

Montgomery County Historic Preservation

Staff Report

<p>ADDRESS: 3948 Baltimore St., Kensington</p> <p>RESOURCE: Kensington Historic District</p> <p>APPLICANT: Nathan Oleson</p> <p>REVIEW: HAWP</p> <p>CASE NO.: 1153990</p> <p>PROPOSAL: Tree Removals</p>	<p>MEETING DATE: 6/10/2026</p> <p>REPORT DATE: 6/3/2026</p> <p>PUBLIC NOTICE: 5/27/2026</p> <p>TAX CREDIT ELIGIBLE: No</p> <p>STAFF: Dan Bruechert</p>
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Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the HPC approve with the HAWP with one (1) condition the HAWP application with final approval delegated to Staff:

1. A site plan showing the location of the proposed replacement trees needs to be submitted before issuance of the final HAWP approval.

Architectural Description

Significance: Primary (1880-1910) Resource* in the Kensington Historic District

Date: 1987

Style: Colonial Revival

* The map adopted with the designation of the Kensington Historic District shows the subject property shaded as a Primary Resource associated with the dates 1880-1910. However, the tax records show a construction date of 1987 and Staff located HAWP application from July 1986 for the construction of a

single-family house (no building plans are attached to the HAWP record).¹ Additionally, based on Staff's evaluation of the house, it is clearly late 20th century construction and is not historic, however, Staff cannot amend the designation map without approval by the County Council.



Figure 1: The subject property (highlighted in blue) is in the Kensington Historic District (hatched in red).

Proposal

The applicant proposes to remove several trees from the property.

Applicable Guidelines

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Kensington Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County Maryland for Kensington (*Master Plan Amendment*), the Vision of Kensington (*Vision*), Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A-8 (Chapter 24A-8), and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (*Standards*). The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

¹ The 1986 HAWP application is available here: https://mcatlas.org/tiles/06_HistoricPreservation_PhotoArchives/Padlock/HAR60640004/Box022/SA%2026-86_Kensington_3948%20Baltimore%20St_07-08-1986.pdf.

Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A-8

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
- (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

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportions, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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 two-story side gable Colonial Revival House constructed in 1987 located at the intersection of Baltimore St. and Prospect St. (see *Fig. 1*). Along Prospect St. there are four White Pines

and an American Holly tree. The applicant proposes to remove these trees and, as part of a larger landscape project, plant five new trees on site.

The applicant's arborist indicates that the several White Pines have died and that a considerable number of limbs have fallen and they are concerned that a limb could fall and damage people and property. The Holly, which is planted amid the pines has been choked by the pines and has stunted growth and very little foliage.

The new landscape plan for the property is still in its conceptual phase, but the applicant has committed to planting five trees on site. One tree will be a Sweet Bay Magnolia and four will be Green Giant Arborvitae.² The Sweet Bay Magnolia will grow to between 15' – 35' (fifteen to thirty-five feet) and the Arborvitae will grow to a height of 40' – 60' (forty to sixty feet).

Staff finds that while the existing pines are tall and part of the historic district's mature tree canopy which helps to reinforce the suburban park setting, they are also in failing condition and may pose a hazard to the health and safety of the community, justifying their removal under 24A-8(b)(6).

Staff additionally finds that the five proposed trees will, given time, grow and help to reinforce the tree canopy. The placement of these trees has not been identified, so Staff recommends the HPC add a condition to the approval of this HAWP requiring the applicant to identify the location of the trees. With the trees in a location where they will have space to grow, Staff finds the proposal is consistent with the character of the district and recommends approval under 24A-8(b)(2) and (d) and *Standard #2*.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application;

1. A site plan showing the location of the proposed replacement trees needs to be submitted before issuance of the final HAWP approval;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(2)(6), and (d), and therefore 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;

² More information about the Sweet Bay Magnolia is available here: <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=c906>. Information about the Green Giant Arborvitae is available here: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/thuja-green-giant/>.

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:

**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	*	*	*	*	*		*

Front
Porch

* 3948 Baltimore St *

House

Porch

Garage

Driveway

Ex. Nardus

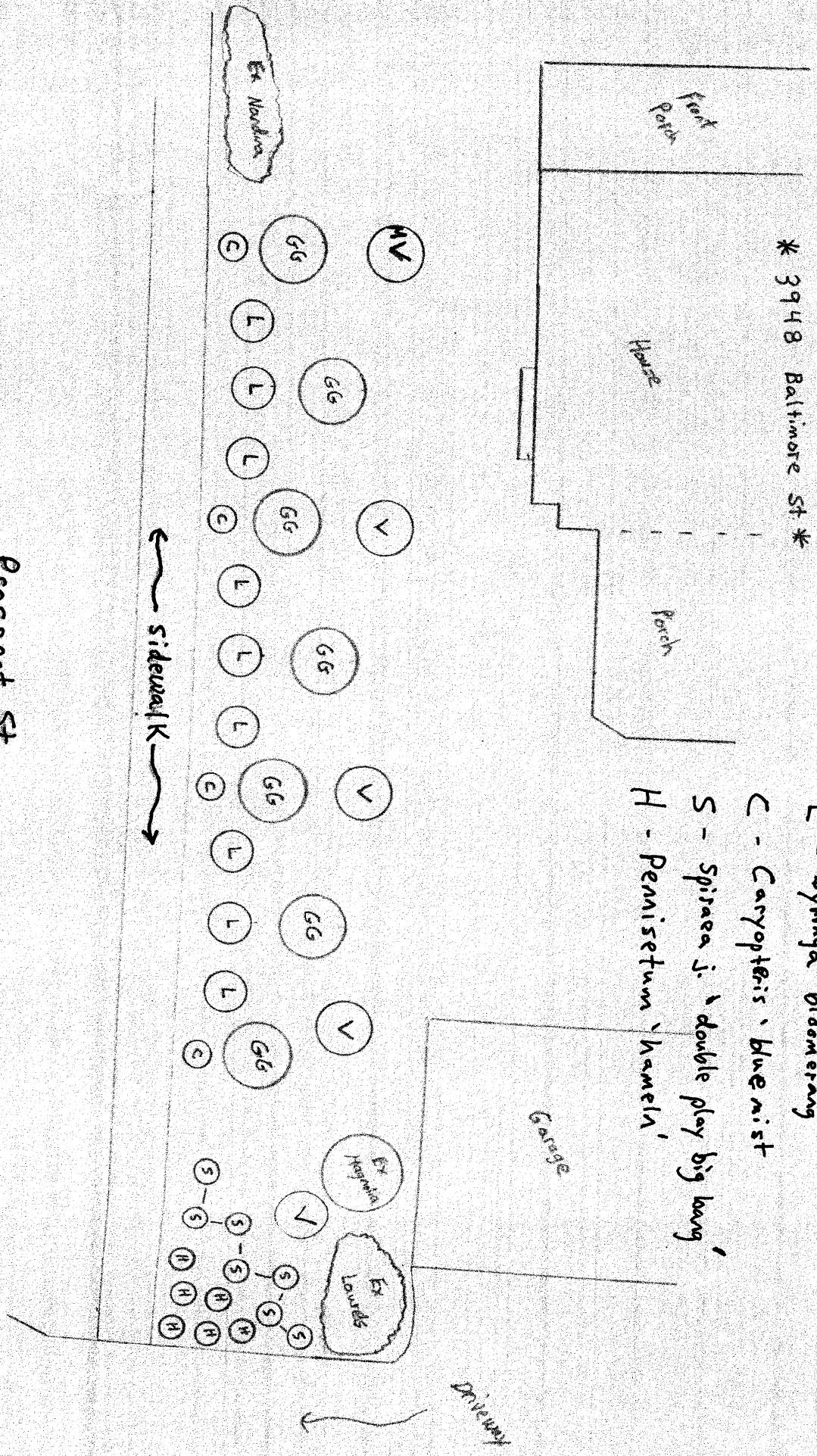
Ex. Hamamelis

Ex. Lards

Prospect St.

sidewalk

- MV - Magnolia Virginiaana
- V - Viburnum 'shasta'
- GG - Thuja 'green giant'
- L - Syringa 'blauerang'
- C - Caryopteris 'blue mist'
- S - Spiraea j. 'double play big bang'
- H - Pennisetum 'hameln'





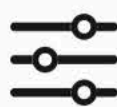


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