

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	8 E. Melrose Street	Meeting Date:	11/12/2025
Resource:	Non-Contributing Resource Chevy Chase Village Historic District	Report Date:	11/5/2025
Applicant:	Christopher O'Kane (Adele O'Dowd, Agent)	Public Notice:	10/29/2025
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	N/A
Permit Number:	1137024	Staff:	Devon Murtha
Proposal:	Fence replacement, grading, and hardscape alterations		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve** the HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Non-Contributing Resource within the Chevy Chase Village Historic District
STYLE: Modern
DATE: 1892-1916



Figure 1: The subject property is located along East Melrose Street in the Chevy Chase Village Historic District.

PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to:

- replace and relocate an existing wood gate with a new, 6' wide gate,
- replace the existing fence in-kind,
- regrade backyard to improve drainage, and
- install a cobblestone patio in the rear of the house.

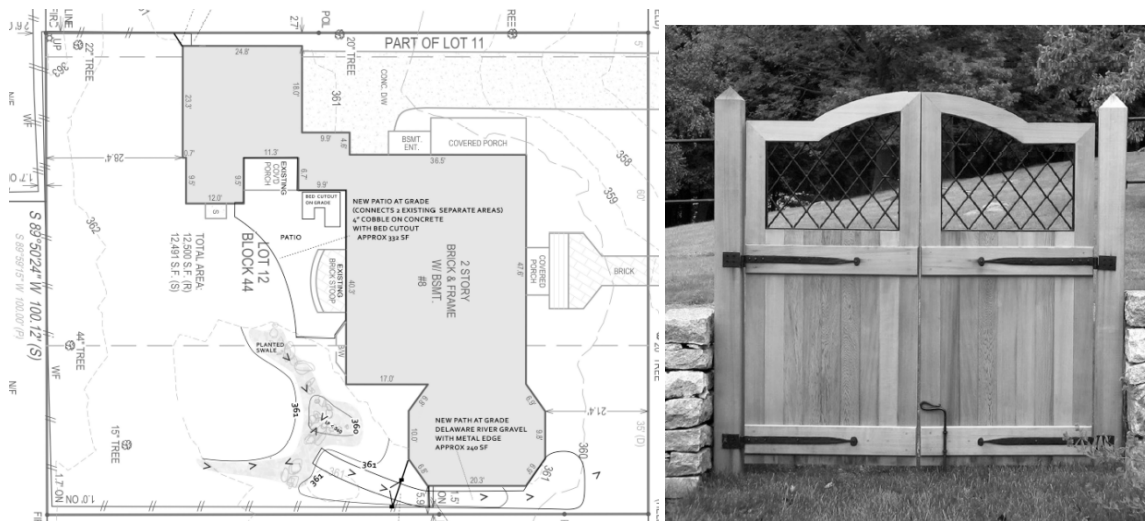


Figure 2: Proposed plan for new rear patio (left) and style of new gate (right).

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 HPC in developing their decision. These documents include *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)*, the historic preservation review guidelines in the approved and adopted amendment for the *Chevy Chase Village Historic District (Guidelines)*, 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 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
- (c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.

- (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.)

Chevy Chase Village Historic District Guidelines

The *Guidelines* state that the following five basic policies should be adhered to:

1. Preserving the integrity of the proposed 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.
2. Preserving the integrity of the contributing structures in the district. Alterations to contributing structures should be designed in such a way that the altered structure still contributes to the district.
3. Maintaining the variety of architectural styles and the tradition of architectural excellence.
4. 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.
5. Alterations to the portion of a property that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be subject to very lenient review. Most changes to rear of the properties should be approved as a matter of course.

The *Guidelines* that pertain to this project are as follows:

Non-contributing/out-of-period resources are either buildings that are of little or no architectural and historical significance to the historic district or newer buildings constructed outside the district's primary period of historical importance. HAWP applications for exterior alterations, changes, and/or additions to these types of 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 the structure which affect the surrounding streetscape and/or landscape and could impair the character of the historic district as a whole.

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.
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.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Staff supports the proposal and recommends approval. The subject property is a Non-Contributing Resource within the Chevy Chase Village Historic District. The original survey forms for Chevy Chase Village state the house was originally a Craftsmen that was substantially remodeled prior to designation. Based on historic maps and aerials, it appears the overall footprint has been altered (*Figure 3*).

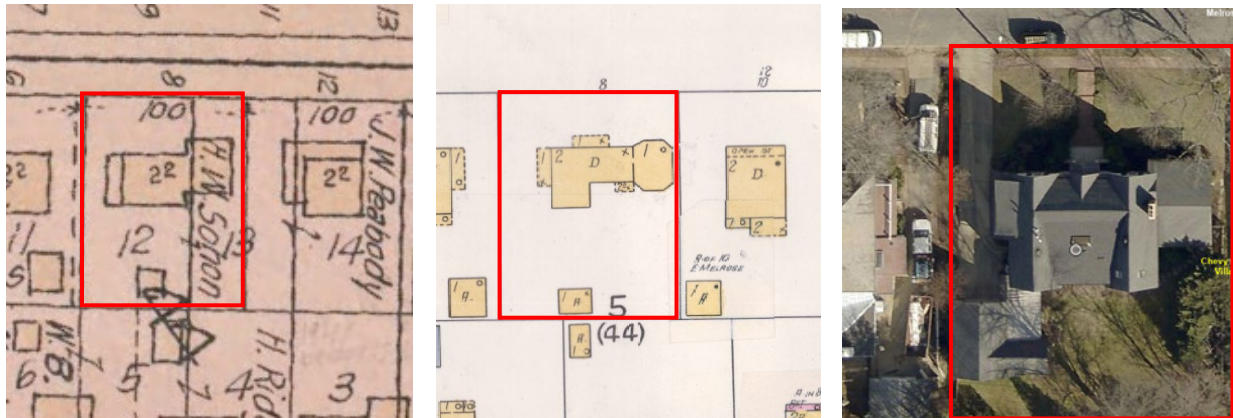


Figure 3: Subject property as depicted in the 1931 Klinge map (left); 1963 Sanborn map (middle) and current aerial (right).

Per the *Guidelines*, most alterations and additions to Non-contributing/out-of-period resources should be approved as a matter of course, except major additions and alterations to the scale and massing of the structure. Staff finds that the proposed regrading, fence replacement, and patio installation will not affect the overall scale and massing of the structure. Additionally, the regrading and patio installation are not at all visible from the right-of-way and will have no impact on the district. The proposed gate is wood, and generally in keeping with the character of the resource and the district and will also have no impact on the streetscape.



Figure 4: View of the subject property from the right-of-way along Melrose Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2), and (d), having found that the proposal, as modified by the conditions, is consistent with the *Chevy Chase Village Historic District Guidelines* identified above, and therefore 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*,

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 HPC staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact Dan Bruechert at 301-495-1328 or devon.murtha@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, colonial revival with existing garage at NW rear corner.

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

Replace and relocate east backyard gate with cottage style wood gate with metal lattice windows
Install new utility gate on west side matching existing fence.
Regrade backyard for improved drainage, adding planted swale.
Connect two existing patio spaces to become one on grade. Material: cobblestone and granite.
New Delaware gravel path on grade at east side of house.

SEE ATTACHED SITE PLAN

materials

photographs

tree survey

Work Item 1: East Gate

Description of Current Condition:

Deteriorating drooping wood gate with non-functioning latch.

Proposed Work:

Replace, slightly relocate and widen to 6 ft. New gate to match example with double cottage style wood gate with metal lattice windows. New fence section to attach to house.

Work Item 2: West Gate

Description of Current Condition:

Fence.

Proposed Work:

Plain and to match fence exactly. Approx 2 ft wide. Attach to existing fence.

Work Item 3: Regrade backyard

Description of Current Condition:

Existing lawn with pooling water graded towards existing deteriorating backyard gate with poor drainage. Low point at the closest junction to neighbor.

Proposed Work:

Regrade backyard for improved drainage, adding planted swale. Lowpoint to be located well inside back yard.

Work item 4: **connect 2 existing Patio to be 1**

current condition: two unuseful small brick patio spaces that do not match character of the house

proposed work: Connect two patio spaces by creating one useful cobblestone patio on grade with corner garden bed cutout on grade

Work item 5: New Delaware River Pea Gravel Path east side

current condition: Narrow entry with no grass or plantings that floods with stormwater. Narrow grass strip to front, existing bed takes up too much space.

proposed work: greatly reduce size of existing side yard planting bed (currently 3.5'), remove shrubs. install Delaware River Pea Gravel path with metal edging closer to house, and with drainage pipe from new backyard planted swale below grade to prevent flooding on grade

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	*	*	*	*	*		*



EXISTING CONDITIONS WITH EXISTING FENCE AND GATE



NEW GATE STYLE

8 EAST MELROSE SITE PLAN
PLANS
MATERIALS
PHOTOGRAPHS
TREE SURVEY

R LEGAL DESCRIPTION
/ALID WITHOUT ALL PAGES

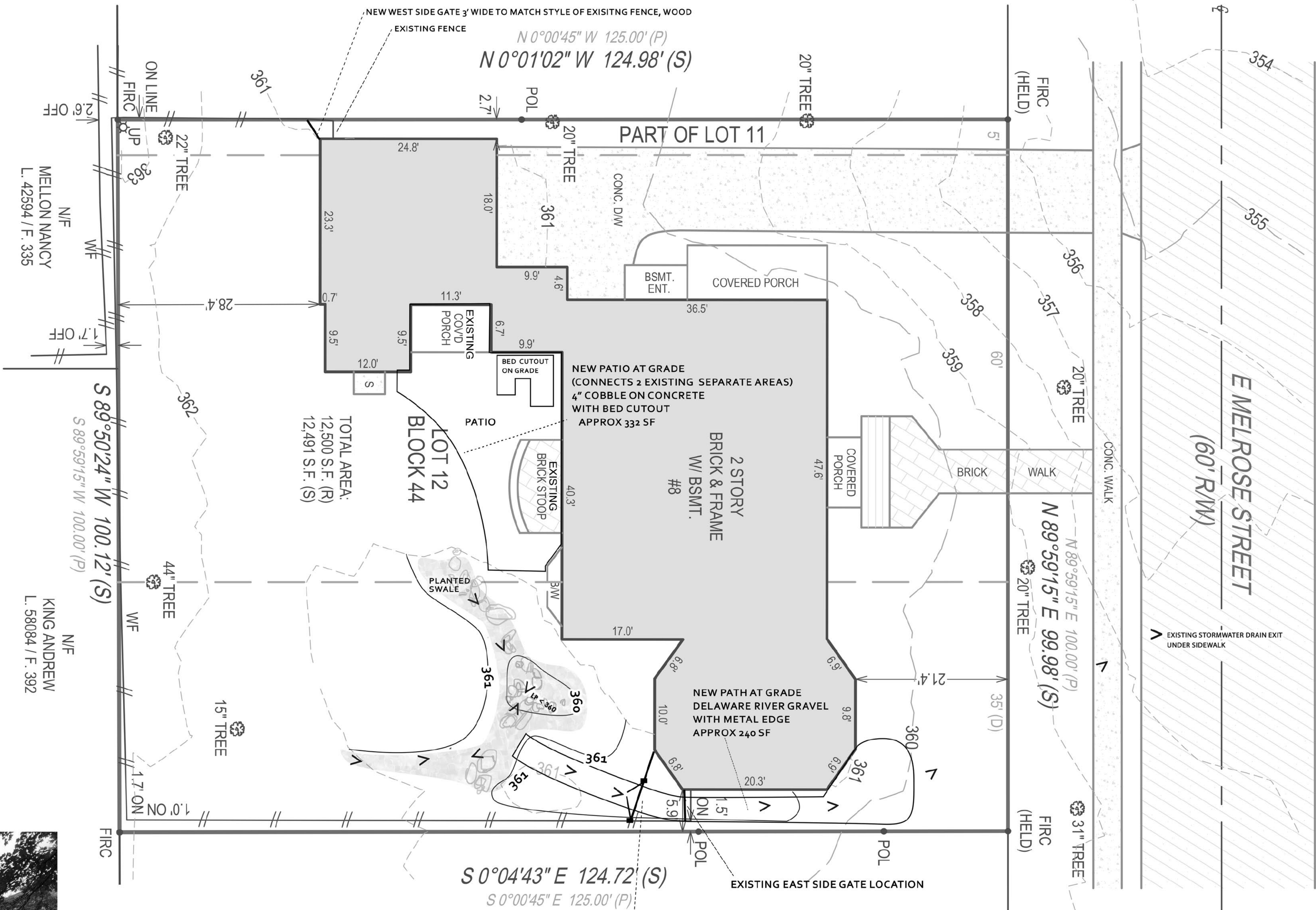
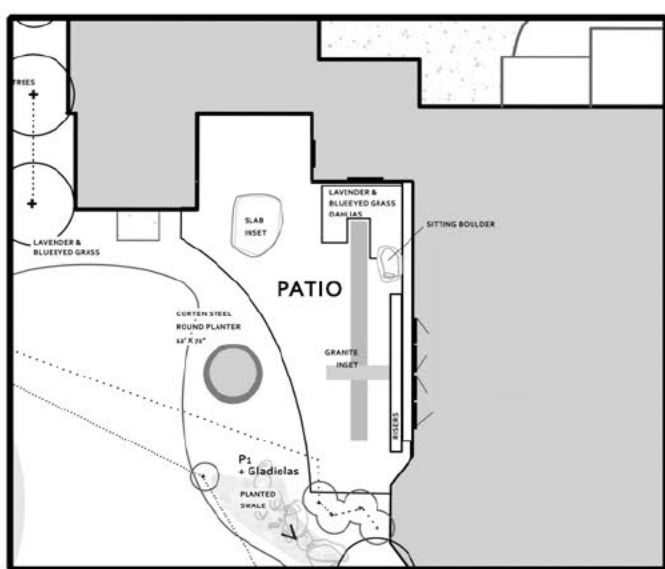
SHOWN HEREON IS IDENTIFIED
66 AMONG THE ASSESSMENT
OMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND



GRANITE STEPS & INSET
EXAMPLE IMAGE BUT WITH COBBLE
INSTEAD OF BRICK



PATIO
COBBLESTONE FAN PATTERN
ALIGNED TO EMANATE FROM
CENTER OF EX FRENCH DOORS
SET ON GRADE IN CONCRETE
WITH SINGLE COBBLE BORDER
GRANITE & IRREG SLAB INSETS
SITTING BOULDER
GRANITE STEPS
BED CUTOUT



Pruning by Design
4702 DeRussey Parkway
Chevy Chase MD 20815

Adele Medina O'Dowd, principal
Annika Haksar, principal
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O'KANE & DE GUZMAN RESIDENCE
8 EAST MELROSE ST CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815



SITE PLAN

1" = 8' / 1"

Date SIGN OFF

06/16/2025
10/08/2025
10/22/2025



**Municipality Letter for
Proposed Construction Project**

Subject Property: 8 East Melrose, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
Property Owner: Christopher O'Kane
Project Manager/Contractor: Adele O'dowd/Pruning By Design
Proposed Work: Enlarged patio, gravel walkway, gates, native plantings

10/21/2025

Rabbiah Sabbakhan, Director
Department of Permitting Services of Montgomery County
255 Rockville Pike, 2nd floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Sabbakhan,

This letter is to inform your department that the above homeowner/contractor has notified Chevy Chase Village that he or she plans to apply for both county and municipal permits for the above summarized construction project. Chevy Chase Village will not issue any municipal building permit(s) for this proposed project until Montgomery County has issued all necessary county permits and the applicant has provided Chevy Chase Village with copies of county-approved and stamped plans. We have advised the homeowner/contractor that a permit from Montgomery County does not guarantee a permit from this municipality unless the project complies with all our municipal rules and regulations.

If this homeowner/contractor later applies for an amended county permit, please do not approve that application until you have received a Municipality Letter from us indicating that the homeowner/contractor has notified us of that proposed amendment to the permit.

If you have any questions about this proposed project and the municipal regulation of it by Chevy Chase Village, do not hesitate to have your staff contact my office. The Village Permitting Coordinator can be reached by phone at 301-654-7300 or by e-mail at ccvpermitting@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

Shana R. Davis-Cook
Chevy Chase Village Manager

CHEVY CHASE VILLAGE

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