Preliminary Consultation

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 23310 Frederick Road, Clarksburg  
Meeting Date: 1/6/2021

Resource: Contributing Resource  
Clarksburg Historic District  
Report Date: 12/30/2020

Applicant: JAISAI Properties  
(Ben Dorsey, Architect)  
Public Notice: 12/23/2020

Review: Preliminary Consultation  
Tax Credit: N/A

Staff: Michael Kyne

Permit Number: N/A

PROPOSAL: For conceptual review of siting and design for a new daycare center

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the applicants make any revisions based upon the HPC’s comments and return for a second preliminary consultation concurrent with the next phase of preliminary and/or site plan review.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource within the Clarksburg Historic District
STYLE: Queen Anne
DATE: c. 1891-1900

Fig. 1: Subject property.
PROPOSAL:

The applicants propose to construct a new daycare/preschool center within the environmental setting of the Clarksburg Historic District.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Clarksburg Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A), the Vision of Clarksburg: A Long-Range Preservation Plan (Vision), and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards). The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

(a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.

(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.

(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 relevance.
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.” The Standards are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

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.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

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.
II.B

STAFF DISCUSSION:

Background & Site Constraints

The subject property is a c. 1891-1900 Queen Anne-style Contributing Resource within the Clarksburg Historic District. The house was built by Clarksburg physician Dr. James Deetz and his wife Sarah. The property is known as Hammer Hill, which was the tract name given to the land in 1752. The property is located on the west side of Frederick Road (MD 355) at the southern end of the Clarksburg Historic District, where Frederick Road (MD 355) intersects with Stringtown Road. The house is located on top of a knoll with a deep setback from Frederick Road, and it is accessed via a long driveway. The existing driveway is paved and is at least 20’ wide, making it compliant with current fire department requirements. There is an existing, non-original outbuilding with red siding located to the north (right side) of the historic house. The owner of Hammer Hill recently undertook a comprehensive rehabilitation and restoration of the house, and it is utilized as a doctor’s office. The owner is the applicant for the newly proposed daycare center.

This application has been discussed internally with County staff through the Planning Department’s Design Review Committee (DRC). The purpose of review at the DRC is to solicit input from all County agencies, including but not limited to Planning, MCDOT, WSSC, Fire & Rescue, and Parks, among others, prior to an applicant filing a development proposal. Prior to bringing the case to the DRC, the owner discussed the site constraints and zoning limitations with the HP Office.

Proposal

The applicants propose to construct a new daycare/preschool center at the rear of the subject property. The daycare/preschool center will be oriented toward Stringtown Road and partially located on two lots – the subject property lot and an adjacent undeveloped lot to the west, which is protected by the East Environmental Overlay Zone. The proposed location was recommended by Montgomery Planning and HPC staff to be consistent with the setback of the majority of properties within the historic district and the existing development on Stringtown Road. The new construction cannot be located entirely within the undeveloped lot to the west, due to impervious surface limits.
Fig. 2: Proposed building location.

No work is proposed to the historic Hammer Hill house, but the existing, non-original outbuilding will be removed. The current HP Supervisor as well as the former Supervisor evaluated this outbuilding in 2016 and again in 2018, and determined that it did not date to the period of significance of the house or historic district. Additionally, two trees are proposed to be removed from the proposed parking lot area northwest of the historic house. Grading will also be required for a pedestrian access ramp from Stringtown Road, parking areas, pedestrian circulation, stormwater management, the building footprint, and adjacent playground area.

The proposed new daycare/preschool center will be a one-story, 13,500 sf building. It will have a contemporary design, but it will be compatible in scale, proportion, and materials with the historic house and with the architectural character of the historic district. Elements the applicants considered in the proposed design include the character defining features of Hammer Hill and the Clarksburg Historic District, the HPC’s design guidelines, and the standardized architectural program developed by the Primrose School (the proposed daycare/preschool center will be a Primrose School, but it will be managed by an independent operator).

The proposed building’s design is intended to reference, but not duplicate, the designs of late 18th through early 20th century rural and agricultural outbuildings. Other design strategies intended to ensure compatibility include low scale, staggered massing, integration of mechanical equipment within the building envelope, the use of screen walls, and the use of traditional and compatible new materials (i.e., standing seam metal roofing, aluminum, and fiber cement siding).

The applicant has submitted three concepts for the HPC’s consideration, with the main differences being the expression of the roof and the building finishes. Concepts One and Two are similar, in that they both feature a non-continuous, two-part gable roof, with a flat roof between. As viewed directly from the front, the northernmost roof form in Concept One will be directly behind the historic house, whereas, in Concept Two the two roof forms will frame the historic house. In Concept One, the gable ends will be
covered with fiber cement reveal panels and vertical aluminum screening, while in Concept Two the gable ends will be covered with fiber cement reveal panels and diamond metal wall shingles. Concept Three features one continuous roof, with fiber cement board and batten and diamond metal wall shingles on the gable ends.

**Staff’s Findings**

Staff is generally supportive of the applicants’ proposal. As noted, staff recommended the proposed building location, finding it appropriate, given the site constraints and consistent setback. Of particular note regarding setbacks, the *Vision* states “[t]he perception and historic character within the Clarksburg Historic District is that the houses are set close to the road with regular intervals between them. This characteristic is one of the most important elements that unifies the streetscape.”

![Fig. 3: Pattern of building setbacks and building spacing from the Vision.](image)

Staff also supports the approach of taking visual cues from historic rural and agricultural outbuildings, while incorporating modern features. This approach is consistent with *Standard #3*. Staff notes that, according to the *Vision*, 73% of the historic buildings within the historic district have gable roof forms, demonstrating the general compatibility of the proposed roof forms.

The proposed new building will be one-story, while the *Vision* notes that the historic houses within the historic district all range from two- to two-and-one-half stories. Although the proposed new construction will be clearly visible when viewing the historic house from the primary public right-of-way of Frederick Road (MD 355), its relatively limited scale and massing will reduce its potential to overwhelm or compete with the historic house. Future plan submissions that include detailed renderings from all perspectives will aid this analysis.

Regarding the three submitted concepts, staff finds that Concept Two is the most successful. As noted above, the two non-continuous roof forms that frame the historic house when viewed directly from the front create a less disruptive view of the historic house, allowing its entire roof form and massing to be discerned against the skyline. Staff finds that traditional horizontal siding or board and batten is a more compatible treatment for the gable ends. However, given the building’s orientation, these materials will
be minimally visible at best when viewing the property from the primary public right-of-way of Frederick Road (MD 355). Alternative materials, such as fiber cement are appropriate and compatible, as they accurately replicate traditional materials (i.e., wood, which, according to the Vision, is the dominant material within the historic district).

Staff notes that, in 2018, the HPC reviewed a proposal for the construction of a filling station, carwash, and 3,741 sf convenience store at the rear of 23200 Stringtown Road, a Contributing Resource known as the Day House. This property is directly across from Hammer Hill (on the east side of Frederick Road (MD 355) at the southern end of the Clarksburg Historic District, where Frederick Road (MD 355) intersects with Stringtown Road), and that proposal shared some similarities with the current project. Specifically, both were commercial projects with similar intensities of use, and the principal building was to be setback close to the street. Both proposed buildings also have a modern design, while taking visual cues from historic buildings. Although the 23200 Stringtown Road project never received a formal HAWP (the applicant abandoned the project), staff and the HPC were generally supportive of the proposal, finding it to be appropriate and compatible infill construction outside the historic core at the southern entrance of the historic district.¹

Link to September 5, 2018 preliminary consultation audio/video transcript for 23200 Stringtown Road: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=0828a68e-b78f-11e8-a2a6-0050569183fa
Link to October 24, 2018 preliminary consultation audio/video transcript for 23200 Stringtown Road: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=ec4eae7f-d92e-11e8-9302-0050569183fa
Staff seeks the Commission’s concurrence regarding the following:

1. The appropriateness of the proposed building location, given the site constraints and existing setbacks within the historic district and on Stringtown Road.

2. Guidance regarding the preferred Concept (One, Two, or Three) and materials/finishes.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the applicants make any revisions based upon the HPC’s comments and return for a second preliminary consultation concurrent with the next phase of preliminary and/or site plan review.
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301.563.3400

APPLICANT:

Name: JAISAI Properties
Address: 4007 Broadstone Street
Daytime Phone: 240-423-3615
E-mail: pbolarum@gmail.com
City: Frederick
Zip: 21704
Tax Account No.: 02-00021673

AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):

Name: Ben Dorsey/SKA Studio
Address: 47 Randall Street Suite 2
Daytime Phone: 443-569-6203
E-mail: bdorsey@skastudio.com
City: Annapolis
Zip: 21401
Contractor Registration No.: __________

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE: MIHP # of Historic Property

Building Number: 23310
Street: Frederick Road
Town/City: Clarksburg
Nearest Cross Street: Stringtown Road
Lot: __________  Block: __________  Subdivision: _____  Parcel: _____

TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: See the checklist on Page 4 to verify that all supporting items for proposed work are submitted with this application. Incomplete Applications will not be accepted for review. Check all that apply:

✔ New Construction  ☐ Deck/Porch  ☐ Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure
☐ Addition  ✔ Fence  ☐ Solar  ☐ Tree removal/planting
✔ Demolition  ☐ Hardscape/Landscape  ☐ Window/Door  ☐ Other: __________________
✔ Grading/Excavation  ☐ Roof  

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct and accurate and that the construction will comply with plans reviewed and approved by all necessary agencies and hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of owner or authorized agent  Date
Description of Property: Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

The project site spans two lots, one protected by the East Environmental Overlay Zone, and the other the site of Hammer Hill, a contributing resource of the Clarksburg Historic District. Hammer Hill stands prominently on a knoll facing Frederick Road where the existing drive leads up to the historic building. While built as a private residence, it currently serves as a medical office. Just beyond the existing parking lot, stands a small outbuilding clad in red siding. The site has large areas of open space, but there are some mature trees scattered around the existing buildings. Hammer Hill is significant to the Clarksburg Historic District because it departs from the earlier vernacular traditions of the town, leading to the belief that it was professionally designed. Its prominence on the site, particular in its relationship to Frederick Road is important in retaining the historic character of the site and of the district.

Description of Work Proposed: Please give an overview of the work to be undertaken:

Applicant is requesting preliminary consultation in the design development for a new daycare/preschool center to be located to the rear of Hammer Hill, a contributing element to the Clarksburg Historic District. The daycare/preschool center will be oriented towards Stringtown Road in a nonhistorical area. No work is proposed to the Hammer Hill House and within the primary viewshed from the historic house to the historic district. Contemporary design is proposed for the daycare/preschool center that will be compatible in scale, proportion and materials with the main house and with the architectural character of the historic district. Factors considered in the development of the proposed design scenarios submitted for discussion include the character defining features of the historic site, HPC design guidelines, and the standardized architectural program developed by Primrose School.

The work proposed for the site includes all steps necessary to construct a new daycare/preschool center with adequate parking accessible from the existing Hammer Hill driveway, pedestrian access from Stringtown Rd., and a secure playground. The proposed plan will require the demolition of an existing outbuilding and the removal of several trees. Minimal grading of the site will occur for the new pedestrian ramp from Stringtown Road, parking areas and pedestrian circulation, storm-water management, the building footprint and adjacent playground area.

The design scenarios for the one-story, 13,500 sf, daycare/preschool center have been developed to reference, but not duplicate, the designs of secondary, functional support buildings typical of the period of significance of the Clarksburg Historic District. Design strategies incorporated into the scenarios include low scale, staggered massing, integration of mechanicals within the building envelope, use of screen walls, and use of materials.

The site constraints limit the location of the daycare/preschool building to the west of the historic house. As such, the daycare/preschool building becomes a back drop to the Hammer Hill house when viewed from Frederick Rd. The proposed scenarios for the daycare/preschool building design are intended to: 1. visually limit overall scale and massing; 2. not introduce roof forms and architectural elements that will visually compete with the architectural elements of the historic building; 3) be of an informal architecture that will read as secondary to the architecture of the historic building.
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<th>Work Item 1: <strong>Demolition</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Current Condition:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small outbuilding clad in red siding, white trim, and a standing seam metal roof. Mature growth deciduous trees around the existing parking lot.</td>
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<td><strong>Proposed Work:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demolish the existing outbuilding to provide space for the new daycare center. Remove two (2) trees from the proposed parking footprint.</td>
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<th>Work Item 2: <strong>Grading and Sitework</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Description of Current Condition:</strong></td>
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<td>The affected area of the site has a steep grade coming up from Stringtown Road that then flattens to a level, mildly sloping open space, where the parking and daycare center will be constructed.</td>
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<td><strong>Proposed Work:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grading of the topography to create a new pedestrian ramp from Stringtown Road, adequate parking, and storm-water management systems. Also, grading for the building slab and playground equipment area.</td>
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<th>Work Item 3: <strong>New Construction</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Description of Current Condition:</strong></td>
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<td>Hammer Hill stands on a knoll facing northeast, with prominent views from Frederick Road, where the existing drive leads up to the Queen Anne Style building, a six (6) space parking area and outbuilding beyond. The site has large areas of open space, with a number of mature trees scattered around the existing buildings.</td>
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<td><strong>Proposed Work:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction of the new daycare facility, playground area with perimeter fencing, parking, and pedestrian ramp and pathways:</td>
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<td>Refer to Description of Work Proposed above for additional information.</td>
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# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

## CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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Historic Clarksburg School

Primrose School - Ashburn, VA

Primrose School - Waco, TX

Primrose School - Chantilly, VA

Primrose School - Gambrills, MD

Primrose School - Seattle, WA

Primrose School - Denver, CO

Primrose School - Washington, DC

Primrose School - Seattle, WA

Primrose School - Gambrills, MD
Clarksburg Character Defining Features

- Steeply Pitched Roof
- Bracket
- HOOD
- HorizontaL Wood siding
- Fenestration windows
- Pergola & Solar lights

Clarksburg Outbuildings

- Snowdon Homestead
- Wood Novelty Siding
- Dowden’s Ordinary Ghost Structure Timber Framing

Waters Farm Gable Roof Form

Materiality & Natural Lighting

PRECEDENTS

Clarksburg Daycare Center
23100 Stringtown Road
Clarksburg, MD
PROJECT # 10272
Elevation Concept 1

VIEW FROM FREDERICK ENTRANCE

VIEW FROM STRINGTOWN ENTRANCE
Elevation Concept 2
Elevation Concept 2

1. View from Frederick Entrance
2. View from Stringtown
Elevation Concept 3
Elevation Concept 3