

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	29 Philadelphia Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	11/16/2022
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	11/9/2022
Applicant:	Margaret Flaherty (Christian Lopez, Agent)	Public Notice:	11/2/2022
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	n/a
Permit No.:	1011214	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	Fenestration and Hardscape Alteration		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC **approve with two (2) conditions** the HAWP application.

1. The proposed windows shall be wood or aluminum clad with a multi-lite appearance and exterior applied muntins of an appropriate profile. Final approval authority for the windows is delegated to Staff.
2. The new concrete driveway shall be tinted or have exposed aggregate to blend in with the surrounding streetscape. Final approval authority to verify this condition has been satisfied is delegated to Staff.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Craftsman
DATE: 1923

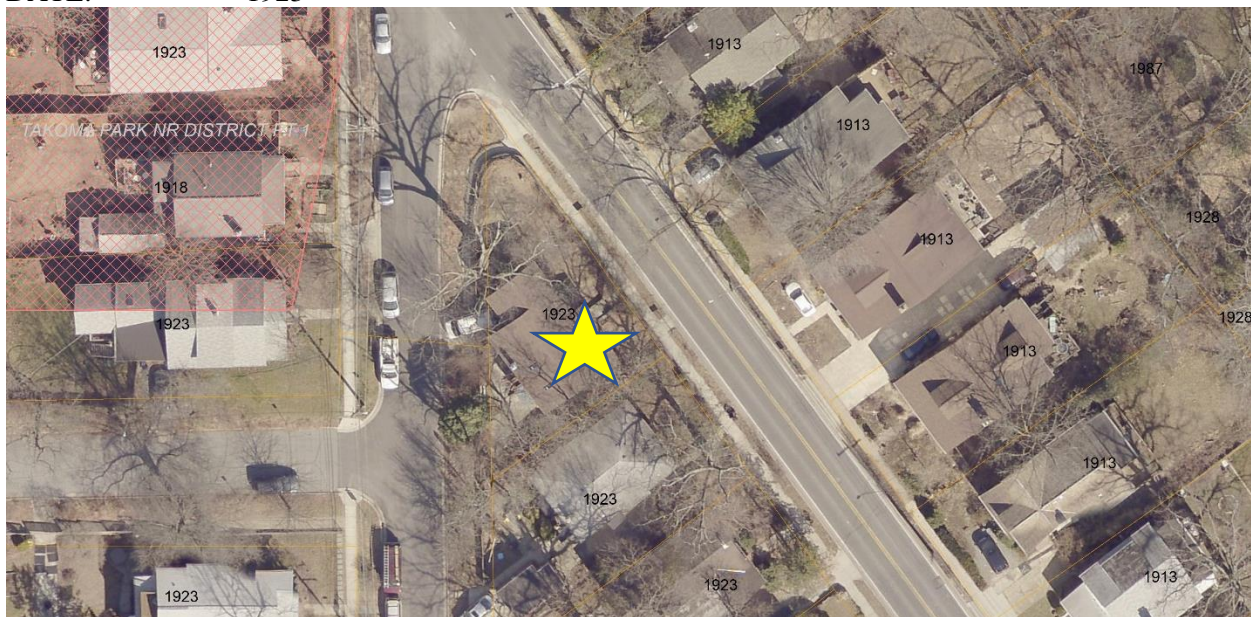


Figure 1: The subject property is located on a triangle-shaped parcel at the intersection of Philadelphia Ave. and Park Ave.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to change the fenestration on the front and rear elevations.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing applications 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)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

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 right-of-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,

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

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

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.
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 one-story Craftsman bungalow with stucco siding, oriented towards Philadelphia Ave. On the rear (Park Ave. elevation), there is a garage door to the basement level.

The applicant proposes to remove the existing garage door and replace it with a new window, replace a basement-level window on the front elevation, and re-grade the rear drive. Staff recommends the HPC approve the HAWP with the condition identified below.

Removing the existing garage door

The existing garage door is a simply designed wood bifold door. To the left of the garage door at the basement level, there is a concrete retaining wall. The applicant proposes to remove this door, fill in the opening with CMU blocks and an awning window, and stucco the wall to match the existing foundation.

Staff's initial impression upon visiting the site was that the house had been modified to accommodate the garage door. That impression was likely due to the proportions of the garage itself and because the retaining wall changes from stone to concrete at the driveway. Staff reviewed the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the property. The 1927 map did not show a garage (typically marked with an "A" for automobile) at the subject property. The notations for the 1959 map show there is auto storage at the basement level. Unsure if a basement garage was a novelty in 1927, Staff reviewed other Sanborn maps and identified five instances of basement-level auto storage. Having determined that the existing garage is not an original feature of the house, Staff recommends the HPC approve the removal of the garage door under 24A-8(b)(1) and Standard 2. Additionally, the proposal does not run afoul of the *Guideline* that encourages the retention of the original window and door size and shape.

Staff additionally finds the proposed stuccoed CMU wall is in keeping with the style and materials of the house and recommends the HPC approve the garage door removal and wall replacement. Discussion of the proposed window continues below.



Figure 2: 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the subject property.

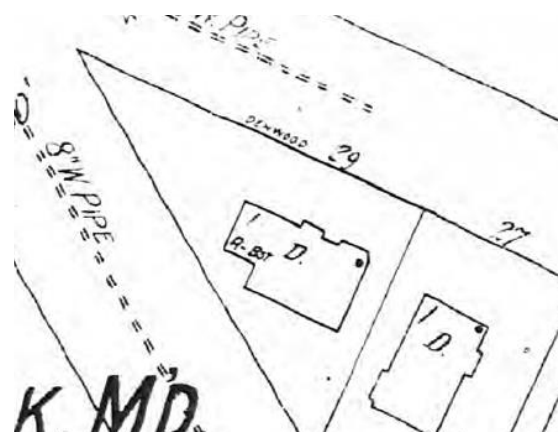


Figure 3: 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, showing basement automobile storage.

Basement Level Windows

On the front and rear elevations, the applicant proposes to install single-lite awning windows, each measuring 6' x 2' 8" (six feet wide by two feet, eight inches tall). The window on the front elevation will require removing an existing sliding window. The frames for both windows will be wood, however, a window specification was not included with the application materials.

Staff finds removing the existing window on the front elevation will not significantly alter the historic character of the house, and the HPC has shown great leniency in altering basement windows for all categories of houses within the Takoma Park District. Additionally, the small window on the front does not likely satisfy contemporary code requirements. Staff finds the size of the proposed window, while larger than the existing, does not overwhelm either elevation – especially because they are at the basement level notwithstanding the *Guideline* mentioned above. Staff has two primary concerns with the proposed window. The first is that the single-lite configuration is incompatible with the historic multi-lite windows. Staff finds the basement windows should have a divided lite appearance. The proposed windows could retain their awning operation but would need to instead resemble a sliding window or multi-lite casement. Staff's second concern is the window material. Because a window specification was

not submitted with the application, Staff provide a recommendation to the HPC. However, because these are basement windows on a ‘Contributing’ resource, Staff would support the approval of a wood or aluminum-clad window; but not vinyl or metal. Vinyl windows are uniformly discouraged within the District on historic buildings, and metal is not appropriate for the basement level. Staff recommends the HPC approve the proposed basement windows with an added condition that the basement windows need to be either wood or aluminum-clad windows with a multi-lite configuration, with final approval authority delegated to Staff.

Rear Re-grading

The rear driveway is cracked in locations, drains towards the house, and can cause occasional flooding. To correct this, the applicant proposes to regrade the driveway and install a new parking pad and retaining wall. The new configuration will allow water to drain into the garden to the west of the house.

Staff finds the proposal will not significantly impact the historic character of the site or surrounding district. As with the windows, the applicant did not provide a concrete specification beyond ‘concrete.’ The HPC has avoided the installation of bright contemporary concrete in the Takoma Park Historic District because its bright appearance is visually inconsistent with the character of the district as a whole. The typical solution is to either tint the concrete so that it better blends in with the surrounding streetscape or use concrete with exposed aggregate. Staff recommends the HPC approve the new configuration for the rear garage with the added condition that the concrete is either tinted or has exposed aggregate to avoid the bright white appearance of contemporary concrete.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application **with two conditions**

1. The proposed windows shall be wood or aluminum clad with a multi-lite appearance and exterior applied muntins of an appropriate profile. Final approval authority for the windows is delegated to Staff.
2. The new concrete driveway shall be tinted or have exposed aggregate to blend in with the surrounding streetscape. Final approval authority to verify this condition has been satisfied is delegated to Staff;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(2) and (d), 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 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;

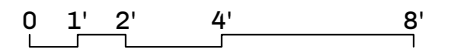
and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact the staff person assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.

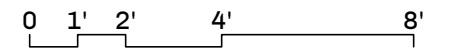


Philadelphia Avenue Streetview - Proposed



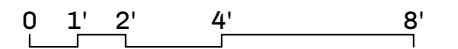
Park Avenue Elevation - Existing







Philadelphia Avenue Elevation - Existing





Philadelphia Avenue Elevation - Proposed

