

# Montgomery County Historic Preservation

## Staff Report

<p><b>ADDRESS:</b> 23351 Davis Mill Road, Germantown</p> <p><b>RESOURCE:</b> Cedar Grove Historic District</p> <p><b>APPLICANT:</b> Alexander Chester</p> <p><b>REVIEW:</b> HAWP</p> <p><b>CASE NO.:</b> 1145858</p> <p><b>PROPOSAL:</b> Tree removal, demolition of existing garage, and construction of new garage</p>	<p><b>MEETING DATE:</b> 5/27/2026</p> <p><b>REPORT DATE:</b> 5/20/2026</p> <p><b>PUBLIC NOTICE:</b> 5/13/2026</p> <p><b>TAX CREDIT ELIGIBLE:</b> No</p> <p><b>STAFF:</b> Laura DiPasquale</p>
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### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the HPC approve with two (2) conditions the HAWP application, with final approval authority delegated to staff:

1. The applicant must submit final dimensions for the new gravel driveway and parking pad, which must not exceed 1,100 square feet.
2. The proposed structure may decrease in size to any dimension smaller than 24-ft by 35-ft within the proposed footprint.

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### Architectural Description

**Significance:** Contributing Resource within the Cedar Grove Historic District

**Date:** 1912

**Style:** American Four Square



Figure 1: Location of the subject property (outlined in blue), which is part of, but discontiguous from, the rest of the Cedar Grove Historic District (outlined and hatched in red).



Figure 2: View of the subject property from Davis Mill Road (January 2026, Historic Preservation Division).

## Proposal

The applicant proposes to demolish an existing wood-frame garage and construct a new 35-ft wide by 24-ft deep by 16-ft tall (12-ft tall to the eave line) three-bay steel garage on a 6-inch concrete slab at the rear of the subject property. The proposed garage would be located 15 feet from the rear and side property lines. Constructed of a steel truss system, the new garage would be clad in 26 gauge sheet steel with aluminum-framed windows with glass inserts. The applicant also proposes to remove three trees to accommodate the new construction, and to add gravel paving in front of the new garage.

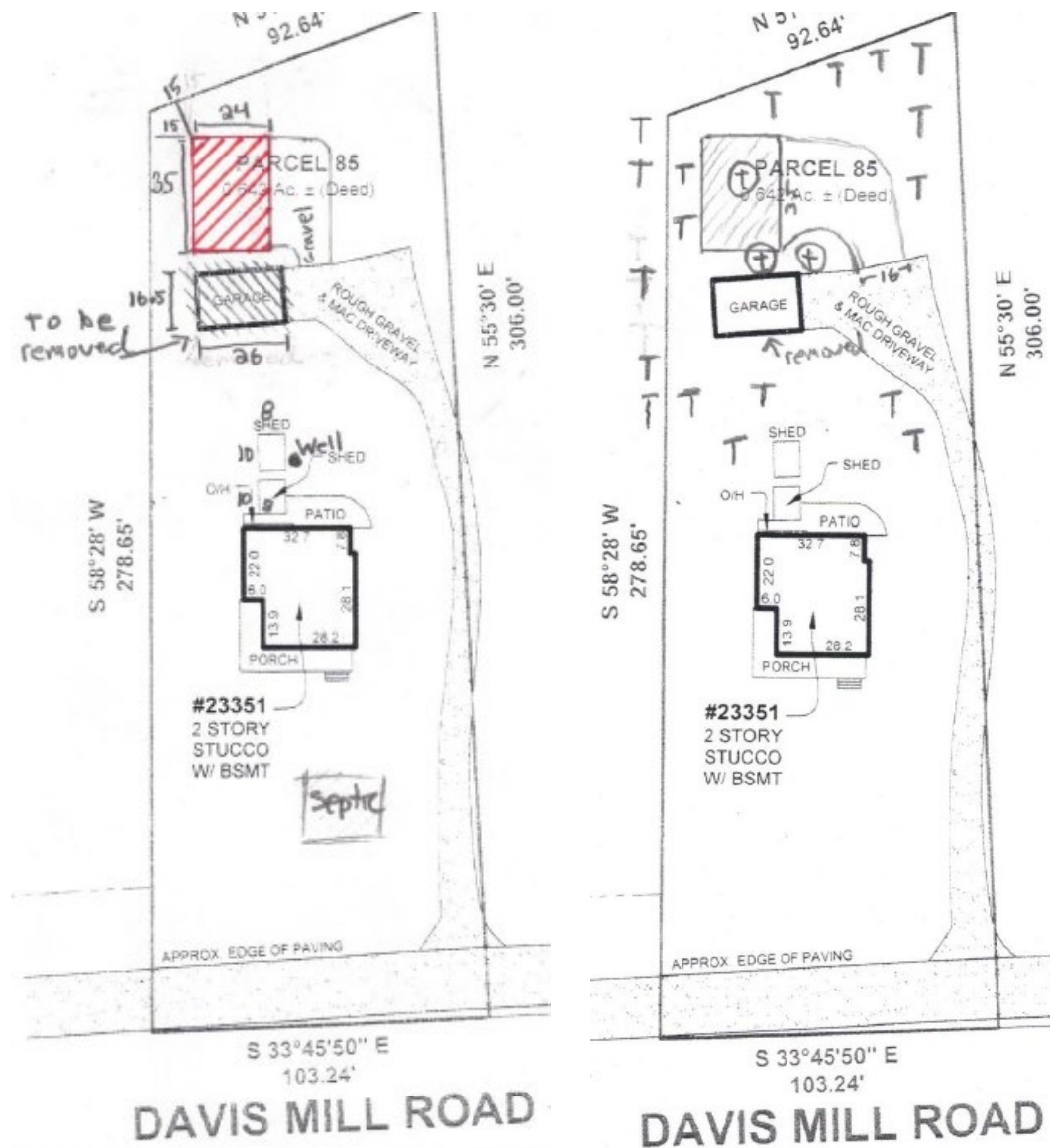


Figure 3: Left, site plan showing the existing garage to be demolished and proposed new garage. Right, site plan showing existing trees and proposed trees to be removed and the additional proposed gravel driveway width.

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## Applicable Guidelines

When reviewing alterations and new construction with the Cedar Grove Historic District, several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the *Cedar Grove Historic District Amendment (Amendment)*, Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A) and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The Amendment offers no specific guidance related to this project, aside from a description of the subject property. The pertinent information in the other 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 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; or

(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 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.
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.

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## Staff Discussion

### Background

The HPC held a preliminary consultation review for the proposed project at its February 25, 2026 meeting. At that meeting, the HPC offered the following comments:

- The *Amendment* inventory does not describe or attribute any significance to the existing garage, which is utilitarian in nature and secondary to the historic house.
- The removal of the existing garage leaves fully intact the Contributing resource and its demolition would not substantially alter the exterior features of the resource, per Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (d), and the historic character of the property would be retained and preserved per *Standard 2*.
- The removal of select trees at the rear of the property will not have a significant impact on the property, per Chapter 24A-8(b)(1).
- At 80 feet from the rear of the main block and 1-story in height, the structure is appropriately scaled and located far enough from the historic house to maintain its character and that of the site and setting, per the *Standards*.
- Increasing the pitch of the gable roof, adding corner boards, and differentiating the roofing from the siding of the proposed garage would create more traditional proportions, massing, and design, making the structure more compatible with the district, per Chapter 24A-(b)(2).
- The HPC would support the applicant seeking a Zoning variance to allow for a freestanding garage of the proposed dimensions at the rear of the property.

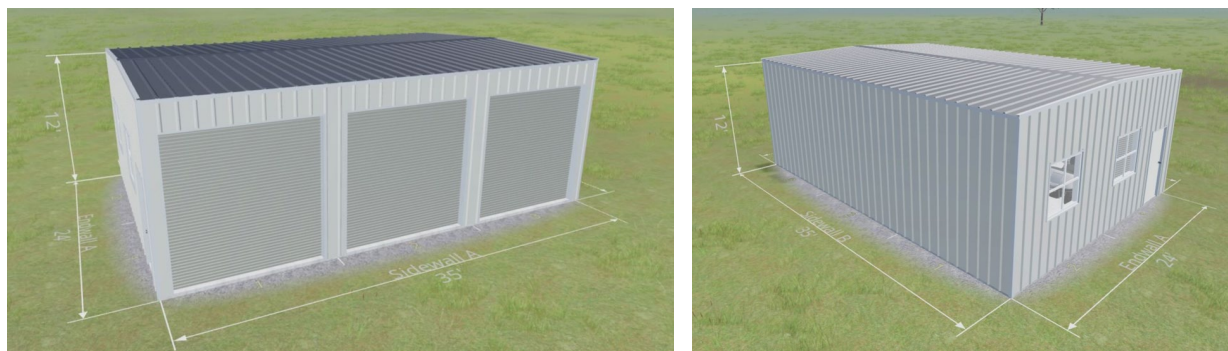


Figure 4: Renderings of the proposed garage presented at the February 25<sup>th</sup> HPC meeting.

### *Current Proposal*

Following the HPC feedback at the preliminary consultation review, the applicant has revised the design to increase the roof pitch and overhang, differentiate the siding and roofing materials, and add corner boards. By increasing the roof pitch, the revised design also increases the overall height of the proposed roof peak to 16 feet, while the eave height remains 12 feet as previously proposed. The applicant has also revised the tree removal proposal to remove three trees as opposed to five as originally proposed.

Staff finds that the revised design complies with the HPC feedback, and that the proposed design is compatible with the district and resource, per Chapter 24A-(b)(2). Staff finds that, although the footprint of the proposed structure is large, at approximately 80 feet from the rear of the main block and at 1-story in height, the proposed structure is appropriately scaled and located far enough away from the 2.5-story historic building to maintain its character and that of the site and setting, per *Standard 2* and Chapter 24A-8(b)(1).<sup>1</sup> Staff further finds that owing to its placement at the far rear of the property, if the garage were to be removed in the future, the integrity of the historic resource would remain, per *Standard 10*.

Staff concurs with the HPC's previous assessments that the removal of the existing garage leaves fully intact the Contributing resource and its demolition would not substantially alter the exterior features of the resource, per Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (d), and the historic character of the property would be retained and preserved per *Standard 2*. Likewise, staff finds that the removal of select trees at the rear of the property will not have a significant impact on the property, per Chapter 24A-8(b)(1).

With a footprint of 840 sq ft to the main house's approximately 1,174 sq ft footprint, the proposed structure exceeds the footprint allowable by Zoning in the AR zone, which specifies that the cumulative footprint of all accessory buildings on a lot with a detached house may not exceed 50% of the footprint of the principal building, unless the structure is for agricultural use. The property has two other smaller sheds whose square footage has not been identified. Following HPC approval, the applicant has indicated that they wish to seek a Zoning variance for the size of the structure. As such, staff notes that additional revisions to the size of the structure might be required. Staff also notes that the submitted site plan does not fully dimension the proposed gravel area, which appears to be approximately 35-ft by 30-ft, and recommends that the HPC condition approval upon submission of the final site plan details, with additional gravel paving not to exceed 1100 square feet, and delegate approval authority to staff for a revised garage of any size smaller than the proposed garage within the existing proposed footprint.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/treatment-guidelines-2017-part1-preservation-rehabilitation.pdf>

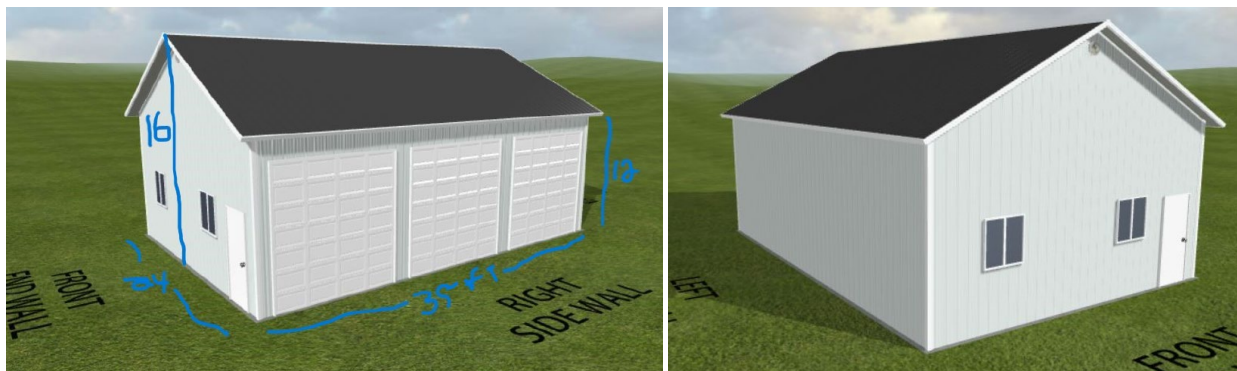


Figure 5: Renderings of the proposed garage.

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## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve with two (2) conditions the HAWP application:

1. The applicant must submit final dimensions for the new gravel driveway and parking pad, which must not exceed 1,100 square feet.
2. The proposed structure may decrease in size to any dimension smaller than 24-ft by 35-ft within the proposed footprint;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2), 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;

the *Cedar Grove Historic District Amendment*;

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 301-495-2167 or [laura.dipasquale@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:laura.dipasquale@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 (2240 sqft) on a long rectangular lot (approx 100ft wide by 285 ft long) Front of home is located 97 ft from the road. Left side of lot abuts Upper Seneca Baptist Church's parking lot. 19ft of grass and 56 ft of asphalt running the entire length of the property. Rear of property abuts church's rear parking lot. 37ft of grass and 55 ft of asphalt running the entire rear of property. Right side of property has a thick tree line separating it from 23345 Davis Mill Rd. Homes are side by side. Rear yard of 23345 Davis Mill Rd has 2 out buildings, a single large garage, and a separate 2 car garage. Across the street is Grey Goose Farm a landscaping company.

There is a single car garage in the rear of 23351 Davis Mill Rd that is in very poor/dangerous condition and will be demolished prior to building the 3 car garage further back on the property.

The property has a very flat grade and will need very minimal grading for the concrete.

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

Pour 6 inch slab of concrete and erect a 3 car garage 35x24x12 out of 26 gauge galvanized steel in the far left corner of the lot. The 3 car garage doors will be 10x10 in size.

The current single car garage, which is in extremely poor condition, will be demolished and debris removed.

Work Item 1: Tree Removal and Current Garage Demolition

Description of Current Condition:

There are numerous trees in the rear year of property. In left rear corner of property where the 3 car garage is to be buiult, there are 10 trees 3 of which will need to be remove.

There is a single car garage that is in poor condition.

Proposed Work:

Removal off the 3 trees.

Demolish and remove all the debris from original single car garage.

Work Item 2: Excavation and concrete

Description of Current Condition:

The area where 3 car garage will be built is flat. There are no major rocks. There is not issues with water run off. There is nothing impeding a 6 inch deep excavatiof 24x35

Proposed Work:

To have a concrete copmpany excavate for a 6 inch concrete pad of 24 feet by 35 feet and pour the concrete for the building.

Work Item 3: Steel 3 car garage

Description of Current Condition:

Flat empty soil in rear left of property

Proposed Work:

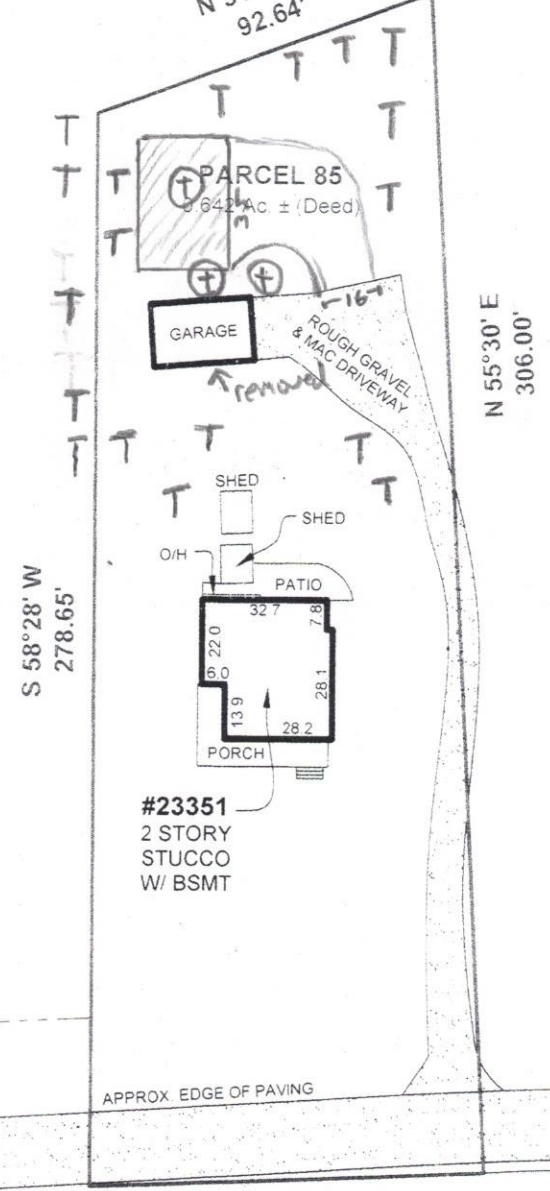
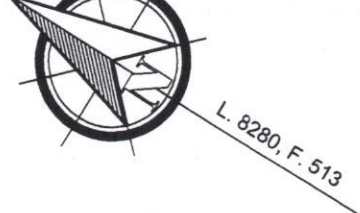
Erect a 24 foot deep, 35 foot length, and 12 foot tall steel building on a concrete slab.

Three 10 foot by 10 foot garage doors on the 35 foot side facing the property and a 3 foot by 7 foot door for the resident to enter structure locating the rear of the house

2 windows on side facing the house .

NOTE:  
ENCROACHMENTS  
MAY EXIST

N 51° 00' 00"  
92.64'



#23351  
2 STORY  
STUCCO  
W/ BSMT

APPROX EDGE OF PAVING

NOTE  
PROPERTY MAY BE SUBJECT TO  
EASEMENT ACQUISITION

DAVIS MILL ROAD

LOCATION DRAWING OF:  
**#23351 DAVIS MILL ROAD**  
**PARCEL 85 TAX MAP FW11**  
N/F PROPERTY OF  
**CHRISTOPHER RUEGG & ANIKI STEENSEN**  
LIBER 8280, FOLIO 513  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

LEGEND:  
\* - FENCE  
B/E - BASEMENT ENTRANCE  
B/W - BAY WINDOW  
BR - BRICK  
BRL - BLDG. RESTRICTION LINE  
BSMT - BASEMENT  
C/S - CONCRETE STOOP  
CONC - CONCRETE  
D/W - DRIVEWAY  
Ex - EXISTING  
FR - FRAME  
MAC - MACADAM  
G - GATE  
O/H - OVERHANG  
PUE - PUBLIC UTILITY ESMT.

A Land Surveying Company

**DULEY**  
and  
**Associates, Inc.**

Serving D.C. and MD.

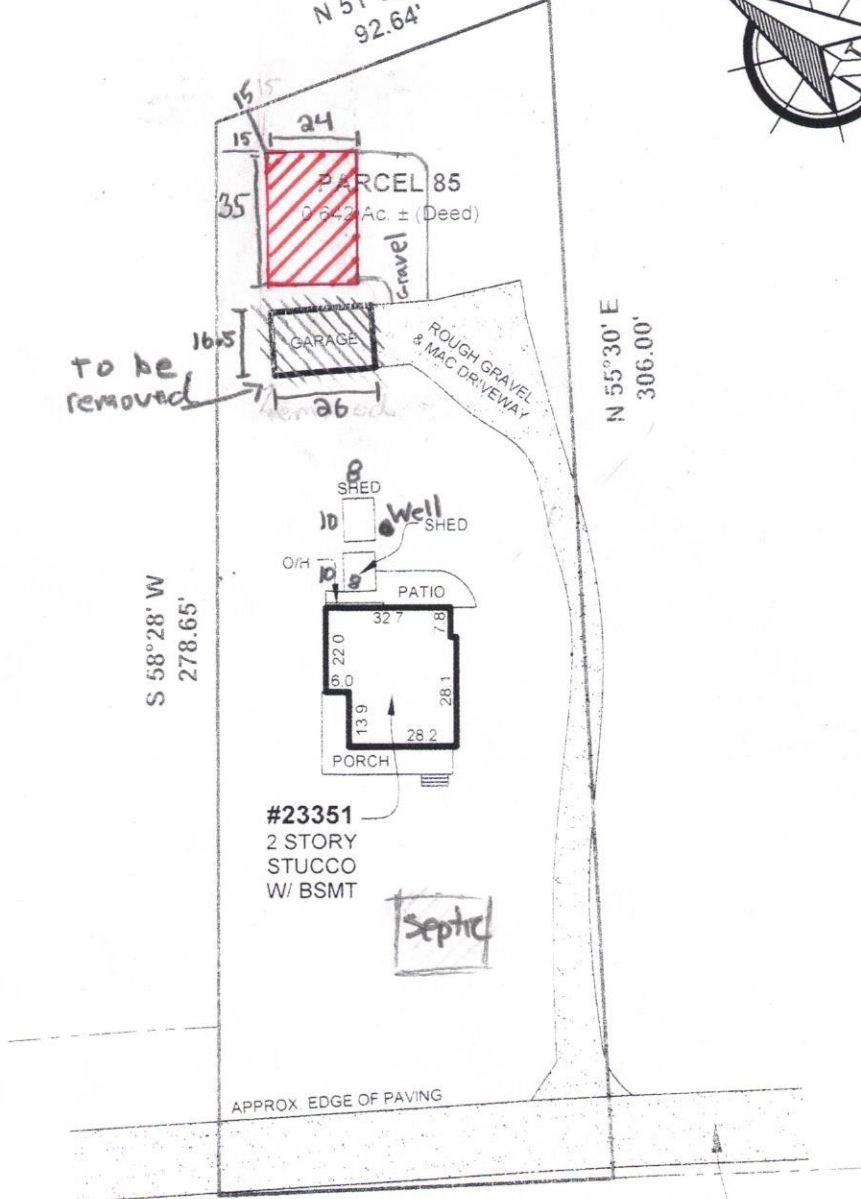
14604 Elm Street, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

NOTE:  
ENCROACHMENTS  
MAY EXIST

N 51° 42.64'



L. 8280, F. 513



To be removed

NOTE  
PROPERTY MAY BE SUBJECT TO  
FUTURE ACQUISITION

DAVIS MILL ROAD

LOCATION DRAWING OF:  
**#23351 DAVIS MILL ROAD**  
**PARCEL 85 TAX MAP FW11**  
N/F PROPERTY OF  
**CHRISTOPHER RUEGG & ANIKI STEENSEN**  
LIBER 8280, FOLIO 513  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

- LEGEND:
- X - FENCE
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  - Ex. - EXISTING
  - FR - FRAME
  - MAC - MACADAM
  - G - GATE
  - O/H - OVERHANG
  - PUE - PUBLIC UTILITY ESMT.
  - PIE - PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT ESMT.

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Building Material:  
The entire building is sheet steel at 26 gauge  
The interior is constructed with a steel truss system.  
Windows are aluminum framed and glass inserts.  
Floor will be 6 inch deep concrete.





SIDE WALL  
LEFT

FRONT  
END WALL