

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7212 Cedar Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	11/12/2025
Resource:	Outstanding Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	11/5/2025
Applicant:	Kelly Vaena	Public Notice:	10/29/2025
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	No
Case Number:	1135654	Staff:	Laura DiPasquale
Proposal:	Tree removal		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

1. The applicant must plant one large-species shade tree on the property.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Outstanding Resource Within the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Queen Anne
DATE: c. 1890

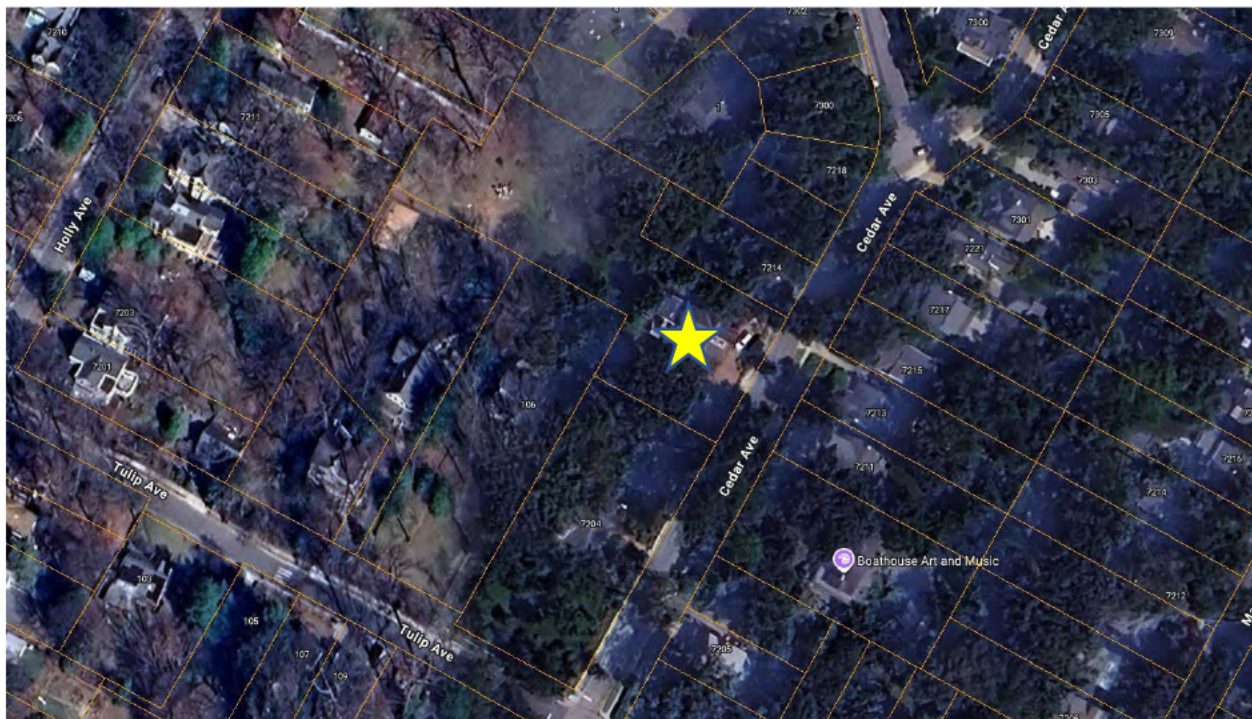


Figure 1: Aerial view of the subject property at 7212 Cedar Avenue, Takoma Park, indicated with a yellow star.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove one 31.9 d.b.h Black Gum tree from the side yard of the property.

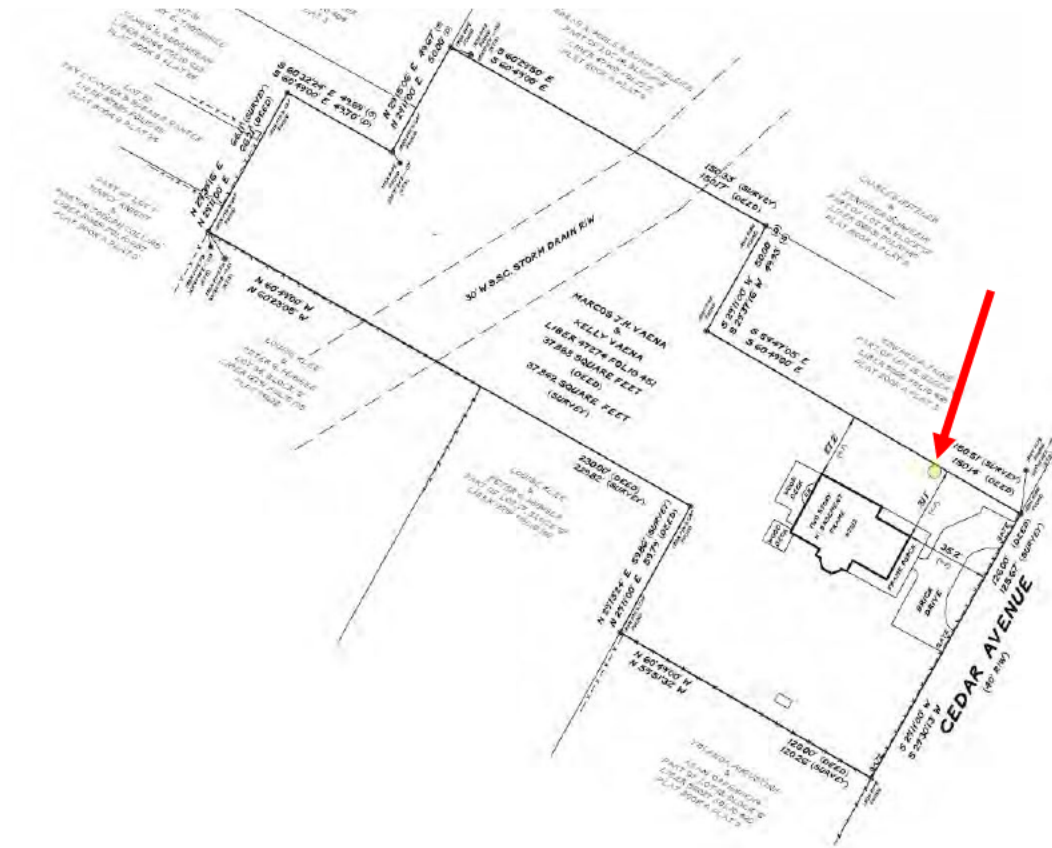


Figure 2: Site plan of 7212 Cedar Avenue showing the location of the proposed tree removal



Figure 3: View of the front façade of the house and the tree proposed for removal (left), and view of the dead stem of the tree circled in red (right).

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

The Historic Preservation Office and 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)*, and the HPC's *Policy No. 20-01 ADDRESSING EMERGENCY CLIMATE MOBILIZATION THROUGH THE INSTALLATION OF ROOF-MOUNTED SOLAR PANELS*. The pertinent information in these four documents is outlined below.

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:

- (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 shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Staff supports the proposed tree removal on the condition that the applicant plant one new large-species shade tree on the property. The applicant has provided the Takoma Park arborist’s assessment that the tree is a “declining, old blackgum with low to moderate vitality,” but has not officially classified the tree as dead or hazardous, which would have enabled a staff-level approval. The report notes that one of the two main stems of the tree has died back. Per the *Guidelines*, Takoma Park’s residential area is characterized by generous lawns shaded by large mature trees. Staff finds that, while the blackgum is a large, mature tree that contributes to the overall tree canopy, the removal of one of the two major branches of the tree would leave a minimal canopy remaining, and that the complete removal of the tree would not have a significant impact on the district, per Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and Chapter 24A-8(d). Staff further finds that planting of a new large-species tree will serve as mitigation of the loss and serve to retain the overall historic character of the property, per *Standard 2*.

Staff notes that the property is also subject to a Maryland Historical Trust easement, and has received staff-level approval for the removal provided the following condition is met: “Since the Deed of Easement on the property protects archaeological resources, the remaining stump of the tree may be grinded down to ground level but the roots underground shall be left in place.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with one condition** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and Chapter 24A-8(d), having found that the proposal, as modified by the condition, will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource;

1. The applicant must plant one new large-species tree on the property.

The Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines;

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 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 HPC as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the HPC 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 301-495-2167 or laura.dipasquale@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.

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

Single family home of Victorian construction, built 1888 est. Large back lot with a steep decline towards the back of the property. No other significant construction.

We do have a historic easement on the property - I am working with MHT to determine if this application will impact the easement. I don't believe it should as it will be above-ground work.

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

Removal of large Black Gum tree that is in decline as confirmed by assessment by Takoma Park's Urban Forest Manager and other arborists. Tree is to the right of the house (when facing) on the border with the neighboring property at 7214 Cedar Ave.

Work Item 1: Removal of Black Gum tree in decline

Description of Current Condition:

Black gum currently has large dead branches reaching over the house. It has in the past been pruned and cabled to support its survival but is now in decline.

Proposed Work:

Remove the declining Black Gum located at the right side of house. Leave stump as close to grade as possible. Remove resulting debris. There is unlikely to be any impact on the house or property. A new tree will be planted in the same area per city requirements.

There are no material specifications aside from those used and then removed by the contracted company.

Work Item 2: _____

Description of Current Condition:

Proposed Work:

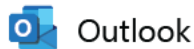
Work Item 3: _____

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	*	*	*	*	*		*



Outlook

Tree Removal Request :: W013468-090425 - Preliminary Approval

From Online Customer Service Center <TakomaParkMD@mycusthelp.com>**Date** Tue 9/9/2025 4:16 PM**To** [REDACTED]

09/09/2025

APPLICATION NUMBER [W013468-090425](#)

Kelly Vaena
7212 Cedar Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Re: Tree Removal Application at:
7212 Cedar Ave
Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Kelly Vaena:

The City of Takoma Park has assessed this tree identified in your Tree Removal Permit Application.
Below are the notes from the assessment:

Tree Type: **BLACK GUM**
Trunk Diameter: **31.9 inches**
Tree Location Relative to House: **FRONT RIGHT**

Tree Condition Rating (1-5):
Crown/Branches: **2**
Root & Root Collar: **3**
Tree Health & Species Profile: **2**
Trunk: **2**
Criterion Total (4-20): **9**

Assessment Notes:

Declining, old blackgum with low to moderate vitality. One of two main stems has died back. No indication of basal rot or root plate failure. Large, old blackgum tree. Removal would create

moderate reduction in canopy cover. Two houses are in close proximity of dead branches.

Hazard of deadwood failure can be mitigated via deadwood pruning. However, due to its current decline spiral, it is possible to put on more deadwood in the next growing seasons. If in the next growing seasons, this tree puts on significantly more deadwood, you may apply for an additional Tree Removal Permit, and the tree likely would be considered dead/hazardous at that time.

Based on this assessment, your application has received **Preliminary Approval**.

You have not yet received a permit to remove this tree.

Preliminary approval means that the City will post your property for a 15 day period beginning 09/09/2025 and ending for public comment. A permit to remove the tree will be granted after the comment period is completed and the City receives the signed agreement to adhere to the City's tree replacement requirement. If public comments are received that request an appeal of the removal, a hearing before the Tree Commission will be scheduled to determine if removal can proceed.

Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP)

Additionally, since your property is located within the Historic District, you are required to receive a HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT (HAWP). To apply for a HAWP, contact Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services by phone 301-563-3400, by email MCP-Historic@mncppc-mc.org or online at:

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/historic-area-work-permits/>

Note that this preliminary permit letter may serve as the Tree Survey required for your HAWP application.

Replacement Planting Requirement

Permits for trees that are not determined to be dead or hazardous come with a replacement planting obligation. The City Code defines a formula to be used in calculating the number of trees required to be planted using the trunk diameter and the Urban Forest Manager's condition assessment of the removed tree. After your 15-day appeal period is completed, you will need to indicate the method with which you would like to fulfill your replacement planting obligation. You have three ways you can do this:

- Agree to plant the required trees
- Pay a fee-in-lieu of planting equaling \$312 per 1.5" trunk caliper tree
- A combination of both tree planting agreement and fee-in-lieu payment

Conditions for Replacement Planting Option

- You must plant the number of 1.5" caliper trees indicated in your preliminary approval notice, or an equivalent basal area of larger trees up to 3" caliper. For this Tree Removal Request, the number of

1.5" trees required is **(1) tree(s)**

- Trees must be planted on a private property within the City of Takoma Park. [See here for a map of the City's boundaries.](#)
- Trees must be of the same size category as the tree that was removed. For your tree, that is the **(MEDIUM)** category.
- Trees must be selected from the Approved Tree Species List, linked here: <https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/public-works/Trees/Takoma-Park-Approved-Tree-Species-List%20-%202023.pdf>
- Documentation of the completed planting must be provided within six months after your permit is issued. Failure to plant the trees within six months is a violation of the law.
- You cannot use a publicly subsidized program, including the City's Tree Takoma program, to plant your required trees. If you would like to use the Tree Takoma program or another public tree planting program, you must opt to pay the fee in lieu to satisfy your requirement.

Conditions for Fee-in-Lieu Payment Option

- Indicate that you would like to pay the fee in lieu instead of planting via the MyTKPK portal and pay the invoice generated by City Staff.
- The fee-in-lieu amount to satisfy your entire replacement planting obligation is \$312 times **(1) tree(s)**, or: **(\$312)**

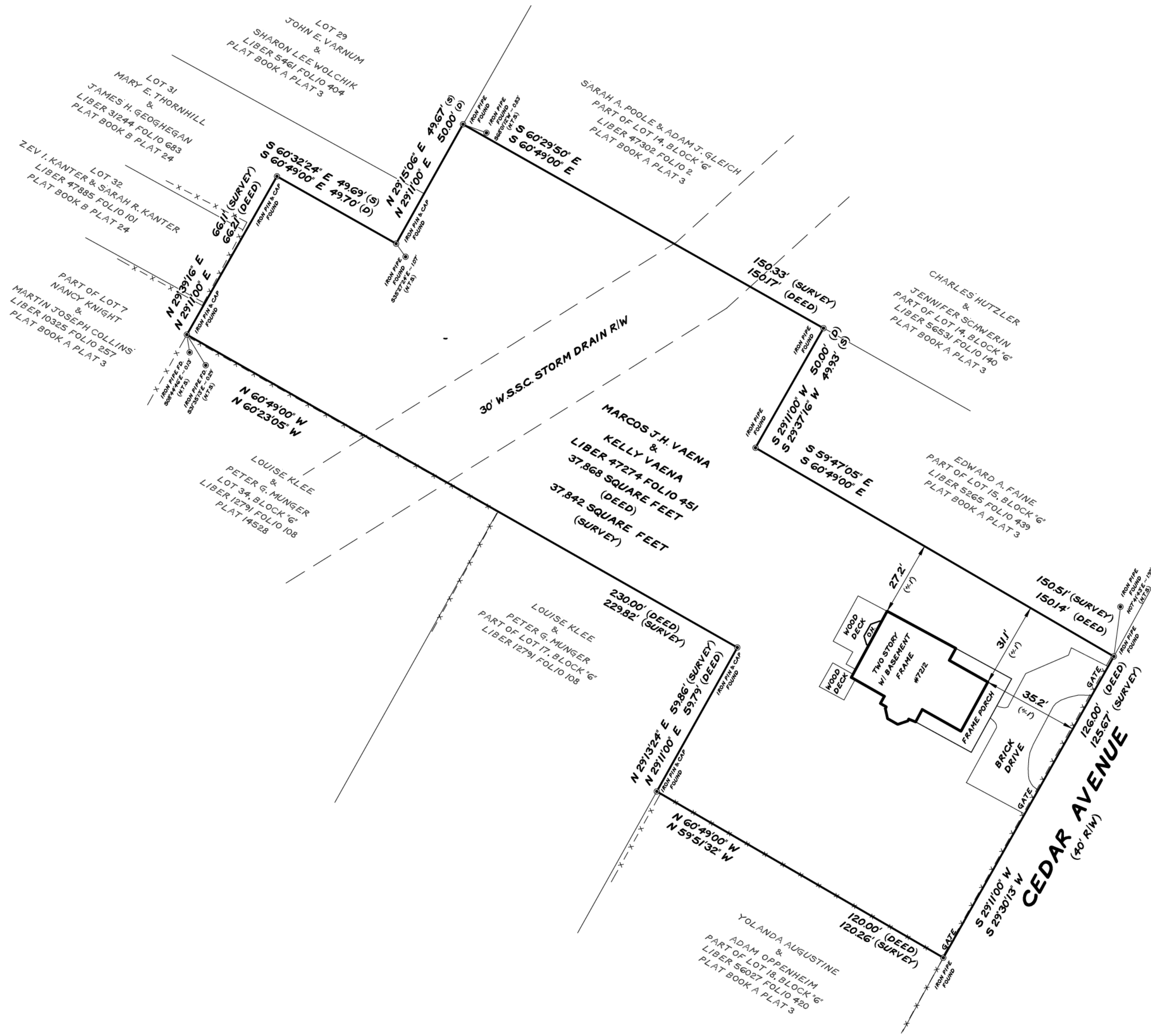
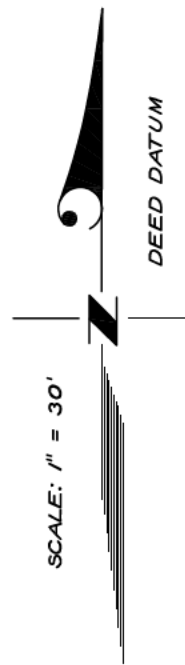
An email notice with further instructions will be sent after your application has passed its 15-day appeal period.

If you have any questions, please contact the Urban Forest Manager by replying to this email.









SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE:
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE PERSONALLY MADE A CAREFUL FIELD-RUN SURVEY OF THE PROPERTY SHOWN HEREON, THAT IS ALL AND THE SAME LAND CONVEYED BY JEANNE FEENEY TO MARCOS J.H. VAENA AND KELLY VAENA BY DEED DATED JUNE 28, 2013 AND RECORDED AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND IN LIBER 47274 FOLIO 45. THIS PLAT WAS PREPARED WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A TITLE REPORT AND IS SUBJECT TO ALL EXISTING CONVEYANCES, EASEMENTS, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY OF RECORD OR OTHERWISE, THAT PERMANENT IRON MARKERS ARE IN PLACE AS INDICATED. THIS SURVEY IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE 9, SUBTITLE 13, CHAPTER 6, SECTION 12 OF THE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF PRACTICE. MY CURRENT LICENSE EXPIRES NOVEMBER 20, 2020.

STEPHEN L. WILSON
DRASTIC MEASURES, INC.
6503 STEUBEN COURT
CLINTON, MARYLAND 20735
OFFICE: 301-856-3152
FAX: 301-856-8569



BOUNDARY SURVEY
LAND OF
MARCOS J.H. VAENA & KELLY VAENA
THIRTEENTH ELECTION DISTRICT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SCALE: 1" = 30' NOVEMBER 2018

From: Online Customer Service Center TakomaParkMD@mycusthelp.com
Subject: Tree Removal Request :: W013468-090425
Date: Oct 7, 2025 at 2:38:03 PM
To: [REDACTED]



10/07/2025 PERMIT
NUMBER [W013468-090425](#)

Kelly Vaena
7212 Cedar Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Re: Tree Removal Application at:
7212 Cedar Ave
Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Kelly Vaena:

Permit Number: W013468-090425

This is your permit to remove the following tree from your property.

Tree Type: **BLACK GUM**

Trunk Diameter: **31.9 inches**

Tree Location Relative to House: **FRONT RIGHT**

Replacement Planting Requirement

You have opted to fulfill your replacement planting requirement all or in part by planting replacement trees. You will have six months after receiving your permit to conduct the planting. See below for the replacement planting plan you have provided and committed to in order to account for the requirement associated with this Tree

Removal Permit. If you have received permits for multiple tree removals, additional replacement plantings may be required for your other permits.

Your Replacement Planting Plan

Number of Replacement Trees:	1
Species of Replacement Trees:	Black Gum
Caliper/Trunk Diameter of Replacement Trees:	1.5
Address Where Replacement Trees Will be Planted:	7212 Cedar Ave
Locations on Property for Replacement Trees:	The current plan is to plant the replacement in the same area where the current tree will be removed. (Right of the house as facing the house.)

How to Provide Documentation Verifying Completion of Planting

Once your replacement planting is complete, you must provide proof of the planting by doing the following:

1. Reply to this email and include the following:
 - o Attach a photo that clearly shows the location of each planted tree.

- Attach a photo, copy, or scan of your receipt or paid invoice documenting that you have purchased the tree(s).
- 2. Log in to MyTKPK, find this request ([W013468-090425](#)), indicate "YES" for "Replacement Planting Documentation Submitted" and provide a written description of any changes from your original replacement planting plan, which must still comply with the conditions listed in your preliminary approval notice, and click save. This will prompt the Urban Forest Manager to review your documents and verify that the replacement planting has been satisfactorily completed.
- 3. If you have applied for multiple tree removals that require replacement plantings, please reply to each permit email and update each MyTKPK record documenting just the replacement trees that apply to that individual Tree Removal Permit.

TREE WORK DONE FOR HIRE IN THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK MUST BE CARRIED OUT BY A MARYLAND STATE LICENSED TREE EXPERT, OR LTE. HIRING SOMEONE WHO IS NOT LICENSED IS A VIOLATION OF CITY AND STATE LAW. MAKE SURE YOUR CONTRACTOR HAS A LTE NUMBER BEFORE YOU HIRE THEM.

If you have any questions, please contact the Urban Forest Manager by replying to this email.

To monitor the progress or update this request please log into the [\[MY TKPK\]](#)



Chapingo Tree Care Specialists

3558 Worthington Blvd #201 Frederick MD 21704

(301) 646-2516 Fax: (240) 575-9943 www.chapingotreecare.com



October 13, 2025.

To Whom It May Concern:

Following a visual ground inspection conducted on September 4th, 2025, of the large Black Gum tree (*Nyssa sylvatica*) with a 33-inch DBH, located in the front-right area of the property at 7212 Cedar Ave, Takoma Park, MD 20912, the following observations were made:

The tree's main structure begins with a single stem, which shows no significant structural defects or physical damage. This stem divides into two secondary stems, one of which has declined in health beyond the point of recovery but continues to provide stability to the tree canopy due to the existing tree cabling system, which remains in place. The healthier stem, which displays more foliage, leans toward the neighboring house and could present a significant risk of failure if the declining stem and cabling system are removed. Therefore, the removal of the entire tree is considered the safest and most appropriate measure to protect both properties within the reach of the tree in the event of failure.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Black Gum tree be removed promptly, and that all resulting debris be hauled away from the property. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information regarding this tree.



Sincerely,

SO

Salvador Orellana

Chapingo Tree Care Specialists

ISA Certified Arborist MA-6465A

Fwd: Takoma Park HAWP for Tree Removal

From [REDACTED]
Date Mon 10/27/2025 12:14 PM
To HAWP <HAWP@montgomeryplanning.org>; DiPasquale, Laura <Laura.DiPasquale@montgomeryplanning.org>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,
Could the below email please be added to the files for 7212 Cedar Avenue, Takoma Park - HAWP 1135654?
Best, Kelly

Begin forwarded message:

From: MHT Easements -MDP- <mht.easements@maryland.gov>
Date: October 22, 2025 at 6:32:33 AM GMT+2
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Takoma Park HAWP for Tree Removal

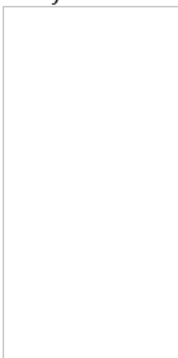
Good evening Kelly,

Thank you for the additional requested information and I sincerely apologize for the delay. Please accept this email as staff approval to remove the dying black gum tree on your property at 7212 Cedar Ave in Tacoma Park, provided the following condition is met:

- Since the Deed of Easement on the property protects archeological resources, the remaining stump of the tree may be grinded down to ground level but the roots underground shall be left in place.

Should you have any questions regarding this approval, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,
Carolyn



Easement Program

Maryland Historical Trust / Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032
V 410.697.9545
E mht.easements@maryland.gov
W mht.maryland.gov

[MD TWO FIFTY: Maryland's Story is America's Story](#)

*Please note that hard copy submissions to the easement program are no longer required unless specifically requested by staff.

On Fri, Oct 10, 2025 at 10:52 AM [REDACTED] wrote:

Thank you very much. Here are some photos and information submitted with the tree application/HAWP.

Best,
Kelly

From: MHT Easements -MDP- <mht.easements@maryland.gov>

Sent: Thursday, October 9, 2025 7:46 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Takoma Park HAWP for Tree Removal

Good afternoon Kelly,

Thank you for your email. Typically we do not have an issue with the removal of dead or dying trees but do need to review the request. At your convenience, could you please send a photograph of the tree you are wishing to have removed and a second photograph or a map (such as Google maps with the tree circled) showing the location of the tree? I am not going to request that an application be filled out in this instance so we can quickly get this reviewed for you.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Carolyn Nosacek
Easement Administrator



Easement Program

Maryland Historical Trust / Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032
V 410.697.9545
E mht.easements@maryland.gov
W mht.maryland.gov

[MD TWO FIFTY: Maryland's Story is America's Story.](#)

*Please note that hard copy submissions to the easement program are no longer required unless specifically requested by staff.

On Mon, Oct 6, 2025 at 2:37 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Hello,

We have an easement on our property at 7212 Cedar Ave, Takoma Park MD. I am trying to secure permitting to remove a large Black Gum tree that is in decline. It has been assessed by the Takoma Park Urban Forest Manager, and we have preliminary approval for removal. We are also required to have a Historic Area Work Permit from Takoma Park, which references permission needed from easement holders. Please let me know if a change/alteration request is needed for this purpose. I am trying to secure permits for removal as soon as possible as the tree has several dead limbs that are a threat to the (historic) house.

The Takoma Park Historic Area Work Permit form with easement language can be found here:

[HAWP-Application-Fillable-7-29-2022.pdf](#)

Thanks in advance,
Kelly Vaena