

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7406 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	2/22/2023
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	2/15/2023
Applicant:	Ann Shelleck and James Klein (Paul Treseder, Architect)	Public Notice:	2/8/2023
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	N/A
Permit Number:	1019648	Staff:	John Liebertz

PROPOSAL: Demolition of an accessory structure.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) **approve** the HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Colonial Revival
DATE: c. 1920



Figure 1: The subject property at 7406 Maple Avenue is located on the west side of Maple Avenue. The red line is the boundary of the Master Plan Historic District, the yellow star is the location of the subject dwelling, and the blue arrow points to the subject garage.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to demolish the accessory building located in the rear of the property.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

The Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consult several documents when reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District. 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 three documents is outlined below.

Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

There are two 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.

A majority of the buildings in the Takoma Park Historic District have been assessed as being “Contributing Resources.” While these buildings may not have the same level of architectural or historical significance as Outstanding Resources or may have lost some degree of integrity, collectively, they are the basic building blocks of the Takoma Park district. They are important to the overall character of the district and the streetscape due to their size, scale, and architectural qualities, rather than for their particular architectural features.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient level of design 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.

The following guidance which pertains to this project are as follows:

- 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.
- Alterations to features that are not visible at all 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

The following guidance which pertains to this project are as follows:

- (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.
- (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.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The subject property is a Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District. The property features a two-story, wood-frame, Colonial Revival house constructed ca. 1920 and a one-story accessory building (shed) located towards the northwest (rear) corner of the property. The wood-frame shed rests

partially on a concrete block foundation, features lap wood siding and wood trim, and is capped with a low-pitched gable roof. The foundation is fully exposed on the western extent of the building due to the grade. Fenestration consists of a: 1) double-leaf, wood, ledge and brace doors on the east elevation; 2) two six-light, wood awning windows, a single-leaf, two-panel, wood door, and a single-leaf, four-light, three-panel wood door on the south elevation; 3) paired six-light, wood awning windows on first story and an unframed opening in the concrete block foundation on the west elevation; and 4) a single six-light, wood awning window on the north elevation. The date of construction for the shed is unknown, but it may be contemporaneous to the construction of the dwelling. The Historic Preservation Commission has approved no HAWPs associated with the subject accessory structure.



Figure 2: View of the accessory structure from Maple Avenue (left), the south elevation of the accessory structure (center), and the west and south elevations of the accessory structure (right). The red arrow points to the location of the subject structure.

Source: Montgomery Planning.

Staff attempted to date the accessory structure; however, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps failed to record this and other nearby properties on the west side of Maple Avenue. Staff then consulted Klingle's *Atlas of Montgomery County*, but the resource is known to be less reliable in the documentation of accessory structures and it shows no buildings to the rear of the main house in the 1950s. Research into newspapers revealed the following advertisement for the property from 1926:

TAKOMA PARK—BUILT BY OWNER; first floor, four rooms, pantry, glassed, screened, sleeping porch, large front porch, fireplace, second floor, four sleeping rooms, hall, bath, large attic. Beautiful lawn, shrubbery, front and back. Playground, chicken house, fruit trees....¹

The building plan does not conform to a typical suburban or urban poultry house of the period, and it is unknown if it was used for this purpose.

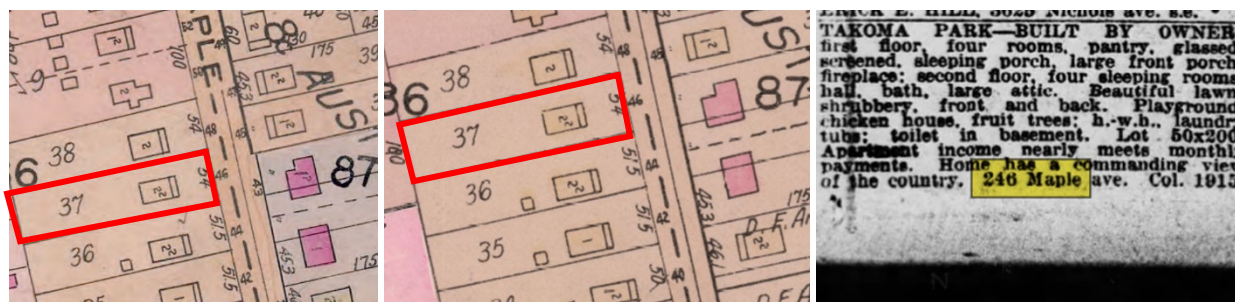


Figure 3: *Atlas of Montgomery County*, 1931 (left) and 1953 (center), and advertisement in the *Evening Star*, May 30, 1926 (right). The red outline is the subject property. No accessory structures are evident on these maps. Source: Frank H.M. Klinge, “*Atlas of Montgomery County*,” 1931 and 1953, and *Evening Star*.

¹ *Evening Star*, May 30, 1926.

Staff finds that the proposal to demolish the accessory structure and return the site to its original grade is consistent with the applicable guidelines. The applicant contends that the accessory structure has degraded to the point where it may no longer be repaired. Staff concurs with this assessment as the damage to the building is comprehensive and it is in danger of collapse. Staff observed evidence of: 1) foundation damage; 2) failure/slip of the sill plate which led to partial collapse of the southern wall; 3) extensive roof damage and failure; 4) impromptu interior bracing to halt the imminent collapse of structure; and 5) areas of extensive deteriorated wood. Staff did not conduct an interior analysis of the building due to safety concerns.

Staff finds that the accessory building has deteriorated beyond repair and that demolition of the building is appropriate as it would remedy an unsafe condition. The level of intervention required to restore the structure is beyond what reasonably should be expected for an accessory structure—of minimal historic or architectural significance—to a Contributing Resource in the Takoma Park Historic District. Furthermore, the removal of the accessory structure will not affect the overall streetscape as views of the subject building from Maple Avenue (*Fig. 2*) are exceedingly limited due to the change in grade and placement of the building.

After full and fair consideration of the applicant's submission, staff finds the proposal, as modified by the condition, consistent with the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2), (4) and (d), having found the proposal is consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #2*, and *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines* outlined above.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), (1), (2), (4) & (d), having found that the proposal is consistent with the *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines*, and therefore 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*;

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 john.liebertz@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.