

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	10407 Fawcett St., Kensington	Meeting Date:	7/26/2023
Resource:	Primary One Resource Kensington Historic District	Report Date:	7/19/2023
Applicant:	Sandra Wasden	Public Notice:	7/12/2023
Review:	HAWP	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Case No:	1036575	Tax Credit:	n/a
PROPOSAL:	Tree Removal		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC **approve** the HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Primary One Resource within the Kensington Historic District
STYLE: Colonial Revival/Queen Anne/Eclectic
DATE: 1898

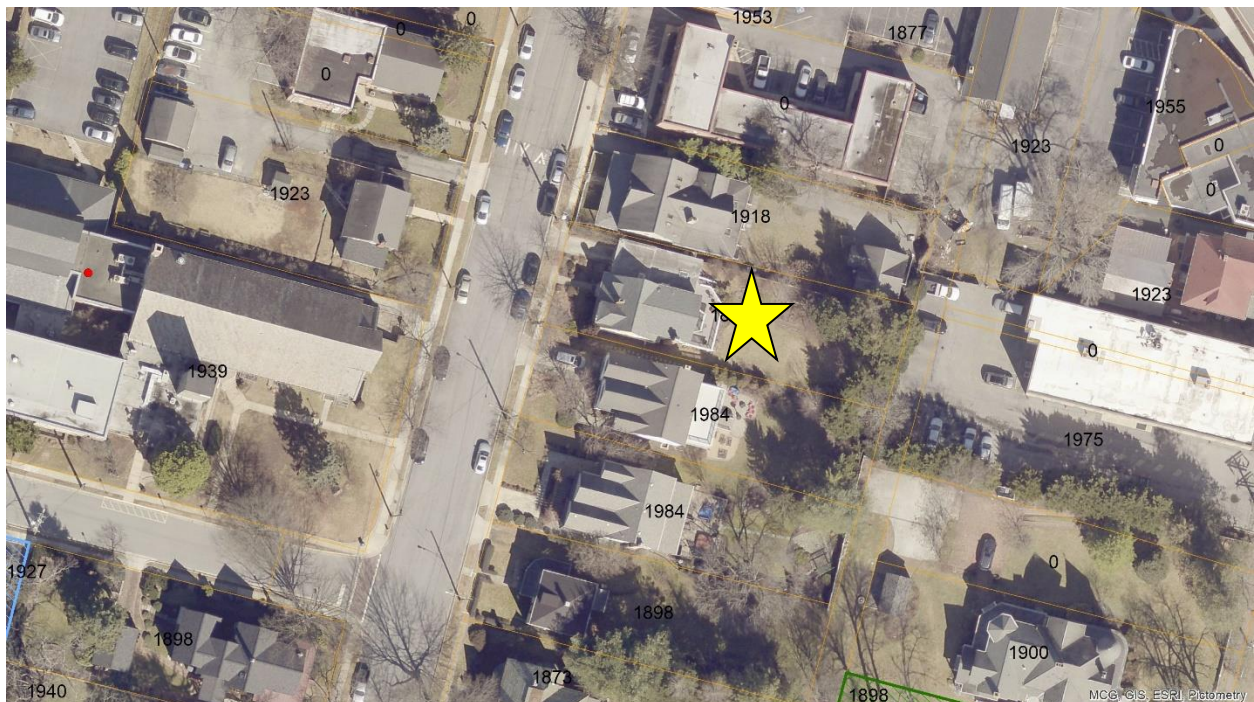


Figure 1: The subject property is located near the commercial section of the Kensington Historical District.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove one tree from the front yard at the subject property.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

Kensington Historic District Guidelines

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Kensington Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the *Approved & Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Kensington Historic District, Atlas #31/6 (Amendment)*, *Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan (Vision)*, *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.

Approved & Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Kensington Historic District, Atlas #31/6

The district is architecturally significant as a collection of late 19th and early 20th century houses that exhibit a variety of architectural styles popular during the Victorian period including Queen Anne, Shingle, Eastlake, and Colonial Revival. The houses share a uniformity of scale, setbacks, and construction materials that contribute to the cohesiveness of the district's streetscapes. This uniformity, coupled with the dominant design inherent in Warner's original plan of subdivision, conveys a strong sense of both time and place, that of a Victorian garden suburb.

Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan

The HPC formally adopted the planning study, *Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan*, and is directed by the Executive Regulations, which were approved by the County Council, to use this plan when considering changes and alterations to the Kensington Historic District. The goal of this preservation plan "was to establish a sound database of information from, which to produce a document that would serve the HPC, M-NCPPC, their staff and the community in wrestling with the protection of historic districts amidst the pressures of life in the 21st century." (page 1). The plan provides a specific physical description of the district as it is; an analysis of character-defining features of the district; a discussion of the challenges facing the district; and a discussion of proposed strategies for maintaining the character of the district while allowing for appropriate growth and change.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (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
- (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 *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-and-a-half-story clapboard house with a side gable roof. At the house’s front right corner, there is an evergreen tree measuring approximately 8” (eight inches) d.b.h. The applicant proposes to remove this tree.

The photograph submitted with the application shows that a majority of the greenery has turned brown. Because an arborist report did not accompany the application, Staff determined the tree removal could not be approved administratively and required a HAWP.

Staff finds the tree is immediately adjacent to the front-right (southwest) corner of the house and is highly visible from the right-of-way. However, Staff finds that the tree does not contribute to the historic district’s mature tree canopy. Staff additionally finds if the tree grows larger its roots could damage the historic house foundation. Staff finds there is justification to remove the tree under 24A-8(b)(1) and 24A-8(d).

Staff typically recommends additional tree planting as an added condition to approved HAWPs for tree removals in the Kensington Historic District. The small front yard at the subject property is landscaped with a large maple tree and two smaller trees and, in Staff’s opinion, there is not sufficient space for a new tree, and Staff does not recommend an added condition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application; under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) 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;*

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.

