

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

<b>Address:</b>	25 Hesketh Street, Chevy Chase	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	6/12/2024
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Chevy Chase Village Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	6/5/2024
<b>Applicant:</b>	Whitney VanMeter (James Holly, Agent)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	5/28/2024
<b>Review:</b>	Historic Area Work Permit	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	Partial
<b>Case Number:</b>	1071279 RETROACTIVE	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	After the fact roof Replacement, New Gutters, and Material Alteration		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application:

1. The approval of this HAWP does not extend to include the soffit enclosure. The soffit must be returned to its previous condition with exposed brackets and rafter tails.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource within the Chevy Chase Village Historic District  
**STYLE:** Craftsman  
**DATE:** 1918



*Figure 1: The subject property is located near the western edge of the historic district.*

## **BACKGROUND**

In reviewing the applicant's 2024 Historic Preservation Tax Credit application, Staff identified several work items that required a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP). Staff directed the applicant to file a HAWP application to seek retroactive approval for those work items.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant seeks retroactive approval to replace several roof surfaces, replace the gutters and downspouts, and to enclose the soffits.

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Chevy Chase Village Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the historic preservation review guidelines in the approved and adopted amendment for the Chevy Chase Village 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 documents is outlined below.

### ***Chevy Chase Village Historic District Guidelines***

The *Guidelines* break down specific projects into three levels of review - Lenient, Moderate, and Strict Scrutiny.

“**Lenient Scrutiny**” means that the emphasis of the review should be on issues of general massing and scale, and compatibility with the surrounding streetscape, and should allow for a very liberal interpretation of preservation rules. Most changes should be permitted unless there are major problems with massing, scale or compatibility.

“**Moderate Scrutiny**” involves a higher standard of review than “lenient scrutiny.” Besides issues of massing, scale and compatibility, preserving the integrity of the resource is taken into account. Alterations should be designed so that the altered structure still contributes to the district. Use of compatible new materials, rather than the original building materials, should be permitted. Planned changes should be compatible with the structure's existing design, but should not be required to replicate its architectural style.

“**Strict Scrutiny**” means that the planned changes should be reviewed to insure that the integrity of the significant exterior architectural or landscaping features and details is not compromised. However, strict scrutiny should not be “strict in theory but fatal in fact” i.e. it does not mean that there can be no changes but simply that the proposed changes should be reviewed with extra care.

- *Exterior trim* (such as moldings on doors and windows) on contributing resources should be subject to moderate scrutiny if it is visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if it is not. Exterior trim on Outstanding resources should be subject to strict scrutiny if it is visible from the public right-of-way.
- *Gutters* are not currently subject to review and should not be reviewed.
- *Roofing Materials* should be subject to moderate scrutiny if they are visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if they are not. In general, materials differing from the original should be approved contributing resources. These guidelines recognize that for outstanding resources replacement in kind is always advocated. For example, replacement of slate roofs in kind is usually required. However, the application should be reviewed with consideration given to economic hardship. Furthermore, as technology continues to change and improve,

- other building materials may become available to provide an appropriate substitute for replacement in kind, and the reviewing agency should be open to consideration of these alternative solutions.
- *Siding* should be subject to moderate scrutiny if it is visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if it is not.
  - The *Guidelines* state five basic policies that should be adhered to, including:
    - Preserving the integrity of the Chevy Chase Village Historic District. Any alterations should, at a minimum, perpetuate the ability to perceive the sense of time and place portrayed by the district.
    - Preserving the integrity of contributing structures. Alterations should be designed in such a way that the altered structure still contributes to the district.
    - Maintaining the variety of architectural styles and the tradition of architectural excellence.
    - Design review emphasis should be restricted to changes that will be visible from the front or side public right-of-way, or that would be visible in the absence of vegetation or landscaping.
    - Alterations to the portion of a property that are not visible from the public-right-of-way should be subject to a very lenient review. Most changes to the rear of the properties should be approved as a matter of course.

***Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8***

- (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 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.

***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:***

#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 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 proportion, 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 two-and-a-half story, side gable Craftsman house, with stucco and shingle siding. In 2021, the HPC approved a HAWP that included expanding the existing porch to create a wrap-around porch and an expansion of a c.1990 addition. The house retains typical Craftsman elements, including roof brackets and exposed rafter tails. A fascia board was installed against the rafter tails to allow for gutter installations.

The applicant proposes work in three areas: replacing the existing roof surfaces, replacing the gutters and downspouts, and enclosing the existing soffits. The *Design Guidelines* explicitly exempt gutter replacement from HPC review and Staff only notes that this is within the scope of work proposed because it is eligible for the County Historic Preservation Tax Credit. Though this work is complete, the HPC is to review HAWPs seeking retroactive approval as if the work has not been undertaken.



*Figure 2: Photo of the rear of the house before the soffits were boxed in.*

### **Roof Replacement**

The applicant proposes to replace roofing in three different areas, the front porch, the non-historic rear dormer, and the primary gable roof. There is limited information about the roofing materials before the replacement, however, Staff finds the proposed roofing materials are compatible with the character of the house and the *Design Guidelines* and recommends the HPC approve the roof replacement.

The submitted photos do not detail the existing condition of the porch roofing, however, Staff was able to find a 2001 HAWP application that proposes to install “asphalt shingles” on the extended wrap-around



porch.<sup>1</sup> A Google StreetView image from November 2016, while lacking resolution, shows a very flat roof surface, which suggests the roof had been covered with three-tab roof singles. Staff finds the visibility of the low-pitched hipped porch roof is minimal from the public right-of-way. The applicant proposed to install a metal roofing system over the existing wrap-around porch.

Detailed measurements of the roof were not provided, however - as the roof has already been installed - Staff confirms the caps over the hips sit low to the roof surface and do not substantially change the roof's appearance when viewed from the public right-of-way. Staff finds metal roofs are not a material typically utilized in the Chevy Chase Village Historic District, but that the limited visibility, due to the porch roof slope, in this application will not detract from the character of the resource or surrounding district. Staff recommends the HPC approve the replacement porch roof under the *Design Guidelines*; 24A-8(b)(2) and (d); and Standard 2.

The second roof surface the applicant proposes to replace is over the front and rear dormers. Due to the low slope and height of the dormers, this roof surface is not at all visible from the historic district. The applicant proposes to install a membrane roof over these dormers. Staff cannot weigh in on the condition of the existing roof surface and relies on the owner's narrative which states the existing roof was leaking. The *Design Guidelines* require a very lenient level of review for alterations that are not at all visible from the public right-of-way. Staff finds the proposed membrane roofing on the dormers, will not have an impact on the visual character of the site or surrounding district. Additionally, Staff finds due to the low slope of the roofs, the proposed material is likely more appropriate than an asphalt shingle roof for the long-term preservation of the resource.

The final roof surface proposed for replacement is the primary gable roof. The applicant proposes to remove and replace the existing three-tab asphalt shingle roof installed as part of the 1990s house expansion, with an architectural shingle roof. Review and approval of this type of roof replacement is frequently delegated to Staff. Staff finds this change is appropriate under the *Design Guidelines*, and 24A-8(b)(2) and (d).

### **Soffit Enclosure**

The existing roof soffits have areas of rotted wood and significant nail penetrations. The applicant proposes to repair the wood damage, install a new vinyl soffit (i.e. boxing-in the soffit), and wrap the existing fascia in aluminum.

Staff finds this alteration is not a recommended practice for several reasons. Primarily, this alteration has obscured two of the house's character-defining features. Typical Craftsman architecture elements include exposed rafter tails and deep eaves supported by brackets. Both of these elements are present at the subject property. By boxing in the soffit, these features are no longer visible and the profiles of the roof overhangs have changed dramatically. The second concern is that enclosing the roof overhangs can trap moisture and accelerate material deterioration. Because the wood is behind the vinyl (or aluminum fascia wrap), it cannot be readily monitored and could lead to material failure before the problem is identified. Third, vinyl materials are typically disfavored because they do not accurately replicate the material they are replacing; in this instance, wood. The vinyl has a shiny finish that does not dull over time and develop a patina. For these reasons, Staff does not find boxing in the soffit to be an appropriate treatment.

Staff finds repairing an element of this type is why the County Council adopted the County Historic Preservation Tax Credit. Staff recognizes that repairing the existing roof overhangs to their historic appearance is more expensive than the treatment proposed in this HAWP application, but notes that the 25% credit substantially helps to narrow the gap between repairing/restoring the feature and the less

<sup>1</sup> The 2021 HAWP application file is available here:

[https://mcatlas.org/tiles/06\\_HistoricPreservation\\_PhotoArchives/Padlock/HAR60640008/Box064/35-13-01F\\_Chevy%20Chase%20Historic%20District\\_25%20Hesketh%20Street\\_04-25-2001.pdf](https://mcatlas.org/tiles/06_HistoricPreservation_PhotoArchives/Padlock/HAR60640008/Box064/35-13-01F_Chevy%20Chase%20Historic%20District_25%20Hesketh%20Street_04-25-2001.pdf).

expensive encapsulation. Staff recommends the HPC not extend approval of this HAWP to include the soffit enclosure and recommends the HPC require the applicant to return the soffit to its previous condition.



*Figure 3: Photo of the existing soffits, provided by the applicant.*



*Figure 4: Rear of the house after the soffit had been boxed in.*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** with one (1) condition the HAWP application;

1. The approval of this HAWP does not extend to include the soffit enclosure. The soffit must be returned to its previous condition with exposed brackets and rafter tails; under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2), and (d), and the *Chevy Chase Village Historic District Guidelines*, 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, 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 [dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:dan.bruechert@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#
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:

- 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 8



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

<b>Owner's mailing address</b>	<b>Owner's Agent's mailing address</b>
<b>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</b>	

**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:



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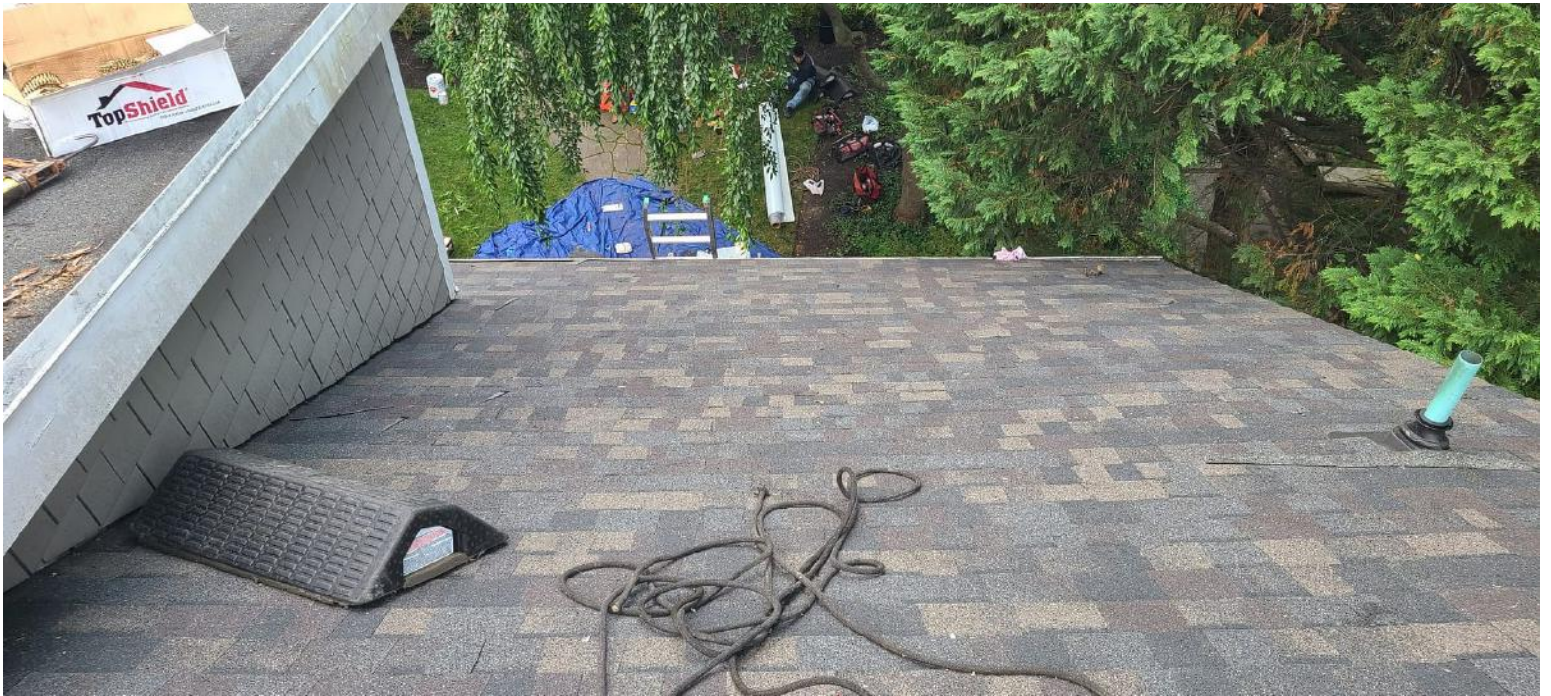
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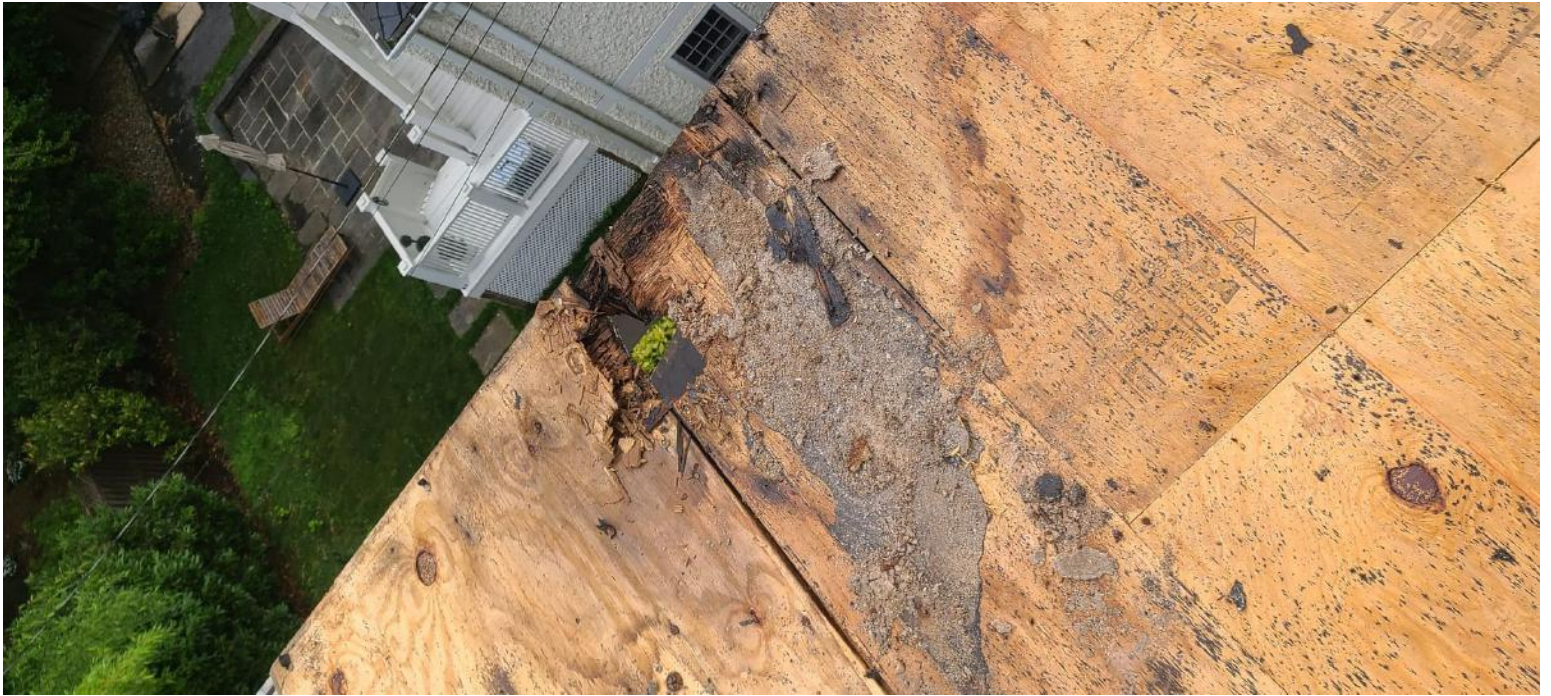
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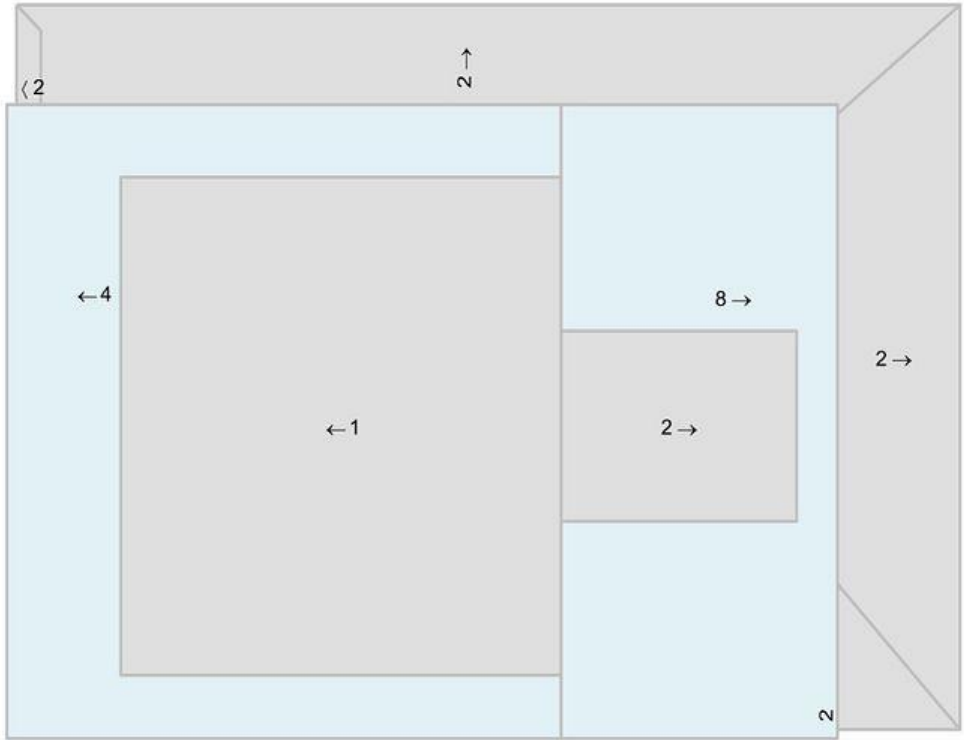
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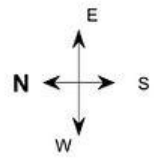
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**Homeowner will receive a quote for 50 year architectural shingles, slate, or synthetic slate for the areas highlighted in blue**

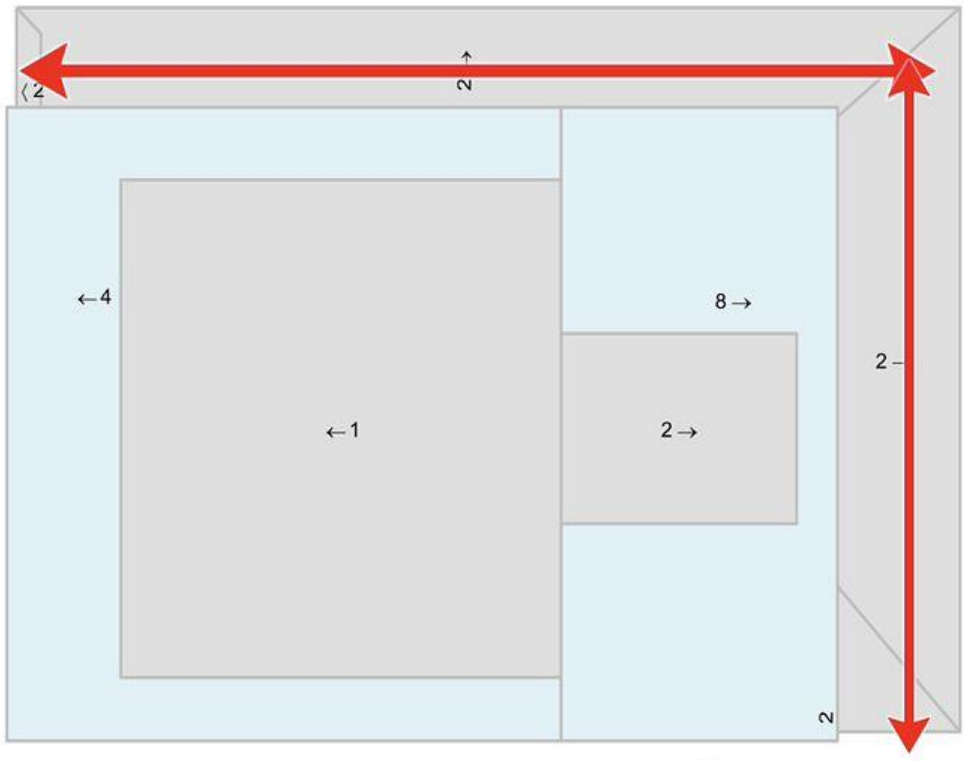


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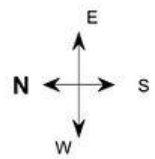
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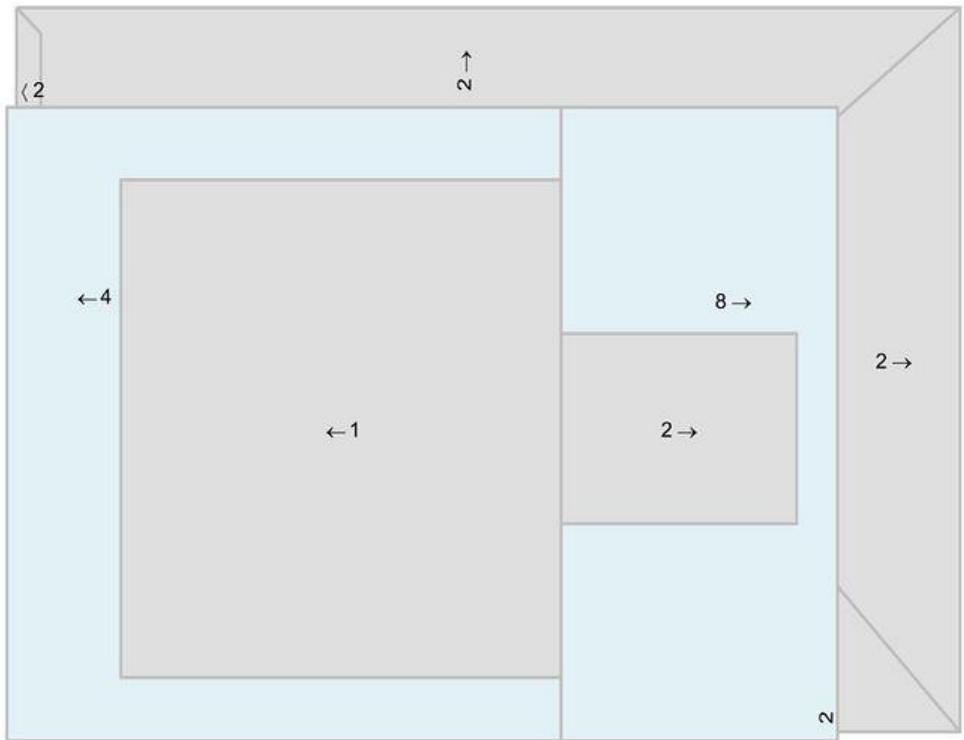
**Homeowner will be given quote to install standing seam metal on the front porch roof**



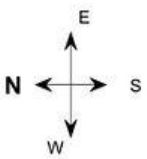
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**Areas highlighted in gray require flat roof membrane or metal roof. Areas with a 2/12 pitch can have shingles but ice and water shield membrane must be installed on the entire deck before shingles**



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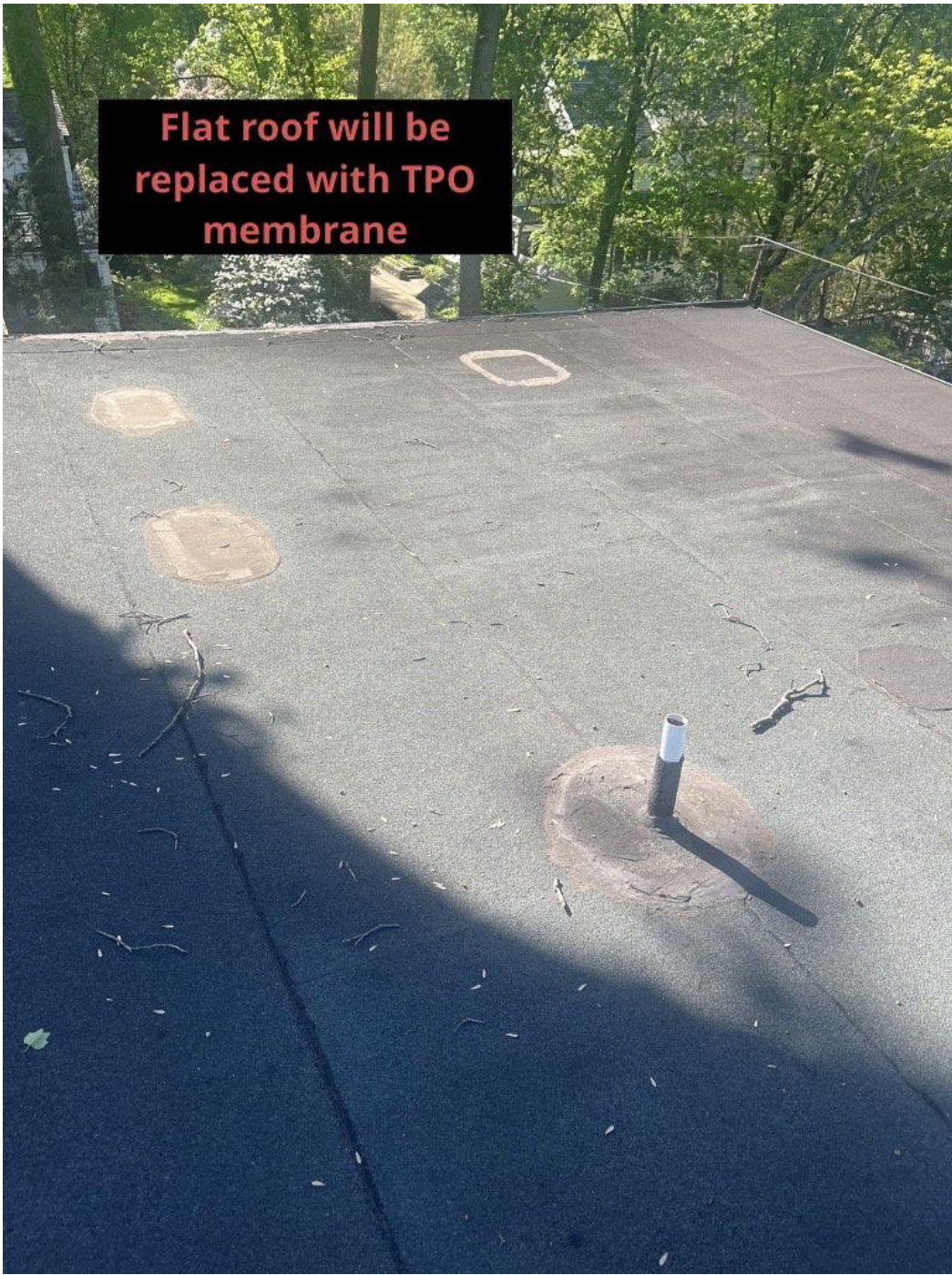
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Existing gutters are attached to the rafters. New fascia boards will be installed and wrapped in white aluminum. New gutters will be attached to fascia boards not rafters

