MO	MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION			
	STAFF REPORT			
Address:	7203 Cedar Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	8/17/2022	
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	8/10/2022	
Applicant:	Mark Foster	Public Notice:	8/3/2022	
<b>Review:</b>	Preliminary Consultation	Staff:	Dan Bruechert	
Proposal:	Front Stoop, Fenestration Alteration, and Dormer	Alteration		

# **Preliminary Consultation**

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the applicant make any revisions recommended by the HPC and return for a HAWP.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District STYLE: Craftsman DATE: 1918



Figure 1: The subject property is located near the intersection of Cedar and Tulip Ave.

#### PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes work in several areas including:

- Replacing the front porch stairs;
- Installing a new roof over the left side entrance;
- Replacing the existing windows with window sash packs;
- Replacing the basement windows;
- Changing the rear fenestration;
- Raising the roof ridge;
- Installing a shed dormer on the right roof slope; and
- Installing a gable dormer and skylights on the left roof slope.

#### **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

When reviewing applications for solar panel installation within the Takoma Park 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 *Takoma Park Historic District (Guidelines), Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A),* and *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards).* 

#### Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

There are two very general, broad planning and design concepts which apply to all categories. These are:

- The design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are all visible from the public rightof-way, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation (it is expected that the majority of new additions will be reviewed for their impact on the overall district), and
- The importance of assuring that additions and other changes to existing structures act to reinforce and continue existing streetscape, landscape, and building patterns rather than to impair the character of the historic district.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient review than those structures that have been classified as Outstanding. This design review should emphasize the importance of the resource to the overall streetscape and its compatibility with existing patterns rather than focusing on a close scrutiny of architectural detailing. In general, however, changes to Contributing Resources should respect the predominant architectural style of the resource. As stated above, the design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are *at all visible from the public right-of-way*, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation.

All exterior alterations, including those to architectural features and details, should be generally consistent with the predominant architectural style and period of the resource and should preserve the predominant architectural features of the resource; exact replication of existing details and features is, however, not required,

Minor alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public right-of-way such as vents, metal stovepipes, air conditioners, fences, skylights, etc. – should be allowed as a matter of course; alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public way-of-way which involve the replacement of or damaged to original ornamental or architectural features are discouraged, but may be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis,

Major additions should, where feasible, be placed to the rear of existing structures so that they are

less visible from the public right-of-way; additions and alterations to the first floor at the front of a structure are discouraged, but not automatically prohibited

While additions should be compatible, they are not required to be replicative of earlier architectural styles

Second story additions or expansions should be generally consistent with the predominant architectural style and period of the resource (although structures that have been historically single story can be expanded) and should be appropriate to the surrounding streetscape in terms of scale and massing

Original size and shape of window and door openings should be maintained, where feasible

Some non-original building materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis; artificial siding on areas visible to the public right-of-way is discouraged where such materials would replace or damage original building materials that are in good condition

Alterations to features that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be allowed as a matter of course

All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

#### Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (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.
- (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." The applicable *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.

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

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

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 Craftsman with a front gable roof, a full-width front porch, and roof brackets. The first floor of covered in stucco and the second floor is clapboard sided. The applicant proposes a whole house renovation/rehabilitation and work elements are detailed below.

#### **Replacing the Front Porch Stairs**

The application states that the existing concrete front stairs have settled to the left and do not satisfy existing code requirements. The proposal will construct new composite stairs over the existing and support the new treads with wood blocking. The submitted materials do not specify what composite material is proposed.

Based on Staff's observations from the site visit, it appears that this work has already been completed. Staff will conduct a more thorough investigation before the Preliminary Consultation hearing, however, the HPC generally finds that composite materials are inappropriate for front stairs and decks on Contributing and Outstanding resources in the Takoma Park Historic District, because they are too shiny to be a compatible substitute for wood and do not develop a patina over time. Staff finds that either wood or masonry would be an appropriate material for replacement front porch stairs at the subject property and would recommend the HPC approve a HAWP for either of those materials and require that the existing, unpermitted work be removed.



Figure 2: The subject property with another two-story Craftsman to the right.

#### Installing a New Roof Over the Left Side Entrance

Above the left side door is a ghost of a previously installed roof. The applicant states that rain can enter directly into the basement and proposes installing a roof over the door to shed rain away from the house. The design submitted is illustrative without enough details to provide thorough feedback. However, Staff recognizes that there is physical evidence of a roof in this location, so a roof would be acceptable. Staff finds that either a shed or simple gable roof would be appropriate and requests feedback from the HPC on the preferred roof form over this entrance and material specifications for the new alteration.

#### **Replacing the Existing Windows with Window Sash Packs**

All the existing windows are wood one-over-one sash windows. The condition of the individual window sashes varies, but all sashes have peeling paint and have tested positive for lead. The applicant proposes removing all of the existing sashes and installing "low profile" aluminum clad sashes in their place. The proposed sash packs will have a six-over-one configuration. Additionally, the applicant proposes to remove all of the aluminum storm windows.

Staff has several concerns with the proposed window treatment. First, applicants are generally required to demonstrate that the windows have degraded beyond repair before the HPC would consider approving the removal of the historic windows. Staff does not find the applicant has satisfied that burden and more information needs to be included with a HAWP application. Second, traditionally constructed wood windows can be repaired, which leads to improved performance while maintaining the historic appearance. The county also offers a tax credit for the repair of historic exterior fabric, including windows, for 25% of the qualified expenses, which can help make the cost of window repair equal to replacing the historic sashes. The County tax credit can be used in combination with the Maryland

Rehabilitation Tax Credit of an additional 20%. Third, Staff's experience with sash packs has not been entirely positive. Sash packs retain the historic window frame and install new jamb liners. Depending on the specifications, the sash packs can reduce the size of the glazing, making the overall window assemblies look chunkier than the historic configuration. Additionally, some of the jamb liners have exposed vinyl surfaces that are frequently bright white and, because they are vinyl, do not weather and darken over time and draw visual attention. If the HPC determines that the windows can be replaced, then detailed specifications for the proposed sashes including complete measurements and profiles of an existing window need to be submitted for review along with the final HAWP submission.

Preservation of the one-over-one original wood windows meets each level of preservation guidance for the district. If replacement windows are considered, they should match the existing one-over-one configuration. Other configurations were present on houses of this style and age; however, they are conjectural and not specific to the known condition of this house. Staff requests HPC feedback on the preferred window specifications including the configuration.

#### **Replacing the Basement Windows**

Most of the basement windows have been replaced or substantially altered. The applicant proposes to replace all of the basement windows with awning windows and the materials state one window opening will be enlarged to satisfy egress requirements.

Based on the photos submitted, Staff finds replacing the basement windows is appropriate and will not detract from the historic character of the house and surrounding district. Staff would support either wood or aluminum clad wood windows in the basement.

#### **Changing the Rear Fenestration**

At the rear of the house, the applicant proposes to remove the paired sash windows, non-historic half-lite door, and blocked-in window. In their place, the applicant proposes to install a sash or casement window, a pair of French doors, and a picture window. No material specifications were included for the doors or picture window.

The Takoma Park *Design Guidelines* are quite permissive on alterations to elevations that are not visible from the public right-of-way. The *Guidelines* state alterations not visible from the public right-of-way should be approved as a matter of course. Staff finds the changes to the fenestration should be approved when the HAWP is approved; however, materials for those features need to be compatible with the character of the house and surrounding district. Staff would recommend the HPC approve either wood or aluminum clad windows and doors at the rear.

#### **Raising the Roof Ridge**

The applicant proposes raising the roof ridge by several feet and enlarging the window under the gable to accommodate a pair of sash windows on the front elevation. The increased ridge height from grade was not included in the submitted materials so Staff's feedback will focus on the proposal in concept and not a detailed response to the work proposed.

The porch and principal roof appear to have matching roof slopes. Raising the roof ridge will alter that design; however, the applicant included three examples of two-story Craftsman houses in the immediate neighborhood where the porch roof and principal roof have different pitches.

Staff finds the existing house is quite tall and questions whether the roof ridge can be raised under existing building code. If the roof can be raised, how many additional feet are proposed? Absent this information, Staff is inclined to find the proposal violates 24A-8(b)(1) by altering a significant architectural feature of the building and would recommend the HPC to not support the change. The applicant should explore other options to provide functional living space without raising the roof ridge by using dormers. Staff requests HPC feedback on the appropriateness of raising the roof ridge.

#### Shed Dormer on the Right Roof Slope

On the right roof slope, the applicant proposes to install a shed dormer nearly the full depth of the house. The dormer will have several windows; the drawings show three pairs of windows and a single sash unit, however, Staff believes this is purely illustrative. Dimensions for the dormer were not provided.

Staff finds that a dormer this size will significantly alter the massing of the house to an incompatible degree and recommends the applicant revise the proposal. While the right roof slop is less visible from the public right-of-way due to the narrow side setback and the grade change, it is still highly visible as shown in the photo below. The roof slope is also largely obscured by trees on the property; however, changes to designated properties need to be considered in the absence of vegetation.

Staff finds installing such a large dormer will overwhelm the character of the streetscape and Staff cannot find support for the dormer in Chapter 24A, the Standards, or the *Design Guidelines*.



Figure 3: StreetView image showing the right roof slope of the subject property.

#### New Gable Dormer and Skylights on the Left Roof Slope

On the left roof slope, the applicant proposes to construct a side gable dormer with a pair of windows flanked by skylights on either side. The ridge of the dormer appears to align with the roof ridge.

Staff finds that properly detailed, a side gable dormer on this roof slope could be acceptable. The size of a single dormer in this configuration would not overwhelm the size and mass of the existing house and is set back enough from the front of the house so the original house roofline is preserved. Staff also finds that any skylights installed behind the dormer would only be minimally visible from the public right-of-way and would be acceptable; however, the exact size and placement of skylights in front of the dormer will be necessary to fully evaluate the proposal.

#### Summary of Questions and Outstanding Issues

Staff requests the HPC feedback on:

- The appropriate documentation required to justify removing the existing windows;
  - What additional documentation needs to be submitted to fully evaluate the existing

windows?

- What is the threshold level of damage to justify removal and replacement?
- The appropriateness of the proposed sash pack and the proposed six-over-one configuration;
  - Is the proposed sash pack appropriate?
  - What additional information (other than measurements of the existing windows) is necessary to evaluate the sash pack?
  - Is it appropriate to convert the existing one-over-one windows to six-over-one?
- Does the HPC concur with Staff's finding that raising the roof ridge is inappropriate?
- The proposed large shed dormer;
  - Does the HPC concur with Staff's finding that the proposed shed dormer is out of scale with the building and surrounding district?
  - What alterations to the roof on the right elevation would the HPC consider?
- The compatibility of the proposed gable dormer and skylights.
  - Does the HPC concur with Staff's finding that a properly detailed gable dormer on the left elevation can be accommodated?
  - Does the HPC agree with Staff's recommendation that skylights on the left elevation need to be placed to the rear of the proposed dormer?



Figure 4: Left elevation from the public right-of-way.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the applicant make revisions based on the feedback from the HPC and return for a HAWP.

GOMERY		HA	R STAFF ONLY: WP#
	APPLICATION RIC AREA WO TORIC PRESERVATION C 301.563.3400	FUR	te assigned
APPLICANT:			
Name:	Е	-mail:	
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Is the Property Located within a			ame
Is there an Historic Preservation map of the easement, and docu	n/Land Trust/Environment	al Easement on t	he Property? If YES, include a
Are other Planning and/or Hear (Conditional Use, Variance, Reco supplemental information.	• • • •	•	
Building Number:	Street:		
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TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: S for proposed work are subm	-	-	
be accepted for review. Chec		-	d/Garage/Accessory Structure
New Construction	Deck/Porch	Sola	
Addition	Fence	Tree	removal/planting
Demolition	Hardscape/Landsca		dow/Door
Grading/Excavation	Roof	Othe	er:
I hereby certify that I have the	authority to make the fore	going application	, that the application is correct
and accurate and that the cons	struction will comply with I	plans reviewed ar	d approved by all necessary
agencies and hereby acknowle	edge and accept this to be	a condition for th	e issuance of this permit.

# HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFING [Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners] **Owner's** mailing address **Owner's Agent's** mailing address Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses

Description of Property: Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

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

Work Item 1:			
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:		
Work Item 2:			
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:		

Proposed Work:	
	Proposed Work:

#### HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

	Required Attachments						
Proposed Work	I. Written Description	2. Site Plan	3. Plans/ Elevations	4. Material Specifications	5. Photographs	6. Tree Survey	7. Property Owner Addresses
New Construction	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Additions/ Alterations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demolition	*	*	*		*		*
Deck/Porch	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fence/Wall	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Driveway/ Parking Area	*	*		*	*	*	*
Grading/Exc avation/Land scaing	*	*		*	*	*	*
Tree Removal	*	*		*	*	*	*
Siding/ Roof Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Window/ Door Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Masonry Repair/ Repoint	*	*	*	*	*		*
Signs	*	*	*	*	*		*

GOMERY		HA	R STAFF ONLY: WP#
	APPLICATION RIC AREA WO TORIC PRESERVATION C 301.563.3400	FUR	te assigned
APPLICANT:			
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Address:	C	ity:	Zip:
Daytime Phone:	т	ax Account No.: _	
AGENT/CONTACT (if applicabl	le):		
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LOCATION OF BUILDING/PRE	MISE: MIHP # of Historic F	Property	
Is the Property Located within a			ame
Is there an Historic Preservation map of the easement, and docu	n/Land Trust/Environment	al Easement on t	he Property? If YES, include a
Are other Planning and/or Hear (Conditional Use, Variance, Reco supplemental information.	• • • •	•	
Building Number:	Street:		
Town/City:	Nearest Cross S	Street:	
Lot: Block:	Subdivision:	Parcel:	
TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: S for proposed work are subm	-	-	
be accepted for review. Chec		-	d/Garage/Accessory Structure
New Construction	Deck/Porch	Sola	
Addition	Fence	Tree	removal/planting
Demolition	Hardscape/Landsca		dow/Door
Grading/Excavation	Roof	Othe	er:
I hereby certify that I have the	authority to make the fore	going application	, that the application is correct
and accurate and that the cons	struction will comply with I	plans reviewed ar	d approved by all necessary
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Work Item 2:		
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:	

Work Item 3:	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

# Work Item 1: Front porch steps

The following photos show the existing, non-compliant front porch steps





### Work Item 1: Front porch steps, con't

The following are examples of porch steps found within a 1-block radius of the subject property. The proposed steps will approximate such designs.



# Work Item 2: Restored side stoop roof

Below are a photo of the existing left-side elevation and a simple mockup of the size and location of the proposed roof.





The following pages include photos of existing windows for reference and manufacturer specifications of the proposed replacement sashes.

#### Typical windows with various non-original casings





Window condition All windows last painted in Q1 2022









#### Existing sash dimensions



Left/right stiles: 2 3/8" + ~1/8" lateral travel space on each side



<u>Top rail: 2 1/8"</u>



Bottom rail: 2 3/4" at interior edge of sloped sill



Meeting rail: 1 1/4"

Proposed sash dimensions: vertical and horizontal sections



Below are photos of an example sash pack kit and similar replacement sashes in situ





Existing basement windows



# Work Item 4: Rear-facing doors/windows

Below are a photo of the existing left-side elevation and a simple mockup of the size and location of the proposed windows and doors.





# Work Item 5: Modified roof pitch

Below are a photo of the existing front elevation and a simple mockup of the proposed roof pitch,





# Work Item 5: Modified roof pitch, con't

The following are examples of 2-story Craftsman houses with steeper roof pitches found within a 1-block radius of the subject property, including the next-door neighbor in the middle photo.



### Work Item 6: Dormers and skylights

Below are photos of the existing side elevations and a simple mockup of the proposed dormers. The right side elevation is impossible to photograph directly, so it is shown as completely as feasible.





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Gable dormer on left elevation

# Work Item 6: Dormers and skylights, con't

The following are examples of 2-story Craftsman houses with dormers within 1-block radius of the subject property, including the next-door neighbor.



7201 Cedar Ave



212 Tulip Ave showing one of two dormers



Photo taken from subject property of shed dormer at 210 Tulip Ave in foreground and gable dormer 214 Tulip Ave beyond



