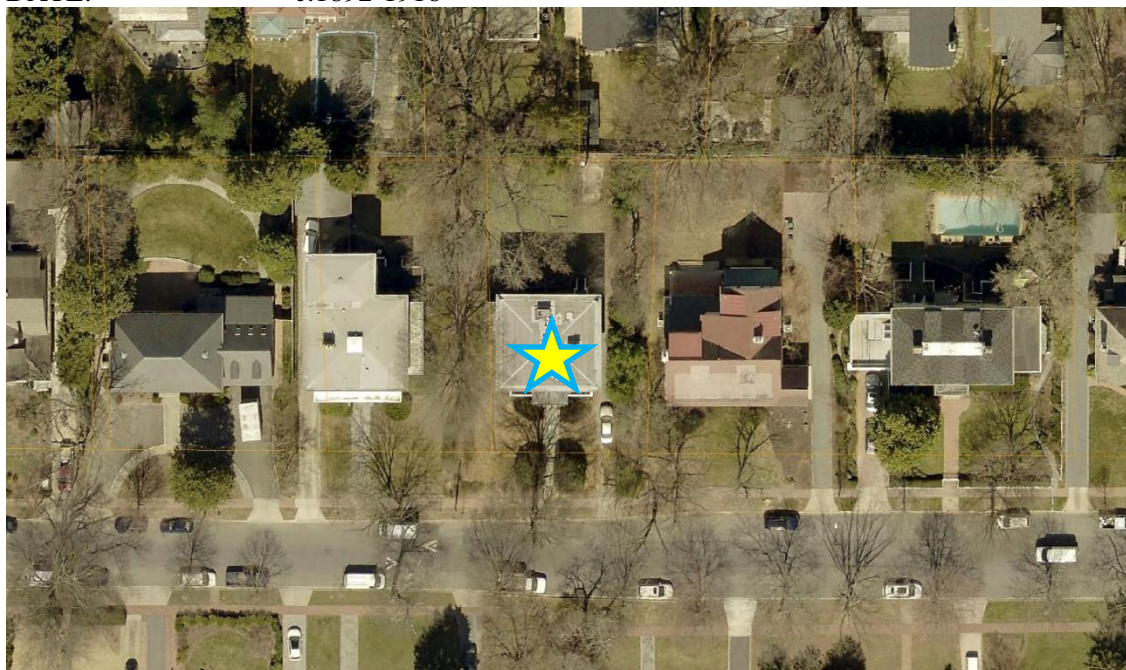
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP Application

1. The concrete mix proposed for the retaining wall needs to match the historic in tint and aggregate content. Final approval authority for this condition is delegated to Staff to confirm this condition has been met.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource to the Chevy Chase Village Historic District  
**STYLE:** Prairie  
**DATE:** c.1892-1916



*Fig. 1: 13 Grafton Street with its twin located to the left at 15 Grafton St.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The applicants presented a preliminary consultation for this proposal on September 9, 2020.<sup>1</sup> The Commissioners were generally supportive of the size, scale, massing, and architectural detailing of the proposed addition. The HPC also voiced their support for enclosing the side porch.

The Commission was almost uniform in finding the mudroom addition was incompatible with the historic character of the house and needed to be revised. Additionally, the Commission was not supportive of extending the front porch across the full-width of the house. The front porch proposal has been eliminated from the scope of work. The applicants also proposed a different hardscape scheme for the front yard; this proposal has been simplified in the current application.

The applicants have made revisions to the design based on HPC feedback and have returned for a HAWP.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicants propose to construct a two-story addition at the rear, enclose the side porch to create a one-story side addition, remove the existing driveway with curb cut, and install a new curb cut and parking pad on the left side of the property.

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:**

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Chevy Chase Village 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 *Chevy Chase Village 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.

The *Guidelines* break down specific projects into three levels of review – Lenient, Moderate and Strict Scrutiny.

“**Lenient Scrutiny**” means that the emphasis of the review should be on issues of general massing and scale, and compatibility with the surrounding streetscape, and should allow for a very liberal interpretation of preservation rules. Most changes should be permitted unless there are major problems with massing, scale and compatibility.

“**Moderate Scrutiny**” involves a higher standard of review than “lenient scrutiny.” Besides issues of massing, scale and compatibility, preserving the integrity of the resource is taken into account. Alterations should be designed so that the altered structure still contributes to the district. Use of compatible new materials, rather than the original building materials, should be permitted. Planned changes should be compatible with the structure’s existing design, but should not be required to replicate its architectural style.

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<sup>1</sup> The Preliminary Consultation Staff Report can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/III.B-13-Grafton-Street-Chevy-Chase.pdf> with the audio recording of the meeting here: [http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=e4693bc3-f463-11ea-b6a9-0050569183fa](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=e4693bc3-f463-11ea-b6a9-0050569183fa) (the hearing for this proposal starts at approximately 3:05:00).

“**Strict Scrutiny**” means that the planned changes should be reviewed to insure that the integrity of the significant exterior architectural or landscaping features and details is not compromised. However, strict scrutiny should not be “strict in theory but fatal in fact” i.e. it does not mean that there can be no changes but simply that the proposed changes should be reviewed with extra care.

The *Guidelines* state three basic policies that should be adhered to, including:

Preserving the integrity of the contributing structures in the district. Alterations to contributing structures should be designed in such a way that the altered structure still contributes to the district.

Design review emphasis should be restricted to changes that will be visible from the front or side public right-of-way, or that would be visible in the absence of vegetation or landscaping.

Alterations to the portion of a property that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be subject to very lenient review. Most changes to rear of the properties should be approved as a matter of course.

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

- Driveways should be subject to strict scrutiny only with regard to their impact on landscaping, particularly mature trees. In all other respects, driveways should be subject to lenient scrutiny. Parking pads and other paving in front yards should be discouraged.
- Fences should be subject to moderate scrutiny if they are visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if they are not.
- Lot coverage should be subject to strict scrutiny, in view of the critical importance of preserving the Village’s open park-like character.
- Major additions should, where feasible, be placed to the rear of the existing structure so that they are less visible from the public right-of-way.
- Porches should be subject to moderate scrutiny if they are visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if they are not. Enclosures of existing side and rear porches have occurred throughout the Village with little or no adverse impact on its character, and they should be permitted where compatibly designed.
- Roofing materials should be subject to moderate scrutiny if they are visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if they are not. In general, materials differing from the original should be approved for contributing resources. These guidelines recognize that for outstanding resources replacement in kind is always advocated.
- Siding should be subject to moderate scrutiny if it is visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if it is not.
- Tree removal should be subject to strict scrutiny and consistent with the Chevy Chase Village Urban Forest Ordinance.

Additional basic policies that should be adhered to include:

1. Preserving the integrity of the proposed Chevy Chase Village Historic District. Any alterations should, at a minimum, perpetuate the ability to perceive the sense of time and place portrayed by the district.
2. Preserving the integrity of contributing structures in the district. Alterations to contributing structures should be designed in such a way that the altered structure still contributes to the district.
3. Maintaining the variety of architectural styles and the tradition of architectural excellence.
4. Design review emphasis should be restricted to changes that will be visible from the front or side public right-of-way, or that would be visible in the absence of vegetation or landscaping.

5. Alterations to the portion of a property that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be subject to a very lenient review. Most changes to the rear of the properties should be approved as a matter of course.

***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 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
- (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 the 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.” Standards 2, 9, and 10 most directly apply to the application before the commission:

#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.

#10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 subject property is a two-story, Prairie house with a shallow hipped roof and a large overhang. The house retains many of its historic features including stucco siding and multi-lite sash windows. There is a small, open side porch on the left elevation. In the northeast corner of the house, there are filled-in openings on the first and second floors. The Sanborn maps show this corner of the house is “Open” but provides no additional detail. This was likely a sleeping porch. The subject property has a twin at 15 Grafton, which has been altered from its historic configuration. The applicants propose to enclose the

historic side porch, construct an addition at the rear of the house, construct a rear porch, and alter the hardscape by relocating the curb cut and driveway.



Figure 2: Front elevation of 13 Grafton Street.

### Side Porch Enclosure

The applicant proposes to enclose the side porch with multi-lite casement windows. The *Design Guidelines* state that side porches have been successfully enclosed and are approvable if compatibly designed. No other alterations are proposed for the side porch. The HPC voiced their support for enclosing the side porch. Staff finds that the porch enclosure is compatible with the character of the house and its approval is supported under the *Design Guidelines*.

### Building Addition

The applicant proposes construction a two-story addition at the rear, 21' 5" (twenty-one feet, five inches) deep by 34' 4" (thirty-four feet, four inches). This dimension is a 10% reduction from the proposal submitted at the preliminary consultation. The addition will be inset by 2' (two feet) from the historic wall planes. The exterior of the addition will be pebble dash stucco to match the historic and will utilize Pella Architect Series aluminum clad twelve-over-one sash windows throughout. The previous proposal called for one-over-ones, however, the applicants determined this was more in keeping with the character of the house. Due to the placement of the addition, these windows will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The addition's roof will match the pitch of the historic hipped roof, with a slight inset from the historic roof plane. Because of the low roof pitch and the change in grade, the roof surface is not visible from the surrounding district.

The applicant proposes to install a first-floor mudroom on the west elevation behind the side porch. The mudroom will be inset by 1' 6" (one foot, six inches) from the wall plane of the side porch to reduce its visual impact. The exterior treatment of the mudroom will match the stucco, casement windows, and flat roof of the porch. At the preliminary consultation, the HPC found the previous design of the mudroom to be out of character with the house and an incompatible addition. Staff finds the revisions are in keeping



under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2), and (d), having found that the proposal, is consistent with and compatible in character with the purposes of Chapter 24A; The Chevy Chase Village District Design Guidelines;

and with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #2, 9, and 10;

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](mailto:dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.