

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7124 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	5/8/2024
Resource:	Outstanding Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	5/1/2024
Applicant:	Karen & Russell Pittman	Public Notice:	4/24/2024
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	no
Case Number:	1066313 RETROACTIVE	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	Fence Installation		

RECOMMENDATION

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

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Outstanding Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Craftsman
DATE: c.1925

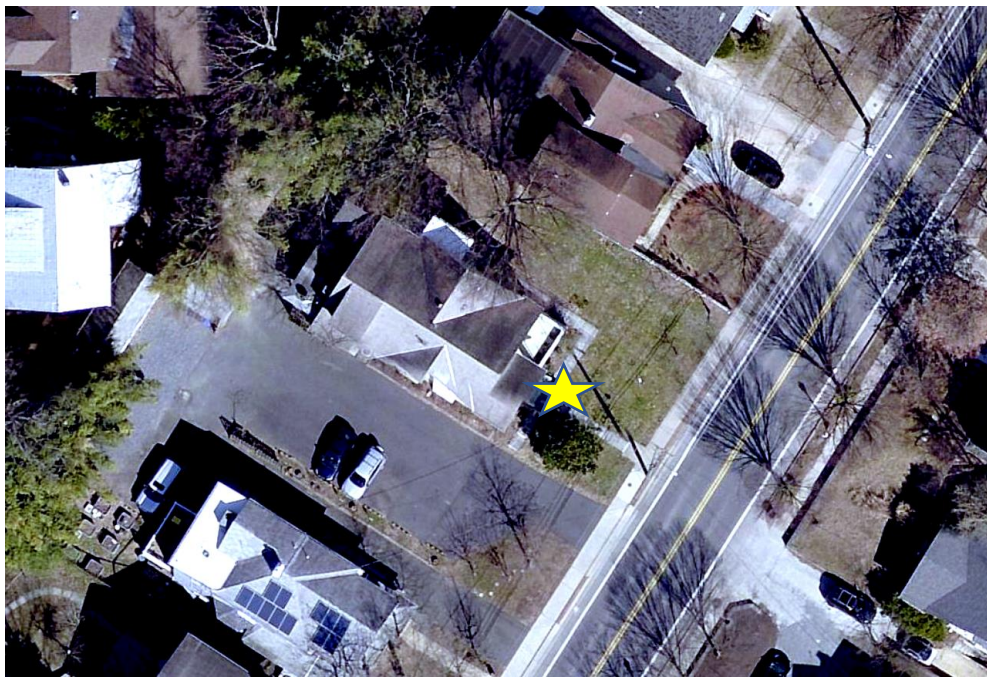


Figure 1: The subject property fronts Carroll Ave. and has a wide setback to the properties to the north and south.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to construct a 4' (four-foot) tall vinyl picket fence to enclose the front 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)*.

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;

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

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

encourages;

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:

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
- (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:

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will 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 tall stucco-sided Craftsman house with a three-tab shingle roof with a cross-gable roof form. The house is designated as an ‘Outstanding Resource’ within the Takoma Park Historic District for its architectural details. The applicant seeks approval for a 4’ (four-foot) tall, vinyl, picket fence to enclose the yard of the subject property. The fence has been installed and the applicant is seeking retroactive approval. As with all HAWPs reviewed for work that has already been completed, the Staff Report and HPC review must be completed as if the work was proposed.

The applicant proposes to construct a 4’ (four-foot) tall fence that encloses the front and a portion of the side yard. The fence has narrow pickets and is constructed out of vinyl.

Background

Staff identified this fence while conducting a site visit at the subject property on February 7, 2024 for a separate HAWP application for rooftop solar panels. After a review of permit records and utilizing the images from Google StreetView (below), Staff concluded that the fence had been installed without a HAWP. On February 15, 2024, Staff sent a letter to the subject property identifying the unpermitted work and laying out the permitting requirements. Staff then reached out to the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) for a Notice of Violation, which includes instructions for remedying the violation. After communication with DPS and our office, the applicant submitted this HAWP application.

Analysis

The subject property is located on Carroll Ave., a main thoroughfare in the Takoma Park Historic District. Many of the houses have retaining walls and/or fences that create a barrier between the street and a property’s front yard. Some of these fences do not comply with the HPC’s standard requirements because they pre-date the creation of the historic district. Typically, fences in the front yards of properties in the Takoma Park Historic District need to be:

- Constructed using a traditional material (i.e., wood, iron, and in limited cases stone);
- Have an open picket design; and
- Be no taller than 48” (forty-eight inches).

These identified characteristics ensure the fence is a compatible feature within the Takoma Park Historic District’s largely open, park-like setting.

Vinyl fences are not typically allowed in the Takoma Park Historic District, or any historic district in Montgomery County for that matter, because of the material’s characteristics. The vinyl used to construct fences is too shiny to be consistent with the finish of a painted wood fence (which is the material it is attempting to replicate). Additionally, vinyl fences never age and develop a patina. While that may be a desirable trait for an applicant, Staff finds the objectives in the *Design Guidelines* are to ensure that new construction and alterations in the Takoma Park Historic District are compatible with the setting and development of the surrounding area. Staff’s review of previously approved HAWP did not uncover a single instance of a vinyl fence that has been approved by the HPC.

The National Park Service developed a general framework to evaluate the need for substitute materials. That framework asks to consider the technical and economical feasibility of using traditional materials including;

- The unavailability of historic materials,
- The unavailability of skilled artisans or historic craft techniques,
- Inadequate durability of the original materials,
- The replacement of a secondary feature; construction of a new addition,
- The reconstruction of a missing feature;

- Code-required performance; and
- For enhanced resilience and sustainability.

Staff finds in each of these criteria, a traditional wood fence would perform as well as the vinyl fence proposed in this HAWP; and that using a substitute material – which vinyl is – is not appropriate. Staff recognizes that a wood fence will require intermittent painting or staining, however, that additional maintenance does not constitute an undue burden on the applicants.

Even though Staff finds the proposed fence is compatible in size, style, and location; Staff nonetheless finds the fence is incompatible with the character of the district due to its material. Staff recommends the HPC deny the HAWP under 24A-8(a) as being incompatible with the character of the District and for violating Standards 2 and 9.



Figure 2: Photo from the February 2024 site visit.



Figure 3: November 2021 image from Google Streetview.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC **deny** the HAWP under 24A-8(a) and that the proposed work is inappropriate, inconsistent with, and detrimental to the preservation, enhancement, and ultimate protection of the historic resource and is incompatible in character with the historic resource and the purposes of Chapter 24A, and the *Takoma Park Historic District Design Guidelines*;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #2, #6, and #9.



APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 301.563.3400

FOR STAFF ONLY: HAWP# DATE ASSIGNED

APPLICANT:

Name: Address: Daytime Phone: E-mail: City: Zip: 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

Is the Property Located within an Historic District? 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.

Building Number: Street:

Town/City: Nearest Cross Street:

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:

- Checklist of work types: 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]

Owner's mailing address	Owner's Agent's mailing address
Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses	

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

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

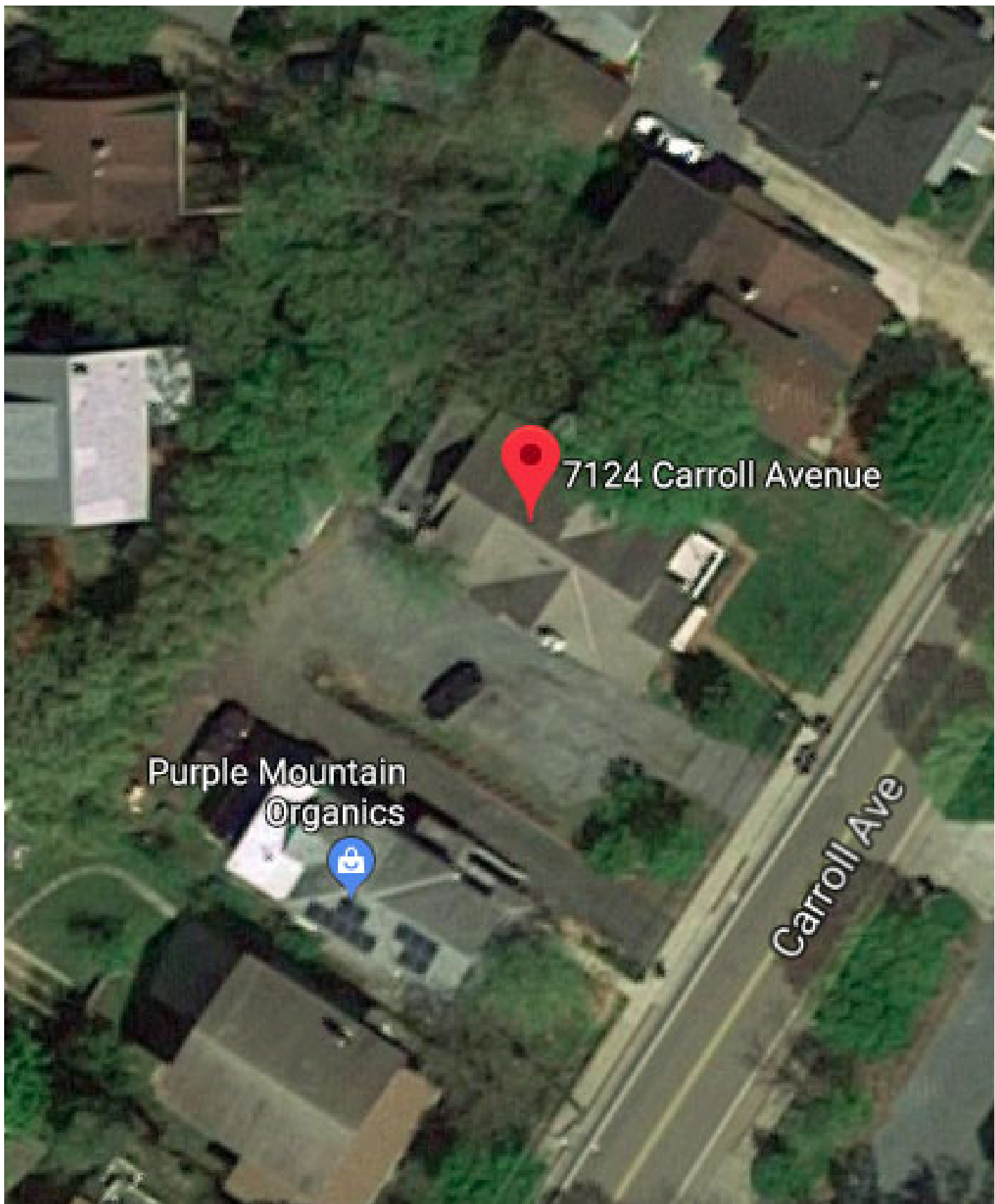
Work Item 1: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 2: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 3: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

**HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
CHECKLIST OF
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

	Required Attachments						
Proposed Work	I. Written Description	2. Site Plan	3. Plans/ Elevations	4. Material Specifications	5. Photographs	6. Tree Survey	7. Property Owner Addresses
New Construction	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Additions/ Alterations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demolition	*	*	*		*		*
Deck/Porch	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fence/Wall	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Driveway/ Parking Area	*	*		*	*	*	*
Grading/Excavation/ Landscaping	*	*		*	*	*	*
Tree Removal	*	*		*	*	*	*
Siding/ Roof Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Window/ Door Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Masonry Repair/ Repoint	*	*	*	*	*		*
Signs	*	*	*	*	*		*



7124 CARROLL AVENUE, AERIAL VIEW

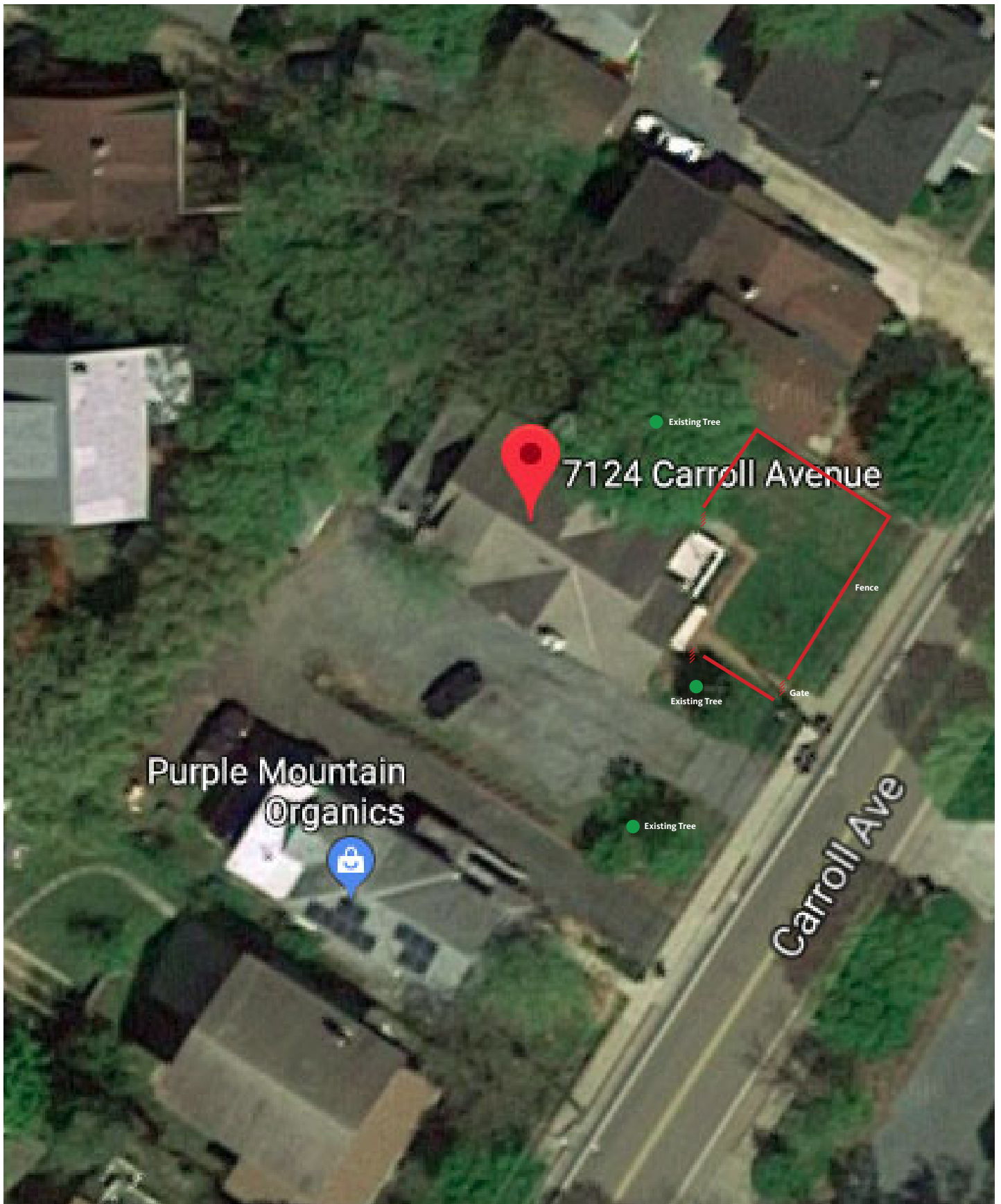


7124



7124





7124 CARROLL, FENCE AND TREE LOCATION PLAN







ONLINE SERVICES

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 Schedule Inspections	 Check Permit Status
 Data Search	 Design Consultation
 Request Records	 Property Complaint

russellpittman3@gmail.com | [Main Page](#) | [Update Contact](#) | [Change Password](#) | [Log Off](#)

Your HAWP Permit application has been created successfully!

The permit application number is **1066313**.

Please write down this number for future reference.



You will be notified by email when the permit is ready to be issued.




We value your feedback regarding our online application process! Please take a moment to complete a brief survey

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL PERMIT IS ISSUED.

**** You MUST complete the HAWP form below. Incomplete forms will not be considered by the Historic Preservation Commission***
Link to fillable PDF HAWP form.

****Your completed HAWP form and any supporting documents must be emailed to HAWP@montgomeryplanning.org.***

VISITING DPS?  2425 Reddie Drive, 7th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902 |  Parking & Directions |

 Accessibility |  7:30am - 4pm, Mon- Fri |  240-777-0311



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