

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7107 Sycamore Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	1/7/2026
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	12/31/2025
Applicant:	Sharon Bakewell	Public Notice:	12/24/2025
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	No
Permit Number:	1143212	Staff:	Devon Murtha
PROPOSAL:	Tree Removal		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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



Figure 1: The subject property at 7107 Sycamore Avenue in the Takoma Park Historic District is indicated with a star. The red cross hatch is the district

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE:	Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE:	Bungalow
DATE:	c. 1910s

The subject property is a Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District. It is a one-and-a-half story bungalow with a partial-width front porch. It is sited on a narrow 0.25 acre lot that fronts Sycamore Avenue to the west.



Figure 2: View of subject property from Sycamore Avenue.

PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to remove a 25” D.B.H. Pin Oak from the front yard.



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: **PIN OAK**
Trunk Diameter: **25 inches**
Tree Location Relative to House: **RIGHT SIDE**

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

Assessment Notes:

Moderate vitality specimen with ~10% necrotic canopy. Deadwood ranges to 3-4" diameter: One broken hanging limb is caught in center canopy. Two poorly sealed topping cuts on lowest scaffold branches. Mild tip dieback. Vast majority of twig biomass alive. Most significant concerns are with the indicators of basal decay / basal swell. Inverted root flare with shallow decay for approximately 10% of the flares circumference. Large canopy specimen between homes; significant ecosystem service. Significant reduction in canopy cover if removed. Located within 10' of home and adjacent homr within 1x height of tree.

Figure 3: Photo of the tree proposed for removal (left) and the Takoma Park arborist's report (right). The tree to be removed is notated with a yellow arrow.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

The Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission (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 *Montgomery County Code, 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 three documents is outlined below.

Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient review than those structures that have been classified as Outstanding. This design review should emphasize the importance of the resource to the overall streetscape and its compatibility with existing patterns rather than focusing on a close scrutiny of architectural detailing. In general, however, changes to Contributing Resources should respect the predominant architectural style of the resource. As stated above, 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.

Relevant factors to be considered in reviewing HAWPs on Contributing Resources include:

- All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A-8

The following guidance that 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 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.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Staff is supportive of the proposal to remove the Pin Oak in the front yard.

Takoma Park’s robust tree canopy is one of the character-defining features of the District. In 1886, real estate promoter Benjamin Franklin Gilbert advertised the community’s fresh air and wooded landscape. Later pamphlets billed the new development as the “sylvan suburb of the National Capital,” highlighting the ample tree coverage that offered shade and fresh air. The importance of these mature trees is further outlined in the *Guidelines*, which states that these trees contribute to the character of the district and are an essential part of maintaining the patterns of open space/landscaping.

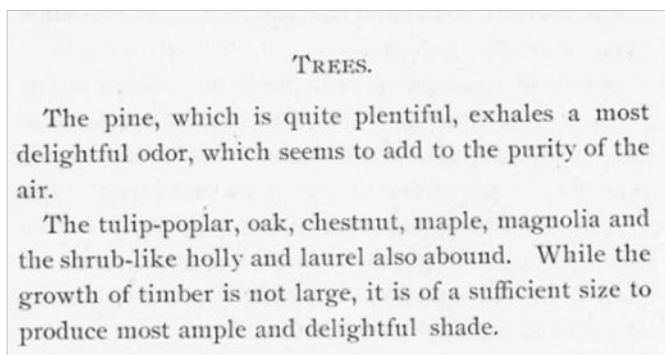
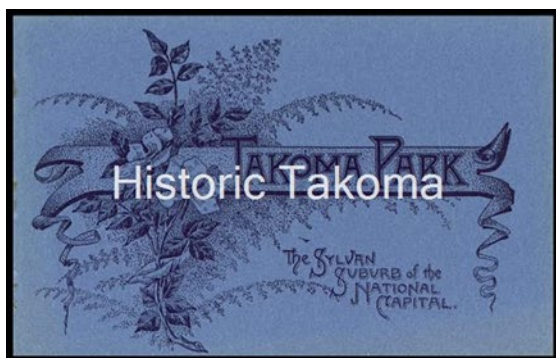


Figure 4: 1901 Pamphlet published by the Takoma Park Citizens Association (left) and text from 1886 Takoma Park Advertising Brochure published by B.F. Gilbert (right). Both images courtesy of Historic Takoma.

The *Guidelines* dictate the HPC should review all changes and additions to Contributing resources with respect to their impact on the environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space. Given the importance of the canopy to Takoma Park’s historic character, Staff finds that the removal of the large tree will have an impact on the streetscape and the district. The Pin Oak contributes to the environmental setting and is clearly visible from the right-of-way along Sycamore Avenue. Moreover, the Takoma Park arborist report states that the removal of this tree will result in a “significant reduction in canopy cover.”

Although the tree contributes to the canopy and overall character of the district, Staff finds that in this case, tree removal is appropriate. The Takoma Park arborist stated that although the tree is moderately healthy and does not present an immediate hazard, there are numerous issues present such as deadwood and evidence of basal decay/swelling. The tree is also located within three feet of the house and is constrained by the adjacent hardscaping (*Figure 5*). During a conversation with Staff, the homeowner stated that the issues with a canopy can be better seen in the summertime, and that they have noticed a notable loss of foliage in the past four years. Staff finds that the proximity of the tree to the house and the declining health of the tree constitute a reasonable concern.



Figure 5: Pin oak proposed for removal.

Staff supports the removal of the tree but remains concerned with the steady loss of canopy in the district. Many of Takoma Park’s trees have been lost to a combination of old age and extreme weather stress, and the cumulative impact of tree removal has a negative impact on the character of the district.¹ According to the most recent published Tree Canopy Assessment, Takoma Park lost nearly 45 acres of canopy coverage between 2009 and 2020, much of which was within the boundaries of the historic district (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Takoma Park ward map with historic district boundaries are annotated in red (left) and Takoma Park Tree Canopy Assessment 2009-2020 (right).

¹ For more information on tree loss in the district, see <https://takomaparkmd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5611/2023-Annual-Urban-Forest-Report-PDF?bidId=> and <https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/public-works/Trees/Takoma-Park-Tree-Canopy-Assessment-2009-2020%20Final.pdf>.

In cases in which the tree is neither hazardous nor dead, but poses a legitimate concern for the homeowner, the HPC has often required the applicant to replant a tree on the property. Although there is no substitute for the retention of a mature tree, an on-site replanting requirement supports the overall canopy and environmental setting of the district for future generations. In this case, the applicant has elected to plant a large, native tree on an adjacent property at 7013 Sycamore. Staff notes that this tree cannot satisfy a replanting condition for this HAWP, as the neighboring property is not listed as an applicant. However, the applicant also recently planted an American Beech tree, which is a large-species native tree, in the front yard of their property on their own accord. Staff finds that the recently-planted American Beech tree does satisfy the replanting requirement. Staff is satisfied that the applicant has made every effort to maintain canopy of their own property and on the street.



Figure 7: View of Beech tree (left) and front yard with additional mature trees to be retained (right).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2), and Chapter 24A-8(d) and the *Takoma Park Historic District* having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and 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 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 301-495-1328 or devon.murtha@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

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	*	*	*	*	*		*



Sharon Bakewell <spomranky@gmail.com>

Tree Removal Request :: W013692-111325 - Preliminary Approval

Online Customer Service Center <TakomaParkMD@mycusthelp.com>

Tue, Nov 18, 2025 at 12:22
PM

To: "spomranky@gmail.com" <spomranky@gmail.com>

11/18/2025

APPLICATION NUMBER [W013692-111325](#)

Sharon Bakewell
[7107 Sycamore Ave](#)
[Takoma Park, MD 20912](#)

Re: Tree Removal Application at:
[7107 Sycamore Ave](#)
Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Sharon Bakewell:

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: **PIN OAK**
Trunk Diameter: **25 inches**
Tree Location Relative to House: **RIGHT SIDE**

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

Assessment Notes:

Moderate vitality specimen with ~10% necrotic canopy. Deadwood ranges to 3-4" diameter. One broken hanging limb is caught in center canopy. Two poorly sealed topping cuts on lowest scaffold branches. Mild tip dieback. Vast majority of twig biomass alive. Most significant concerns are with the indicators of basal decay / basal swell. Inverted root flare with shallow decay for approximately 10% of the flares circumference. Large canopy specimen between homes; significant ecosystem service. Significant reduction in canopy cover if removed. Located within 10' of home and adjacent homr within 1x height of tree.

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 11/18/2025 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 **(LARGE)** category.
- Trees must be selected from the Approved Tree Species List, linked here: [Takoma Park Approved Tree Species List](#)
- 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.



Sharon Bakewell <spomranky@gmail.com>

Tree Removal Request :: W013692-111325

Online Customer Service Center <TakomaParkMD@mycusthelp.com>
To: "spomranky@gmail.com" <spomranky@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 9, 2025 at 7:20 AM



12/09/2025

PERMIT NUMBER W013692-111325

Sharon Bakewell
7107 Sycamore Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Re: Tree Removal Application at:
7107 Sycamore Ave
Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Sharon Bakewell:

Permit Number: W013692-111325

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

Tree Type: **PIN OAK**
Trunk Diameter: **25 inches**
Tree Location Relative to House: **RIGHT SIDE**

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:	Eastern White Pine
Caliper/Trunk Diameter of Replacement Trees:	1.5
Address Where Replacement Trees Will be Planted:	7103 Sycamore Ave

<i>Locations on Property for Replacement Trees:</i>	Open area at back of property
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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:
 - 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 ([W013692-111325](#)), 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 [\[MY TKPK\]](#)



TAKOMA TREE EXPERTS, LLC.
2310 COOL SPRING RD · ADELPHI MD 20783
(301) 681-5800 · (202) 387-8733 e-mail: NetBid@Takomatree.com



TREE ASSESSMENT AND REMOVAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Date of Assessment: November 11, 2025

Property Address: 7107 Sycamore Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

Prepared For: Sharon Bakewell

Prepared By:

Bill Marvil

MD Licensed Tree Expert #573

ISA Certified Arborist

EHAP Certified

Tree Assessment and Recommendation

Tree Location: Front right of house, adjacent to driveway

Species: Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*)

DBH: 23.5 inches (measured at DBH)

Condition: Declining

Total Risk Rating: 7.5/10

Live Crown Percent: 35%

Assessment Summary:

This mature black oak exhibits advanced structural decline and physiological stress. The canopy shows extensive dieback, with multiple large limbs devoid of foliage during the growing season. No fungal fruiting bodies were observed at the time of inspection, but the tree's overall vitality is diminished. The root zone is constrained by adjacent hardscape, and the tree is located close to targets and within striking distance of the driveway and residential structure.

Hazard Evaluation:

Moderate to high likelihood of limb failure

Moderate likelihood of whole-tree failure

High potential for impact to people, vehicles, and property if any portion of the tree fails

Recommendation:

Removal is recommended. The tree qualifies for removal due to its poor condition and hazard potential.

Bill Marvil

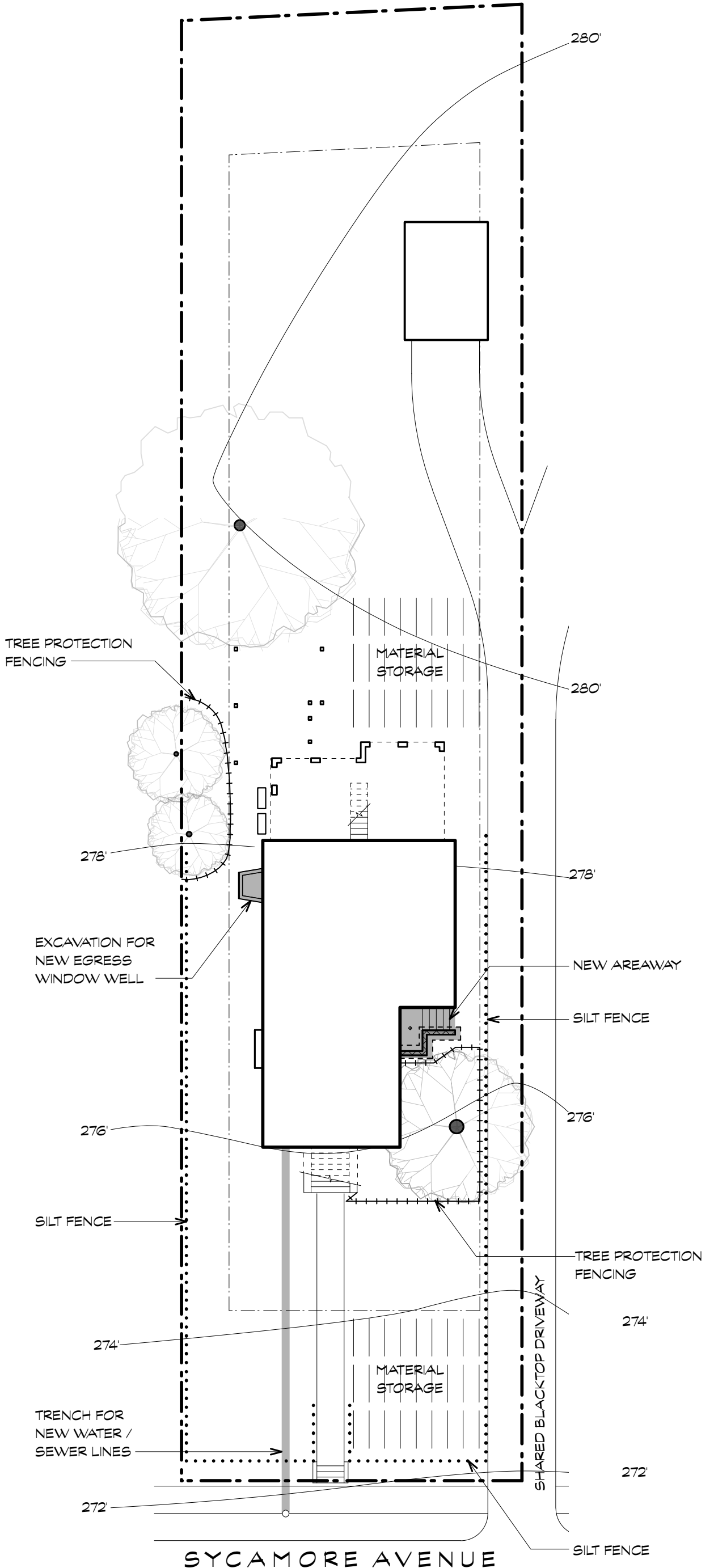
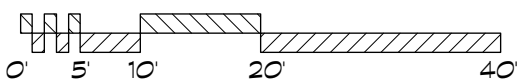
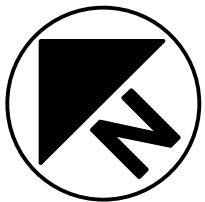
MD Licensed Tree Expert #573

NetBid@Takomatree.com

TREE PROTECTION PLAN LEGEND	
TREE PROTECTION FENCE (4 FT. TALL ORANGE HDPE PLASTIC SAFETY BARRIER)	+++++
STAGING AREA / MATERIAL STORAGE	
SILT FENCE
ROOT PRUNING (RP)	-x-x-x-
ROOT PROTECTION (1/2" OSB PANELS OVER 6" LAYER OF WOOD CHIPS)	XXXXXX
NEW FOOTING	▬▬▬
AREAS OF EXCAVATION	▬▬▬
TREES	●

SITE PLAN BASED ON BOUNDARY SURVEY BY
SHEEHAN, STOKER & ASSOCIATES DATED
10/13/93 AND FIELD OBSERVATIONS BY
BENNETT FRANK MCCARTHY ARCHITECTS, INC.

LOT 22 , BLOCK 12
TAKOMA PARK
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
DISTRICT:
ZONE: R-60



TPP

BAKEWELL BASEMENT

7107 Sycamore Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

Tree Protection Plan

22 June 2023

Scale: 1"=16'-0"

#2174

BENNETT FRANK MCCARTHY
architects, inc.

1400 Spring Street, Suite 320, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-2755
(301) 585-2222 www.bfmarch.com fax (301) 585-8917

