

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	525 Albany Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	7/26/2023
Resource:	Outstanding Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	7/19/2023
Applicant:	Milford Sprecher	Public Notice:	7/12/2023
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	N/A
Permit Number:	1034939	Staff:	John Liebertz

PROPOSAL: Replacement of retaining wall and driveway.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) **approve with three (3) conditions** the HAWP application with final approval of all details delegated to staff:

1. The applicant shall submit material specifications for the section of driveway to be replaced.
2. The applicant shall submit material specifications for the retaining wall including the concrete block and parging/mortar.
3. The applicant shall submit the Tree Impact Assessment reviewed by the City of Takoma Park Urban Forest Manager.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Outstanding Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Craftsman-influenced Four Square
DATE: c. 1912



Figure 1: The subject property at 525 Albany Avenue (noted with the yellow star). The red line is the boundary of the Takoma Park Master Plan Historic District.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to: 1) replace an existing parged concrete block retaining wall with a brick cap abutting the western edge of the driveway with a parged concrete block retaining wall; and 2) replace an 11' section of the exposed aggregate concrete driveway located adjacent to the house.

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.

Outstanding Resources have the highest level of architectural and/or historical significance. While they will receive the most detailed level of design review, it is permissible to make sympathetic alterations, changes and additions. The guiding principles to be utilized by the Historic Preservation Commission are the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Specifically, some of the factors to be considered in reviewing HAWPs on Outstanding Resources:

- Plans for all alterations should be compatible with the resource's original design; additions, specifically, should be sympathetic to existing architectural character, including massing, height, setback, and materials,
- Emphasize placement of major additions to the rear of existing structures so that they are less visible from the public right-of-way,
- Preservation of original and distinctive architectural features, such as porches, dormers, decorative details, shutters, etc. is encouraged,
- Preservation of original windows and doors, particularly those with specific architectural importance, and of original size and shape of openings is encouraged,
- Preservation of original building materials and use of appropriate, compatible new materials is encouraged, and
- 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;
- (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

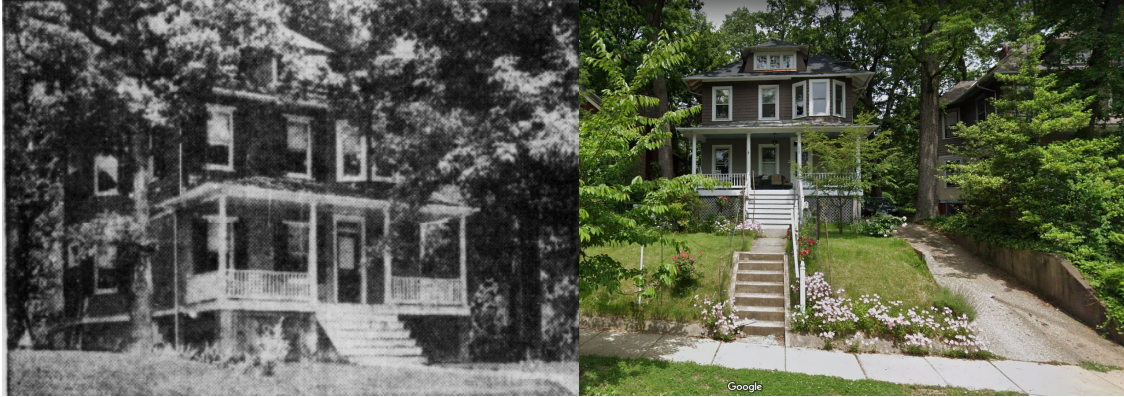
The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” The applicable *Standards* are as follows:

- 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 an Outstanding Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District and features a one-story, Craftsman-influenced Four Square constructed c. 1912. The house is located mid-block on the north side of Maple Avenue. There are no relevant Historic Area Work Permits (HAWP) approved for the property. In 2021, staff reviewed and approved HAWP #962730 for the removal of a tree.¹

¹ For more information see, https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/06_HistoricPreservation_PhotoArchives/HAWP/8-18-2021/525%20Albany%20Avenue.%20Takoma%20Park%20-%20962730-%20Approval.pdf.



**Figure 2: View of the façade of 525 Columbia Avenue, 1932 (left) and 2019 (right).
Source: Evening Star and Google.**

Staff finds the removal and replacement of the 11' section of the concrete driveway to be consistent with the applicable guidelines and recommends approval with conditions. The replacement would have no adverse effect on the historic house or the surrounding district as the overall dimensions of the hardscape would remain the same. The proposal, however, fails to specify whether this section would be replaced in-kind to match the existing exposed concrete aggregate driveway or if a new material would be installed. Staff recommends that applicant submit material specifications for an in-kind replacement or a compatible material. Projects of this scope are typically reviewed and approved at the staff-level.



**Figure 3: View of the section of driveway (left) and retaining wal (right) to be replaced, 2023.
Source: Applicant.**

Staff finds the removal and replacement of the retaining wall to be consistent with the applicable guidelines and recommends approval with conditions. The installation of a new 32'8"-long retaining wall would have no adverse affect to the historic resource or surrounding district. Staff recommends, however, that the appliacont submit specification sheets for the proposed materials (type of block, parging/mortar, etc.). The retaining wall should not feature smooth, white, parged, modern-styled concrete that would be incompatible with the historic district's character defining landscape. In addition, the applicant should submit the proposal to the City of Takoma Park's Urban Forest Manager for a Tree Impact Assessment and forward the approval of the project to staff.

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), and (d), having found

the proposal is consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #9, and #10, and Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with three (3) conditions** the HAWP application with final approval delegated to staff:

1. The applicant shall submit material specifications for the section of driveway to be replaced.
2. The applicant shall submit material specifications for the retaining wall including the concrete block and parging/mortar.
3. The applicant shall submit the Tree Impact Assessment reviewed by the City of Takoma Park Urban Forest Manager.

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), (1), (2), and (d), having found that the proposal, as modified by the condition, 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 #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 john.liebertz@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.



APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301.563.3400

FOR STAFF ONLY:
HAWP# 1034939
DATE ASSIGNED

APPLICANT:

Milford Sprecher
Name:
525 Albany Ave.
Address:
301-830-2198
Daytime Phone:

milford.sprecher@gmail.com
E-mail:
Takoma Park 20912
City: Zip:
13-01063935
Tax Account No.:

AGENT/CONTACT (If applicable):

Name:
Address:
Daytime Phone:

E-mail:
City: Zip:
Contractor Registration No.:

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE: MIHP # of Historic Property
Takoma Park

Is the Property Located within an Historic District? x Yes/District Name
No/Individual Site Name

Is there an Historic Preservation/Land Trust/Environmental Easement on the Property? If YES, include a map of the easement, and documentation from the Easement Holder supporting this application.

Are other Planning and/or Hearing Examiner Approvals /Reviews Required as part of this Application? (Conditional Use, Variance, Record Plat, etc.?) If YES, include information on these reviews as supplemental information.

525 Albany
Building Number: Street:
Takoma Park Takoma
Town/City: Nearest Cross Street:
74 25
Lot: Block: Subdivision: Parcel:

TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: See the checklist on Page 4 to verify that all supporting items for proposed work are submitted with this application. Incomplete Applications will not be accepted for review. Check all that apply:

- New Construction
Addition
Demolition
Grading/Excavation
Deck/Porch
Fence
Hardscape/Landscape
Roof
Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure
Solar
Tree removal/planting
Window/Door
Other:retaining wall

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct and accurate and that the construction will comply with plans reviewed and approved by all necessary agencies and hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent
Date 6/27/23

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING
[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

Owner's mailing address
Milford Sprecher
525 Albany Ave.
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Owner's Agent's mailing address

Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses

Michael Shoenthal
527 Albany Ave.
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Marcel Dupraw
521 Albany Ave.
Takoma Park, MD 20912

7607 Takoma Avenue, Takoma Park 20912

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

Early 1900's American Foursquare. Contributing resource. Two story stucco and cedar shingle exterior. Front porch. Driveway cut into slight grade going up to the side of the house. Modern garage behind the house. Existing west side driveway wall is not original. Replaced decades ago and is failing.

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

Remove and replace an existing brick and concrete block retaining wall that is failing. Replace with a new parged block wall.

Replace driveway apron

Work Item 1: _____

Description of Current Condition:
Removing existing cracked concrete driveway.

Proposed Work:
Replace old concrete driveway with a new section of driveway.

Replace failing block wall

Work Item 2: _____

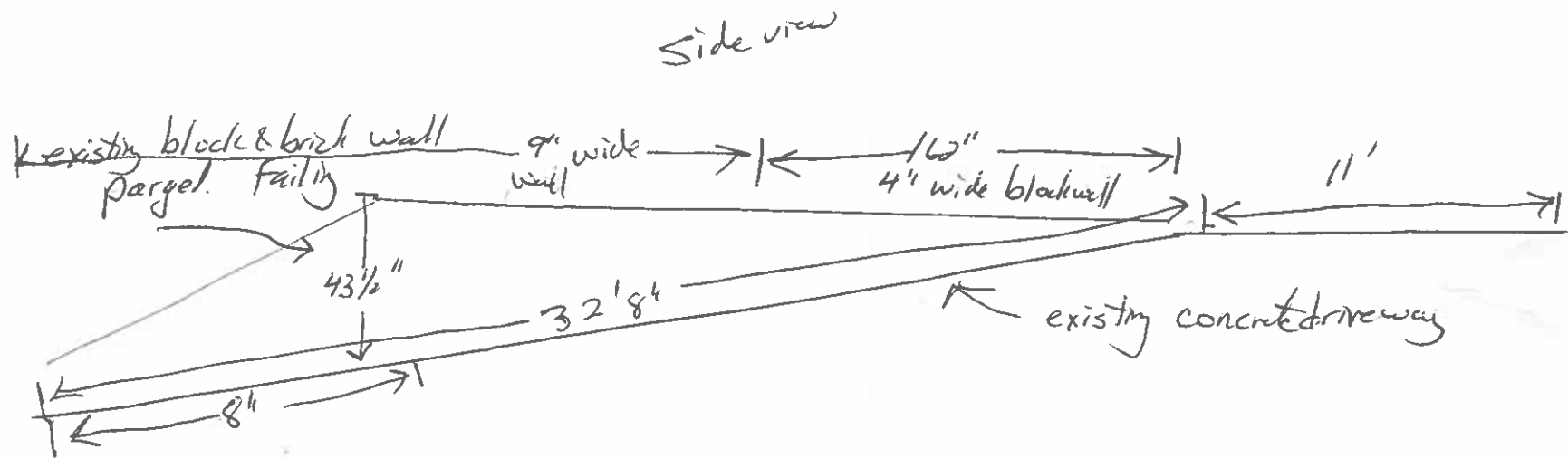
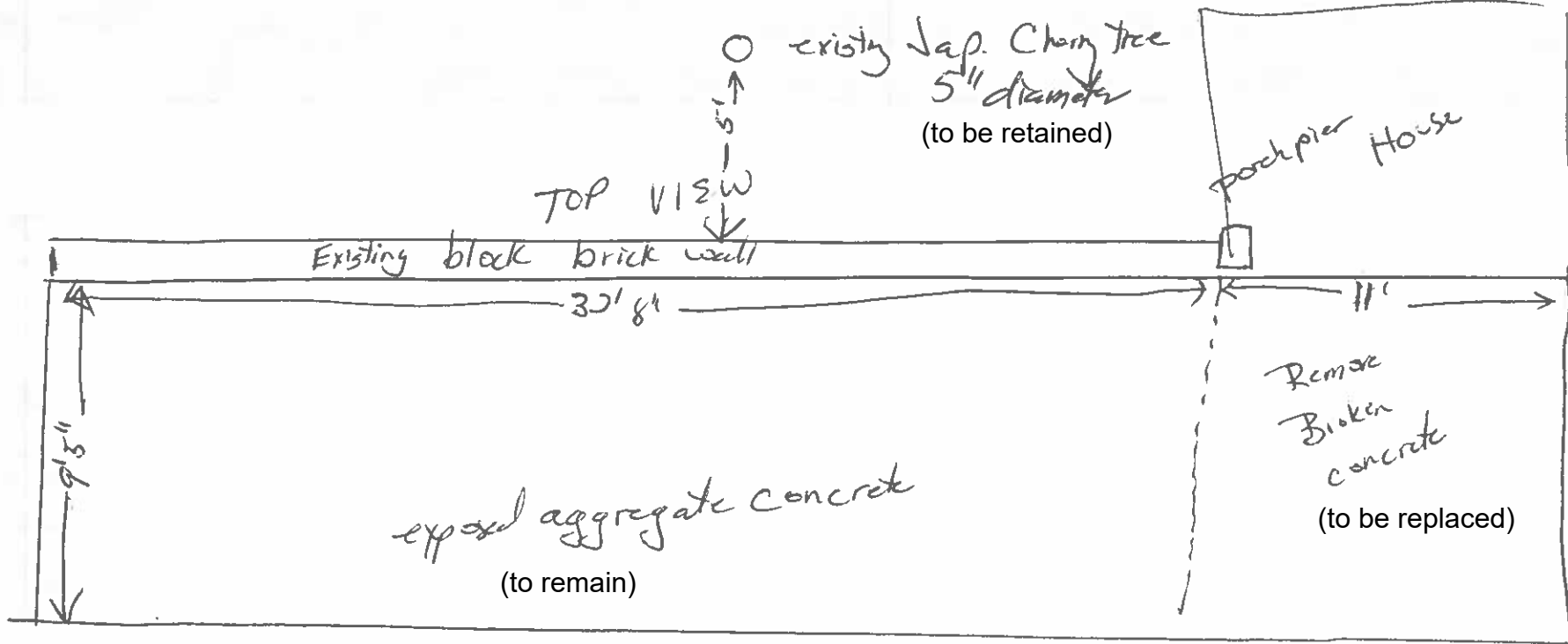
Description of Current Condition:
Failing brick and block retaining wall.

Proposed Work:
Remove existing block wall and replace with a new parged, block wall.

Work Item 3: _____

Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:



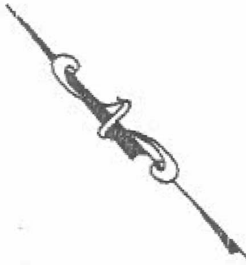
SPRECHER DRIVEWAY RETAINING WALL
REPLACEMENT
525 ALBANY AVE. TAKOMA PARK, MD

CONSUMER INFORMATION NOTES:

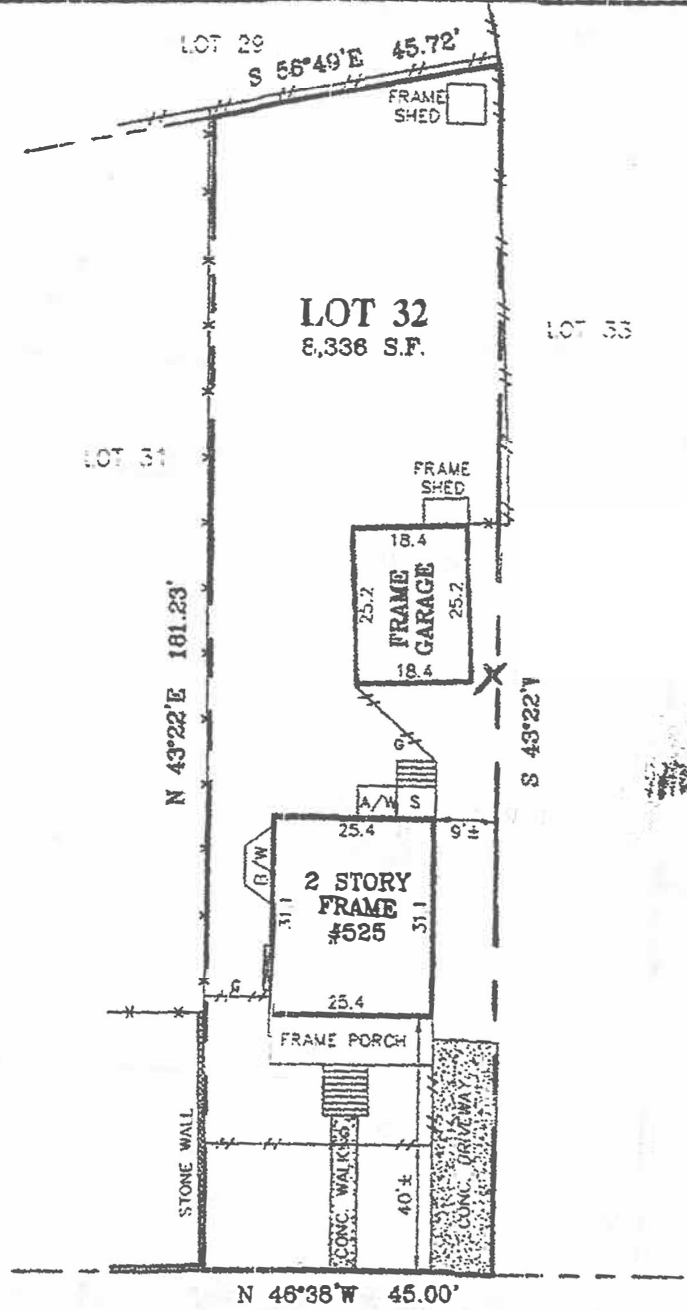
1. This plan is a benefit to a consumer insofar as it is required by a lender or a title insurance company or its agent in connection with contemplated transfer, financing or re-financing.
2. This plan is not to be relied upon for the establishment or location of fences, garages, buildings, or other existing or future improvements.
3. This plan does not provide for the accurate identification of property boundary lines, but such identification may not be required for the transfer of title or securing financing or re-financing.
4. Building line and/or Flood Zone information is taken from available sources and is subject to interpretation of originator.
5. No Title Report furnished.


Notes

- 1) Flood zone "X" per H.U.D. panel No. 0480D.
2. Setback distances as shown to the principal structure from property lines are approximate. The level of accuracy for this drawing should be taken to be no greater than plus or minus 1 foot. Fences, if shown, have been located by approximate methods.



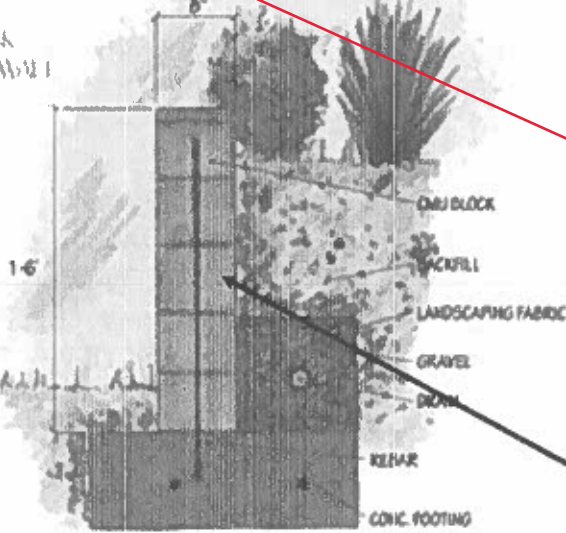
LOCATION DRAWING
LOT 32, BLOCK 74
NORTH TAKOMA
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND



SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE		REFERENCES	 SNIDER & ASSOCIATES LAND SURVEYORS 20270 Goldenrod Lane, Suite Germantown, Maryland 208 301/948-5100 Fax 301/948-
THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON HAS BEEN BASED UPON THE RESULTS OF A FIELD INSPECTION PURSUANT TO THE DEED OR PLAT OF RECORD. EXISTING STRUCTURES SHOWN HAVE BEEN FIELD LOCATED BASED UPON MEASUREMENTS FROM PROPERTY MARKERS FOUND OR FROM EVIDENCE OF LINES OF APPARENT OCCUPATION.		PLAT BK. 2 PLAT NO. 103	
LIBER FOLIO		DATE OF LOCATIONS WALL CHECK: HSE. LOC.: 12-06-07	SCALE: 1" DRAWN BY: JOB NO.: 07-

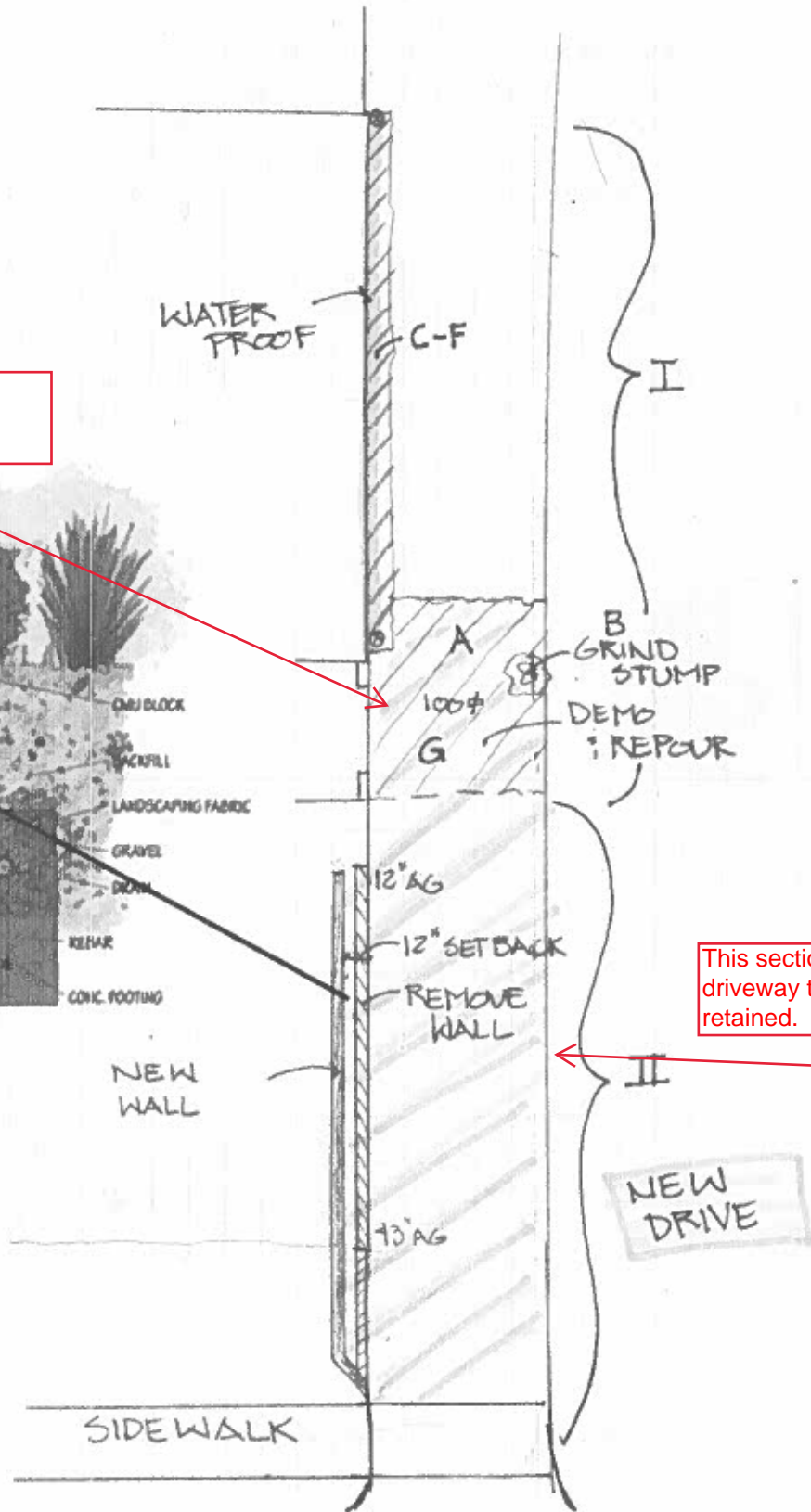
Joseph E. Snider
 MARYLAND PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR REG. NO. _____

CANTEROCK
RETAINING WALL



Stock Example

This section of driveway to be replaced.



This section of driveway to be retained.

SPRECHER
525 Albany Ave,
Takoma Park, MD



Existing wall East Side
Will remain

SPECTER
525 Albany Ave.
Takoma Park



Existing damage driveway

SPRECKER 525 H/king Ave Factory TAKOMA PARK



Looking west



Existing failing wall

SPRECKER
525 Albany Ave
Takoma Park



Existing wall & driveway Facing north

SPRECHER 525 H/ banyu Tulkowa Park

E
X
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