

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

|                    |   |                       |                  |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Address:</b>    | 50 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park                           | <b>Meeting Date:</b>  | 1/7/2026         |
| <b>Resource:</b>   | Contributing Resource<br><b>Takoma Park Historic District</b> | <b>Report Date:</b>   | 12/31/2025       |
| <b>Applicant:</b>  | Sarah Greenberg<br>(Richard J. Vitullo, Architect)            | <b>Public Notice:</b> | 12/24/2025       |
| <b>Review:</b>     | HAWP  | <b>Tax Credit:</b>    | No               |
| <b>Permit No.:</b> | 1143222   | <b>Staff:</b>         | Laura DiPasquale |
| <b>Proposal:</b>   | Fenestration alterations                                      |                       |                  |

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

1. The windows must have simulated-divided-lights and the exterior trim must have a painted finish.

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District  
**STYLE:** Colonial Revival Cottage  
**DATE:** c. 1920-30s



*Figure 1: Aerial view of 50 Philadelphia Avenue (outlined in blue with a yellow star) within the Takoma Park Historic District (outlined and hatched in red).*



Figure 2: Front and southeast side elevations of the subject property.

**PROPOSAL**

The applicants propose to make fenestration alterations along the southeastern side of the subject property. On the southeast wall of the historic main block, the applicants propose to remove a non-historic glass block window and to install a nine-light awning window with a slightly raised sill. On the street-facing, southwest elevation of the non-historic rear addition, the applicants propose to replace a pair of double doors with a single six-over-six double-hung aluminum-exterior window. On the southeast side elevation of the addition, the applicants propose to add a pair of six-over-six double-hung aluminum-exterior windows. New stucco to match the existing stucco would be added to areas of infill.

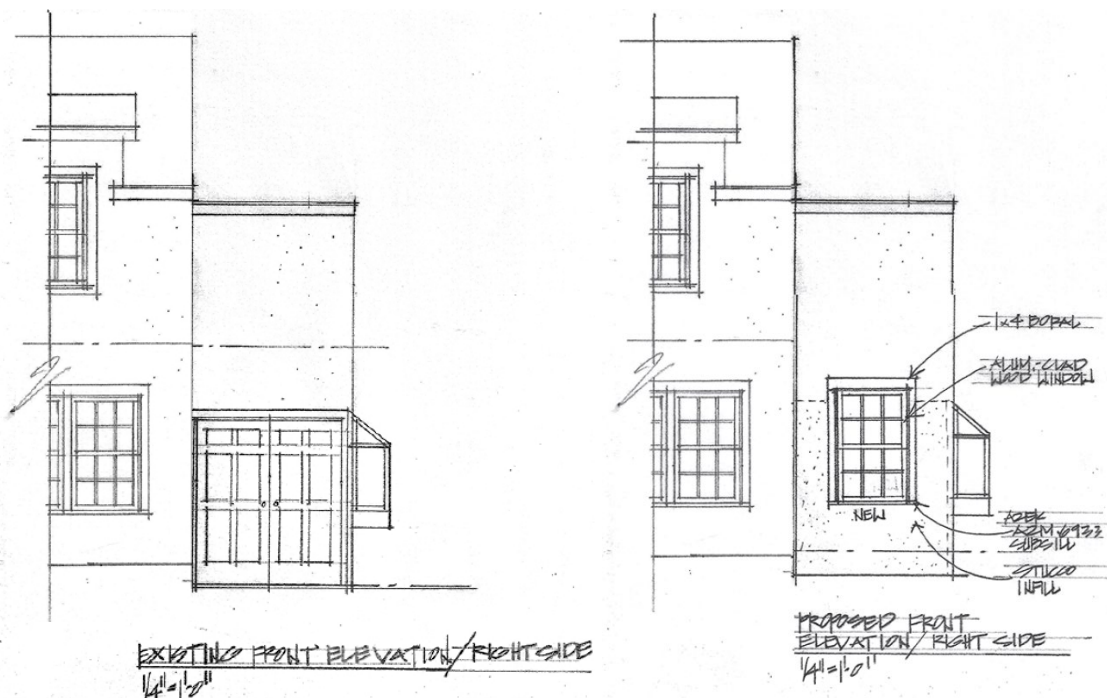


Figure 3: Partial existing and proposed front elevations showing the modifications to the existing street-facing doors on the non-historic rear addition.

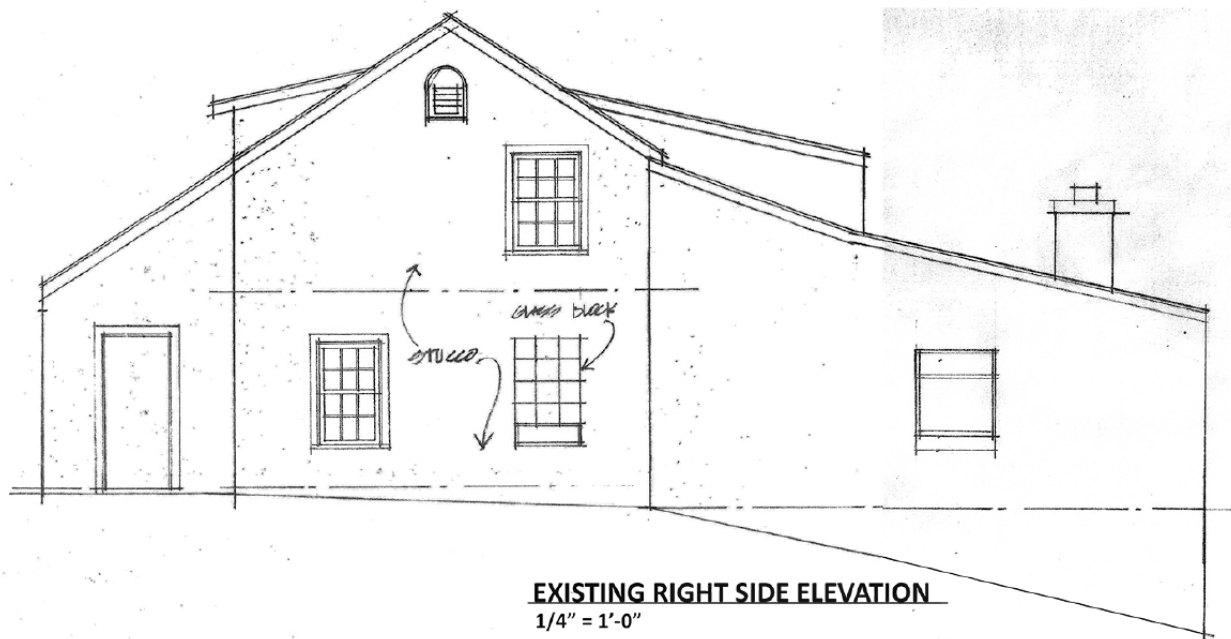


Figure 4: Existing southeast side elevation drawing.

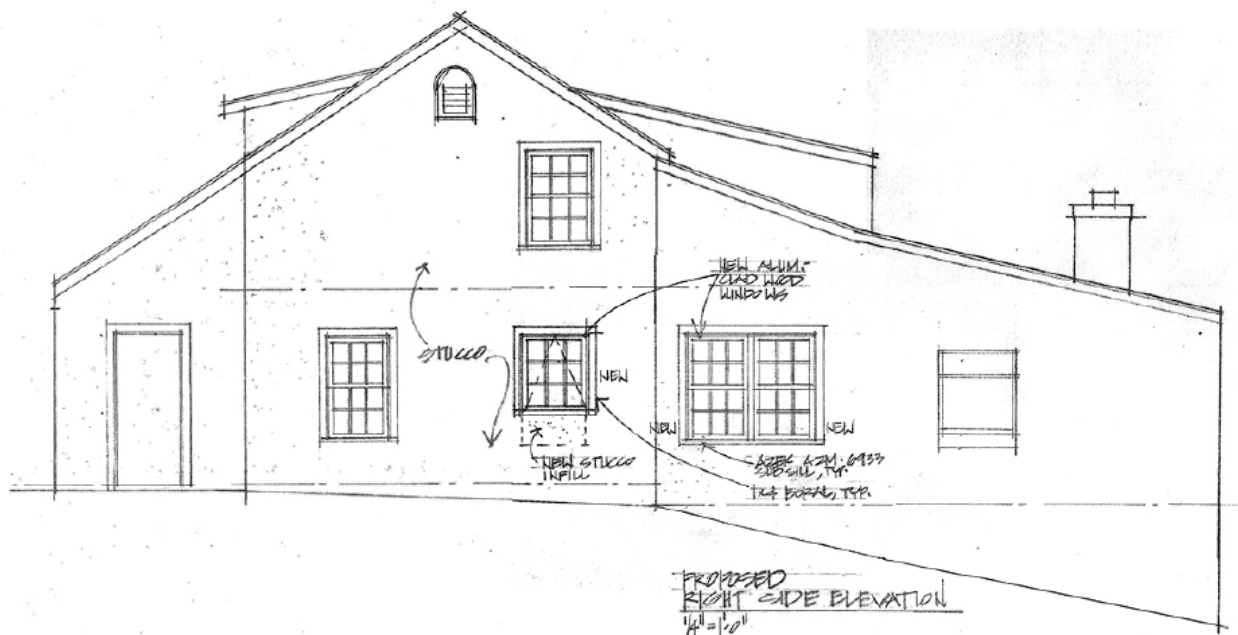


Figure 5: Proposed southeast side elevation drawing.

## 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 *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 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.

A majority of the buildings in the Takoma Park Historic District have been assessed as being “Contributing Resources.” While these buildings may not have the same level of architectural or historical significance as Outstanding Resources or may have lost some degree of integrity, collectively, they are the basic building blocks of the Takoma Park district. They are important to the overall character of the district and the streetscape due to their size, scale, and architectural qualities, rather than for their particular architectural features.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient level of design 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.

### *Residential Areas*

In Takoma Park, there are a number of elements which define the streetscape and building patterns.

- Use of decorative stone retaining walls (where required by topographic changes) and occasionally fences to define a sidewalk line and separate yards from street.
- Sidewalks and planting strips along the street.
- Orientation of driveways and parking areas to the rear and side of buildings.
- Extensive landscaping, including mature trees and flowering plants (e.g. azaleas).

The following guidance which pertains to this project are as follows:

- All exterior alterations, including those to architectural features and details, should be generally consistent with the predominant architectural style and period of the resource and should preserve the predominant architectural features of the resource; exact replication of existing details and features is, however, not required.
- Minor alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public right-of-way – such as vents, metal stovepipes, air conditioners, fences, skylights, etc. – should be allowed as a matter of course;
- Alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public right-of-way which involve the replacement of or damage to original ornamental or architectural features are discouraged but may be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis.
- Original size and shape of window and door openings should be maintained, where feasible.
- Some non-original building materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis;

- Alterations to features that are not visible at all from the public right-of-way should be allowed as a matter of course.
- 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 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.
- 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 proposed alterations and recommends approval, finding that the proposed project will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and that the alterations are compatible with the historic resource. Staff finds that the proposed project will remove non-historic glass block in a previously-modified opening and replace non-historic doors and add windows to a non-historic rear addition, which will not result in removal of historic materials that characterize the property, per *Standards 2 and 9* and Chapter 24A-8(b)(1). Staff finds that size, scale, and design of the proposed windows are compatible with the character of the resource and of the district, per the *Guidelines*, Chapter 24A-8(b)(2), and *Standard 9*. Since the proposed windows are to be located in non-original openings on secondary elevations, staff finds that the proposed aluminum-exterior Marvin windows and Azek trim are compatible substitute materials, per the *Guidelines* and *Standard 9*, provided the windows have simulated-divided-lights (no grilles-between-glass), and the trim has a painted finish.



*Figure 6: View of the front and southeast side elevations of the subject property at the time of designation, showing that the glass block window was a standard hung window at that time (undated, c. 1980s, MCAAtlas).*



*Figure 7: Left, detail of the 1927 Sanborn Map showing the original footprint of the house, which lacked the projecting addition along the southeast side/rear and previously had an open front porch. Right, current aerial image of the property showing the non-historic rear addition (March 2025, ConnectExplorer).*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2), having found that the proposal, as modified by the condition, will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the purposes of Chapter 24A;

1. The windows must have simulated-divided-lights and the exterior trim must have a painted finish.

*The Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines;*

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #2 and 9;

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](mailto:laura.dipasquale@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.

**OWNERS:**

**Sarah Greenberg**  
**Heather Hamilton**  
50 Philadelphia Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**AGENT FOR OWNER:**

**Richard J. Vitullo AIA**  
**Vitullo Architecture Studio, PC**  
7016 Woodland Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**Adjoining Property Owners**

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**Erin Keplinger**  
48 Philadelphia Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**Deanna Johnson**  
51 Philadelphia Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**Kathleen Kiernan**  
47 Philadelphia Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**James Saxon**  
**Renata McAdams**  
53 Philadelphia Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

DESCRIPTION OF *EXISTING* STRUCTURE,  
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND HISTORICAL FEATURES  
AT:

50 Philadelphia Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912

*This is an "Contributing Resource" 2-story Cottage/Colonial Revival, house built in 1923, and it is located in the Takoma Park Historic District. The existing house has a 1226 S.F. footprint, with a basement under the original house excluding the 575 S.F. later rear addition.*

- a. Original House Structure:** *The main house structure is wood framed with a gable roof (7:12 slope +/-), with the main ridge parallel to Philadelphia Ave.. There is a shed roof over the later rear addition (2:12 slope +/-).*
- b. Foundation:** *The foundation is painted CMU.*
- c. Exterior Finish:** *The exterior finish of the original house, and rear addition, is stucco. There is a small original rear structure (probably a former 2-story sleeping porch) that has 10" exposure asbestos lap siding. The exterior window and door trim is aluminum covered wood.*
- d. Windows and Doors:** *There are no original windows in the house; all windows are vinyl replacement windows. There is a glass block window in the current kitchen which is not original.*

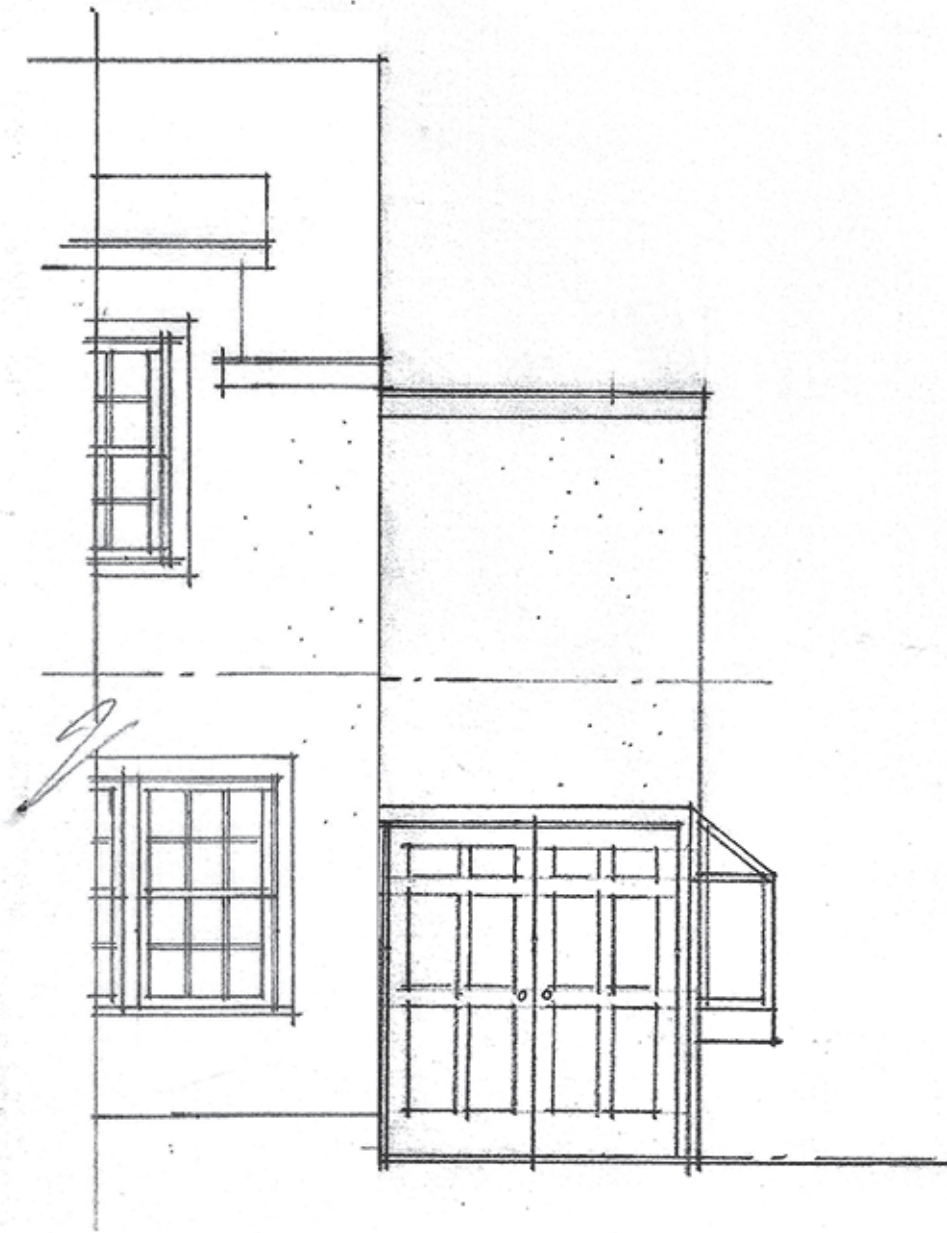
DESCRIPTION OF THE *PROPOSED* PROJECT AND ITS  
EFFECT ON THE HISTORIC RESOURCE:  
50 Philadelphia Avenue., Takoma Park, MD 20912

*The existing house will be renovated on the interior with some window changes to the exterior, based on a new interior layout:*

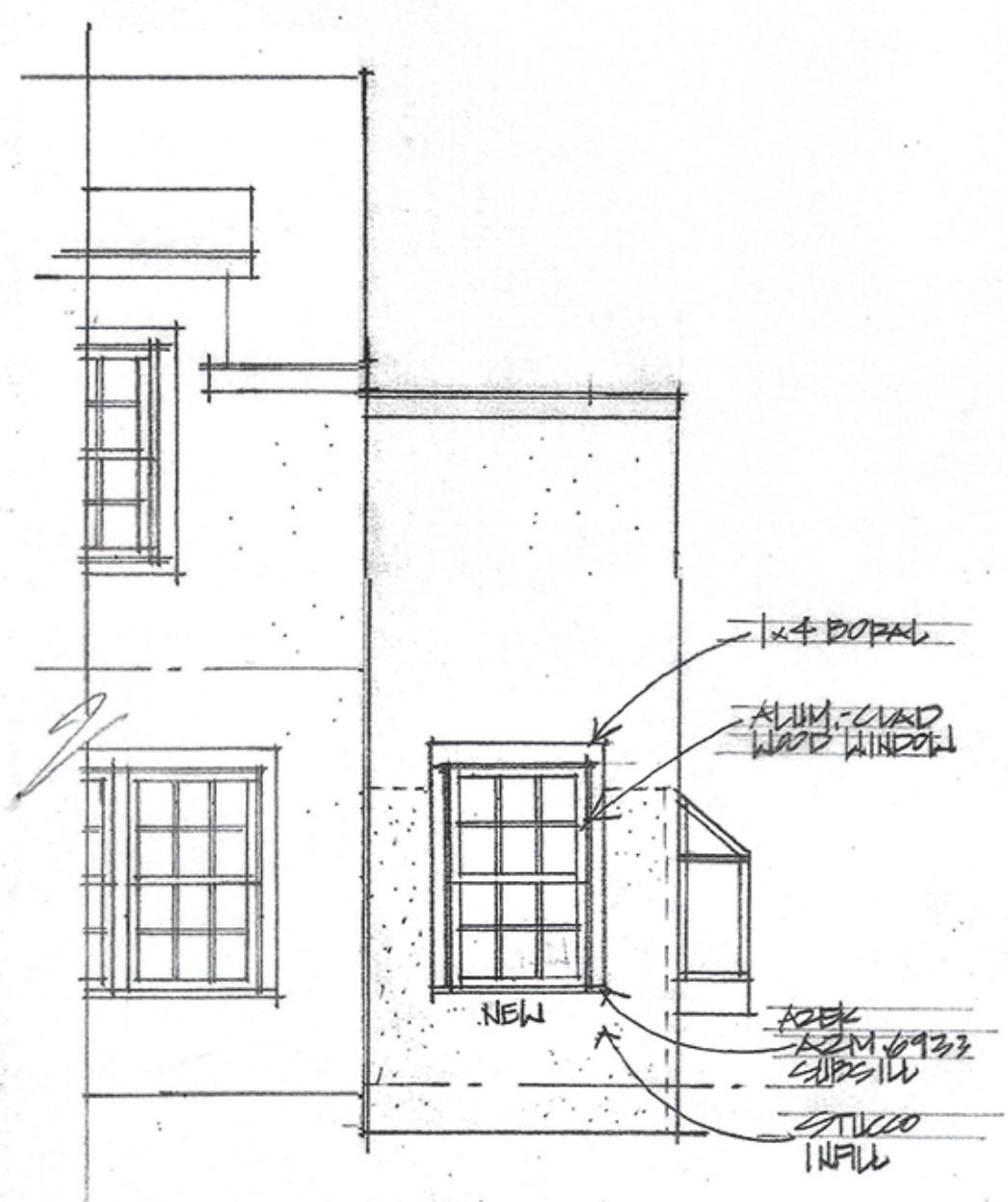
*These will be built using the following materials/details:*

1) **Exterior Finish:** *Any changes to exterior finishes, such as infill wall areas, will also utilize stucco to match the current finish.*

2) **Windows and Doors:** *The existing kitchen glass block window in the existing house will be replaced with an aluminum-clad Marvin wood awning window (9-lite), with an infill section of stucco below it. The three new windows in the newer rear addition will be Marvin aluminum-clad wood double-hung (6-over-6), with any new infill wall areas to be finished in stucco. New trim around windows to be 1 x 4 Boral, with an Azek AZM-6933 subsill.*



EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION / RIGHT SIDE  
 $1/4'' = 1'-0''$

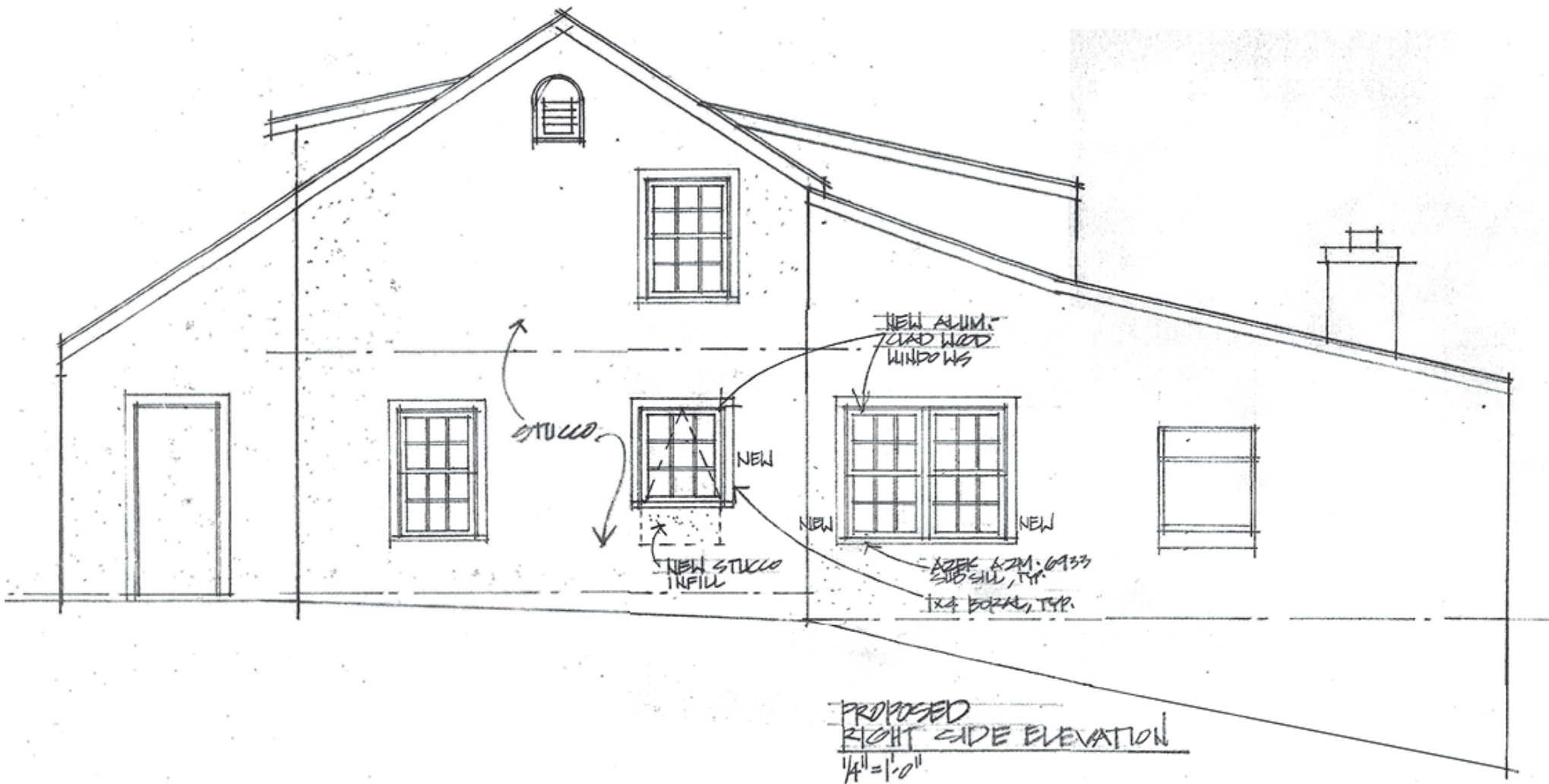


PROPOSED FRONT  
ELEVATION / RIGHT SIDE  
 1/4" = 1'-0"

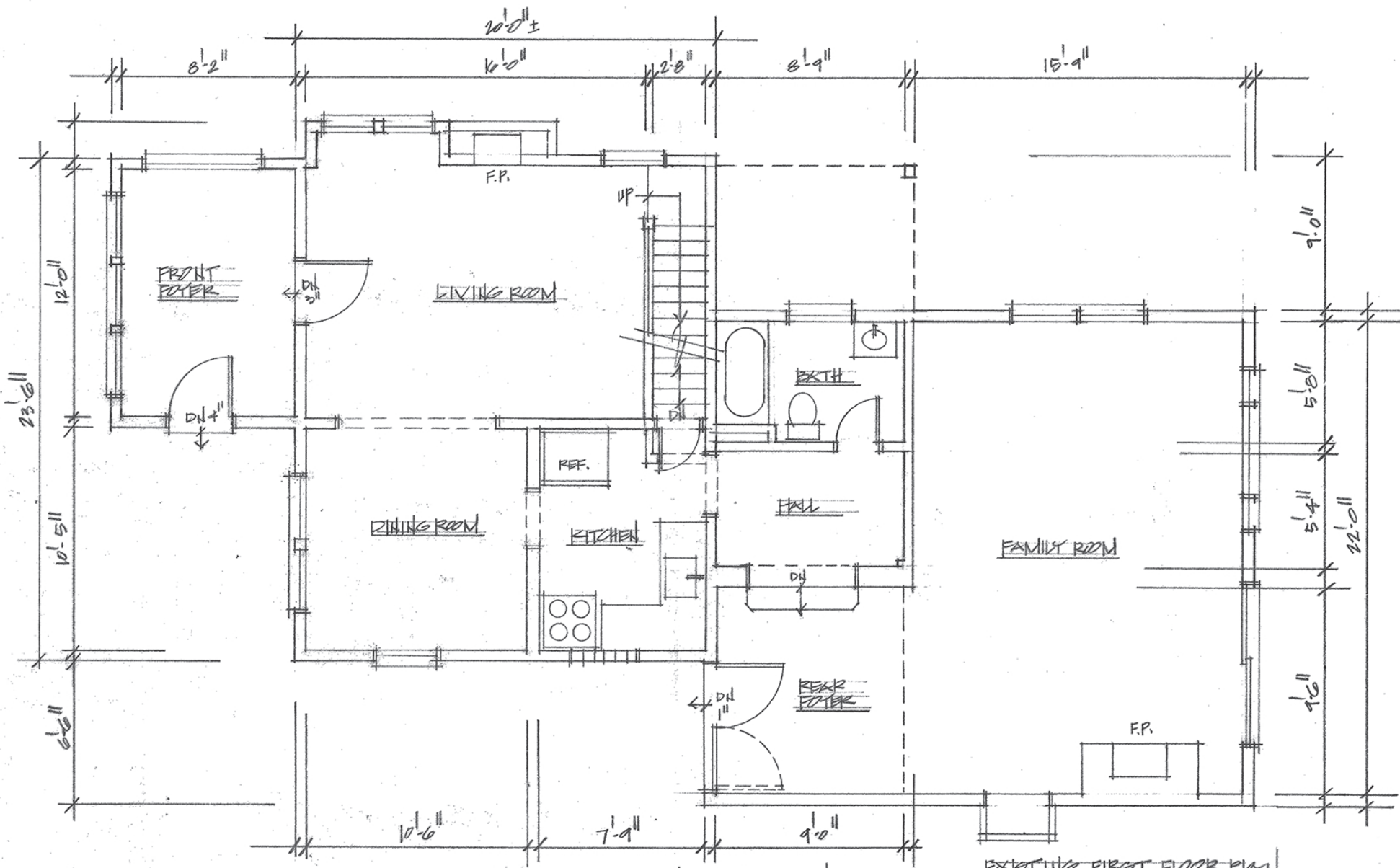


**EXISTING RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION**

1/4" = 1'-0"



PROPOSED  
RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



GREENBERG/HAMILTON  
 50 PHILADELPHIA AVE.  
 TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 1/4" = 1'-0"









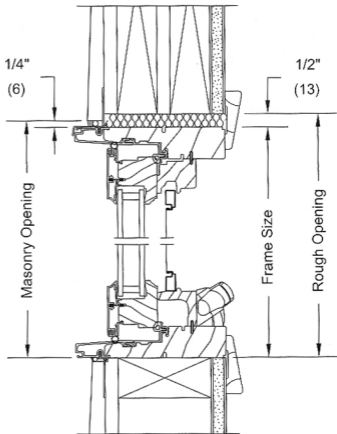






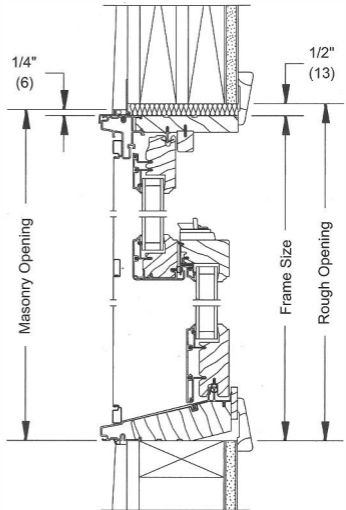
# AWNING

## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



HEAD JAMB AND SILL - OPERATOR

# DOUBLE HUNG G2



HEAD JAMB AND SILL - OPERATOR



DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Rabbiah Sabbakhan  
*Director*

# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

Application Date: 12/9/2025

Application No: 1143222  
AP Type: HISTORIC  
Customer No: 1543448

## Comments

Please send all correspondence to: [rjv@vitullostudio.com](mailto:rjv@vitullostudio.com) or 301-806-6447

## Affidavit Acknowledgement

The Homeowner is the Primary applicant  
This application does not violate any covenants and deed restrictions

## Primary Applicant Information

Address 50 PHILADELPHIA AVE  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912  
Othercontact VITULLO  
Homeowner Greenberg (Primary)

## Historic Area Work Permit Details

Work Type ALTER  
Scope of Work Kitchen and family room renovation with some new windows added.