

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

<b>Address:</b>	7221 Spruce Avenue, Takoma Park	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	4/22/2026
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	4/15/2026
<b>Applicant:</b>	Jen Airoidi	<b>Public Notice:</b>	4/8/2026
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	No
<b>Permit Number:</b>	1154314	<b>Staff:</b>	Devon Murtha
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Fence installation		

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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



***Figure 1: The subject property at 7221 Spruce Avenue in the Takoma Park Historic District. The subject property is indicated with a star.***

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District  
**STYLE:** Craftsman  
**DATE:** c. 1925-1935

The subject property is located on a small triangular lot along Spruce Avenue and contains a two-story Craftsman-style house. It is a Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District. The first story features a gabled roof, augmented by a partial non-historic second story addition (*Figure 2*).



Figure 2: View of subject property from Spruce Avenue.

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is proposing to install a 6.5’ tall deer fence to enclose a small kitchen garden on the side yard of the property. The fence will have cedar posts installed eight feet (8’) apart, with wire mesh in-between. The fence will run on the east side of the property for eighteen feet (18’) feet and on the north side of the property for fifteen feet and six inches (15’6”). There will be three (3) gates, as indicated in the site plan (Figure 3). The gates will match the overall appearance of the fence to be Cedar posts with wire mesh.

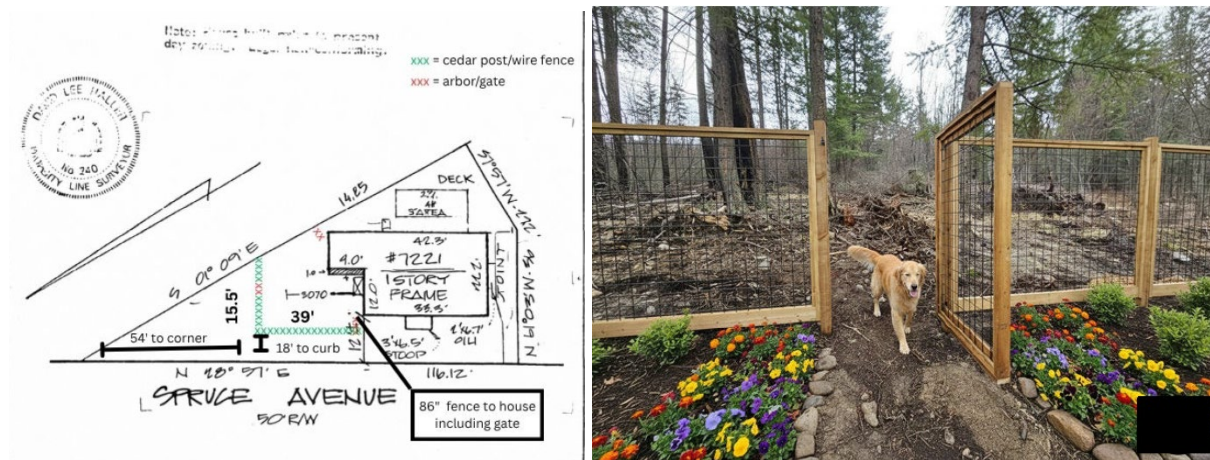


Figure 3: Site plan (left) and precedent image for fencing type (right).

**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 three 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.

Most 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 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.

Some of the factors to be considered in reviewing HAWPs on Contributing Resources include:

- 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.

### ***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 supports the installation of the deer fence on the subject property and recommends approval.

Staff finds that the proposal is appropriate due to the unique site conditions, which allow for additional leniency. In Takoma Park, Staff typically recommends that fences installed in the front of the rear wall plane be no taller than four feet in order to respect the patterns of the open space, per the *Guidelines*. The proposed fencing is substantially taller than this recommendation at six feet six inches (6'6") tall in front of the rear wall plane; however, Staff finds this to be appropriate as there are no alternative locations for the fence. The subject property is located on a small triangular lot with no rear yard (*Figure 4*). Deer are easily able to jump over fences that are four feet (4') in height, and Staff finds that a shorter fence in this location would be insufficient for the applicant's purposes of keeping deer out of the kitchen garden. Staff notes that this height conforms to the best practices for deer exclusion outlined by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.<sup>1</sup>



*Figure 4: View of subject property from Spruce Avenue.*

Staff finds that the additional height will not seriously impair the historic or architectural value of the surrounding historic resources or impair the character of the district. Mesh deer fencing with cedar poles is largely transparent and less visually intrusive than 6' tall picket or board fencing. The fencing will be set back eighteen feet (18') from Spruce Avenue, further reducing its impact. Additionally, Staff notes that there is already a 6' board fence on a stone foundation installed on the rear of the neighboring property, which is abundantly visible from the right-of-way along Spruce Avenue due to the corner location. Staff finds that the proposed deer fencing will not rise to the same height as this fencing and will have a comparatively small visual impact (*Figure 5*). Staff does not find that the installation of the proposed fence will have a notable impact on the character of the resource, the district, or the streetscape, per the *Guidelines* and Chapter 24A-8.

<sup>1</sup> For more information about best deer fence practices, see [https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/hunt\\_trap/ddmtexclude.aspx#:~:text=Eight%2Dfoot%20and%20taller%20fences,avoid%20contact%20with%20the%20fence.](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/hunt_trap/ddmtexclude.aspx#:~:text=Eight%2Dfoot%20and%20taller%20fences,avoid%20contact%20with%20the%20fence.)



Figure 5: View of neighboring property with tall picket fencing. The location of the proposed picket fencing is notated with a yellow arrow.

Staff notes that The HPC has approved taller deer fencing in the district in front of the rear wall plane in several instances. In 2024, the HPC retroactively approved an eight foot (8') tall deer fence at 7105 Cedar Avenue.<sup>2</sup> (Figure 6). The HPC found that this was appropriate due to the relatively unobstructive nature of the fencing, the limited visibility, and the specific conditions of the site.

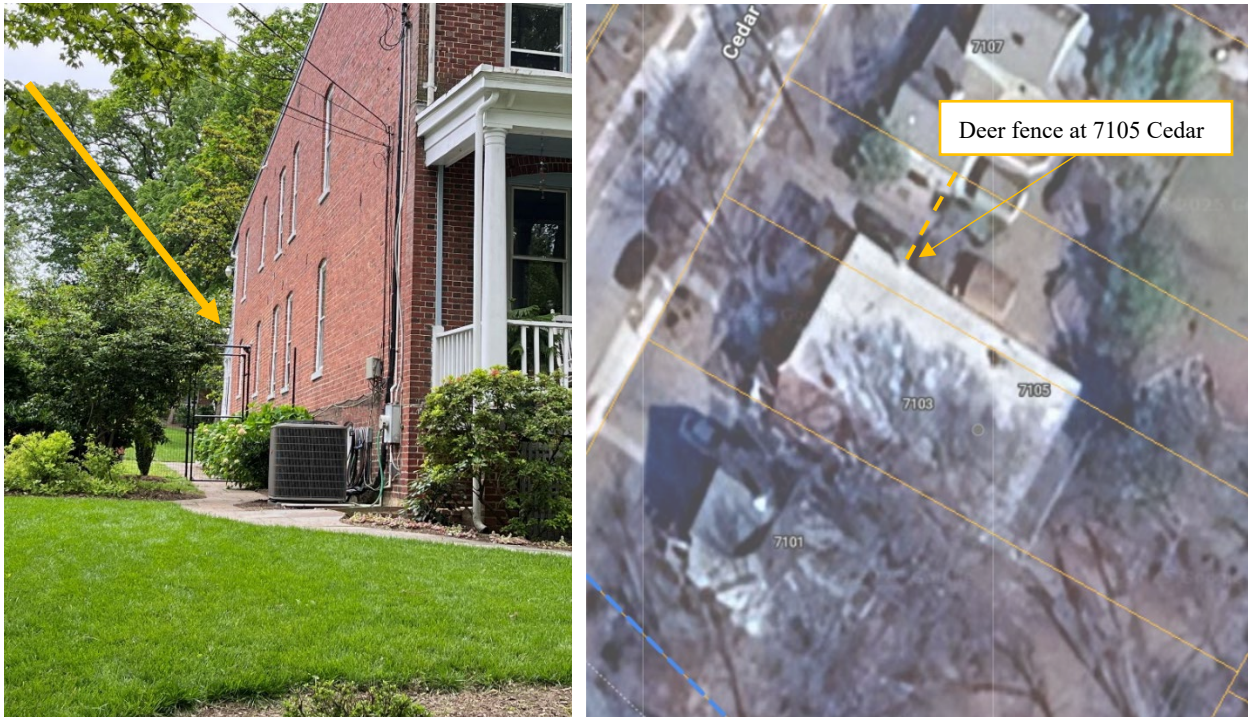


Figure 6: View of deer fence installed at 7105 Cedar Avenue (left, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> See approval here: [https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/06\\_HistoricPreservation\\_PhotoArchives/HAWP/HPC%202024-07-10/7105%20Cedar%20Avenue.%20Takoma%20Park%20-%201071932%20-%20Approval-compressed.pdf](https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/06_HistoricPreservation_PhotoArchives/HAWP/HPC%202024-07-10/7105%20Cedar%20Avenue.%20Takoma%20Park%20-%201071932%20-%20Approval-compressed.pdf) .

Staff is concerned by the proliferation of deer fences proposed in the more urban/suburban historic districts within Montgomery County due to the required height. Staff emphasizes that this recommendation in no way establishes precedent and only applies to the unique circumstances at the subject property. In this particular case, Staff finds that the deer fence is appropriate due to the site conditions, modest scope, and lack of alternative locations.

After full and fair consideration of the applicant's submission, staff finds the proposals, as modified by the conditions, consistent with the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8, having found the proposal is consistent with *Standards #2, 9, and 10* and the *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines*.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with** 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, 9, and 10*;

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 301-563-3400 or [devon.murtha@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto: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:

**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	*	*	*	*	*		*

Lipscomb and Farnest, Trustees,  
Addition to Takoma Park.

April, 1902.

I certify that the lots, blocks and streets indicated in the above plat are apart of the whole land devised to Elizabeth Thornton by the last will and testament of Gottlieb C. Grammer, duly recorded in the office of the Register of Wills of Montgomery County, State of Maryland, and being a part of Lot Four (4) of the Grammer Farm. And I further certify that I have planted a monument stone of not less than six (6) inches in diameter at the top, and two (2) feet in the ground at each end of one of the principal lines of said plat, and that the location of said stones ~~is~~ are properly indicated on said plat, being indicated by the figures 1 and 2 and that the calculations have been made to the true meridian.

M.C. Hazen.  
 Civil Engr.  
 Washington D.C.

Plat No. 46 filed June 17<sup>th</sup> 1902

Received this 17<sup>th</sup> day of June 1902, to be recorded in Plat Book No. 1, plat 46, one of the Land records of Montgomery Co. Md. and examined per

Thomas Dawson

Plat No 46 filed June 17<sup>th</sup> 1902  
 in Plat Book Sub. J.A. No 1

Jes. Thomas Dawson Clerk



Maryland State Archives

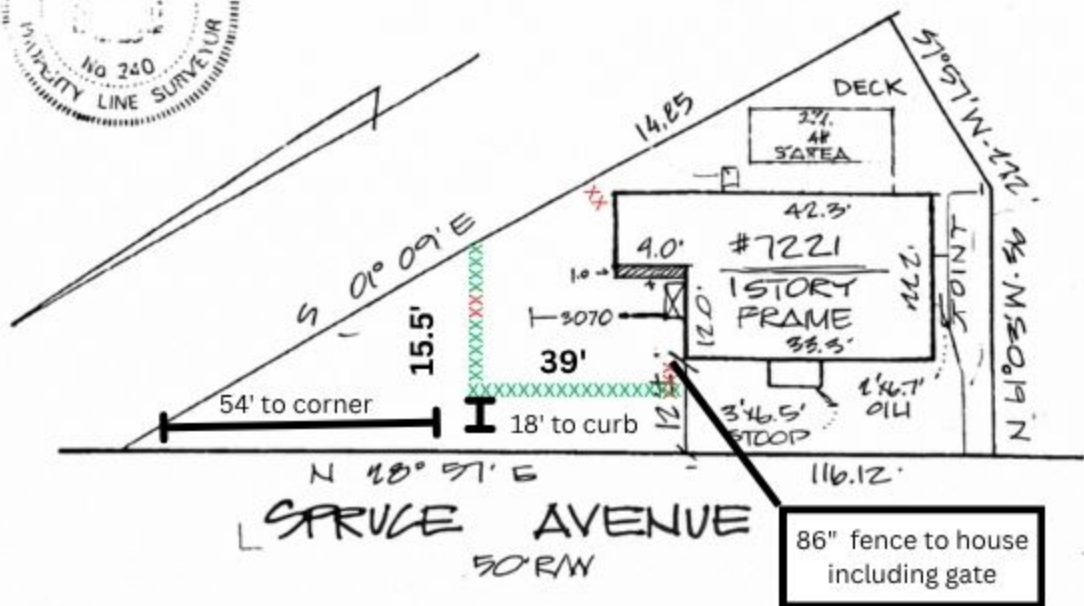
1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6

HOUSE LOCATION  
 PART OF LOT 15-BLOCK 7  
 LIPSCOMB AND EARNEST  
 TRUSTEES  
 ADDITION TO TAKOMA PARK  
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Note: House built prior to present  
 day zoning. Legal front setback.

xxx = cedar post/wire fence

xxx = arbor/gate









**BARRIER  
BOSS**