

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	5 Columbia Avenue, Takoma Park	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	11/15/2023
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	11/8/2023
<b>Applicant:</b>	Samuel Bryson	<b>Public Notice:</b>	11/1/2023
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	N/A
<b>Permit Number:</b>	1047167	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Fence Installation		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) **approve** the HAWP application **with three (3) conditions:**

1. The section of fence that runs parallel along Columbia Ave., between the house and eastern property line, shall be no taller than 48” (forty-eight inches). A revised site plan and fence details for this section shall be submitted to Staff to verify this condition has been satisfied before issuing final approval documents.
2. The section of fence between the south property line and the rear of the house along Pine Ave. shall be no taller than 48” (forty-eight inches). A revised site plan and fence details shall be submitted to Staff to verify this condition has been satisfied before issuing final approval documents.
3. The applicant shall submit a tree impact assessment from the Takoma Park Arborist, if required, or a waiver from the Arborist, if an impact assessment is not required, before Staff is authorized to issue final approval documents.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District  
**STYLE:** Vernacular  
**DATE:** c. 1886



Figure 1: The subject property at 5 Columbia Avenue (noted with the yellow star).

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approved the demolition of two non-historic additions, construction of the present rear addition, and in-kind replacement of the original windows.<sup>1</sup> That same year, the HPC approved the installation of twenty-four (24) roof-mounted solar panels on the house. The panels were arranged in two arrays: sixteen (16) panels on the rear addition and eight (8) panels on the eastern slope of the front-gable house.<sup>2</sup>

On September 20, 2023, the HPC, by consent, approved an expansion of the existing solar array.<sup>3</sup>

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to enclose the rear of the subject property and replace the existing fence along the eastern property boundary.

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

When reviewing alterations and additions for new construction to Contributing Resources within the Takoma Park Historic District, decisions are guided by the Takoma Park Historic District Design Guidelines (*Design Guidelines*) and Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (*Chapter 24A*) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (*The Standards*).

### ***Takoma Park Historic District Design 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 at 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,

<sup>1</sup> For more information, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/I.A-5-Columbia-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf> and <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/I.J-5-Columbia-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/I.H-5-Columbia-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> The Staff Report and application for the September 2023 HAWP are available here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/I.E-5-Columbia-Avenue-Takoma-Park-1040700.pdf>.

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 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

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 Historic Resources Preservation***

(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 insure 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***

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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportions, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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 Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District and features a two-story, front-gable, vernacular house (ca. 1886) with no particular stylistic influences. The front-gable house features a full-width front porch and a gable projection on its west elevation that creates its T-shaped floor plan. Character defining features include shiplap wood siding and two-over-two (simulated divided light), double-hung, wood-sash windows. The house has undergone numerous alterations since its construction.

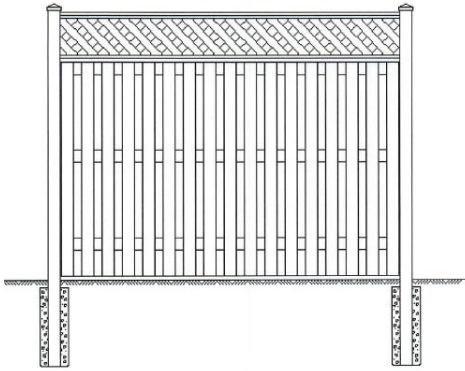
There is an existing approximately 4' (four-foot) tall stockade fence to the east (left) of the house, see below. There are also small sections of wood fence along the eastern property boundary, but those sections of fencing do not create a continuous enclosure.



*Figure 2: Views of the subject house looking south, the existing fence aligns with the front wall plane.*

The applicant proposes to enclose the rear yard with 265' (two hundred and sixty-five linear feet) of 6' (six foot tall) board on board fence with a lattice top.





*Figure 3: Elevation drawing of the proposed fence.*



*Figure 4: Aerial photo of the site with the approximate fence location shown in red.*

The HPC's general requirement for fences in the Takoma Park Historic District are that they be no taller than 48" (forty-eight inches) with an open picket character, but can be up to 6' (six feet) and solid to the rear of the historic wall plane. The primary reason for this requirement is to retain the open character of

the district. Requirements for corner lots are not quite as rigid and take into account setback and other visual considerations particular to these properties.

Staff finds the fence to the east of the house will not have a significant impact on the character of the site and surrounding district. This is largely because the property line is at an awkward angle and the narrow side setback to the house at 7 Columbia Ave. Staff finds the materials and design of the fence are compatible with the character of the district. However, Staff finds the proposed fence is taller than what is typically allowed. Staff recommends the HPC add a condition to the approval of the fence that the section of fence that runs parallel with Columbia Ave. be no taller than 48" (forty-eight inches). Because of the narrow side setback to the neighboring property and the property line angle, Staff finds a 6' (six-foot tall) fence is appropriate along the eastern property boundary.

The fence along the south property line extends from the southeast corner of the lot to approximately the front corner of the house at 6 Pine Ave. The fence then turns north and encloses the remainder of the yard before finally engaging with the house at the southwest corner of the recent building addition. Even though the fence is pulled away from the right-of-way, Staff finds that a solid 6' (six foot) fence along Pine Ave. creates the effect of a wall and needs to be lowered to no more than 48" (forty-eight inches). Because the fence is setback approximately 20' (twenty feet) from the street, Staff find a solid fence design, as opposed to an open picket, is acceptable. Staff recommends the HPC add a condition for approval that the section of fence fronting Pine Ave. be no more than 48" (forty-eight inches) tall.

Staff recommends an additional condition to the approval of this HAWP that before Staff issues the approval documents, the applicant needs to submit a tree impact assessment from the Takoma Park Arborist, if required, or a waiver from the Arborist, if an impact assessment is not required. Staff notes there are several large trees along the eastern property line that could be impacted by the proposed fence. The HPC has typically required this finding before approving HAWPs in Takoma Park.



*Figure 5: Aerial photo of the subject property. Staff's recommended conditions would limit the fence in yellow to 48" (forty-eight inches) in height.*

Staff finds the proposed fence, with the recommended conditions, meets the requirements of the *Design Guidelines*, 24A-8(b)(1), (2), and (d), and Standards 2, 9, and 10.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP **with three (3) conditions**;

1. The section of fence that runs parallel along Columbia Ave., between the house and eastern property line, shall be no taller than 48" (forty-eight inches). A revised site plan and fence details for this section shall be submitted to Staff to verify this condition has been satisfied before issuing final approval documents.



APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301.563.3400

FOR STAFF ONLY:
HAWP# 1047167
DATE ASSIGNED

APPLICANT:

Name: Samuel Bryson
Address: 5 Columbia Ave
Daytime Phone: 202-340-2924

E-mail: sam.bryson@gmail.com
City: Takoma Park Zip: 20912
Tax Account No.: 01058893

AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):

Name:
Address:
Daytime Phone:

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

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE: MIHP # of Historic Property

Is the Property Located within an Historic District? X Yes/District Name Takoma Park
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.

Building Number: 5 Street: Columbia Ave
Town/City: Takoma Park Nearest Cross Street: Pine Ave
Lot: P13 Block: 18 Subdivision: 0025 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:

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



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

<b>Owner's mailing address</b> 5 Columbia Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912	<b>Owner's Agent's mailing address</b> N/A
<b>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</b>	
5 Pine Ave Takoma Park, MD	7 Columbia Ave Takoma Park, MD  1 Columbia Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912
6 Pine Ave Takoma Park, MD	7105 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park MD 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:

The existing structure is an historic farmhouse and is a contributing resource in the Takoma Park Historic District. The property underwent a significant renovation in 2019 & 2020 to restore it to habitability.

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

We seek to construct a 6' board-on-board cedar wood fence surrounding the yard on the southern portion of the property, as well as along the eastern border of the property. A short existing fence facing Columbia Ave will also be replaced.

Work Item 1: See attached

Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:

Work Item 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:

Work Item 3: \_\_\_\_\_

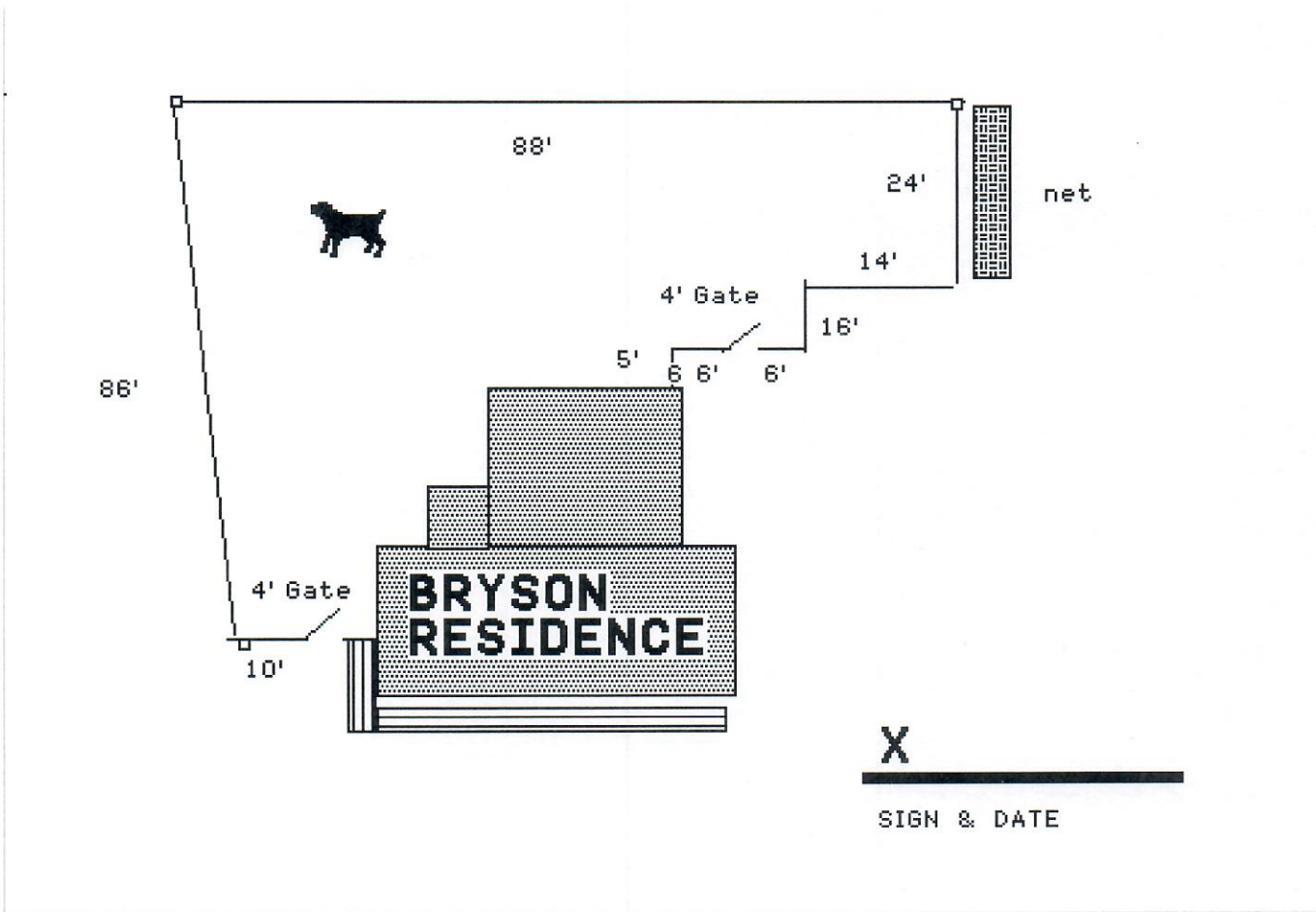
Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:

JOB SKETCH

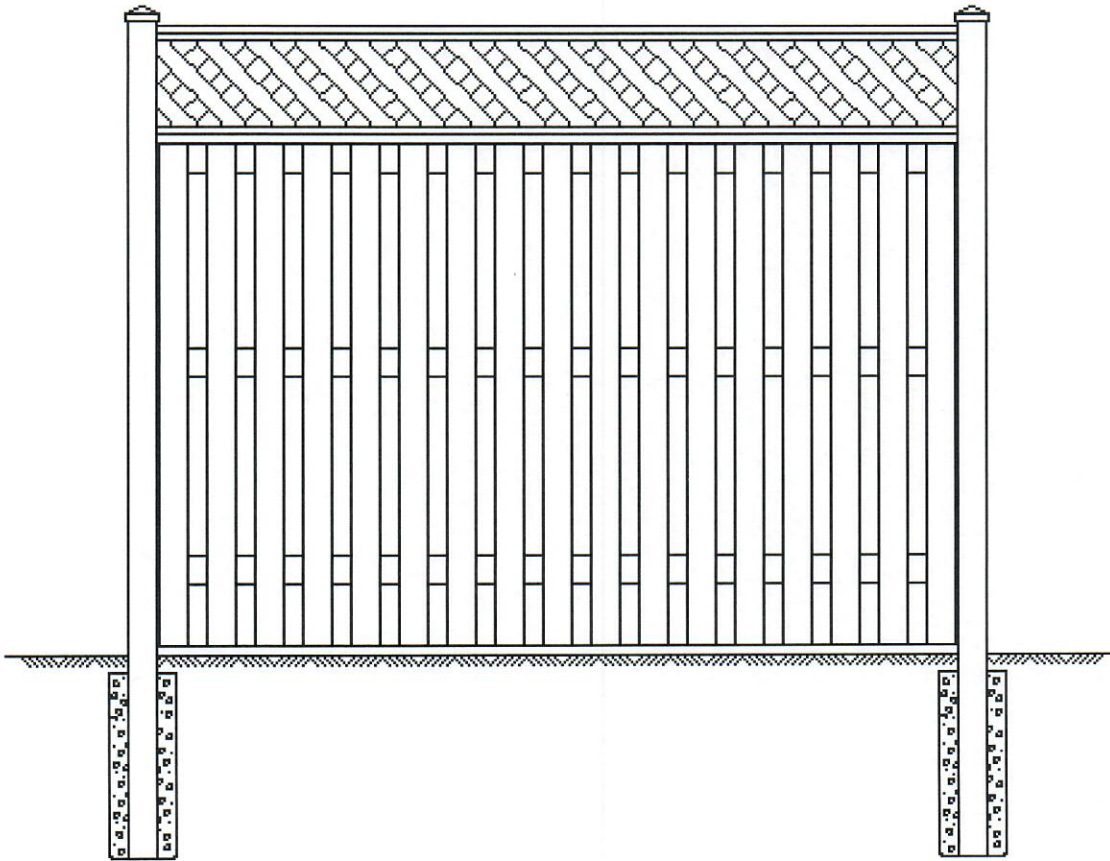
Sam Bryson  
 #5 Columbia Ave.  
 Takoma Park, MD 20912  
 202-352-4738

265' 6' high WRC 1X4 BOARD ON BOARD - LATTICE TOP Fencing



10/10/2023





**BUILDERS | FENCE**  
COMPANY

Builders Fence Company  
44330 Mercure Circle, Suite 140  
Dulles, VA 20166  
703-820-0967

6' WRC 1X4 BOARD ON BOARD - LATTICE TOP

DRAWN BY: 10/10/23

SCALE:

PAGE:

REVISED: 10/10/23

FILE:

1 of 1

Front of House Facing Columbia Ave Showing Old Fence to be Replaced





Side of house between 5 Columbia & 7 Columbia Ave



South to North View

North to South View



View of Rear Yard to be enclosed (Facing Pine Ave)







DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Rabbiah Sabbakhan  
*Director*

# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

Application Date: 10/16/2023

Application No: 1047167  
AP Type: HISTORIC  
Customer No: 1374901

## Affidavit Acknowledgement

The Homeowner is the Primary applicant  
This application does not violate any covenants and deed restrictions

## Primary Applicant Information

Address 5 COLUMBIA AVE  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

Homeowner Bryson (Primary)

## Historic Area Work Permit Details

Work Type CONST

Scope of Work We seek to construct a 6' cedar wood fence on southern and eastern portions of our property