



June 13, 2022

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Historic Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Kacy Rohn, Cultural Resources Planner II

**SUBJECT:** Pyles House, 4608 North Park Avenue, *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* Listing

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**Staff Recommendation:** That the Historic Preservation Commission does not recommend that the Montgomery County Planning Board list the Pyles House, 4608 North Park Avenue, in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*.

**Background:** On February 3, 2022, Julian Mansfield, Village Manager, submitted a written request on behalf of the Village of Friendship Heights that the property be considered for listing in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*. The request included a completed Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form.

**Discussion:** Historic Preservation staff conducted historical research and an architectural survey of the site to document the property and analyze its potential historical and architectural significance as defined by the designation criteria in §24A-3: Historic Resources Protection of the Montgomery County Code. A brief overview of the property and the staff findings follows.

The Pyles House is a two-bay frame dwelling constructed in 1906, shortly after Friendship Heights was first platted as a streetcar subdivision. Friendship Heights in the early 20th century was characterized by single-family residences with wide yards, free-standing garages, and small outbuildings supporting domestic agriculture. Today, this building is one of the few early-to-mid twentieth century homes remaining within the Village of Friendship Heights. The community was extensively redeveloped by the 1970s with high-rise condominium, apartment, and commercial buildings. As a result, the setting and association with the streetcar-era landscape have been highly impacted.

The home was owned and primarily occupied by Joseph F. Pyles, his wife, Bertha A. Pyles, and their children from the time of its construction through the late 1960s. The Pyles family, though residents of Friendship Heights through its initial growth and the beginning of its rapid redevelopment, did not appear to otherwise shape their community.

As detailed in Section 7-I of the Designation Form, staff finds that the subject property does not meet any applicable designation criteria listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

### ***Evaluation Criterion (1): Historical and Cultural Significance***

The subject property fails to meet the requirements for historical or cultural significance. It is not the site of a significant historic event, is not associated with persons who influenced

society, and does not symbolize the county's social, political, cultural, or economic history. Though it does date to the period of Friendship Heights' emergence as a streetcar suburb, it does not communicate this history today: the characteristics of the property and the community which evoked that era no longer exist.

***Evaluation Criterion (2): Architectural and Design Significance***

The subject property's wood frame construction and simple design reflect building trends commonly employed throughout the region in the early twentieth century. This building does not stand out as a significant example of its method of construction. Alterations to the building, especially to the frieze and to the front porch detailing, have erased features which defined its original style. Though elements of early-twentieth century design and construction are retained, these aspects do not impart historical or architectural significance to the property.

Joseph F. Pyles, the home's builder, does not qualify as a master of his trade.

The home has not been recognized as a familiar visual feature of Friendship Heights or the county. The 1998 *Friendship Heights Sector Plan* distinguished this dwelling based on its age, but did not recommend historic designation of the property.

**Conclusion:** Historic Preservation staff does not recommend listing the property at 4608 North Park Avenue in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*.