

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

<b>Address:</b>	6124 MacArthur Boulevard, Bethesda	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	12/1/2021
<b>Resource:</b>	Master Plan Site #35/47 ( <i>Bonfield's Garage</i> )	<b>Report Date:</b>	11/24/2021
<b>Applicant:</b>	William Fuchs ( <b>Christopher M. Ruhlen, Agent</b> )	<b>Public Notice:</b>	11/17/2021
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	N/A
<b>Case Number:</b>	897899 REVISION		
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	After the fact tree removal, grading, site alteration, new hardscape construction		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

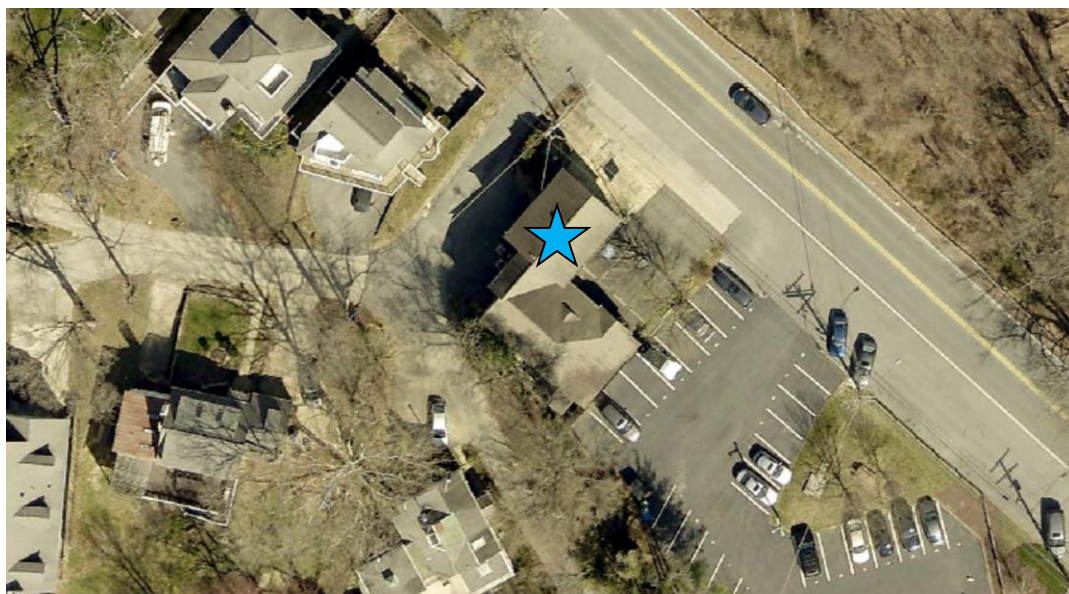
Staff recommends that the HPC **approve** the HAWP application.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

SIGNIFICANCE: Master Plan Site #35/47, *Bonfield's Garage*  
 STYLE: Automobile Repair Garage  
 DATE: c. 1927

Excerpt from *Places from the Past*:

Bonfield's Garage, one of the last early automobile repair garages, represents the transformation of lower Montgomery County from a farming community into a residential suburb. The Bonfield family opened an auto repair garage here about 1927. For 70 years, Walter Bonfield, inheriting the business from his father, operated the garage and lived in the second-level apartment over the shop. Adjacent to the building are open-air grease pits, predating the hydraulic lifts in today's service stations. Bonfield expanded his business in 1936, installing gas pumps to supplement the automobile repair service. The 2½-story front-gable structure is a traditional building form used for commercial structures as early as the mid-1800s. In contrast, the metal streamline sign announcing Bonfield's services was a response to the faster pace of the automobile age.



*Fig. 1: Subject property, as marked by the blue star.*

### **BACKAGROUND:**

The applicant previously appeared before the Commission for preliminary consultations for building alterations at the July 24, 2019 and September 11, 2019 HPC meetings. The applicant subsequently submitted a HAWP application (HAWP #897899), which was approved by the Commission at the December 18, 2019 HPC meeting. The applicant returned to the Commission for a preliminary consultation regarding after the fact alterations at the August 18, 2021 HPC meeting.<sup>1</sup>

### **PROPOSAL:**

The applicant proposes after the fact tree removal, grading, site alteration, new hardscape construction.

### **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:**

When reviewing alterations and new construction at Master Plan Sites several documents are to be

<sup>1</sup> Link to audio/video transcript of the July 24, 2019 HPC meeting:

[http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=62bbb12f-af0e-11e9-b703-0050569183fa](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=62bbb12f-af0e-11e9-b703-0050569183fa)

Link to July 24, 2019 preliminary consultation staff report: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/II.A-6124-MacArthur-Boulevard-Bethesda..pdf>

Link to photographs of the subject property, as presented at the July 24, 2019 HPC meeting:

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Photos-for-II.A-6124-MacArthur-Boulevard-Bethesda.pdf>

Link to audio/video transcript of the September 11, 2019 HPC meeting:

[http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=88b51f16-d56f-11e9-b703-0050569183fa](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=88b51f16-d56f-11e9-b703-0050569183fa)

Link to September 11, 2019 preliminary consultation staff report:

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/II.A-6124-MacArthur-Boulevard-Bethesda.pdf>

Link to audio/video transcript of the December 18, 2019 HPC meeting:

[http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=d7f65486-2283-11ea-a240-0050569183fa](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=d7f65486-2283-11ea-a240-0050569183fa)

Link to December 18, 2019 HAWP staff report: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/I.I-6124-MacArthur-Boulevard-Bethesda.pdf>

Link to audio/video transcript of the August 18, 2021 HPC meeting:

[http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=9787973c-0415-11ec-9f1e-0050569183fa](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=9787973c-0415-11ec-9f1e-0050569183fa)

Link to August 18, 2021 preliminary consultation staff report: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/II.B-6124-MacArthur-Boulevard-Bethesda-Preliminary-Consultation.pdf>

utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include *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.

***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 the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:***

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 c. 1927 automobile repair garage with c. 1990s rear addition, which projects to the southeast (left side, as viewed from the public right-of-way of MacArthur Boulevard). The applicants previously appeared before the Commission for preliminary consultations for building alterations at the July 24, 2019 and September 11, 2019 HPC meetings. The applicants subsequently submitted a HAWP application (HAWP #897899), which was approved by the Commission at the December 18, 2019 HPC meeting. The previous approval included the following work items:

- Removal of an existing non-historic rear deck and construction of a new deck with enclosed refrigeration/storage boxes in its place.
- Construction of a new deck on the right side of the historic building and existing non-historic rear addition.
- Enclosure of the covered walkway on the front of the existing non-historic left side addition.
- Construction of a balcony/bridge, connecting the parking/proposed delivery area at the front of the property to the proposed refrigeration/storage at the rear.
- Conversion of the non-original fixed windows behind the sliding garage doors on the façade of the historic building to an entry.

In June 2021, historic preservation staff conducted a follow up site visit to the subject property. Upon inspection, staff determined that unpermitted work had occurred at the rear of the property, including:

- Additional site clearing.
- Tree removals.
- Significant regrading.
- Construction of a new retaining wall, ranging from approximately 2' to 6' in height.

The applicant returned to the Commission for a preliminary consultation regarding the after the fact alterations at the August 18, 2021 HPC meeting. At the preliminary consultation, the Commission expressed the following:

- The Commission did not support the proposed revisions, finding them incompatible with the historic resource and approved HAWP.
- Specific comments included:
  - The scope of work (i.e., new deck, grade, location of mechanical equipment, etc.) should conform with the original HAWP approval.
  - More exploratory work needs be done by the applicant to determine the structural stability of the new deck, and the applicant should be prepared to present this information to the HPC.
  - There are concerns regarding the potential noise level generated by the condensers at grade, and the applicant should explore this issue and be prepared to discuss it with the HPC.
  - There are concerns regarding the parking/delivery area in the rear, and there was little support for this aspect of the proposal.
  - Suggested alternatives for the retaining wall included a structurally sound CMU or poured concrete wall, but there was little support for a retaining wall.
  - The applicant is encouraged to work with the neighbors to better understand their issues with the proposal.

Since the August 18, 2021, the applicant has retained an architect to address the Commission's concerns and recommendations with the following revisions:



- At the preliminary consultation, the HPC determined that the approved HAWP did not accurately reflect the previously existing (prior to construction of the approved addition and after the fact alterations) grade and site conditions of the property. The current proposal accounts for the existing grade and site conditions, as well as the as-built conditions of the addition and after the fact alterations. The current proposal demonstrates the requirement for site clearing, tree removal, and regrading to accommodate the approved addition.
- The applicant has worked with a structural engineer, who determined that the constructed deck posts are structurally stable and sufficient to support the addition, even with the after the fact retaining wall. The applicant will be prepared to discuss the engineer's findings at the December 1, 2021 HPC meeting. However, the applicant proposes the following revisions to further increase the stability of the deck posts:
  - Removal of the after the fact retaining wall.
  - Reduction in the height of the deck posts and addition of concrete pedestal bases below, shortening the unbraced length of the posts.
- The applicant has worked with an acoustical engineer, who has performed tests, using the noise levels created by the largest condenser and multiplying the results by the total number of condensers, accounting for the worst-case scenario. The applicant has stated that the preliminary results of these tests demonstrate compliance with local noise ordinances. While the final test results were not available as of the time of this writing, the applicant will be prepared to present them to the Commission at the December 1, 2021.
  - Staff reiterates that there are local noise ordinances in place to address any noise issues that may arise once operations commence.
- The after the fact parking pad/delivery area at the rear is proposed to be removed.
- As noted above, the after the fact retaining wall is proposed to be removed, and the site will be partially restored to its previous condition, with an embankment, ornamental landscaping, and planting of evergreens.
- The applicant's team has worked closely with the neighbors, holding meetings and providing them with options/proposals for feedback prior to submitting the revised HAWP.

Other proposed revisions include:

- Restoration of the embankment at the right side of the building, where unapproved excavation and construction of a CMU retaining wall had occurred.
- The addition of a lattice-clad screening fence at the rear (below the deck), decreasing the noise generated by the at grade condensers and screening mechanical equipment from public view.
- The proposed deck posts, pedestal bases, and screening will be painted to match the color scheme of the building.
- Although the delivery walk at the right side of the building was included in the original HAWP approval, the proposed railing has been revised to be a traditional wood railing with balusters. The delivery/parking area at the front of the building has also been shortened, and the delivery walk railing extended to as necessary to accommodate the shortened delivery/parking area.

Staff supports the applicant's proposal, finding that the proposed revisions respond appropriately to the Commission's concerns and recommendations at the August 18, 2021 preliminary consultation. Staff finds that the applicant's proposal, as revised, retains the character of the property and will not detract from the character defining features of the historic c. 1924 automobile garage, in accordance with *Standards #2 and #9*. Additionally, the proposed alterations can be removed in the future without impairing the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment, in accordance with *Standard #10*.

After full and fair consideration of the applicant's submission staff finds the proposal as being consistent with the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b) (1) and (2), having found the proposal is consistent

with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #2, #9, and #10* outlined above.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b) (1) and (2), 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, #9, and #10*;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present an electronic set 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](mailto:michael.kyne@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.

Wagshal's

6124 Macarthur Blvd. Bethesda, MD 20816

Adjacent and Confronting Properties:

Bethesda, MD 20816

6106 MacArthur Boulevard

6204 MacArthur Boulevard

6206 MacArthur Boulevard

6208 MacArthur Boulevard

4210 Leeward Place

4224 Leeward Place

4230 Leeward Place

6200 Windward Place

6201 Windward Place

6202 Windward Place

6203 Windward Place

6204 Windward Place

6205 Windward Place

6207 Windward Place

4443 Springdale Street NW Washington, DC 20016

Existing Conditions



Corner of Windward and Leeward



Looking toward Windward and Leeward intersection



Existing Conditions



Existing conditions under addition



Existing conditions under addition

Existing Conditions



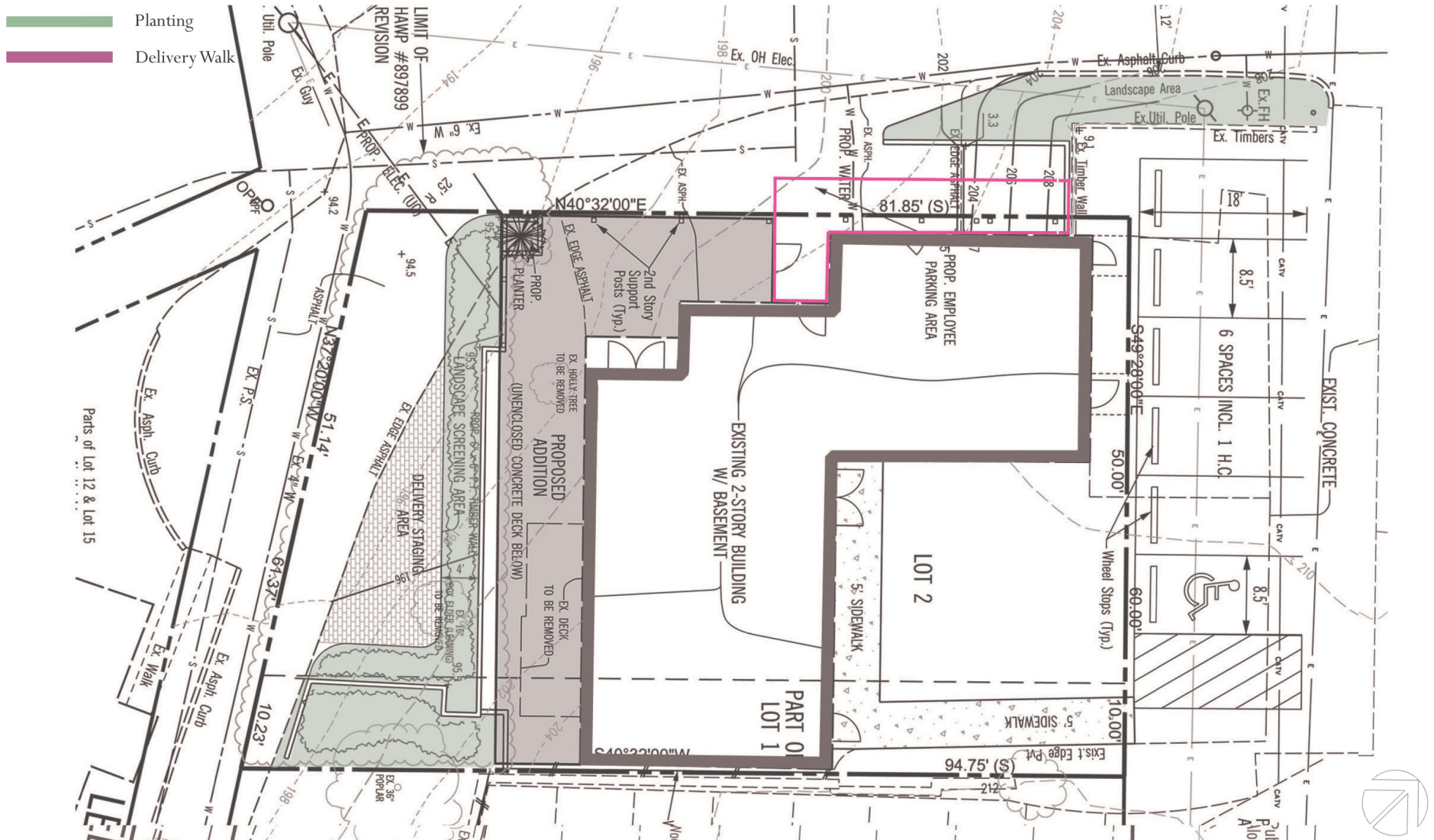
View down Windward from Macarthur



View up Windward toward Macarthur



Previously Proposed Site Plan



FOUNDRY  
a r c h i t e c t s





Corner of Windward and Leeward



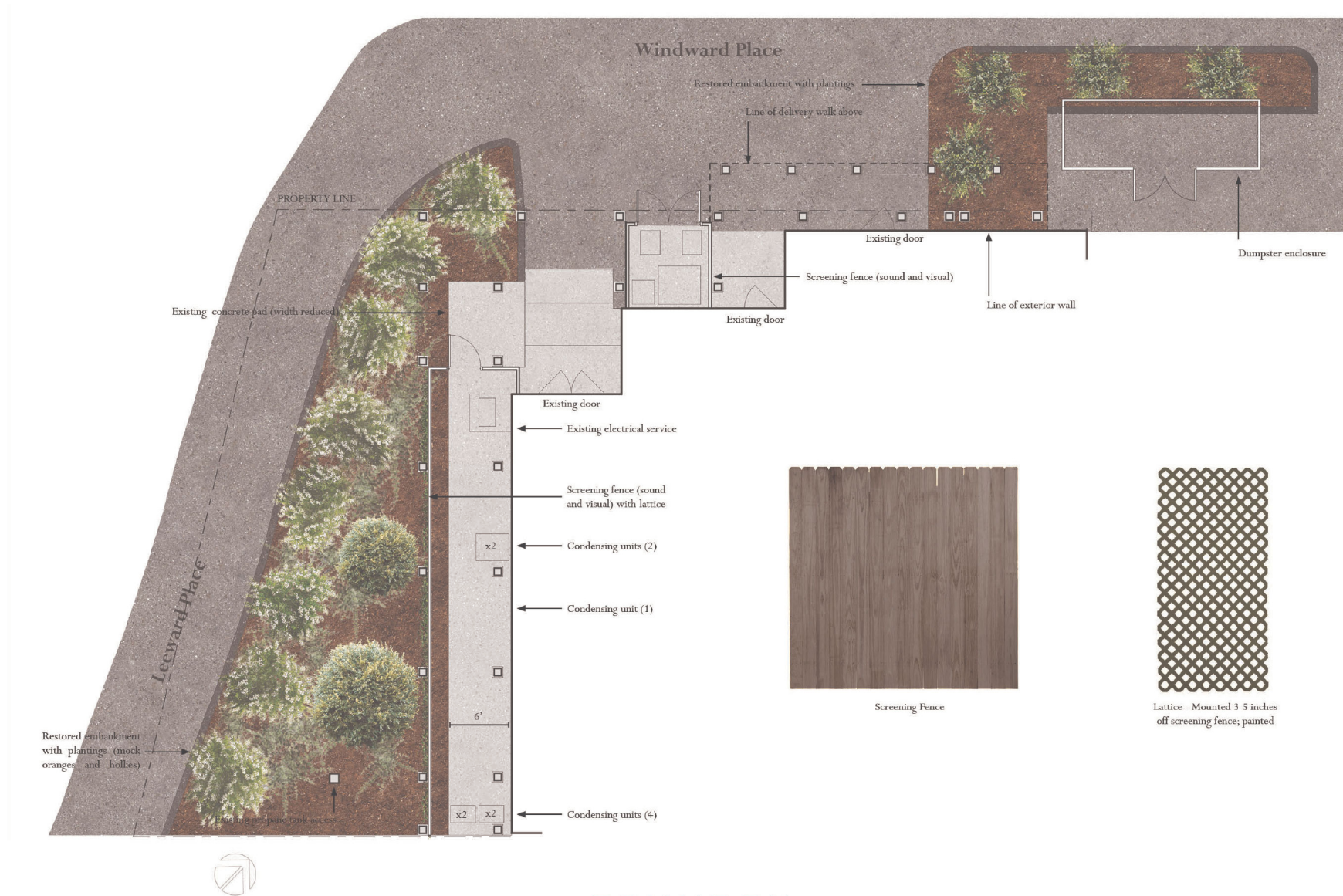
Existing



Proposed



# Proposed Plan





Windward Place Elevation

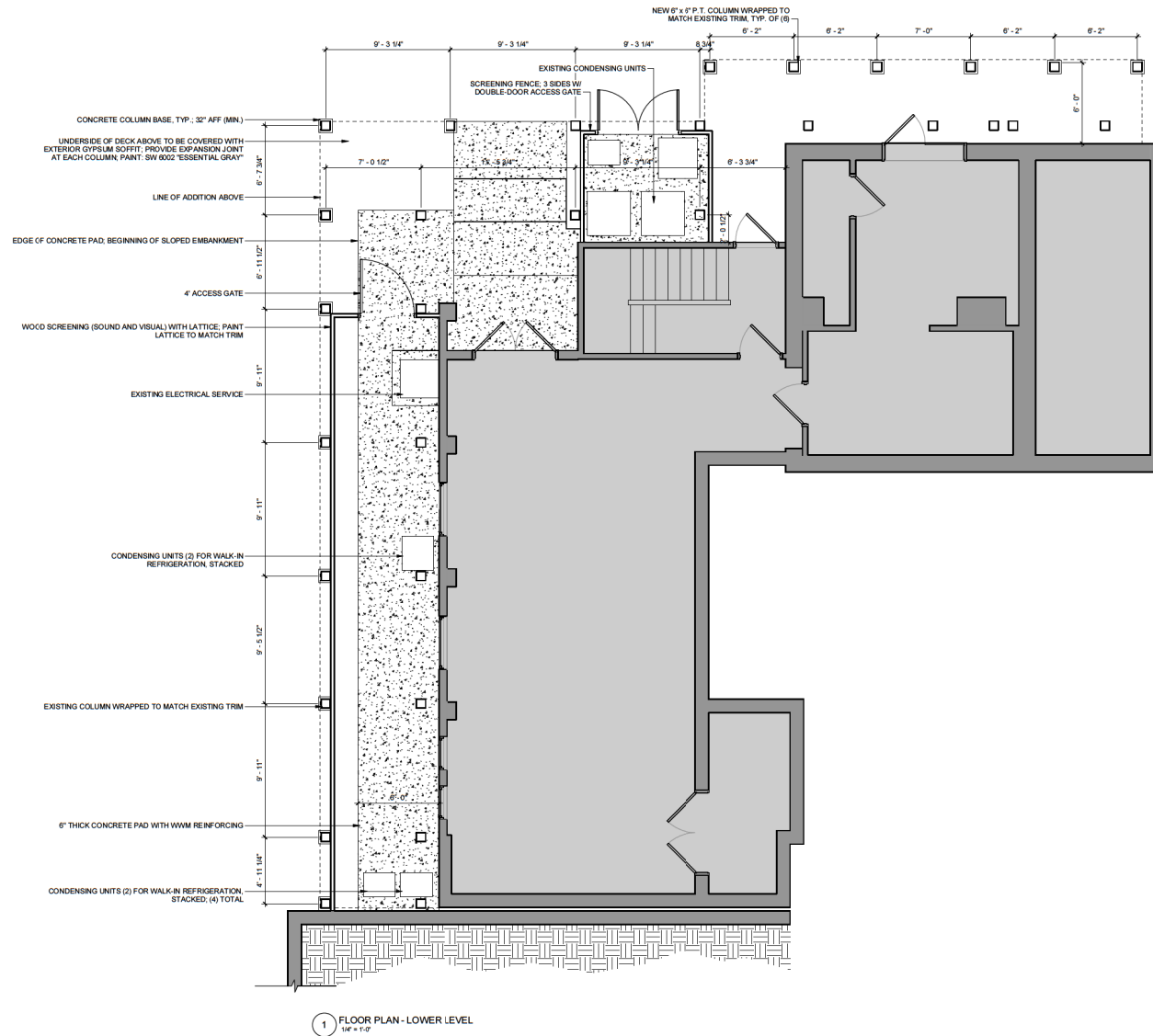




Leeward Place Elevation



Foundry Architects LLC  
2701 N. Charles Street  
Suite 100  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
410-946-3367  
Project Name:  
Enter address here



DATE	DESCRIPTION
11/10/21	HPC RESPONSE

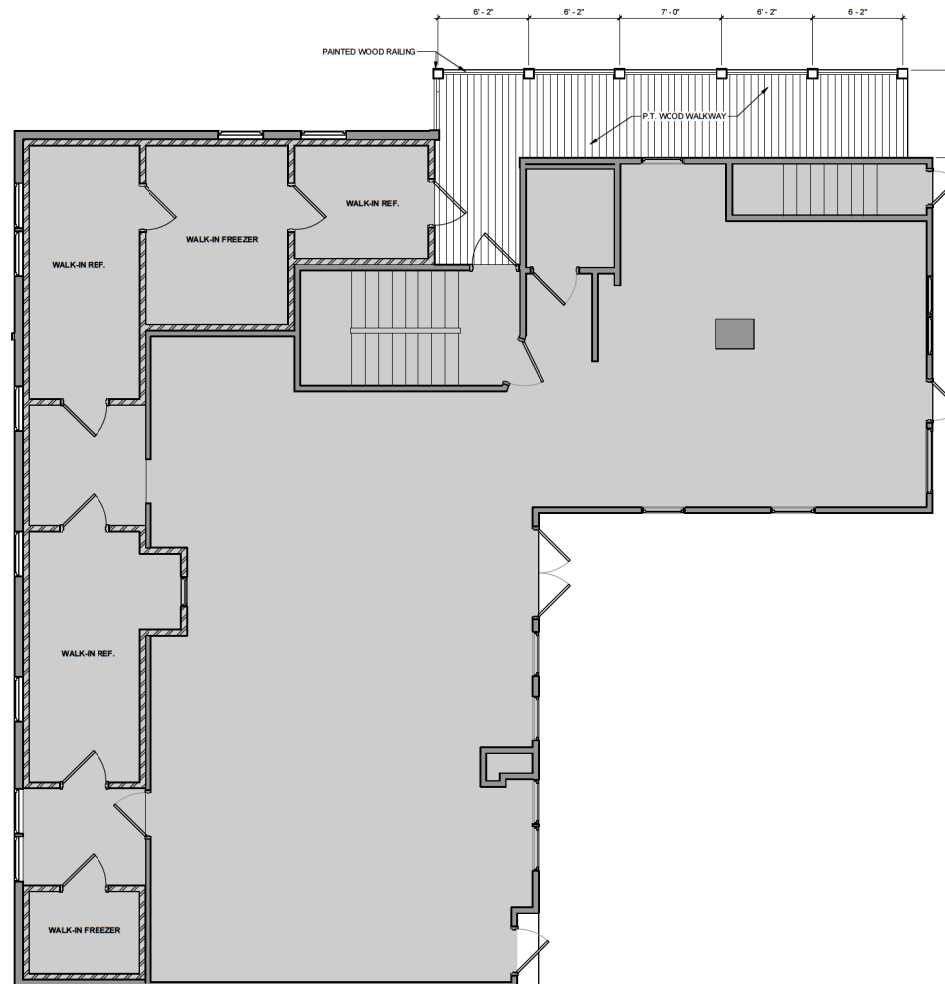
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION



FLOOR PLAN - LOWER  
LEVEL

SK-1110.1





1 FLOOR PLAN - GROUND FLOOR  
1/4" = 1'-0"



Foundry Architects LLC  
2701 N. Charles Street  
Suite 100  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
410-946-3067  
Project Name:  
Project Name:  
Enter address here

DATE	DESCRIPTION
11/10/21	HPC RESPONSE

NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

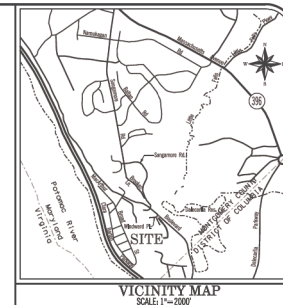
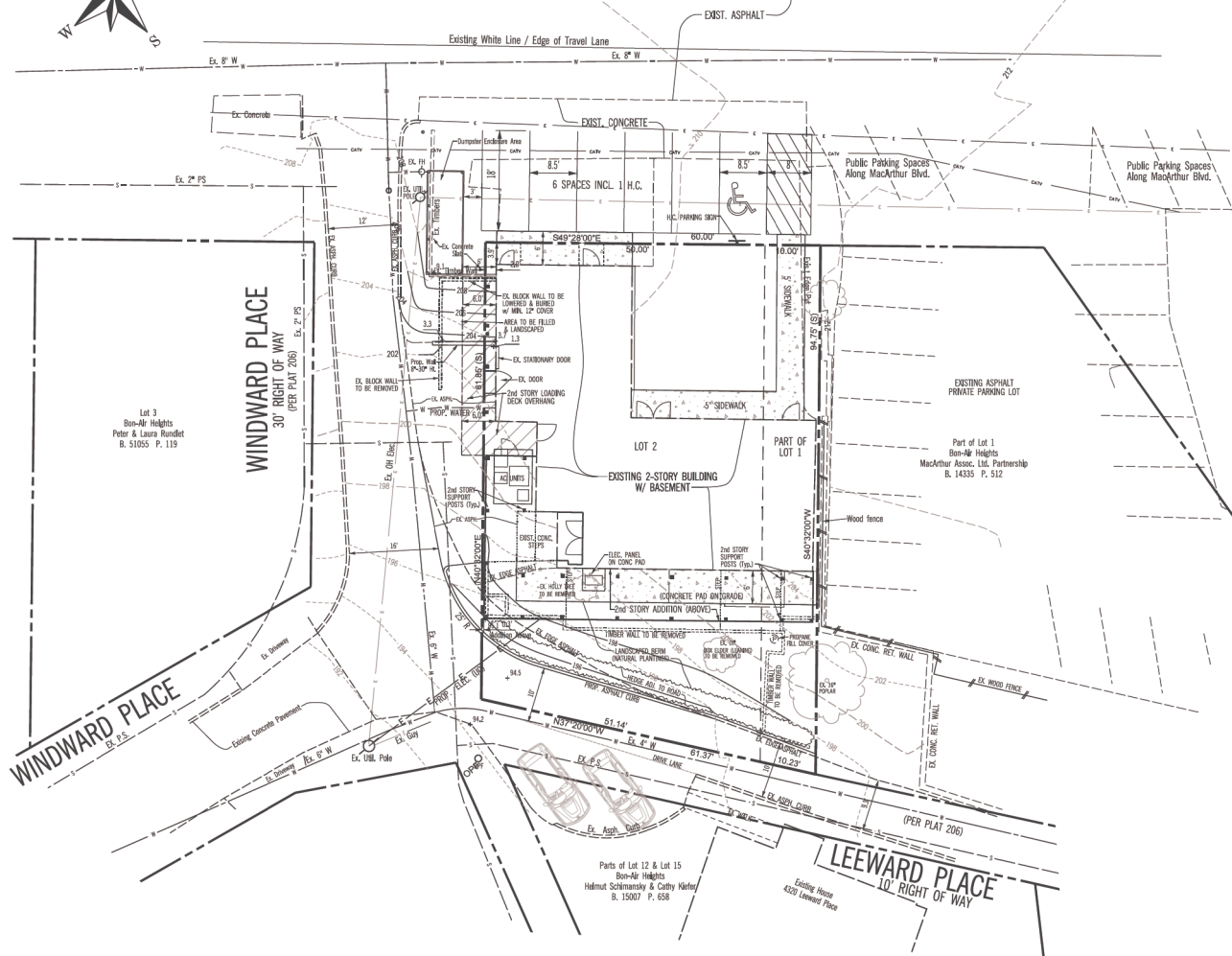


FLOOR PLAN - GROUND  
FLOOR

SK-1110.2



MACARTHUR BOULEVARD



VICINITY MAP  
SCALE: 1"=200'

WINDWARD PLACE  
30' RIGHT OF WAY  
(PER PLAT 206)

LEEWARD PLACE  
10' RIGHT OF WAY  
(PER PLAT 206)



**SITE SOLUTIONS, INC.**

P.O. Box 1783  
Clerksburg, Maryland 20871  
(301) 840-7990

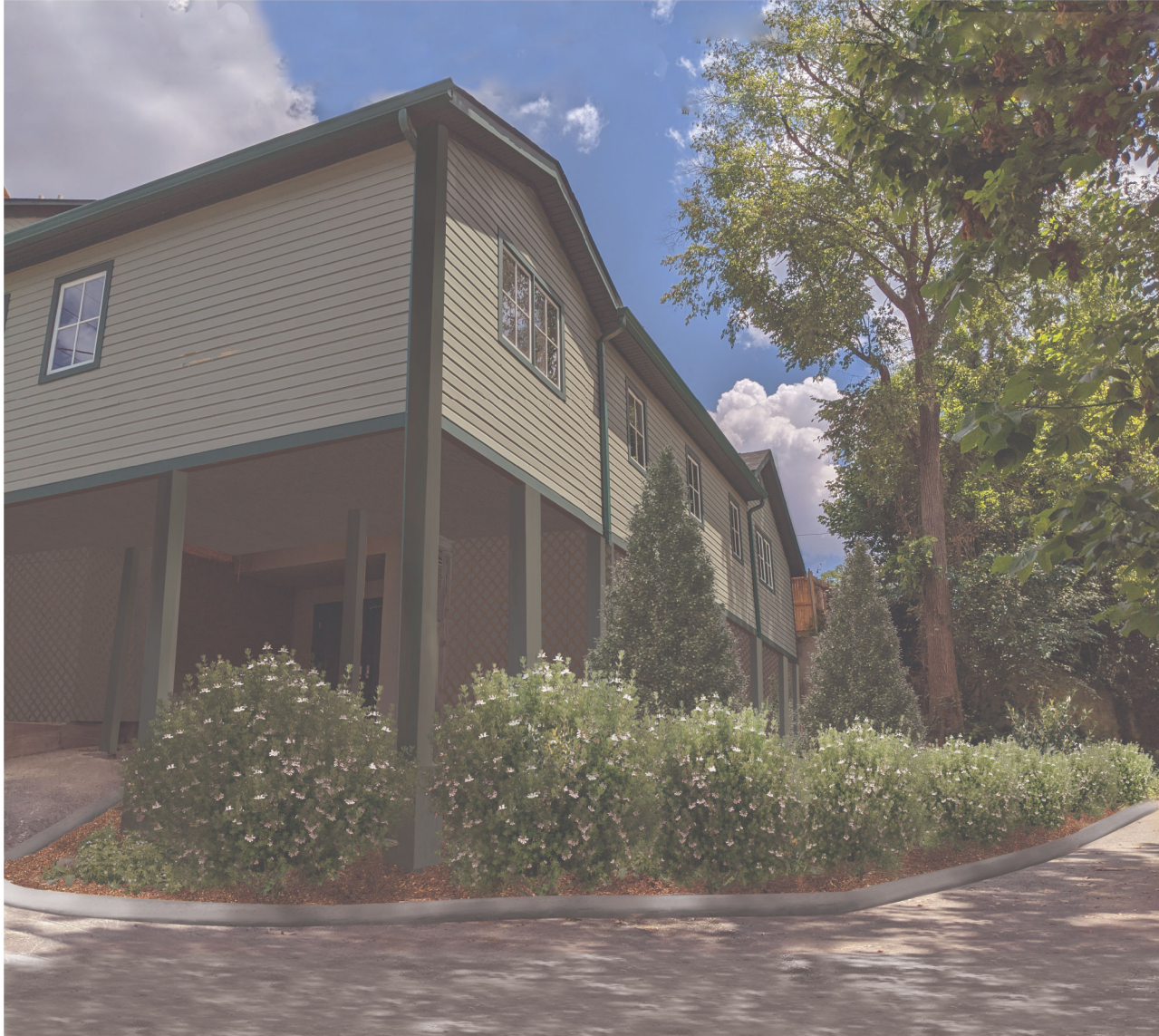
Planning • Landscape Architecture • Engineering

OWNER:  
SILBER FUCHS LLC  
6124 MACARTHUR BOULEVARD  
BETHESDA, MD 20816  
ATTN: BILL FUCHS

NO	REVISION	DATE

**SITE PLAN**  
**WAGSHAL'S BBQ & DELI**  
(BONFIELD'S GARAGE)  
LOT 2 & PART OF LOT 1, BON-MR HEIGHTS  
BETHESDA ELECTION DISTRICT #7  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

JSL	SCALE	1"=10'
DESIGN		
DWR		
CHECKED		
11/9/2021	SHEET	1 OF 1
PLAT DATE	3020	D-
PROJ. NO.		



6124 Macarthur Blvd. Bethesda, MD 20816

FOUNDRY  
a r c h i t e c t s

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