MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 10405 Fawcett St., Kensington  
Meeting Date: 2/24/2021

Resource: Non-Contributing Resource  
Kensington Historic District  
Report Date: 2/17/2021

Applicant: Anne & Eric Lichter  
Public Notice: 2/10/2021

Review: HAWP  
Tax Credit: No

Case No.: 937310  
Staff: Dan Bruechert

PROPOSAL: Building porch addition, tree removal, hardscape alteration, window and siding replacement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC approve the HAWP with two (2) conditions:
1. The proposed front porch columns and railing are PVC. Because these materials will be physically manipulated, substitute materials are inappropriate and wood needs to be used. Verification that this condition has been met is delegated to Staff for final review and approval.
2. The proposed shutters are too narrow for the window openings and are a visually incompatible feature and need to be removed from the design. Verification that this condition has been met is delegated to Staff for final review and approval.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Non-Contributing Resource within the Kensington Historic District
STYLE: Queen Anne Revival
DATE: 1984

Figure 1: 10405 Fawcett St. has the same design as its neighbor to the south.
**PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to:
- Enclose a section of the 2nd floor porch and construct a new front porch,
- Modify the existing hardscape and remove a tree, and
- Replace the existing siding and windows.

**APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

*Kensington Historic District Guidelines*

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Kensington Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the Approved & Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Kensington Historic District, Atlas #31/6 (Amendment), Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan (Vision), 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.

**Approved & Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Kensington Historic District, Atlas #31/6**

"In regard to the properties identified as secondary resources--that is visually contributing, but non-historic structures or vacant land within the Kensington District--the Ordinance requires the Preservation Commission to be lenient in its judgment of plans for contemporary structures or for plans involving new construction unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding resources or impair the character of the district."

**Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan**

The HPC formally adopted the planning study, Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan, and is directed by the Executive Regulations, which were approved by the County Council, to use this plan when considering changes and alterations to the Kensington Historic District. The goal of this preservation plan "was to establish a sound database of information from, which to produce a document that would serve the HPC, M-NCPCC, their staff and the community in wrestling with the protection of historic districts amidst the pressures of life in the 21st century." (page 1). The plan provides a specific physical description of the district as it is; an analysis of character-defining features of the district; a discussion of the challenges facing the district; and a discussion of proposed strategies for maintaining the character of the district while allowing for appropriate growth and change.

**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
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. 9-44, § 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:

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 Queen Anne house constructed in 1984. The subject property and its neighbor to the south were constructed as infill properties and built on-spec, two years before the Kensington Historic District was established. The house has vinyl siding and shutters, and vinyl windows.

The applicant proposes work in several areas including constructing a front porch, enclosing a portion of the 2nd story-front porch, reconfiguring the hardscape, and removing and replacing the siding and windows. Staff finds these are all non-historic features and the work will not have a significant impact on the surrounding district and recommends the HPC approve the HAWP.

Porch Reconfiguration

There is currently no front porch on the subject property. On the second floor to the right, there is a small section of a covered porch. The applicant proposes enclosing the second-floor porch and installing a wrap-around porch on the first floor.

The applicant proposes to enclose the second-floor porch with Hardie panels and batten trim pieces and a front-facing two-over-two sash window. The neighboring house enclosed this porch section, however, Staff has been unable to find the HAWP for that work. Staff finds that the second-floor porch enclosure will not have a significant impact on the character of the house and recommends approval under the Kensington Historic District Amendment and 24A-8(d). The applicant also proposes creating a foyer at the front entrance underneath the porch enclosure. This feature will not have a significant impact on the building massing, as the right side of the house is stepped back from the front wall plane. The porch expansion and enclosure at the neighboring property was at the February 14, 2001 HPC meeting.

At the front of the house, the applicant proposes installing a wrap-around porch. The proposed porch will have a metal roof and square columns with decorative brackets. The proposed columns, railing, and brackets are all PVC.

The Vision of Kensington identified front porches as a typical building feature within the Kensington
Historic District. When the survey was conducted in 1986, only 16% of residential structures (including the subject property) did not have a front porch. Staff finds that the proposal will make the property better fit into the character of the surrounding district. While most porches are raised from grade, the subject property’s entrance is on-grade, so any front porch added to it must also be on grade.

The proposed metal roof is an Everlast AFT-150 metal roof system. The “seams” of this roof project 1 ½” (one and one-half inch). Because this is a roof system, a trim piece needs to be installing over the roof hip. This system utilizes a hip that is placed directly above the seam (see drawings below), so it will not project more than necessary. While Staff is generally concerned about the appearance of the ridge/hip cap on metal roofs on historic buildings, the visual impact of the proposed roof is reduced because the porch roof slope is so low.

The porch will be supported by square columns, with decorative brackets, and will have a railing at the front. Staff finds that the design of these features is compatible with the Victorian elements of the house and surrounding district. However, Staff finds that the proposed PVC is an inappropriate material. Traditionally, these features would have been constructed out of wood. While some PVC products are able to match the appearance of wood, they cannot match the physical properties. This is why the HPC has consistently required traditional materials on the front of historic buildings that are physically manipulated (i.e. railings, fences, etc.). Staff recommends that a condition for approval be added that the railings, columns, and brackets be constructed out of wood. Verification that this condition has been met can be delegated to Staff for final review and approval.

Hardscape Reconfiguration
In order to accommodate the proposed front porch, discussed above, the applicant proposes to reconfigure the hardscaping. The largest proposed change is to shorten the front driveway by 9’ 6” (nine feet, six inches). The applicant also proposes to install new flagstone walks from the sidewalk and garage to the front door. A cherry tree will also be removed to accommodate the new walkways.

Staff finds that the modifications to the existing hardscape will have a minimal impact on the house and the surrounding district. The HPC has approved the use of flagstone walkways in the Kensington Historic District and Staff finds that to be an appropriate material here. The extant cherry tree will likely impact the proposed front porch, and its roots may extend far enough to impact the house foundation. The applicant indicated that they proposed to re-plant an additional tree on the lot, but have not identified a
species or final location for the proposed tree. Staff finds that replanting on site is an appropriate measure of mitigation.

**Siding and Window Replacement**

The applicant proposes to remove and replace the existing siding, windows, and shutters. The existing fabric is original to the house and has degraded and needs to be replaced. Because these materials are not historic, Staff supports their removal. Staff notes that this scope of work, removing and replacing the vinyl siding and windows, was approved by the HPC at the neighboring property at the April 23, 2008 HPC meeting.

In place of the existing vinyl siding, the applicant proposes to install fiber cement siding. While the profile of this material is thinner than wood siding, it will create an appearance that is more consistent with wood siding than the existing vinyl, and Staff recommends approval of the siding replacement under 24A-8(d).

The applicant proposes removing all of the existing one-over-one vinyl windows and replacing them with Anderson 400 Series vinyl-clad wood windows in a two-over-two configuration. Staff finds that the change in configuration is appropriate and the proposed window configuration is compatible with the surrounding district. While Staff would prefer to see an aluminum-clad wood window, in this instance, a vinyl-clad wood window is acceptable. The subject property is not historic and does not have any traditional materials in the siding and windows. Staff finds that this proposed work will not detract from the surrounding district and should be approved under 24A-8(d).

With the window replacement, the applicant proposes enlarging some of the existing windows. On the north (left) elevation, the applicant proposes slightly enlarging all three of the existing sash windows. These windows are all set far back from the right-of-way and are only minimally visible. On the south (right) elevation, the applicant proposes adding two second-floor windows and enlarging two other windows. On the west (front) elevation, the applicant proposes reconfiguring the middle opening on the first floor. The current configuration is a pair of sash windows, flanked by shorter, narrower sash windows. The applicant proposes enlarging this opening and installing three sash windows. Staff finds the additional windows and window re-sizing will not have a substantial impact on the character of the house or the surrounding district.

The final proposed change to the exterior is the applicant proposes to remove the existing shutters and re-install new composite shutters. The existing shutters are fixed and vinyl and are too narrow to fully cover a window opening. The proposed shutters are also so narrow that, if they were operable, would not be capable of covering the window opening. Because so many of the window openings on the front elevation are ganged, Staff recommends that the shutters be eliminated as a feature completely. The proportions of these shutters stand out as an outlier in the surrounding district. Staff’s initial concerns that eliminating the shutters would create too much solid siding was allayed when viewing the neighboring house at 10403 Fawcett, which removed its shutters sometime prior to 2012. The recommended condition, if adopted, can be confirmed by Staff upon review of permit drawings.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approves with two conditions** the HAWP application:

1. The proposed front porch columns and railing are PVC. Because these materials will be physically manipulated, substitute materials are inappropriate and wood needs to be used. Verification that this condition has been met is delegated to Staff for final review and approval.

2. The proposed shutters are too narrow for the window openings and are a visually incompatible feature and need to be removed from the design. Verification that this condition has been met is
delegated to Staff for final review and approval;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2), and (d), and the Vision of Kensington, and the Kensington Historic District Designation, having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the district and the purposes of Chapter 24A;

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 permit sets of drawings 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.
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301.563.3400

APPLICANT:
Name: Ann & Erik Lichter
Address: 10405 Fawcett Street
Daytime Phone: 301-942-2962

E-mail: annlichter@gmail.com
City: Kensington
Zip: 20895
Tax Account No.: 1613 02389483

AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):
Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
Daytime Phone: ____________________

E-mail: ____________________________
City: _____________________________
Zip: _____________________________
Contractor Registration No.: __________

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE: MIHP # of Historic Property______________________________

Is the Property Located within an Historic District? X Yes/District Name Kensington
__ No/Individual Site Name __________________________

Is there an Historic Preservation/Land Trust/Environmental Easement on the Property? If YES, include a map of the easement, and documentation from the Easement Holder supporting this application.

Are other Planning and/or Hearing Examiner Approvals /Reviews Required as part of this Application? (Conditional Use, Variance, Record Plat, etc.?) If YES, include information on these reviews as supplemental information.

Building Number: 10405 Street: Fawcett Street

Town/City: Kensington Nearest Cross Street: Mitchell

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 [X] Deck/Porch
[ ] Addition [ ] Fence
[ ] Demolition [X] Hardscape/Landscape
[ ] Grading/Excavation [ ] Roof

[ ] Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure [ ] Solar
[ ] Tree removal/planting [X] Window/Door
[ ] Other: ________________ [ ] New siding

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 12/30/2020
## HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING

[Owner, Owner’s Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner’s mailing address</th>
<th>Owner’s Agent’s mailing address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10405 Fawcett Street</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kensington, MD 20895</td>
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### Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rudy and Suly Uberman</th>
<th>Sandy Wasden</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10403 Fawcett Street</td>
<td>10407 Fawcett Street</td>
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<td>Kensington, MD 20895</td>
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<tr>
<td>10401 Armory Avenue</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kensington, MD 20895</td>
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</table>
Description of Property: Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

This non-historic house was constructed in 1984. The house is a typical builder style of that era, with vinyl siding, non-traditional windows (including inconsistent window trim and design elements) and oddly sized plastic shutters. The original builder added decorative features such as gables that were meant to echo the Victorian style of nearby houses in the historic district of Kensington. The house currently has a small concrete pad front porch entry with a small second-story front porch above that. The window trim and decorative gables are rotting and in need of replacement. The front stone walkway is damaged and in need of repair as well. The large cherry trees planted by previous owners are too close to the house with the root systems up against the foundation in the front and side of the house. The house at 10405 Fawcett Street is flanked by two houses. The house on the north side is a historic structure that underwent an exterior renovation a few years ago, and the house on the south side is a mirror image of 10405 Fawcett and was built in 1984 by the same builder but had the exterior and windows redone and front patio installed about 10 years ago. Both of these houses extend farther out to the sidewalk than 10405 Fawcett (see pictures).

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

The purpose of this project is to make the house more energy-efficient and to improve the usability and overall design integrity of the house. The vinyl siding will be removed, proper insulation will be added throughout, and new Hardie plank siding and windows will be installed. This should greatly improve the energy efficiency of the house. In addition, we will enclose the existing concrete front stoop to create a foyer, and we will add a small porch to the front of the house. We will enclose the second story porch above the front door so that it can be a home office. The exterior facade work will use materials and proportions that contribute to an overall cohesive design. The front garden and hardscape will be redesigned so that the stone walkway leads directly from the front door to the sidewalk, more in keeping with the style in the neighborhood. The overgrown cherry trees that are too close to the house will be removed and replaced with smaller trees, such as dogwoods. The updates to the house and front garden will not only improve the energy efficiency and appearance of the 1980s structure, it will also better contribute to the overall character of the Kensington historic district.
### Work Item 1: New siding and windows

**Description of Current Condition:**
Vinyl siding, rotting window trim and rotting decorative trim/gables. The plastic shutters are oddly sized and deteriorating. The existing windows in the front and north side are non-standard size.

**Proposed Work:**
Replace aging vinyl siding with painted Hardie plank siding; add proper insulation throughout. Replace all windows with new, energy efficient models and update to standard size windows on the front and north side of the house. Replace existing shutters with traditional style and size composite shutters.

### Work Item 2: Porch modification

**Description of Current Condition:**
Front concrete pad porch entry with a second story open porch with railing above it.

**Proposed Work:**
Enclose existing front concrete pad to create a foyer; construct new porch with composite flooring and railing that extends along the front of the house. Enclose second-story front porch to create a home office.

### Work Item 3: New hardscape & garden update

**Description of Current Condition:**
Front stone walkway has broken, deteriorating stones and it wraps around front of house to the driveway. Overgrown Kwanzan cherry tree (approximately 50" diameter) situated in front flower garden is growing close to house with roots up against the foundation.

**Proposed Work:**
Install new hardscape - stone path that leads straight from front door to sidewalk. Remove large cherry tree in front of the house and replace with smaller dogwood tree. Reorient existing front flower garden around new stone path.
REPLACE ALL SIDING AND TRIM ON BACK ELEVATION TO MATCH OTHER ELEVATIONS

ARCHITECT
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rbnehrebecky@verizon.net

10405 Fawcett Street
Kensington, MD 20895

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

FRONT ELEVATION

RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

LEFT SIDE ELEVATION

GABLE DETAIL

COLUMN DETAIL
16
Existing front facade 10405 Fawcett Street, Kensington, MD, as seen from front facing sidewalk.
Existing concrete pad front stoop and second-story porch.
Existing hardscape and driveway, with overgrown cherry trees too close to the foundation and house.
Rotting decorative gables at roofline.
Rotting window trim in need of replacement.
10405 Fawcett setback compared to neighboring historic property at 10407 Fawcett Street.
North side of house (adjacent to 10407 Fawcett). Windows to be replaced with standard size windows.
South side of house (adjacent to 10403 Fawcett). Windows to be replaced, two new upper story windows to be added per plans.
Precedent work done on adjacent house 10403 Fawcett (mirror image of 10405 Fawcett also built in 1984 by same builder).