

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	17017 Georgia Avenue, Olney	Meeting Date:	10/8/2025
Resource:	Master Plan Site #23/104 (<i>Berry-Mackall House</i>)	Report Date:	10/1/2025
Applicant:	Juan Arias, Inglesia Evangelica Cristo Promesa Inc. (Husam Albattrawi, Architect)	Public Notice:	9/24/2025
Review:	RETROACTIVE HAWP	Tax Credit:	No
Permit No.:	1131131	Staff:	Laura DiPasquale
Proposal:	Tree removal and replanting		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. The replacement trees must be planted at least 15 feet from any historic structure.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

SIGNIFICANCE: Master Plan Site #23/104, *Berry-Mackall House*
 STYLE: Vernacular Farmhouse
 DATE: 1853-57; 1868-75

Excerpt from *Places from the Past*:

The Berry-Mackall House, originally built between 1852 and 1857, is a well-recognized, pre-Civil War landmark along the Washington-Brookeville Turnpike (now Georgia Avenue). The dwelling was built by Elisha Berry, whose ancestors were among the early settlers of Montgomery County. In 1868, the property was acquired by Robert McGill Mackall, a member of Mosby's Raiders during the Civil War, who significantly improved the property by adding the two-story frame building to the front of the original structure, and by constructing the still-extant carriage house on the site. The Berry-Mackall House is a good illustration of the evolution of the rural domestic building in Montgomery County. The house was built in three distinct phases. In the 1850s, Elisha Berry built a modest, two-story frame structure. By 1875, Mackall added a new, side-passage house on front of the original house, and, during the first quarter of the 20th century, a two-story rear wing with a shed roof was further appended to the dwelling, giving the house its three-part appearance. The farmstead features a Gothic Revival carriage house, built 1859-1868, (currently a secondary residence), a smokehouse from the original period of construction, and a 20th-century barn.

The property was designated as a Master Plan site as part of the *Approved and Adopted Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Olney-Sandy Spring-Goshen* areas in 2002.

PROPOSAL:

The applicants seek retroactive approval for tree removal, and propose to plant three new shade trees on the site.

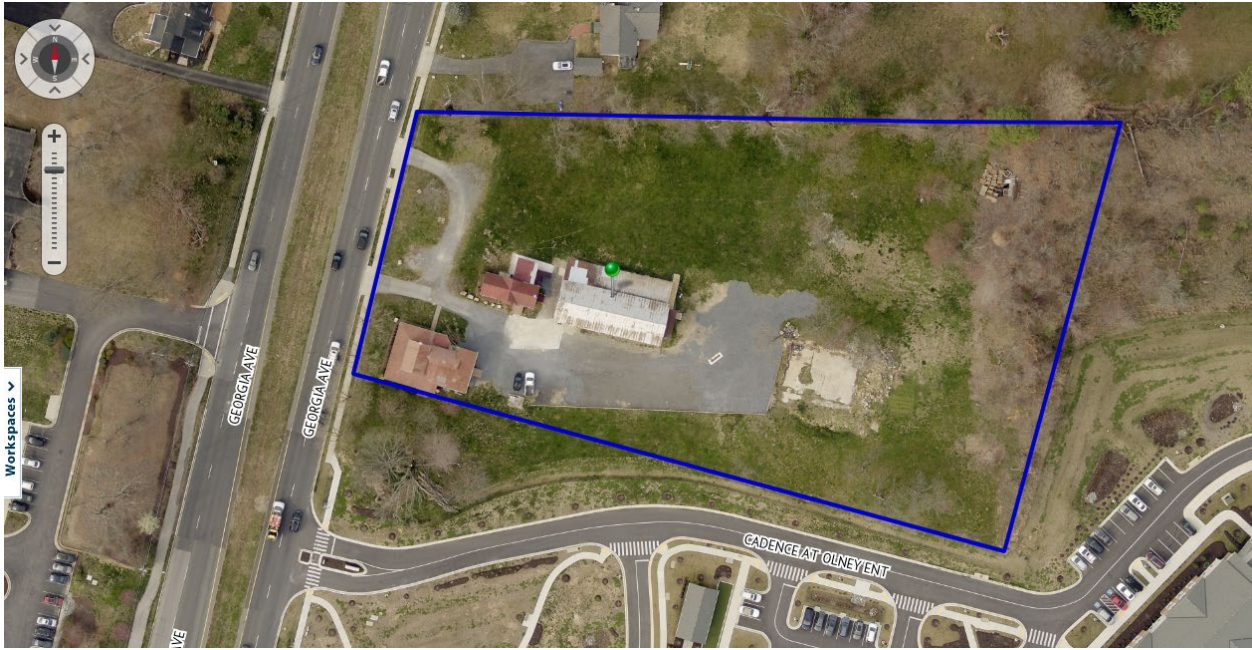


Figure 1: Aerial view of the Berry-Mackall House property at 17017 Georgia Avenue, March 2025, with the property boundary in blue (ConnectExplorer).



Figure 2: Aerial view of the subject property, April 2015 (ConnectExplorer), prior to current ownership.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

When reviewing alterations and new construction at Master Plan Sites several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include *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.

Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24A-8:

- (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; or

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.

STAFF DISCUSSION:***Background***

In November 2024, staff conducted an initial site visit to the subject property regarding a proposed addition. At that time, staff noticed that many elements of the property appeared new or recently-installed. Upon reviewing the HPC's files, aerial and Google Streetview imagery of the property, staff concluded that numerous alterations had been made to the property in recent years without the requisite Historic Area Work Permits or building permits. At the request of staff, the Department of Permitting Services issued five citations to the property on April 23, 2025. Historic Preservation staff met with the applicants on May 19, 2025 to discuss the work items and to assist them in bringing the property into compliance with the requirements of *Chapter 24A*. On September 2, 2025, the applicants applied for five Historic Area Work Permits seeking retroactive approval of the work items.

HAWP application 1131131

This application addresses tree removal on the site since 2015. The applicants have noted that some of the trees identified by staff as having been removed in that time period were removed by PEPCO and not the owners, who have acknowledged the removal of three trees and propose to replant three shade trees on the site. Staff finds that the Berry-Mackall farm complex was not historically a planned landscape, and that the specific location of trees on the site is not significant to the site, but that the presence of mature shade trees in proximity to the house and outbuildings contributed to the overall feeling and sense of place of the site. Given the extensive new construction on the property to the south—which is outside of the boundary of the Berry-Mackall Master Plan site and environmental setting—staff would encourage

planting of one to two large species shade trees near the southern property line behind the historic house but at least 15 feet from the rear of the historic structure, and that the planting of trees on the property is compatible with the character and nature of the resource. Staff finds the proposal is compatible per Chapter 24A-8(b)(2) and would replace features that contributed to the character of the site that were removed, per *Standard 2*. Staff also notes that the applicants have recently planted two trees along the north side of the main house.



Figure 3: Streetscape view of 17017 Georgia Avenue in October 2015 (Google Streetview).



Figure 4: Streetscape view of 17017 Georgia Avenue in July 2024 (Google Streetview) showing the tree removal that has occurred on the site.



Figure 5: Photograph of the north elevation of the house with recently-planted trees (September 2025, Historic Preservation Office).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

1. The replacement trees must be planted at least 15 feet from any historic structure.

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-(b) (2), having found that the proposal is compatible in character with the purposes of Chapter 24A;

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 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 301-495-2167 or laura.dipasquale@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.



FOR STAFF ONLY:
HAWP# 1131131
DATE ASSIGNED _____

**APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT**
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301.563.3400

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: 17017 Street: Georgia Avenue

Town/City: Olney 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

☐ Deck/Porch

☐ Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure

☐ Addition

☐ Fence

☐ Solar

☐ Demolition

☐ Hardscape/Landscape

☐ Tree removal/planting

☐ Grading/Excavation

☐ Roof

☐ 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.

husam albatrawi

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	*	*	*	*	*		*



Replant
shade tree