

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	15 Columbia Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	5/14/2025
Resource:	Non-Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	5/7/2025
Project Contact:	Jesse Karpa	Public Notice:	4/30/2025
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	n/a
Case No.:	1114208	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	Hardscape Alteration		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application with final approval delegated to Staff.

1. Verification that the Takoma Park Arborist has reviewed the proposal and conducted a tree impact assessment must be submitted to Staff before release of the final approval documents.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Non-Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Colonial Revival
DATE: c.1960 with 2023 Rehabilitation



Figure 1: 15 Columbia Ave., Takoma Park

BACKGROUND

The HPC approved a HAWP for modifications to the front porch, hardscaping, window and door replacement, a large rear addition, and an accessory structure at the July 14, 2021 HPC meeting.¹

On October 26, 2022, the HPC approved revisions to the proposed fenestration by consent.²

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing driveway and parking pad on the right side of the house and construct a new driveway on the left side of the house.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park 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 *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 documents is outlined below.

Takoma Park Historic District 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,

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.

Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should receive the most lenient level of design review. Most alterations and additions to Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should be approved as a matter of course. The only exceptions would be major additions and alterations to the scale and massing of Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources which affect the surrounding streetscape and/or landscape and could impair character of the district as a whole.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (a) 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

¹ The Staff Report for the HAWP is available here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/I.A-15-Columbia-Avenue-Takoma-Park-952481.pdf>. The HAWP was approved by consent, so there is not a recorded hearing.

² The Staff Report for the HAWP revision is available here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/II.L-15-Columbia-Avenue-Takmoa-Park-952481-REVISION.pdf>. The HAWP was approved by consent, so there is not a recorded hearing.

- (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 Non-contributing, two-story, side gable house within the District. Recently, the applicant completed an extensive rehabilitation that included the construction of a new front porch, fenestration alteration, and the construction of a large rear addition. There is a double-width shared driveway to the right of the house that functions as a parking pad on the right side of the house. The existing driveway is constructed out of asphalt that has substantially deteriorated. The applicant proposes to demolish the portion of the existing driveway on their property and construct a new 11' (eleven foot wide) permeable block driveway on the left side of the property. The driveway will extend from the street to align with the house's side gable ridge, approximately 10' (ten feet) to the rear of the front wall plane. A new curb cut will be constructed to the left of the house. The accompanying renderings (see *Figure 3*) show a new walkway from the sidewalk to align with the relocated front door. That work is not included in the application narrative or shown on the proposed site plan and is not under consideration for this HAWP.

The submitted site plan shows there are two trees within 10' (ten feet) of the proposed driveway on the neighboring property. A letter/approval from the Takoma Park Arborist was not submitted with the application materials, and Staff recommends the HPC add a condition to the approval of this HAWP that requires the applicant to submit this review before Staff can release the final HAWP approval documents.



Figure 2: 2021 photo of the subject building (left) before its rehabilitation.

Staff finds the existing double apron driveway is not a character defining feature of either property or of the surrounding historic district and may be removed.

Staff finds the proposed new driveway will not detract from the character of the site or the surrounding district. Staff additionally finds that relocating the driveway to the left side of the house will not dramatically impact the rhythm or spacing of the streetscape in a manner that would negatively impact the character of the district as a whole.

Staff finds the proposed permeable pavers are an appropriate material for the subject property. The pavers' dark color and textured appearance are generally consistent with the character and variety of paving materials in this part of the Takoma Park Historic District. While there are no driveways constructed using brick or block on the subject block, there are driveways constructed out of gravel, concrete, and asphalt; in both uniform and ribbon configurations. Staff finds the proposed pavers will not detract from the overall character of the streetscape and are preferable to the uniform appearance created by concrete or newly laid asphalt. Staff recommends the HPC approve the HAWP under 24A-8(b)(2) and (d) and *Standards #2, 9, and 10*.



Figure 3: Proposed rendering showing the location of the proposed driveway and front walk.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application with final approval authority delegated to Staff.

1. Verification that the Takoma Park Arborist has reviewed the proposal and conducted a tree impact assessment must be submitted to Staff before release of the final approval documents; under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2), and (d), and the *Takoma Park 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 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: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Tax Account No.: _____

AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

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:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck/Porch | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardscape/Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree removal/planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grading/Excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Roof | <input type="checkbox"/> Window/Door |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> 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:

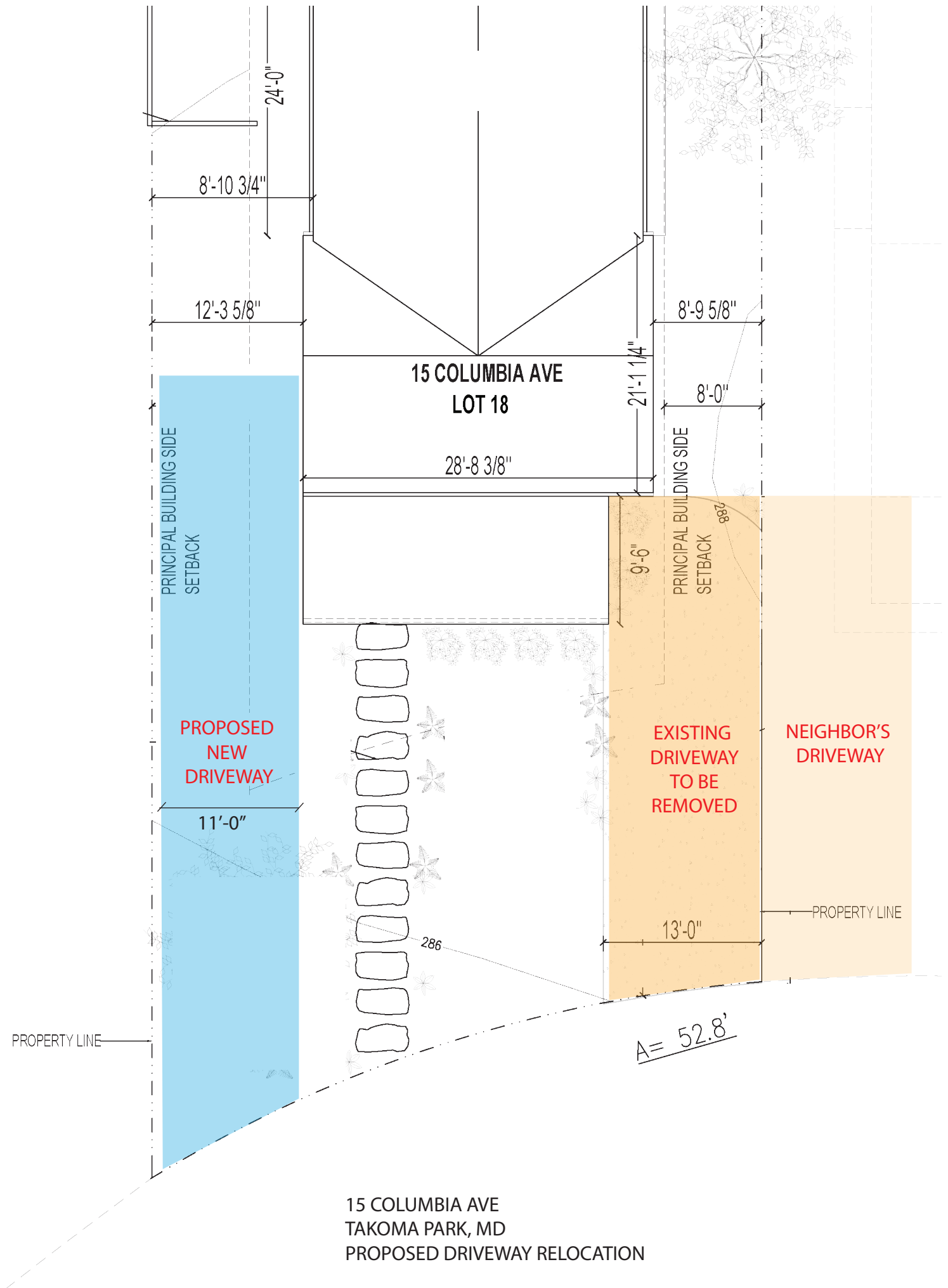
Work Item 1: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

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	*	*	*	*	*		*



15 Columbia Ave
Takoma Park, MD
Driveway relocation



permeable pavers



