

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	50 Elm Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	4/8/2026
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	4/1/2026
Applicant:	Tamir Ezzat	Public Notice:	3/25/2026
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	Partial
Case Number:	1148441	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	Retroactive Roof Replacement and Chimney Removal		

RECOMMENDATION

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

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Colonial Revival
DATE: c.1940



Figure 1: The subject property is located near the intersection of Elm Ave., Westmoreland Ave., and Walnut Ave.

BACKGROUND

In mid-2025, a tree struck the subject property and substantially damaged the roof, walls, window, retaining walls, and site walls. Much of the work is being repaired or replaced in-kind and does not

require a Historic Area Work Permit.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to retroactively replace the roof shingles and to remove a damaged rear chimney.

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)*.

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.

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.

- 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.
- Some non-original building materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis; artificial siding on areas visible to the public right-of-way is discouraged where such materials would replace or damage original building materials that are in good condition

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;
 - (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.
- (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.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The subject property is a side gable, brick, multi-family building located near the southwest corner of the Takoma Park Historic District. A twin of the subject property was constructed to the east at 54 Elm Ave. A tree in the rear of the property fell in the summer of 2025, causing extensive structural and material damage. There is ongoing work to repair the walls, windows, foundation, and site walls; all of which will be replaced in-kind and does not require a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP). The two changes under consideration for this HAWP are removing and replacing the three-tab roof shingles with architectural shingles and removing the damaged rear chimney. Staff finds that both changes will not have a substantial impact on the historic character of the property and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the HAWP.

Roof Shingle Replacement

The existing roof has a 3-tab asphalt shingle. As part of the roof structural repairs, the applicant proposes to remove the existing roof. The applicant proposes to install an architectural shingle in its place.

Staff finds the existing 3-tab roof shingles are damaged, and their approval should be approved as a matter of course. Additionally, the HPC has consistently determined that architectural shingles are an appropriate replacement for 3-tab roofing. Absent the chimney removal (discussed below), Staff would have approved the roof replacement at the Staff level as a compatible new roofing material. Staff recommends the HPC approve the roof replacement under 24A-8(1), (2); and (d); *Standard #2*, and the Design Guidelines.

The roof replacement is an eligible expense for the County's Historic Preservation Tax Credit.

Chimney Removal

At the rear of the property, there is a brick chimney. Aerial photography shows the chimney was a brick rectangular chimney with a concrete cap. There does not appear to be decorative brickwork or a crown on the chimney. The chimney is a vestige from a furnace and water heater that were abandoned decades ago. The tree fall substantially damaged the chimney (see *Fig. 3*, below). Rather than reconstruct the chimney, the applicant proposes to demolish the chimney and repair the siding with matching wood shakes.



Figure 2: The subject property (left) and its twin showing the location and height of the chimneys.

The HPC has generally considered two primary factors when evaluating the appropriateness of removing chimneys. First, how significant is the chimney to the architectural character of the property, particularly when viewed from the public right-of-way? Second, how does removing the chimney impact the scale and massing of the historic building? Staff finds the chimney is not a significant architectural feature and was intended to serve a purely utilitarian function. The chimney is located at the rear of the building and lacks any ornamentation. Additionally, due to the rise in grade from Elm Ave., the chimney is only partially visible from the rear on Pine Ave. at a distance of approximately 150 ft (one hundred fifty feet). Staff further finds removing the chimney will not have a substantial impact on the massing of the building, as the chimney is an appendage at the rear that is only minimally visible from the right-of-way. Staff recommends the HPC approve the chimney removal under 24A-8(1), (2); and (d); *Standard #2*, and the Design Guidelines.



Figure 3: Rear elevation of the subject property showing the location of the chimney.

As the proposed alteration is removing historic fabric, and is not replacing it in-kind, it does not qualify for the County's Historic Preservation Tax Credit.

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 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 #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 301-563-3400 or dan.bruechert@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:

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:



TARANTINO

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FIELD REPORT

Inspected Site: 50 Elm Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912	Purpose of Investigation: Structural review of tree impact TEC #: 25-191FH
Date of Site Visit: 16 July, 2025	Date Report Issued: 25 July, 2025
Report Prepared For: Tamir Ezzat, DDB Workshop	Persons Contacted: Christian Alvez, Insured Connor Sparks, Jenkins Restoration Ali Tolson, Jenkins Restoration

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

For purposes of this report, the front of the home is considered to face South towards Elm Avenue (*Appendix A: Photo 1*)¹. The site consists of a two-story, multi-unit apartment building comprised of four units, two each level, with walkout basement. The building features wood framing with CMU foundation wall below grade and a brick chimney on the north exterior wall. A CMU retaining wall makes up the walkout basement egress path on the north side and transitions to a timber site retaining wall at the northeast corner (*Appendix A: Photos 1-5*).

2. FINDINGS

Our review consisted of a visual observation only while walking the interior and exterior of the home. Some observations of the structure were made in areas of the home where the finishes were removed, exposing the structural members. Not all portions of the structure could be observed due to some finishes still being in place at the time of the visit. The roof and chimney were covered by tarps and could not be viewed. All dimensions noted are approximate.

2.1 Construction Type

We noted the following construction:

- The roof is framed with 1x6 deck board roof sheathing over 2x6 rafters at 20” on-center, notched on a 4x8 ridge beam spanning east to west. The ridge beam is supported by 2x4 posts with 1x6 collar ties.
- The second floor ceiling is framed with 2x6 joists at 16” on-center.
- The first floor is framed with 6” wide deck board floor sheathing over 2x8 joists that bear on steel framing.
- The basement consists of CMU foundations walls and concrete slab. Portions of the basement are unfinished crawlspace with dirt infill.

¹ Google Maps

2.2 Damage and Observations

We observed the following damage in the attic:

- Punctures are present in the roof sheathing (Appendix A: Photo 6).

We observed the following in the stairwell:

- Small cracks are present in the ceiling finishes on the second level stairwell (Appendix A: Photo 11).

We observed the following damage on the 2nd level (Unit 4):

- The North facing exterior wall and adjacent interior walls in the kitchen are compromised, with severe damage to the framing and finishes. Cracks are in the ceiling finishes (Appendix A: Photo 8, 9).
- Hairline cracks are in the finishes throughout the apartment (Appendix A: Photo 10).

We observed the following damage on the 2nd level (Unit 3):

- Hairline cracks are in the finishes throughout the apartment (Appendix A: Photo 11).

We observed the following damage on the 1st level (Unit 2):

- Large cracks are in the finishes of the North exterior wall in the kitchen below one window (Appendix A: Photo 12).
- A large crack is in the finishes on the interior wall between the apartment and stairwell (Appendix A: Photo 13).
- A large crack is present in the east exterior wall in the office (Appendix A: Photo 14).
- Hairline cracks are in the finishes throughout the apartment (Appendix A: Photo 15).

We observed the following damage on the 1st level (Unit 1):

- Hairline cracks are in the finishes throughout the apartment (Appendix A: Photo 16).

We observed the following damage in the basement:

- Cracks related to the impact are in the North facing CMU foundation wall. The wall is displaced and no longer plumb (Appendix A: Photo 17).
- Cracks unrelated to the impact are in the South facing CMU foundation wall (Appendix A: Photo 18).

We observed the following damage (exterior):

- The damaged portions of the roof are currently covered by tarps (Appendix A: Photo 19).
- The chimney is damaged, with bricks surrounding its base (Appendix A: Photo 20).
- The timber retaining wall in the rear of the home is displaced (Appendix A: Photo 21).

3. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

A large tree fell from the backyard and struck the home. The tree's size and speed when it struck the building caused a large shock to the structure. Homes are not required to be designed to withstand the impact of a tree by building codes. As such, the impact can cause permanent damage to the structural members but may also force structural components to move to such a degree that the finishes attached to them crack but the structural members themselves can return to their original state.

The tree fell from the north and fell almost parallel to the structure, striking the rear roof section in the vicinity of Unit 4, causing structural damage. The most severe damage occurred at the north wall in Units 2 and 4. Impact forces propagated through the structure, affecting ceiling and wall finishes throughout the entire building. The walls were observed to be generally plumb, though some walls had evidence of severe racking as noted by large cracks in the finishes. Hairline cracks present in wall finishes can be assumed to indicate no structural damage to the wall. However, any cracks in finishes wider than hairline can indicate damage to structural members. These walls should have their finishes removed and investigated for further damage.

Exterior elements such as roofing, gutters, fascia, soffit, and were also likely damaged, but were covered by tarp at the time of the site visit and as such their condition could not be accurately assessed. Cracks and displacement were observed in the CMU foundation wall of the basement in multiple areas; the owner pointed out pre-existing cracks in the south wall that were likely worsened by the impact. This damage should be repaired but is not part of this claim.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings related to the tree impact, we recommend the following:

- Replace roof sheathing at roof penetrations in full board lengths.
- Replace all missing or damaged rafter tails on the north exterior wall (assume 10% of rafters and roof sheathing are damaged for pricing purposes).
- Replace the kitchen walls of unit 4 highlighted in red as shown in the 2nd Level Schematic (*Appendix B: Figure 1*).
- Remove finishes of walls highlighted in yellow as shown in the 1st Level Schematic and inspect the framing for racking or damage, focusing on the studs and top plates. Replace any cracked members (*Appendix B: Figure 2*).
- Replace approximately 6'-8' of CMU blocks cracked and displaced by the tree impact, highlighted in red on the north wall in the basement as shown in the Basement Level Schematic and repoint any damaged or cracked mortar joints (*Appendix B: Figure 3*).
- Replace cracked and displaced CMU blocks as pointed out by the owner, highlighted in red on the south wall in the basement as shown in the Basement Level Schematic and repoint any damaged or cracked mortar joints (*Appendix B: Figure 3*).
- Replace the damaged CMU and timber retaining walls.

TEC can make a return site visit to further investigate damage uncovered once finishes are removed, upon request.

5. APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

6. APPENDIX B: SCHEMATICS

This report is based on facts, data, and information available at the time of inspection. To the extent that additional or different facts, data, or information is developed or discovered after the issuance of this report, Tarantino Engineering Consultants, P.C. reserves the right to amend, alter, or change the report and structural drawings as needed to reflect consideration of the additional or different facts, data, or information. Please let us know if you have any questions or we can be of further assistance.



Brian Tarantino, P.E.

Samuel Richardson

"Professional Certification. I hereby certify that these documents were prepared or approved by me, and that I am a duly licensed professional engineer under the laws of the State of Maryland, License No.24871 Expiration Date: 2/28/26"

APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

PHOTO 1: SITE PLAN

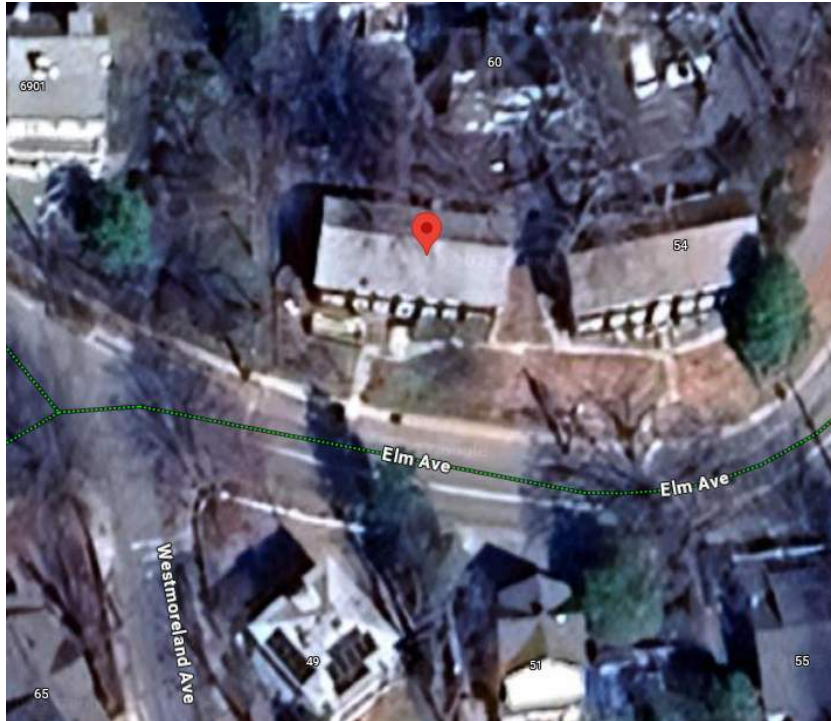


PHOTO 2: SOUTH ELEVATION



50 Elm Ave.
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Structural review of tree impact
25 July, 2025

PHOTO 3: NORTHEAST ELEVATION



PHOTO 4: NORTHWEST ELEVATION



PHOTO 5: CMU RETAINING WALL (FACING WEST FROM WALKOUT BASEMENT DOOR)



PHOTO 6: DAMAGED ROOF SHEATHING AND RAFTERS

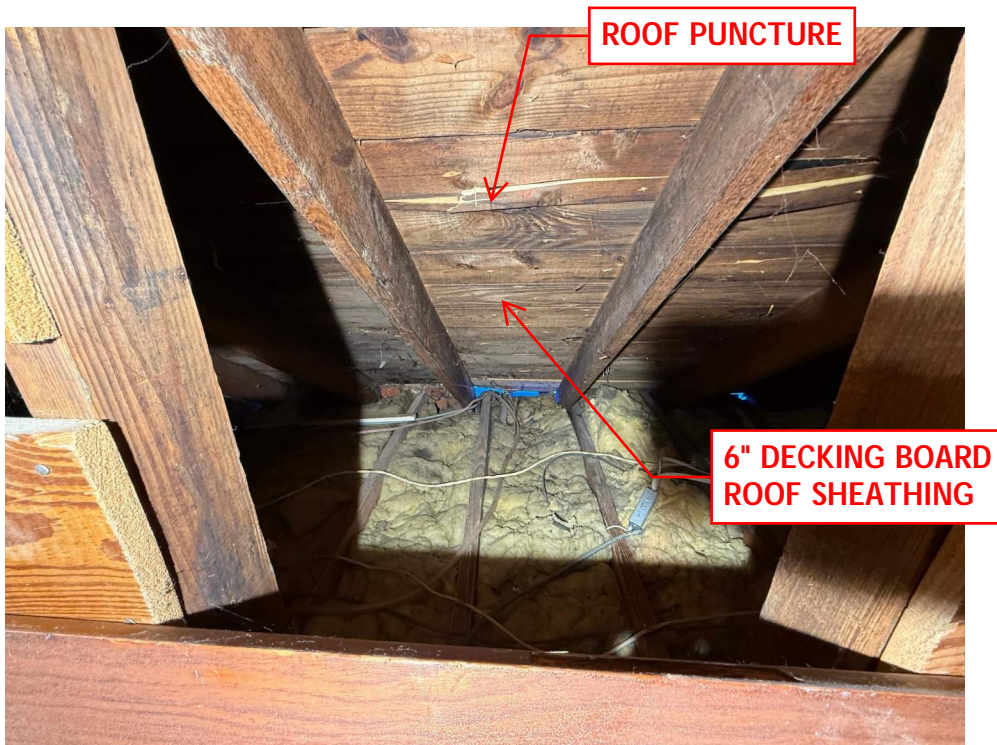


PHOTO 7: DAMAGED CEILING FINISHES AT 2ND LEVEL STAIRWELL



PHOTO 8: DAMAGED WALLS (UNIT 4)

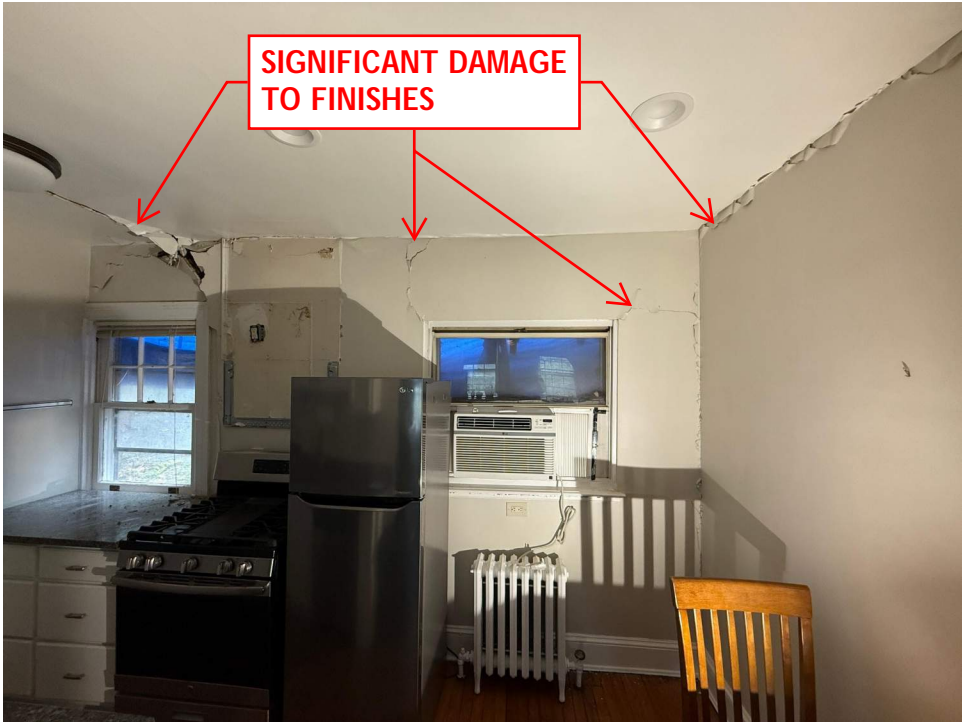


PHOTO 9: DAMAGED WALLS AND CEILING FINISHES (UNIT 4)



PHOTO 10: HAIRLINE CRACKS, TYPICAL (UNIT 4)



PHOTO 11: HAIRLINE CRACKS, TYPICAL (UNIT 3)



PHOTO 12: CRACKS IN NORTH EXTERIOR WALL (UNIT 2)



PHOTO 13: CRACKS IN INTERIOR WALL ADJACENT TO STAIRS (UNIT 2)



PHOTO 14: CRACKS IN EAST EXTERIOR WALL (UNIT 2)



PHOTO 15: HAIRLINE CRACKS, TYPICAL (UNIT 2)



PHOTO 16: HAIRLINE CRACKS, TYPICAL (UNIT 1)



PHOTO 17: CRACKED AND DISPLACED NORTH CMU FOUNDATION WALL (BASEMENT)



PHOTO 18: EXISTING CRACKS IN SOUTH CMU FOUNDATION WALL (BASEMENT)

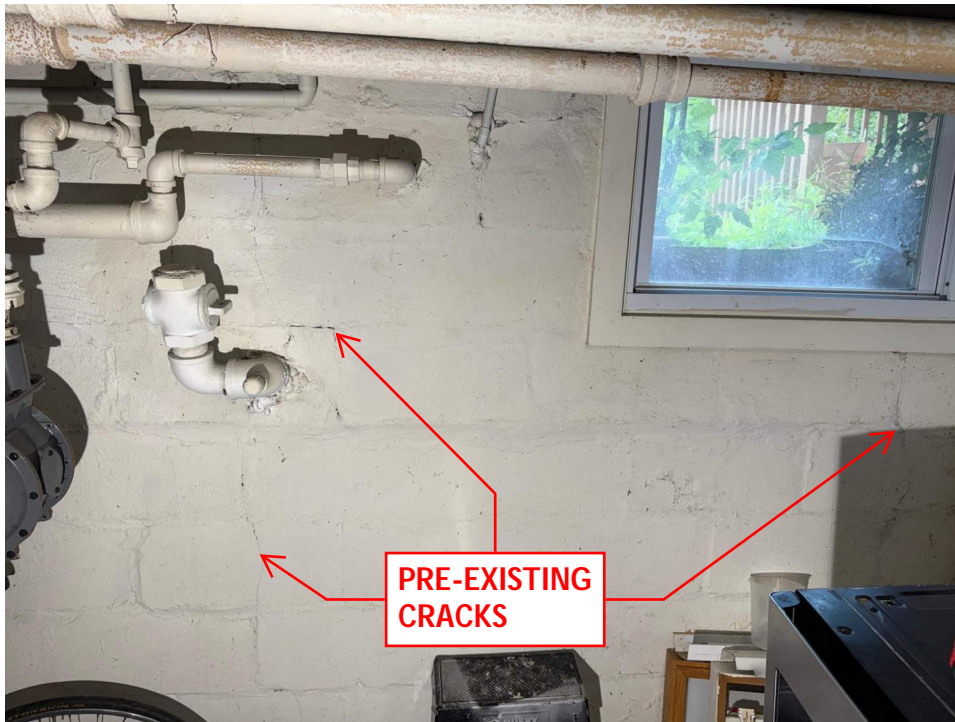


PHOTO 19: TARPS COVERING ROOF DAMAGE



PHOTO 20: DAMAGED CHIMNEY



PHOTO 21: DISPLACED TIMBER RETAINING WALL



APPENDIX B: SCHEMATICS

FIGURE 1: 2ND LEVEL

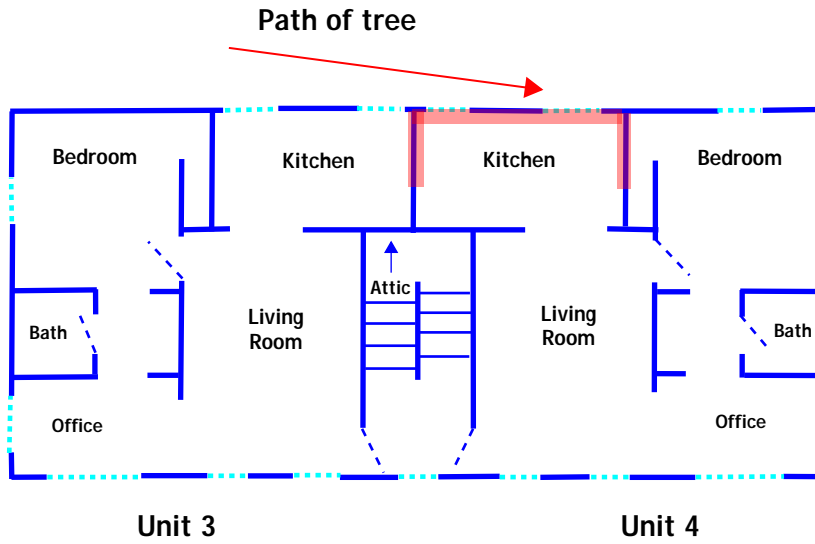


FIGURE 2: 1ST LEVEL

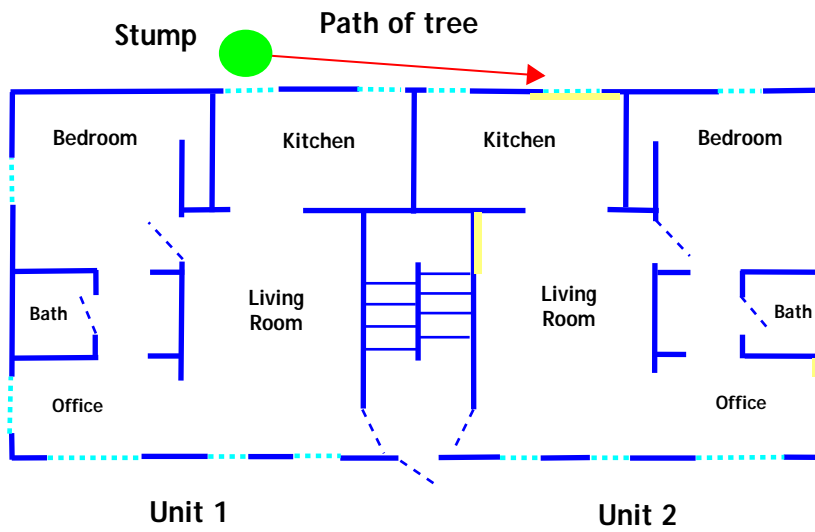
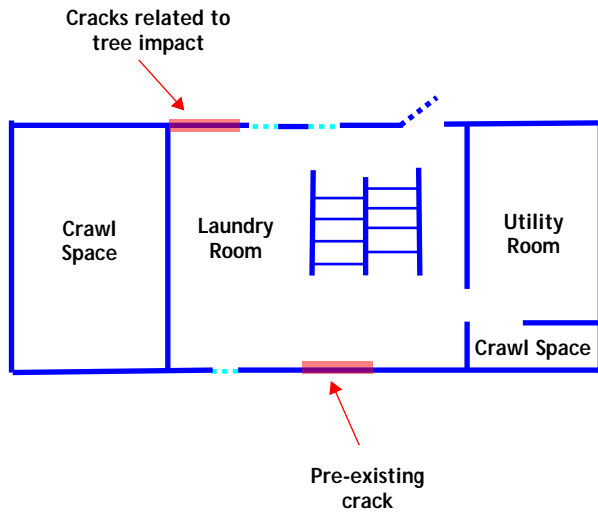
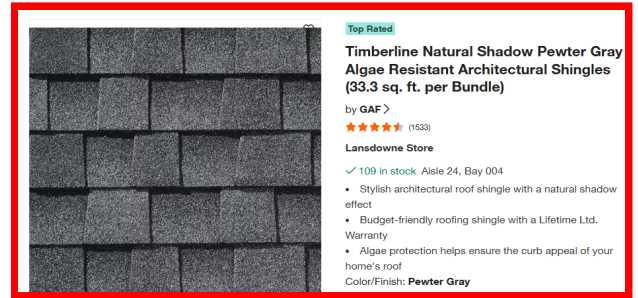


FIGURE 3: BASEMENT



50 ELM AVENUE
COMBUILD-1133968

SPEC: GREY ARCHITECTURAL SHINGLE, OR SIM. TO MATCH



Architectural shingle, same color, to replace entire roof



Shingles to match existing, patch and repaint

one-over-one, vinyl double hung windows to replace existing/damaged vinyl window, to match. Non-divided lites