

612 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park
(RETROACTIVE) HPC Case # 37/03-08AA
Takoma Park Historic District



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION


Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Jef Fuller
Chairperson

Date: May 29, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Carla Reid, Director
Department of Permitting Services

FROM: Joshua Silver, Senior Planner 
Historic Preservation Section
Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Historic Area Work Permit #483309, stone wall installation

The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has reviewed the attached application for a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP). This application was **Approved** at the May 28, 2008 meeting.

The HPC staff has reviewed and stamped the attached construction drawings.

THE BUILDING PERMIT FOR THIS PROJECT SHALL BE ISSUED CONDITIONAL UPON ADHERENCE TO THE ABOVE APPROVED HAWP CONDITIONS AND MAY REQUIRE APPROVAL BY DPS OR ANOTHER LOCAL OFFICE BEFORE WORK CAN BEGIN.

Applicant: Ruth Skafsgaard & Martin Lowery

Address: 612 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park

This HAWP approval is subject to the general condition that the applicant will obtain all other applicable Montgomery County or local government agency permits. After the issuance of these permits, the applicant must contact this Historic Preservation Office if any changes to the approved plan are made.





RETURN TO: DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES
255 ROCKVILLE PIKE, 2nd FLOOR ROCKVILLE MD 20850
240-777-6370

DPS - #

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: RUTH SKAFSGAARD

Daytime Phone No.: 301/585-8374

Tax Account No.: 16 13 01069646 MARTIN LOWERY

Name of Property Owner: RUTH SKAFSGAARD & Daytime Phone No.: 301/585-8374

Address: 612 PHILADELPHIA AVE. TK PK MD 20912
Street Number City State Zip Code

Contractor: THE LANDSCAPE GROUP Phone No.: 202/291-1650

Contractor Registration No.: 10480 MHIC

Agent for Owner: _____ Daytime Phone No.: _____

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number: 612 Street: PHILADELPHIA AVE.

Town/City: TAKOMA PARK Nearest Cross Street: TAKOMA AVE.

Lot: P11 Block: 69 Subdivision: 25

Liber: _____ Folio: _____ Parcel: _____

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

- 1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Construct | <input type="checkbox"/> Extend | <input type="checkbox"/> Alter/Renovate | <input type="checkbox"/> A/C | <input type="checkbox"/> Slab | <input type="checkbox"/> Room Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Porch | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move | <input type="checkbox"/> Install | <input type="checkbox"/> Wreck/Raze | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodburning Stove | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revision | <input type="checkbox"/> Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Revocable | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>FREE STANDING STONE ENTRY TO DRIVEWAY</u> | | | | |

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 17,800.00

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # _____

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 WSSC 02 Septic 03 Other: _____

2B. Type of water supply: 01 WSSC 02 Well 03 Other: _____

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height _____ feet _____ inches

- 3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
- On party line/property line Entirely on land of owner On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

[Signature] 4/21/08
Signature of owner or authorized agent Date

Approved: [Signature] For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: _____ Signature _____ Date: 5/29/08

Application/Permit No.: _____ Date Filed: _____ Date Issued: _____

Editt 5/21/99 **SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS**

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION.**

1. **WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

a. Description of existing structure(s) and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance:

Gravel driveway and stone retaining wall
presumably original from early 1920's
Old retaining wall in need of repair, in part
due to traffic accident and would benefit
from the addition of coping.

b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource(s), the environmental setting, and, where applicable, the historic district:

Free-standing stone entryway matching and
integrating with stone retaining wall,
constructed set back from the street to
create entryway definition. Coping on
retainer wall.

2. **SITE PLAN**

Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale. You may use your plat. Your site plan must include:

- the scale, north arrow, and date;
- dimensions of all existing and proposed structures; and
- site features such as walkways, driveways, fences, ponds, streams, trash dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and landscaping.

3. **PLANS AND ELEVATIONS**

You must submit 2 copies of plans and elevations in a format no larger than 11" x 17". Plans on 8 1/2" x 11" paper are preferred.

- Schematic construction plans**, with marked dimensions, indicating location, size and general type of walls, window and door openings, and other fixed features of both the existing resource(s) and the proposed work.
- Elevations (facades), with marked dimensions, clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, context. All materials and fixtures proposed for the exterior must be noted on the elevations drawings. An existing and a proposed elevation drawing of each facade affected by the proposed work is required.

4. **MATERIALS SPECIFICATIONS**

General description of materials and manufactured items proposed for incorporation in the work of the project. This information may be included on your design drawings.

5. **PHOTOGRAPHS**

- Clearly labeled photographic prints of each facade of existing resource, including details of the affected portions. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.
- Clearly label photographic prints of the resource as viewed from the public right-of-way and of the adjoining properties. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.

6. **TREE SURVEY**

If you are proposing construction adjacent to or within the dripline of any tree 6" or larger in diameter (at approximately 4 feet above the ground), you must file an accurate tree survey identifying the size, location, and species of each tree of at least that dimension.

7. **ADDRESSES OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS**

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LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

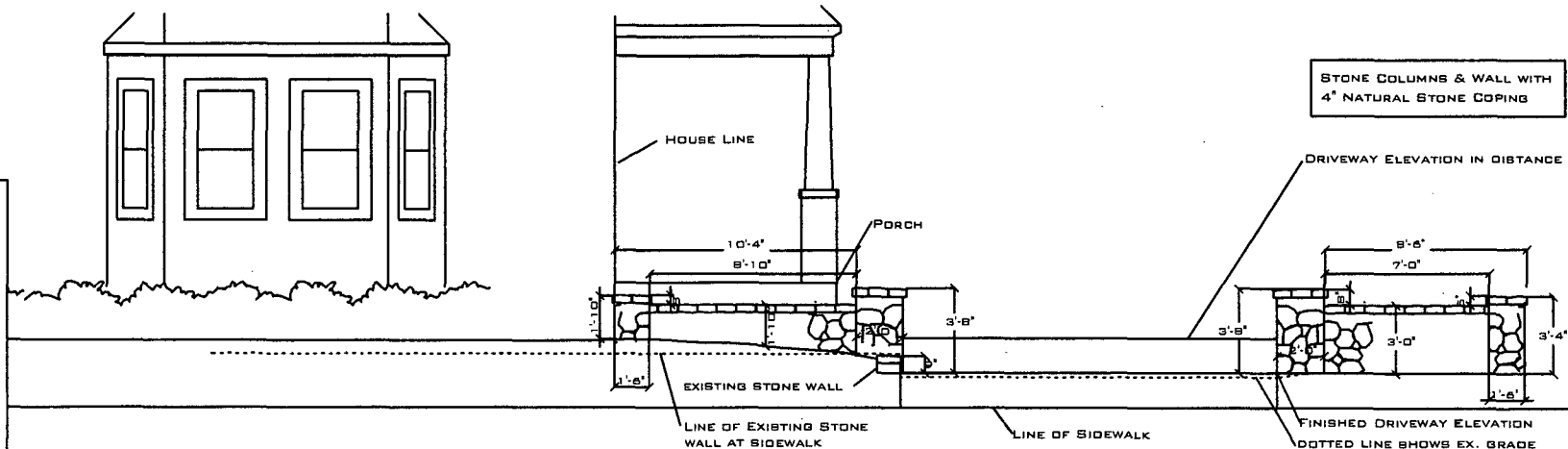
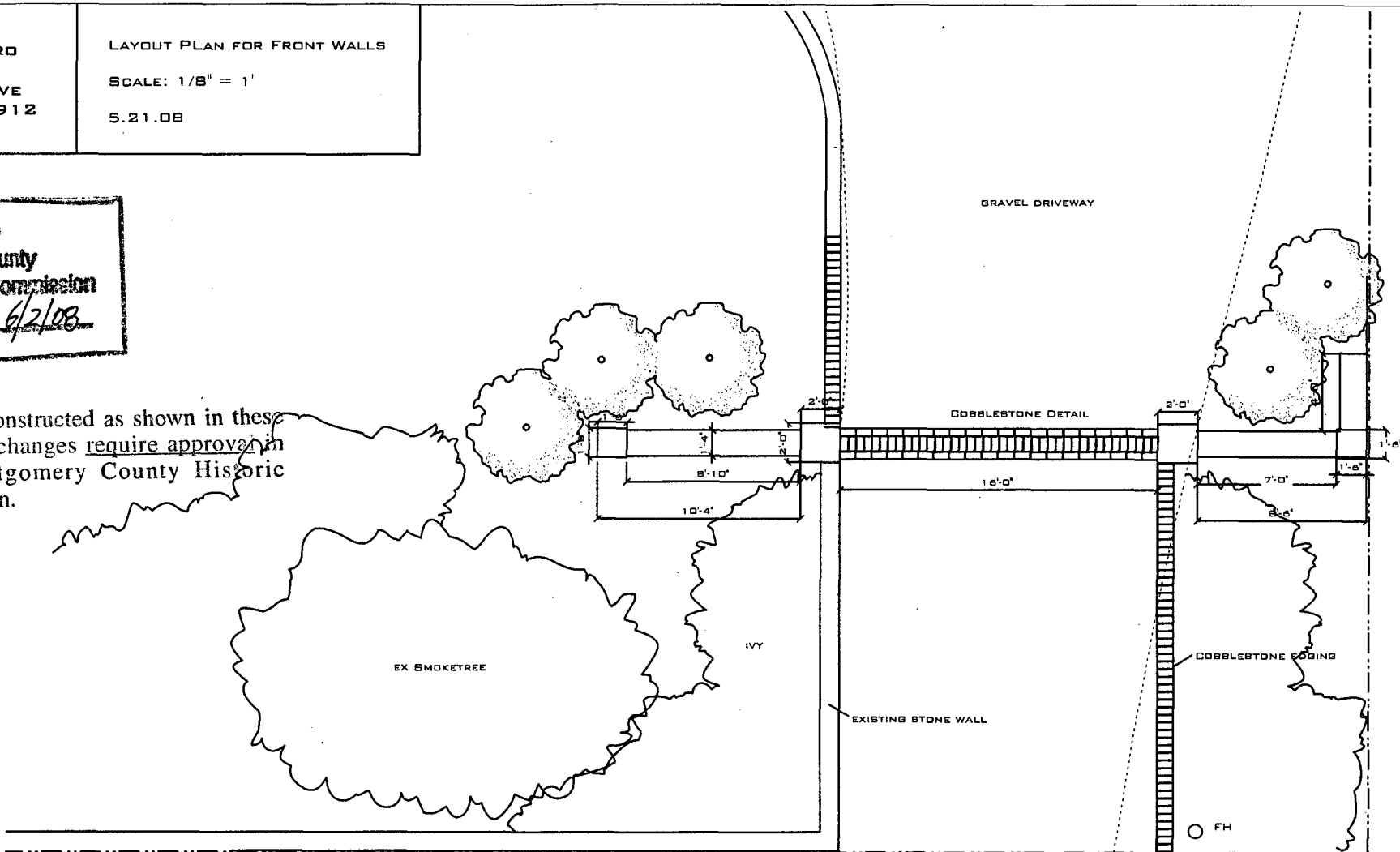
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'

5.21.08

APPROVED
Montgomery County
Historic Preservation Commission

Carol Silver 6/2/08

This project must be constructed as shown in these approved plans. Any changes require approval in writing by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.



THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD.
7059 BLAIR ROAD NW SUITE 102
WASHINGTON DC 20012

PH: 202.291.1650

FAX: 202.291.2992

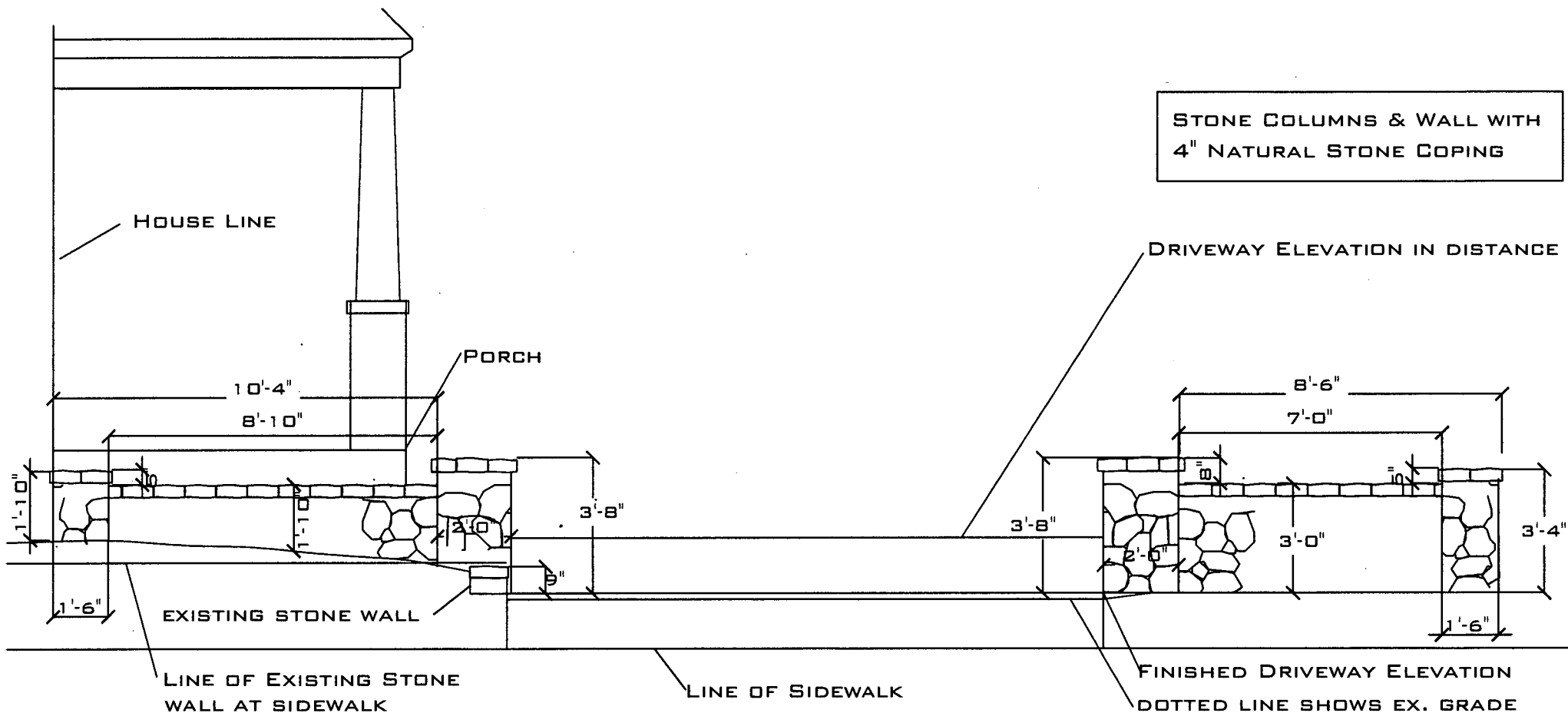
EMAIL: INFO@TLGDESIGN.NET

LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 Philadelphia Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

5.21.08



THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD.
7059 Blair Road NW Suite 102
Washington DC 20012

ph: 202.291.1650
fax: 202.291.2992
email: info@tlgdesign.net

APPROVED
Montgomery County
Historic Preservation Commission
Charles Wilson 6/2/08

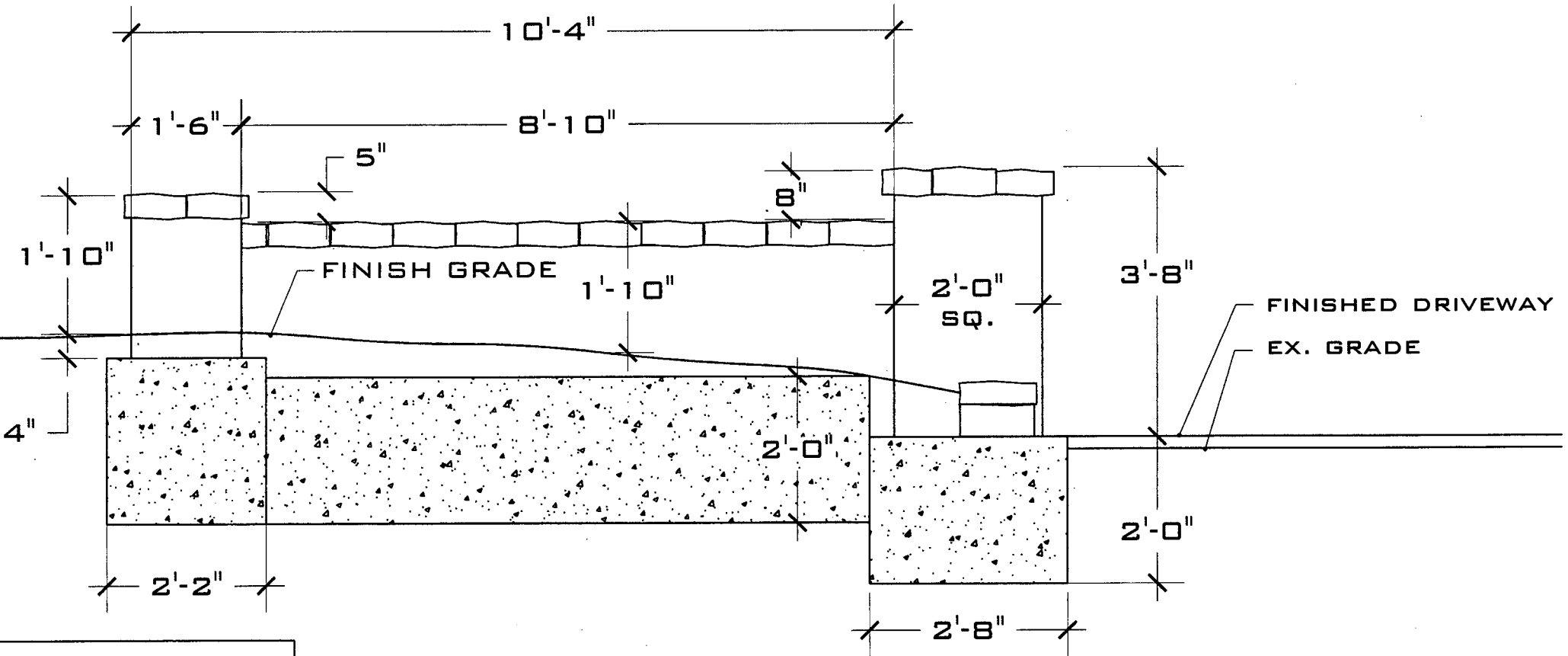
This project must be constructed as shown in these approved plans. Any changes require approval in writing by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 Philadelphia Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912

TYPICAL WALL SECTION

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'

5.28.08



THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD.
7059 BLAIR ROAD NW SUITE 102
WASHINGTON DC 20012

PH: 202.291.1650
FAX: 202.291.2992

EMAIL: INFO@TLGDESIGN.NET

APPROVED
Montgomery County
Historic Preservation Commission

Carol Silver 6/2/08

This project must be constructed as shown in these approved plans. Any changes require approval in writing by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	612 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	5/28/2008
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	5/21/2008
Applicant:	Ruth Skafsgaard & Martin Lowery	Public Notice:	5/7/2008
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	None
Case Number:	37/03-08AA (RETROACTIVE)	Staff:	Josh Silver
PROPOSAL:	Stone wall installation		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending that the HPC **approve** this HAWP application.

BACKGROUND

On April 9, 2008 the HPC reviewed a (RETROACTIVE) HAWP application for the installation of an approximately 31-total linear feet stone privacy wall in the front yard of the subject property. The proposal included installation of a stone wall split into two sections by an existing gravel driveway:

- (Section 1) the left (east) section of the wall is approximately 12'2" long, 2'0" thick, and ranges from 4'6" – 6'6" tall;
- (Section 2) the right (west) section of the wall is 10'7" long (extending east-west across the front of the property), and returns 8'0" (extending north-south toward the house), 2'0" thick, and ranges from 6'0"– 6'6" tall.

There was general consensus among the HPC that the proposed stone wall was:

- An uncharacteristic feature within the Takoma Park Historic District
- Inconsistent with the *Guidelines* and *Standards* with respect to preserving the existing open space pattern of the historic district
- Too tall and out of scale for the site and with the existing retaining walls at the property
- Not approvable if a HAWP application was submitted prior to installation. (See attached draft transcript not yet reviewed and approved by the HPC Circle 23)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource Within The Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Craftsman
DATE: c1920s

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Takoma Park is historically significant as both an early railroad suburb and a streetcar community. It was the one of the earliest railroad suburbs of Washington. The community was given new lifeblood in the early-20th century with the opening of streetcar lines, which led to the development of new subdivisions in Takoma Park.

Before 1883, the area that became Takoma Park was used for farming and vacation homes for Washingtonians. A few houses from this period still exist.

Benjamin Franklin Gilbert was the developer of Takoma Park, which he promoted for its natural environment and healthy setting. The site offered fresh water, trees, and a high elevation to escape the malaria-ridden District of Columbia. In 1883, Gilbert purchased a 90-acre farm and platted a subdivision with picturesque, winding streets named for native trees, including Sycamore, Chestnut, Hickory, and Oak. Equally reflective of Gilbert's promotion of the natural setting is the use of the Native American "Takoma", meaning "exalted" or "near heaven." Later he added the "Park" appellation to draw attention to its healthy environment.

Takoma Park houses built between 1883 and 1900 were fanciful, turreted, multi-gabled affairs of Queen Anne, Stick Style, and Shingle Style influence. The substantial houses had spacious settings, with deep, narrow lots of 50 feet by 200-300 feet, with 40-foot setback requirements. Extensive numbers of these houses (built from 1883 to 1900) remain, particularly concentrated along Maple, Cedar, and Holly Avenues. The earliest houses were built on Cedar Avenue (originally known as Oak Avenue).

Gilbert was more than just the developer of the community - he was a resident and civic leader. He built one of the first houses in the new community for himself and later became the town's first mayor. By 1886, Takoma Park had a post office

and a new railroad station. Fifteen trains a day ran between Washington and Takoma Park and the population had reached 100.

By 1893, the town's population quadrupled. Four subdivisions had expanded the town, which was incorporated in 1890. Takoma Avenue, Pine Avenue, and Holly Avenue were among the streets to develop during this period.

The first multi-family buildings in Montgomery County were built in Takoma Park. The earliest documented multi-family dwelling is the *Ford House* at 7137-39 Maple Avenue. Brothers Byron and Seth Ford built this large, elaborate, frame double-house in 1885 for their families. The next multi-family dwellings to be built in the county were not constructed until 1907.

The start of streetcar service along Carroll Avenue in 1897, operated by the Baltimore and Washington Transit Company, made the adjacent areas more attractive for residential development, leading to new subdivisions. This line, supplemented in 1910 by the Washington and Maryland line (1910-27), led to the creation of eight additional subdivisions extending out from the trolley lines. The inexpensive electric streetcar, the availability of low-cost house plans and kit houses in combination with smaller lot sizes made home ownership in Takoma Park possible for individuals of more modest income levels than during the previous period. By 1922, the population soared to 4,144, making Takoma Park the tenth largest incorporated town in Maryland. Among the streets, which developed during the 1910s and 1920s in response to the establishment of streetcar, lines are Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Carroll Avenues.

The appearance today of much of the Takoma Park historic district is formed by the large numbers of dwellings constructed from 1900 into the 1920s. The houses built in Takoma Park during this period reveal changing American tastes in house design from the elaborate ornamentation of the late 19th century dwellings to more practical, simplified designs. Many of these early twentieth century houses reflect the aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which emphasized the inherent nature of the building materials and structural elements for ornamentation. Residences put up in the American Four Square, Craftsman, Bungalow, and Colonial Revival designs continued the pattern of suburban development previously established - detached, wood frame single-family residences with uniform setbacks from the streets, though at a smaller scale. Entire streetscapes of these houses, particularly the Bungalow and Craftsman designs, are found along Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Westmoreland Avenues. Scores of Bungalows, and Craftsman-style houses and catalog-order houses were built in this era.

Takoma Park continues to thrive today, with a population of 20,000. Though the train no longer stops there, the town's close relationship with mass transportation continues. The Metro enables residents to continue the tradition, started with the railroad and extended with the streetcars, of living in the suburbs and commuting to the District using mass transit. Two sections of the Montgomery County portion of Takoma Park have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Takoma Park Historic District since 1976.

PROPOSAL:

The applicants have submitted a revised proposal to install a stone wall in the front yard of the subject property. The proposed wall is approximately 27-total linear feet and split into two distinct sections by an existing gravel driveway.

Section 1

The left (east) section of the wall is approximately 12'4" long, 2'0" thick, and ranges from 1'10" – 3'8" tall.

Section 2

The right (west) section of the wall is 10'6" long (extending east-west across the front of the property), and returns 4'0" (extending north-south toward the house), 2'0" thick, and ranges from 3'4" – 3'8" tall.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. 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 4A)*, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

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.

The *Guidelines* that pertain to this project are as follows:

- All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A

A HAWP permit should be issued if the Commission finds that:

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of a historic site or historic resource within a historic district.
2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical archaeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which a historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto of to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter.

In the case of an application for work on a historic resource located within a 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 surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district.

A HAWP should be denied if the Commission 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.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- #2 The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of historical materials or alteration of features and spaces 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 will be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Staff is discouraged the applicants completed the installation of the stone wall without first receiving an approved HAWP. The review of retroactive applications is difficult for both staff and the HPC. Staff reminds the applicant of their obligation to apply for a HAWP when performing alterations to the exterior of the property.

Staff has met with the applicant and their agent twice since the April 9, 2008 HPC meeting to discuss making refinements to their proposal to address the projects inconsistencies with the *Guidelines* and

Standards. The revised proposal reflects the efforts of staff and the continued cooperation of the applicant to develop an approvable proposal more consistent with the *Guidelines* and *Standards*. Although staff is recommending approval of the revised proposal, it views the new design as a solution to reduce the impact on the integrity of the historic district rather than a best practice.

As the *Guidelines* state the design review emphasis for contributing resources are restricted to changes that are *at all visible from the public right-of-way*, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation. The *Guidelines* also state all changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

The *Standards* recommend retaining the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features of a setting. The *Standards* recommend **not** removing or radically changing those features of the setting which are important in defining the historic character. The *Standards* also recommend **not** introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

Staff is amenable to recommending approval of the revised proposal because of the significant decrease in the height and scale of the wall. As a result of these reductions the stone wall will have a diminished impact on the streetscape of the historic district, and on the existing landscaping and pattern of open space found at the property and along Philadelphia Avenue. These reductions coupled with the addition of the two additional piers at the end of both walls better integrate the wall with the historic retaining walls that front the property, give the wall a defined horizontal limit, and mitigate the visual impact the wall had on the historic relationship of the street and house and adjacent property. *Staff is recommending that the Commission approve this HAWP application.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application as being consistent with Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) & (2);

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

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the **3 permit sets of drawings 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 the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans.



RETURN TO: DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES
295 ROCKVILLE PIKE, SUITE 200, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850
202-772-1177

DPS - #8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: RUTH SKAFSGAARD
Daytime Phone No.: 301/585-8374
Tax Account No.: 16 13 01069646 MARTIN LOWERY
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LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

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Town/City: TAKOMA PARK Nearest Cross Street: TAKOMA AVE.
Lot: P11 Block: 69 Subdivision: 25
Liber: _____ Folio: _____ Parcel: _____

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE: Construct Extend Alter/Renovate AC Slab Room Addition Porch Deck Shed
 Move Install Wreck/Raze Solar Fireplace Woodburning Stove Single Family
 Revision Repair Revocable Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) Other: FREE STANDING STONE ENTRY TO DRIVEWAY
1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 17800.00
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3A. Height _____ feet _____ inches
3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
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I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.
Ruth Skafsgaard Martin Lowery 4/21/08
Signature of owner or authorized agent Date

Approved: _____ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission
Disapproved: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Application/Permit No.: 483309 Date Filed: 4/21/08 Date Issued: _____

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION.**

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- a. Description of existing structure(s) and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance:

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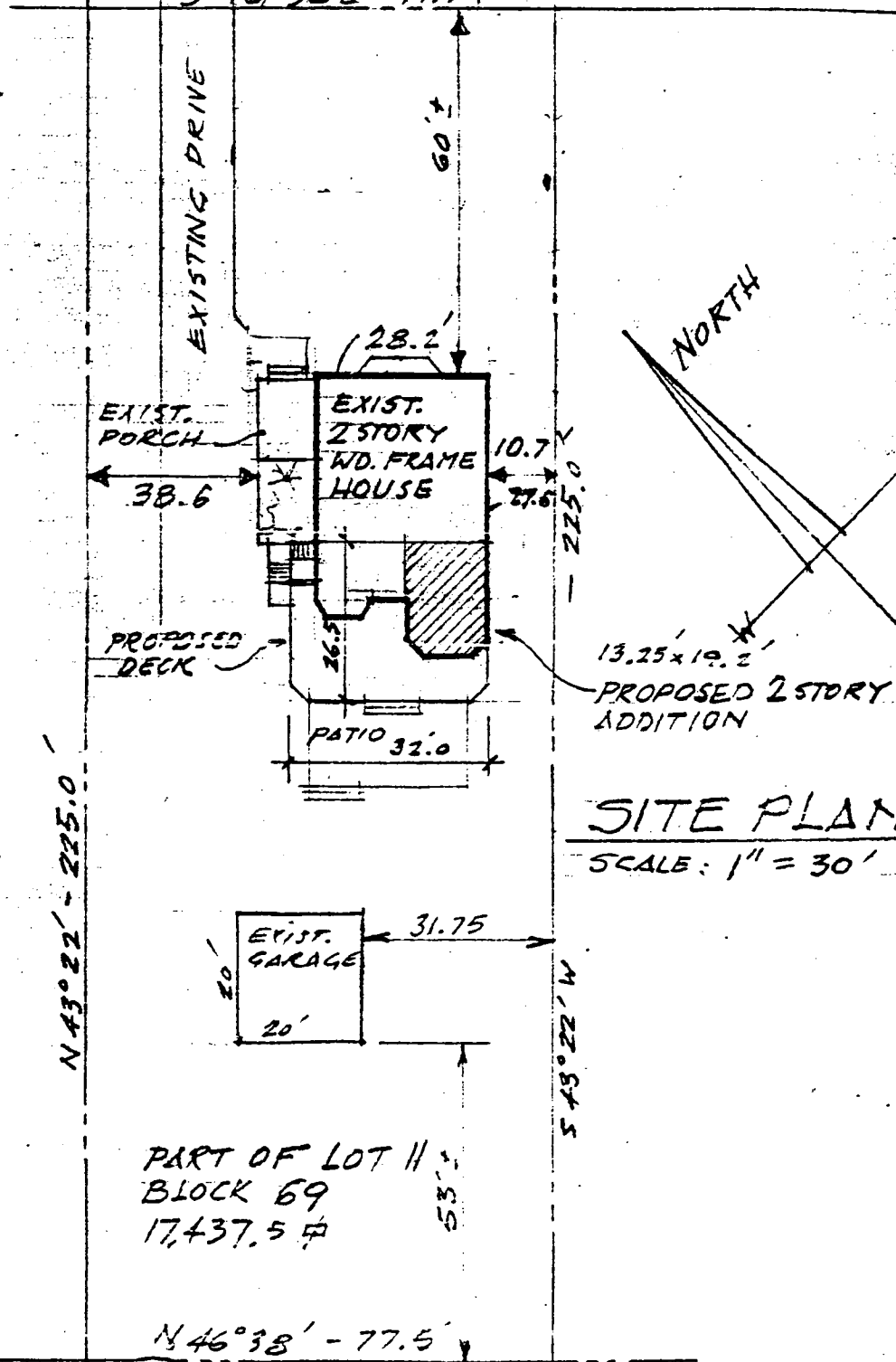
HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING
 [Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<p>Owner's mailing address</p> <p>612 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912 (MARTIN LOWERY + RUTH SKAFFSHARD)</p>	<p>Owner's Agent's mailing address</p>
<p align="center">Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</p>	
<p>FAGAN, DEBORAH + BERNARD 608 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD. 20912</p>	<p>JOHN SANDAGE 704 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912</p>
<p>JAMES EVANS 703 New York Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912</p>	<p>CHERYL SLOAN 613 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912</p>
<p>PEGGY BULLGER DOUG LEATHERBURY 619 PHILADELPHIA AVE TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912</p>	

ATT: CRISS LOPEZ

PHILADELPHIA AVE.

S 46° 38' E - 77.5'



SITE PLAN

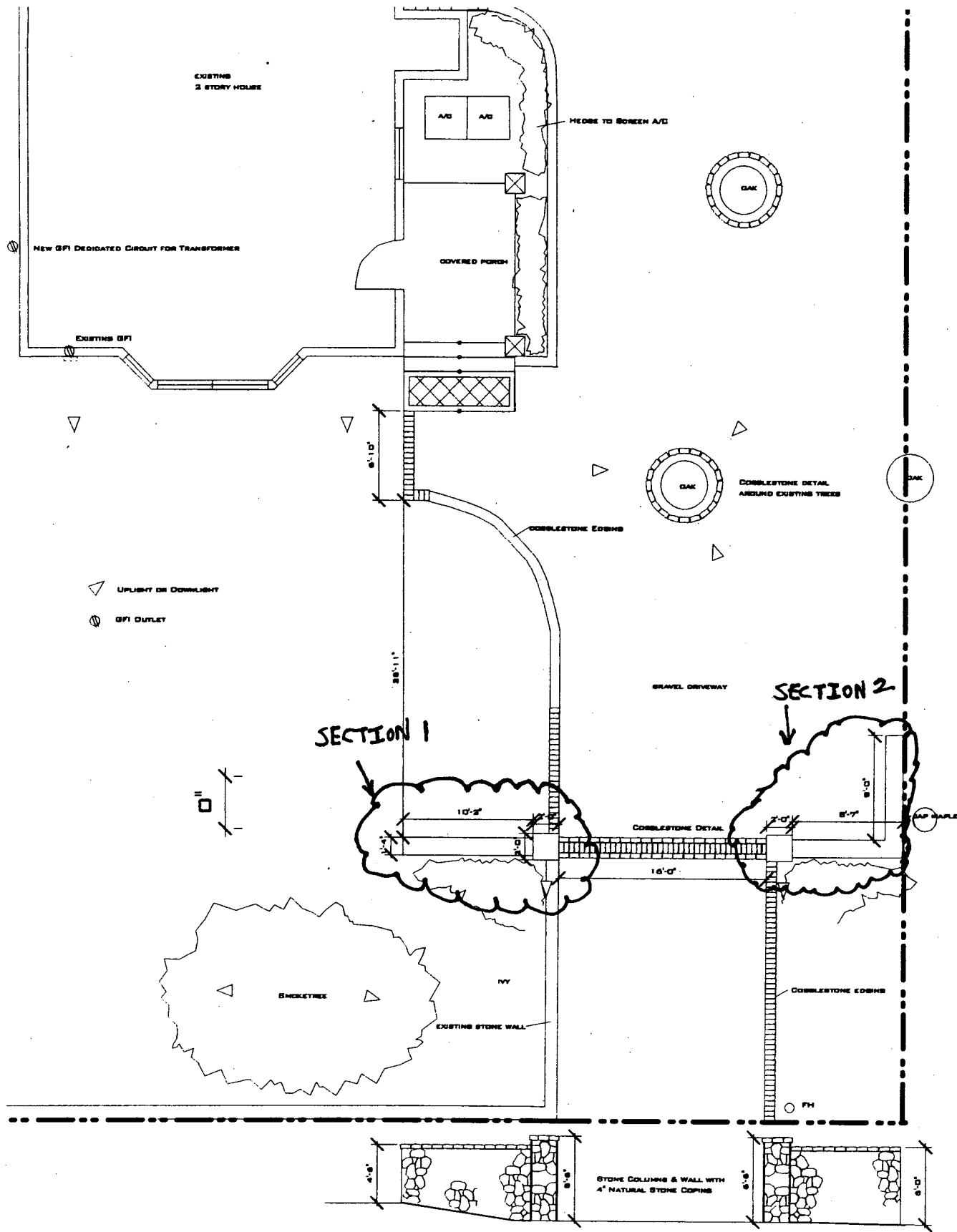
SCALE: 1" = 30'

DOOR AREAS: SQ. FEET:

	EXIST.	ADDITION	TOTAL
SHT	802	-	802.0
1 st FL	978	240	1,218.0
1 st FL	778	346	1,124.0
TOTAL	2,558	586	3,144.0

PART OF LOT 11
BLOCK 69
17,437.5 sq ft

SKAFSGARD'S RESIDENCE - ADDITION



THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD.
 7059 BLAIR ROAD, NW SUITE 102
 WASHINGTON DC 20012
 PH: 202.291.1650
 FAX: 202.291.2992
 EMAIL: INFO@TLGDESIGN.NET

LOWERY - SKAFBGAARD
 RESIDENCE
 612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
 TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

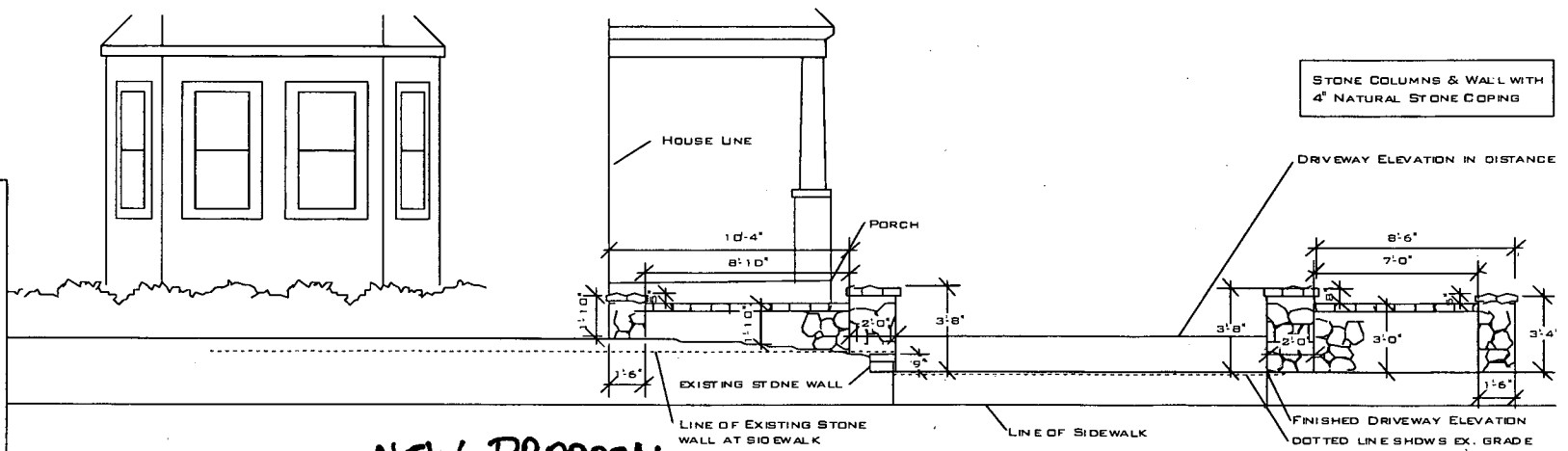
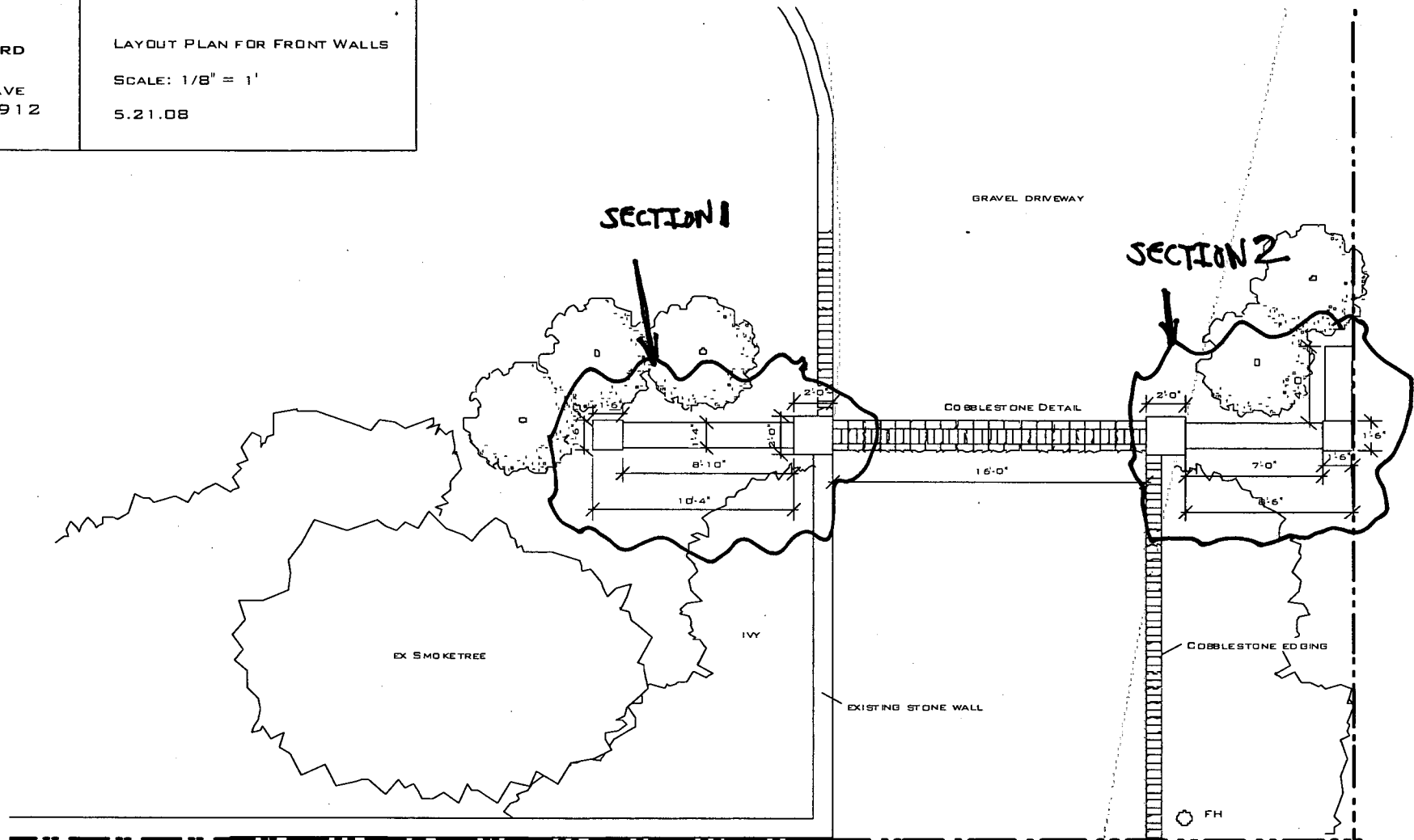
LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS
 SHEET NUMBER: 2 OF 3
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'
 3.16.08

LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'

5.21.08



THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD.
7059 BLAIR ROAD NW SUITE 102
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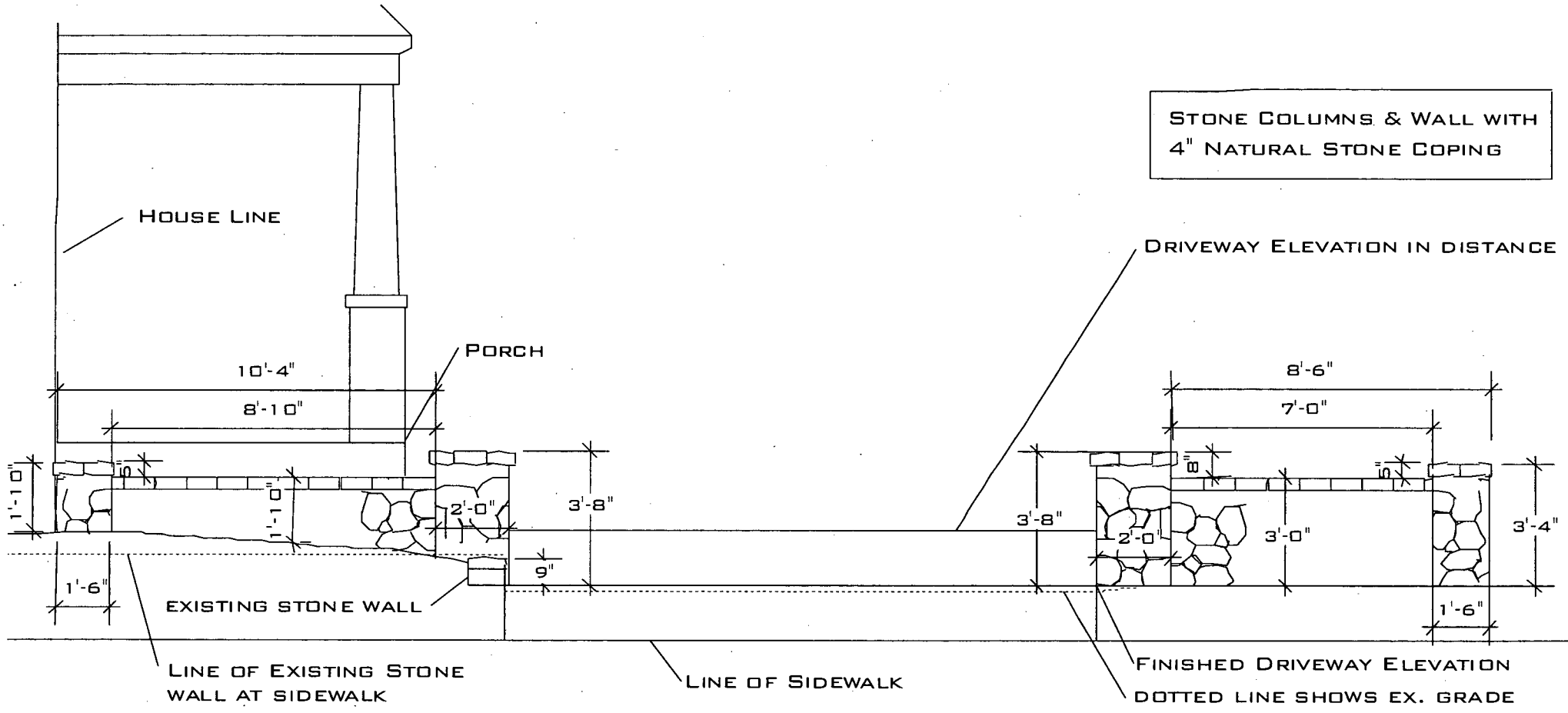
NEW PROPOSAL

LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

5.21.08



STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH
4" NATURAL STONE COPING

DRIVEWAY ELEVATION IN DISTANCE

EXISTING STONE WALL

LINE OF EXISTING STONE
WALL AT SIDEWALK

LINE OF SIDEWALK

FINISHED DRIVEWAY ELEVATION
DOTTED LINE SHOWS EX. GRADE



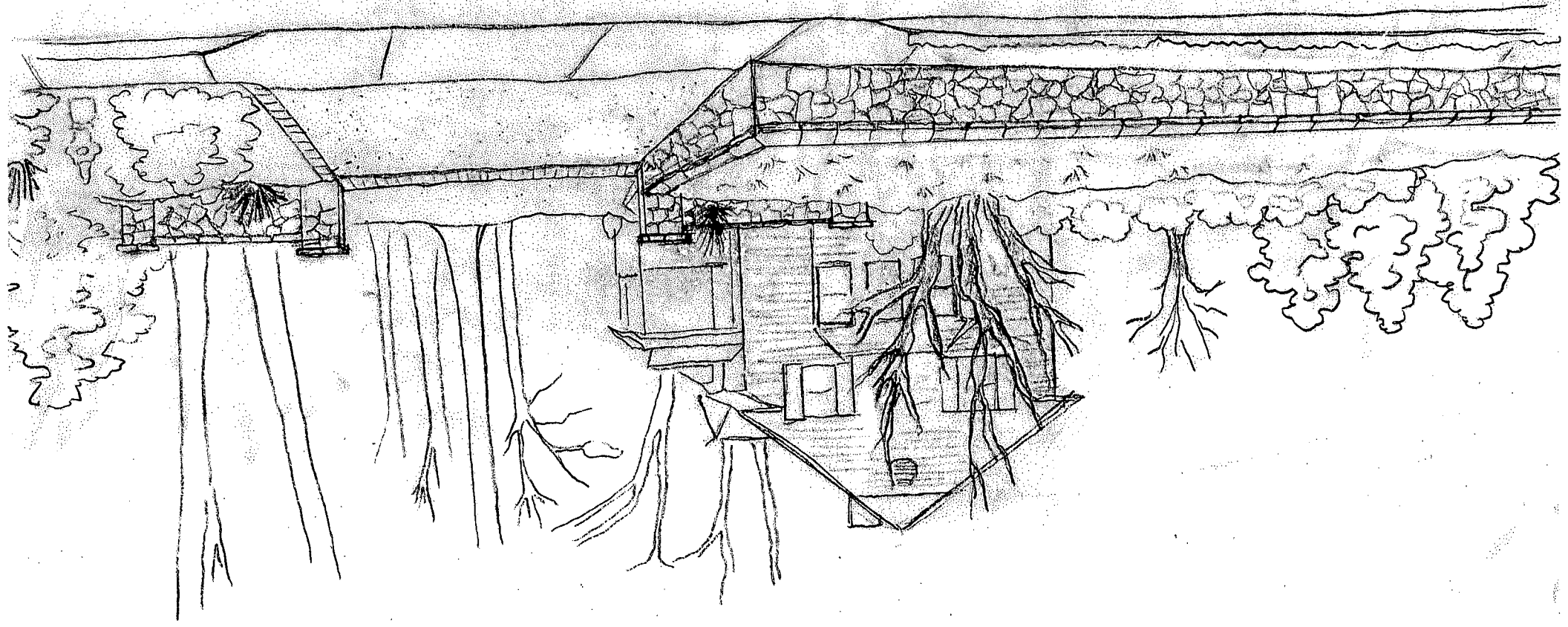
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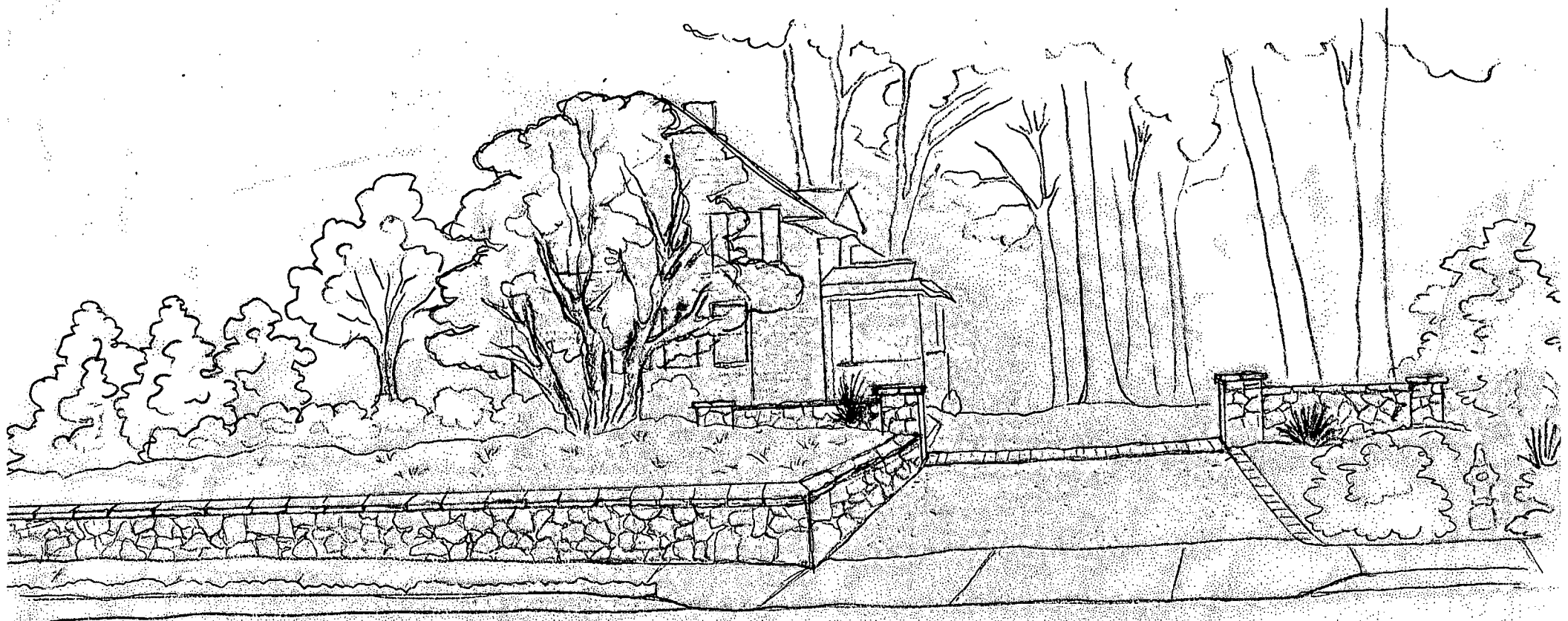
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NEW PROPOSAL

NEW PROPOSAL

WINTER

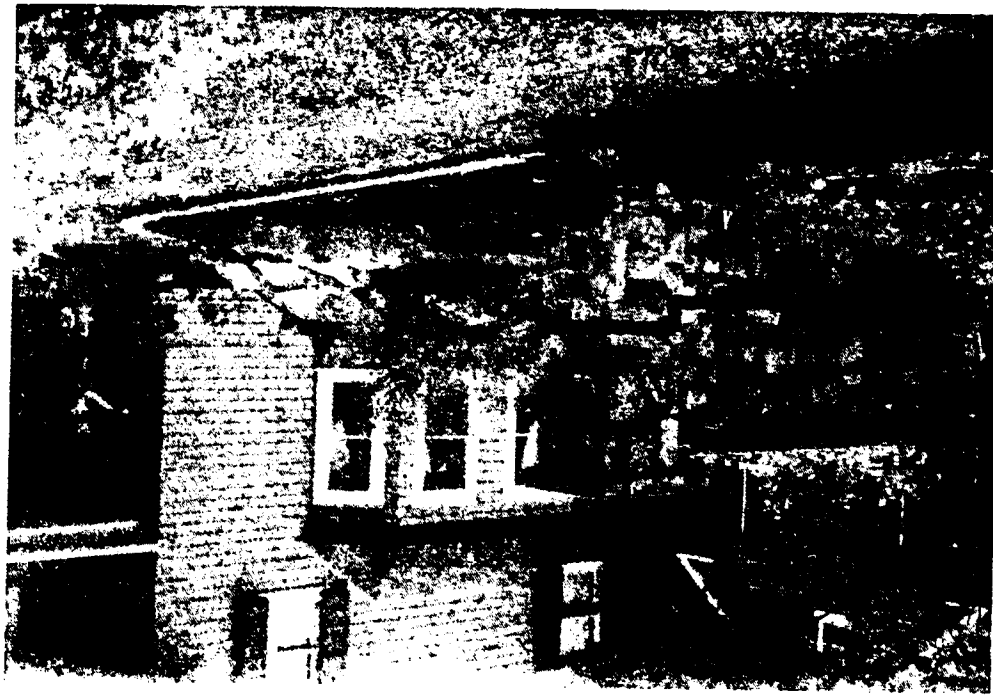




NEW PROPOSAL

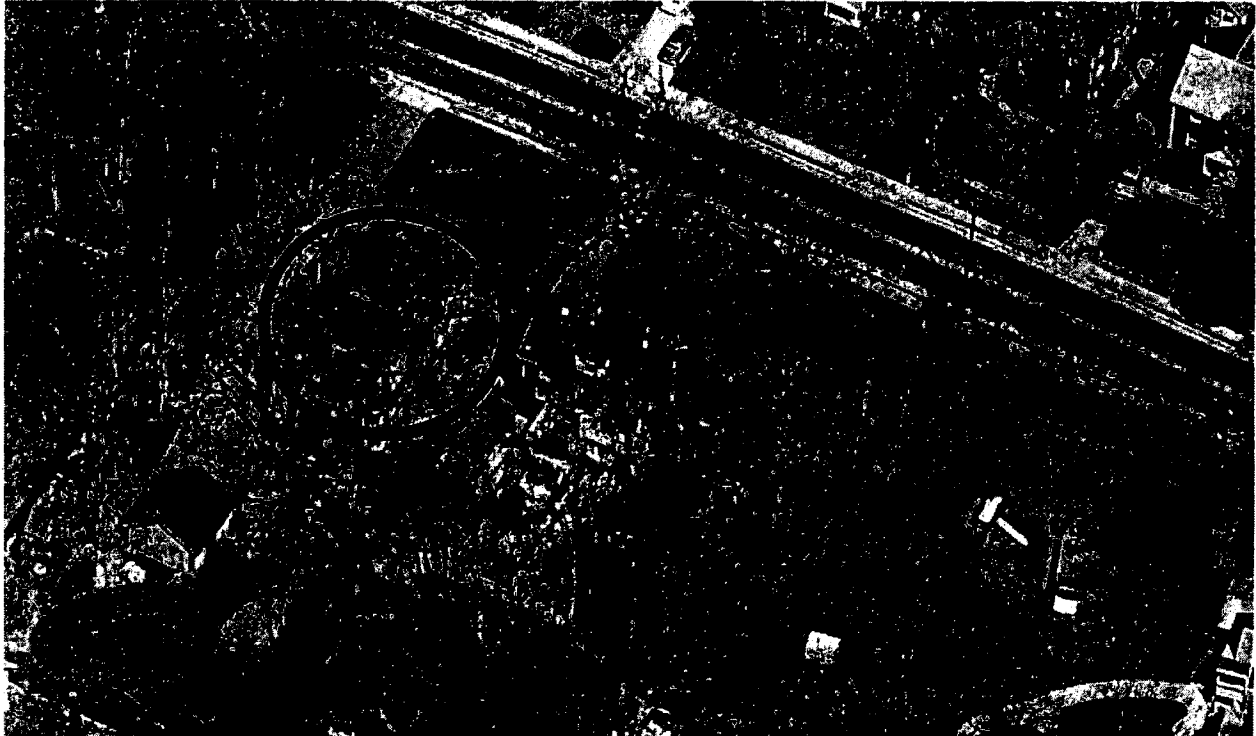
SUMMER

14



— = PROPOSED NEW WALL HEIGHT

612 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park
Takoma Park Historic District







612 Philadelphia Avenue Takoma Park
Takoma Park Historic District
(Completed Stone Wall Installation Project)



Philadelphia Avenue, facing northwest



Photo from adjacent property, facing west



Photo from public right-of-way, facing southwest



Photo from public right-of-way, facing south

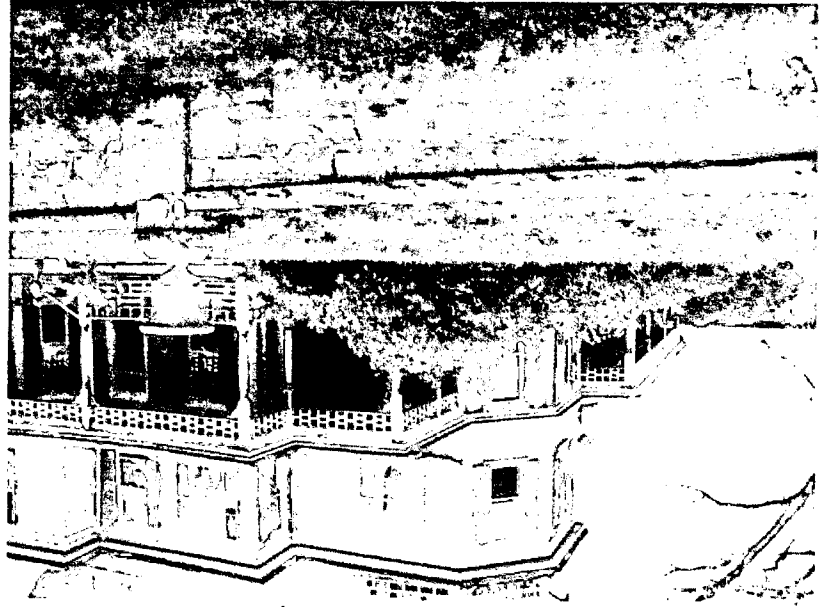


Photo from public right-of-way, facing southeast



Photo from adjacent property, facing east

Wynne's Cape



Historic Gray de House
Alcorn Park



HPC MEETING TRANSCRIPT

APRIL 9, 2008

1 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

3 - - - - - X
4 HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT - : HPC Case No. 37/03-08S
612 Philadelphia Avenue : Takoma Park Historic
5 : District
6 - - - - - X
7 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - : Garrett Park Historic
10915 Montrose Avenue : District
8 :
9 - - - - - X

10 A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on
11 April 9, 2008, commencing at 7:38 p.m., in the MRO
12 Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland
13 20910, before:

14
15 COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

16 David Rotenstein

17
18 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

19 Warren Fleming
20 Nuray Anahtar
21 Caroline Alderson
22 Thomas Jester

23
24
25
Deposition Services, Inc.
6245 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852
Tel: (301) 881-3344 Fax: (301) 881-3338
info@DepositionServices.com www.DepositionServices.com

ALSO PRESENT:

Joshua Silver
Scott Whipple
Anne Fothergill, Staff

APPEARANCES

STATEMENT OF:

PAGE

Martin Lowery

9

Ruth Skafsgaard

9

Steven Mackler

15

Jon Siegel

34

Mark Rockman

1 and reflecting the revised drawings received by staff; case
2 30/13-08B at 10909 Kenilworth Avenue in Garrett Park.

3 MR. WHIPPLE: Mr. Chairman, I just have to correct
4 the record, case C is actually 37/03-080 not zero.

5 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So noted.

6 MS. ALDERSON: Thank you.

7 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Is there any discussion for those
8 cases? Do I have a second there?

9 MR. FLEMING: I second.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: All those in favor? It's
11 unanimous. If those were your case, your application has
12 been approved and you are free to go for the evening. You
13 can speak to staff after the meeting or outside.

14 The first case we're going to hear this evening
15 is case I at 612 Philadelphia Avenue in Takoma Park. Do we
16 have a staff report?

17 MR. SILVER: Yes, we do. 612 Philadelphia Avenue
18 is a contributing resource located in the Takoma Park
19 historic district. This case is being heard retroactively
20 for an installation of a stone wall. Staff is recommending
21 that the HPC deny this application.

22 The applicant is proposing to install a stone
23 privacy wall in the front yard of the subject property. The
24 proposed wall is approximately 31 total linear feet, and
25 split into two section by an existing gravel driveway.

1 I've noted in the staff report on circle 3 under
2 the proposal section of section one and section two, and
3 those correspond to circle 9 of the staff report.

4 Section one, the left east section of the wall is
5 approximately 12 feet two inches long, two inches thick, and
6 ranges from four feet six inches to six feet six inches
7 tall.

8 Section two, the right, the west section of the
9 wall is 10 feet seven inches long, extending east/west
10 across the front of the property and eight feet long
11 extending north/south toward the house. This wall is also
12 two feet thick and ranges from six feet to six feet six
13 inches tall.

14 Although staff has discouraged, the applicants
15 completed the installation of the stone wall without first
16 receiving an approved historic area work permit and the
17 review of projects retroactively is undesirable for staff
18 and the Commission. This is not the basis for staff
19 recommending denial of this application.

20 As the guidelines staff, the design review
21 emphasis for contributing resources are restricted to
22 changes that are at all visible from the public right-of-way
23 irrespective of landscaping or vegetation. The guidelines
24 also state, all changes and additions should respect
25 existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns

1 of open space.

2 The stone wall is located in a prominent location
3 in the front yard of the subject property and is very
4 visible when approaching the property from either direction
5 on Philadelphia Avenue. The standards recommend retaining
6 the historic relationship between buildings and landscape
7 features of a setting. The location of the wall is
8 inconsistent with the historical pattern of open space found
9 in the district and specifically around Philadelphia Avenue.

10 Staff is opposed to a stone wall on this property
11 in the current location that is visually incompatible with
12 the historic character of the setting in terms of size and
13 location in the front yard, and is detrimental to the
14 historic relationship of the house with the streetscape of
15 the historic district.

16 In summary, staff is recommending that the
17 Commission deny this Historic Area Work Permit application
18 for the following reasons. One, the wall is forward of the
19 rear plane of the house, and it is higher than four feet and
20 approximately two feet thick.

21 It is the general policy of the Commission and it
22 is with any fence that it's either typically wood or
23 historically appropriate when forward of the rear plane of
24 the house, and that it cannot exceed four feet in height,
25 and should be open picket style in sections facing the

1 public right-of-way to preserve transparency of the historic
2 structure and environment setting for the streetscape of the
3 historic district.

4 Two, the wall's uncharacteristic feature within
5 the historic district; and three, the wall is inconsistent
6 with the guidelines and standards with respect to preserving
7 the existing open space pattern of the historic district and
8 specifically properties along Philadelphia Avenue within the
9 historic district.

10 Staff would also like to add that they received a
11 phone call from Historic Takoma to discuss the project, and
12 I believe that I was supposed to receive a letter but I left
13 the office before receipt of that letter this afternoon or
14 this evening.

15 But the discussion, without going into any great
16 detail that's important for this, for the purpose of the
17 hearing, is that Historic Takoma agreed with staff that the
18 wall was inappropriate and that it should either be removed
19 or lowered significantly. And I do have some slides that I
20 can share with you.

21 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Please.

22 MR. SILVER: This is across the street probably
23 about three houses down on the opposite site of the street.
24 This is the property to the left of the house. This would
25 be standing close to the public right-of-way. And of course

1 directly across the street. That's all I have for slides.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Thank you. Are there any
3 questions for staff? Would the applicant like to come up,
4 please? Good evening. Could you please state your name,
5 for the record? Just press the --

6 MR. LOWERY: My name is Martin Lowery, and I'm the
7 co-owner of the property, along with Ruth Skafsgaard, my
8 wife.

9 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Do you have any comments on the
10 staff report?

11 MR. LOWERY: Definitely. First of all, we
12 appreciate Josh's efforts. We worked closely with him when
13 this first came out, and there are a number of things that I
14 would like to state for the record.

15 Number one, it was not our intent not to apply for
16 permit. We've been before you numerous times in the past,
17 like the back house, which you can see there, the two-story
18 building there; a bump out on the side, and so on.

19 While we accept full responsibility for not having
20 gotten a permit, we were actually thinking of this not as a
21 wall but as an entryway that framed the driveway. In
22 addition, you can see in the front there, the retaining wall
23 is a stone wall that goes back, to the best of our
24 knowledge, to the origins of the property. And our goal was
25 to see that integrated, as an integrated space coming into

1 the driveway, which will remain gravel, and we intend to
2 make some changes respecting the tree lines. You can see
3 the orange tree protection there.

4 We did go to the City of Takoma Park, actually, to
5 review the tree protection plan before we proceeded. So
6 that was a bit ironic. We had fully intended to enhance
7 this with plantings as well.

8 Our contractor, design contractor is here,
9 landscape contractor, to answer any questions in terms of
10 visual integrity and so on. I do have, if you are
11 interested in looking at it, since it was after the staff
12 filing, I do have a couple of drawings that show what this
13 looks like, ultimately, with the plantings, if the
14 Commission would be interested in seeing those.

15 MR. ROTENSTEIN: If you'd like to pass them up.

16 MR. LOWERY: Sure. And see, it is sort of a
17 before and after image of the whole thing. While it was not
18 our intention to think of this, other than architectural
19 enhancement, we do have a noise problem that has been
20 growing for years and years.

21 We've been in our house since 1978, so we are 30-
22 year residents, and we believe that everything we have done
23 to date has been actually a positive improvement to the
24 neighborhood that we moved into in '78. We love Takoma Park
25 and think very highly of what's happened around the

1 neighborhood, especially the historic district. But the
2 noise continues to grow in terms of traffic volume, and
3 traffic volume especially given the revitalization of Silver
4 Spring is significant.

5 While that is not a noise abatement project, the
6 section over to the, looking at it this way, to the right,
7 with that slight L in it, does, in fact, help in terms of
8 traffic noise that's coming toward the house from Silver
9 Spring. Again, that was, that was an incidental outcome of
10 the whole thing, but something that we kind of liked.

11 We also talked to numerous neighbors about this,
12 and shared, I think, and Josh you may have added that to our
13 filing.

14 MR. SILVER: Yes, it's in the staff packet.

15 MR. LOWERY: We have signatures of 16 neighbors
16 all of whom feel very positive about the project, and
17 appreciate the effort that we've made there.

18 We were not aware of an Historic Takoma objection,
19 and would certainly understand the right to do that, and
20 would love to hear more. But you don't have the
21 documentation, I don't think, so there is nothing more we
22 can say about that tonight. But we were not aware of a
23 concern on the part of Historic Takoma.

24 We also did photographs that may not be directly
25 relevant to this assessment of fences and walls both in the

1 historic district and outside in Takoma Park and Chevy Chase
2 to attempt to show that, in fact, that kind of a facade look
3 is not uncommon, and in our opinion, not entirely
4 uncharacteristic of either the old neighborhoods or any
5 current construction.

6 When you go along Philadelphia Avenue, you see
7 numerous stockade fences, tall noise abatement type efforts,
8 lots of landscaping in that regard. And so we, again, while
9 we, it was a lapse on our part not thinking about the
10 permitting process, we fully understand that that is an
11 important issue for you. But we do appreciate staff's
12 recognition that that wouldn't be the basis for just saying
13 no.

14 We think highly of the aesthetics of it, frankly,
15 as do many, many of our neighbors, and saw this as an
16 improvement; saw it as something that integrates nicely,
17 especially as we looked to continuing landscaping in the
18 back. Ruth, anything you'd like to say?

19 MS. SKAFSGAARD: No.

20 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Okay. Are there any questions
21 for the applicant?

22 MR. JESTER: Could you tell me where, you said you
23 mentioned the back, I guess the back of the house. Do you
24 have outdoors space that you use on the other side of the
25 house, away from Philadelphia?

1 MR. LOWERY: Yes. There's about a quarter to a
2 half an acre back there. You can see in the -- well, a
3 total of a quarter: Yes; there's a lot of lawn back there,
4 and so on. I'm not sure whether I'm directly answering your
5 question or not.

6 MR. JESTER: .Yes.

7 MR. LOWERY: Okay. Are there any others?

8 MR. ROTENSTEIN: I appreciate your efforts in the
9 past at this property. I have a few questions myself. The
10 original retaining wall, is that all stone?

11 MR. LOWERY: Yes.

12 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Yes.

13 MR. LOWERY: It's all stone.

14 MR. ROTENSTEIN: And your new wall/entryway,
15 that's concrete with stone facing?

16 MR. LOWERY: No, that's all stone.

17 MR. ROTENSTEIN: It's all stones?

18 MR. LOWERY: Uh-huh.

19 MS. SKAFSGAARD: There's all stone there. A large
20 part of the stones were already on the property, and we
21 matched it up to the existing retaining wall.

22 MR. LOWERY: I must say, the stone masons did an
23 enormously interesting job in building that. It's a
24 beautiful piece of work. But it's all stones.

25 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Okay.

1 MR. JESTER: You mentioned that the noise
2 abatement or that part of the project was an incidental
3 outcome, but it seems to me that -- I just have a hard time
4 believing that that's an incidental outcome and it's not
5 something a little more deliberate than that. The height of
6 the wall is more than just the height of an entry. It's
7 very, it seems like that was part of your thinking when you
8 decided to build it that high. Is that accurate or --

9 MR. LOWERY: Actually, our landscape designer is
10 here, and I think he would attest to the fact that we just
11 had a very interesting conversation about what would look
12 nice in terms of an entryway there.

13 MS. SKAFSGAARD: But furthermore, we had mentioned
14 to our landscaper that it was troublesome in terms of the
15 noise from the streets.

16 MR. LOWERY: That's true.

17 MS. SKAFSGAARD: So that, in my mind, certainly
18 was a large part of it.

19 MR. LOWERY: We had, over the years we thought
20 about other options like a berm, for example. There's a
21 very nice berm in Chevy Chase on -- what's the street? I
22 can't think of it off the top of my head.

23 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Bradley Boulevard.

24 MR. LOWERY: Bradley Boulevard, and would a large
25 berm in there help. You'll see in the second story there,

1 it's a direct hit in terms of traffic, and you know,
2 plantings help, and that type of thing. And as I've said,
3 all along Philadelphia Avenue you'll find folks are doing
4 their best to figure out how to avoid that.

5 But no, I have to stick with the sense that the
6 original, the original intent there was primarily an
7 aesthetic integration.

8 MR. ROTENSTEIN: What was your reasoning on the
9 height of the wall and its ultimate horizontal limits?

10 MR. LOWERY: That I'd like to call on our
11 landscape designer, if you don't mind, who is here. Would
12 that be all right?

13 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Sure.

14 MR. LOWERY: Let me. Steve Mackler. Come up
15 here, Steve. Steve is the principal of the Landscape Group.
16 He lives in Takoma Park. He's been there 35 years, and has
17 done a lot of award-winning gardens and landscaping design.
18 And I'd ask you, Steve, to answer that question as to the
19 reasoning, in terms of height for this.

20 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Please take a seat and identify
21 yourself of the record, please.

22 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Press this, Steve.

23 MR. MACKLER: This? Steven Mackler. I'm
24 president of the Landscape Group, a design and build
25 company, 30 years in business.

1 In response to the question directly, if you look
2 closely at the photograph, you can see the ink line of the
3 hill. It should be noted that from the street, or from this
4 perspective here, it doesn't just get a little bit taller,
5 but when you are at the top of the hill, for example, and
6 you're at the front porch and you are looking out at the
7 street, it's significantly lower, and it appears such.

8 One of the problems, among other things, with
9 Philadelphia Avenue, you know, it has changed dramatically
10 with the development of Silver Spring. It just gets a huge
11 amount of traffic.

12 And one of the original concepts to developing the
13 garden per se was to give the sense of protection, give the
14 sense of enclosure to the space. Clearly, with all respect
15 to the Historic Commission and the community in which I've
16 lived for 35 years, as I moved to Takoma Park in 1973, you
17 know, we tried to really stay in the character of the wall,
18 the stone.

19 We used the exact same stone that you have at
20 Carderock Quarries on River Road. We tried to keep the same
21 style. We left a larger mortar joint to try to, again, keep
22 consistent with this. And if you look at the schematic
23 drawings that I gave you, I mean, the intention, we were
24 stopped at a point before completion. But if you look at
25 it, we really had the intention to put in some lovely plants

1 going along the crest of the hillside, and minimize any
2 scale, any overage that the scale might appear in this
3 particular issue here.

4 If the wall was any shorter, it would still give
5 you the sense of an entranceway. It would give you the same
6 effect, I believe, of protection for the front porch and so
7 on.

8 Right now there's just ivy sitting on top of that
9 stone wall. And we had hoped, it was our intention to level
10 the top of the existing stone wall by putting in four inch
11 coping, which is what is on that, those two walls now, the
12 four-inch piece of cut stone coping which is hand quarried
13 to give it that very rustic and age-old look.

14 And you can see the masons are on point, have
15 started to lay some of the stone. It was not laid in
16 cement. It was just cut to fit and laid out there. And
17 that was our intention was to keep this continuous, you
18 know, raise the wall about four inches by putting this nice
19 dressing on top. Because you can see, it was sort of broken
20 right there on the corner.

21 The gravel driveway is going to remain exactly
22 intact. We're just going to put a fresh coat of top, pea
23 gravel on top there. And again, between plantings, we just,
24 I just thought it was very consistent with this kind of
25 house. I mean, they've done a wonderful job of trying to

1 restore the house to its original grandeur.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: What was prohibiting you from
3 just using all vegetative screening, to not only ensure your
4 privacy, but also abate some of the noise from Philadelphia
5 Avenue?

6 MR. MACKLER: Two reasons. One, the stone wall,
7 and two is the, you know, vegetative screen works very well.
8 It's very nice to mix and match. For example, I'm sure
9 you've all seen in the past a lovely picnic bench with
10 stones, you know, a wood fence with stone columns in
11 between.

12 Well that's really the idea here. We had two
13 stone columns. Instead of having a wood fence, which I felt
14 would have been extremely inconsistent, you know, we just
15 carry a little bit of the wall over there, you know, for the
16 protection, and remember the idea was to continue the
17 plantings all the way across on the left.

18 MR. ROTENSTEIN: If I may ask, how many walls have
19 you installed in the Takoma Park Historic District that have
20 required work permits, historic area work permits?

21 MR. MACKLER: Nothing I've done.

22 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Have you done wells in any
23 designated historic district, or in a property that's been
24 designated historic?

25 MR. MACKLER: Down in D.C., Kalorama, we did a

1 privacy wall in Kalorama.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: But in Montgomery County, you've
3 not done any?

4 MR. MACKLER: Walls, stone walls in Montgomery
5 County historic district, no. Oh, yes, I'm sorry, there is
6 one around the corner from us. I forgot, it's not a stone
7 wall. It's a stucco wall, the old pebble-dashed stucco
8 that's one the front of the house in Takoma Park. It's
9 there to match the house, and match the wall.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Jester, you have a
11 question?

12 MS. SKAFSGAARD: We have a picture of it.

13 MR. MACKLER: You brought a picture?

14 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Yes.

15 MR. LOWERY: The homeowner had applied for permit,
16 I don't know how many years ago.

17 MR. JESTER: Question. When you mentioned your
18 intent was to use this wall to enclose space, are you
19 referring to the area between the wall and the residence?

20 MR. MACKLER: No.

21 MR. JESTER: What's really the driveway area?

22 MR. MACKLER: I was really referring to visual
23 enclosure, you know, out of sight, out of mind. It was just
24 a sense of entrance, framing, respected, and there's a
25 little bit of an L on the wall on the right, a little bit of

1 an L-shape to it. It only goes back around four feet, just
2 to give it a bit of an anchor, because as the grade inclines
3 to four feet, the wall really levels out and becomes much
4 shorter. The top of the wall remains level, but the grade
5 goes like this. So as it goes back four feet, it really,
6 you know, just turns in.

7 MR. JESTER: I think the problem is what you
8 describe, it may have that feeling spatially from the
9 residence looking out towards the wall, but from the street
10 it does, because of the grade increase, and the wall is over
11 six-feet tall in places, it really does look out of scale as
12 a site wall, I mean, even as an entrance feature. It really
13 has a sense of enclosure, is really walling off a portion of
14 the property.

15 I realize it's not continuous, and it's not all
16 the way across the site, but it just seems a little out of
17 scale with the other site, the existing retaining walls that
18 are there.

19 MR. ROTENSTEIN: And I'd also like to add that,
20 yes, it is true that you find enclosures around gardens and
21 yard areas in properties of this age and this type, and even
22 though you may think that it meets your aesthetic needs,
23 there are still certain criteria that have to be complied
24 with in order for the guidelines to be met in the historic
25 district.

1 And those criteria include not just materials and
2 not just finish, but they also include scale. And they
3 include the location of features and how they relate to the
4 surrounding property and the historic district at large.

5 And even though we can take into account your
6 aesthetic concerns and your desires to abate the noise, we
7 really need to address solely how this feature, as built or
8 proposed, meets the criteria that we have to evaluate under
9 Montgomery County's historic preservation ordinance.

10 MR. MACKLER: I understand. That's why I tried to
11 draw you the schematic, to give you a sense. You know, I
12 just want to say in our defense, in my defense, you know, I
13 have been doing this 30 years, and I feel like we have a
14 good handle on it. I mean, our work has been recognized
15 significantly, so I do have some sense of scale and
16 proportion to these things.

17 I allow for the disagreement by the Board and the
18 Commission and I value your opinion to look at it because I
19 am always learning from each and every person that I meet on
20 the street. And I'm willing to, working with the
21 Lowery/Skafsgaard, perhaps if need be taking it down a foot
22 or two, I initially and outright don't feel it is too large
23 for that hill. When I put in a three foot plant, four foot
24 plant, a lovely rhododendron, laurel, whatever, something
25 that is going to just site, the scale will go down.

1 I mean, that tree that's on the left leafs out,
2 it's going to be beautiful. I mean, I think on your picture
3 that I have drawn for you here, I mean, this is a purple
4 smoke tree that's been existing, and that's going to, you
5 know, give it a whole -- that too will help diminish --

6 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Right, but our guidelines as
7 established under chapter 24A require us to look at things
8 outside of vegetative screens. Trees die. Trees change.

9 MR. MACKLER: Exactly.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So in that respect, we really
11 can't evaluate what this might look like relative to an
12 existing tree. At this time I would like to open up the
13 case for deliberation.

14 MS. ANAHTAR: Well, actually, I have a comment and
15 a question. Originally, we would not have approved a wall
16 this high, this tall. And it still it tall, but it's a
17 lesser concern for me at this point. I can understand that
18 you can reduce the height by proper landscaping.

19 But I'm more concerned about the look from the
20 lower side, and how abruptly this wall stops. And it's like
21 a freestanding little piece there. I don't know how you are
22 going to resolve it by landscaping only. I'm wondering if
23 you could have created a transition piece with a gradual,
24 you know, reduction of the height. And please tell us about
25 what kind of plants you had in mind that would stay there

1 summertime and wintertime as well, so that it doesn't look
2 different depending on the season.

3 MR. MACKLER: Well, I think that's actually a good
4 idea, you know, given the concerns of the Board. I think
5 there is merit in taking the wall and perhaps putting a
6 scoop and sloping it down to, you know, to bring it down to
7 two and a half or three foot at the end coming off the
8 column and then scooping it down. I think that too could be
9 very pretty, you know, if that was an option that the
10 Commission would like to consider. Does that answer your --

11 MS. ANAHTAR: And plants, I thought plants that
12 you have in mind?

13 MR. MACKLER: Well, along the front, the left
14 side, which is really the predominant area along there, as
15 you see in the schematic here, I thought something that
16 would be both hardy and evergreen and give him protection
17 from the street, white flowering, evergreen laurel lileukin,
18 not to large, not to tall, something that perhaps gets to be
19 around four to five foot, very loose, very natural, that
20 would ungate in a bit of a hedge going across. It pretty
21 much maintains a pretty good year round color and shape.

22 Something, for example, like a rhododendron is way
23 too woody. We would use those in the background. There are
24 some new varieties, also, if the Board felt that it would be
25 better to keep the plant material, you know, two and a half

1 to three foot height versus four to five foot, there are
2 some great new azaleas called Dorothy Haden, again, very
3 lustrous, flowering, white flowers and very dark green
4 leaves.

5 You get a fair amount of shade in the area, so you
6 need something that's fairly shade tolerant. It's not full
7 sunlight area.

8 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Yes, yes. We've ended the
9 questions. We need to get into deliberations here, so,
10 Commissioner Alderson.

11 MS. ALDERSON: Yes. I always look at these are
12 the applications that are the most painful for me, when
13 someone has invested in something, when it's a neighbor, at
14 that, a neighbor has gone through the process. We've worked
15 together, I think for 20 years, since I was on the LAC. So
16 this one was a difficult one for me, especially driving by
17 and seeing that it is very high quality materials, quality
18 construction.

19 When we talk about that this blends, this blends
20 with an estate on River Road. It's not characteristic of
21 Takoma Park. The nature of the houses and their
22 surroundings, their enclosures is more modest, more
23 vernacular community, early 20th century. It's not in the
24 nature of the great estates with the grand approaches. And
25 so it's too tall and too solid to be characteristic of this

1 neighborhood, and it does seem a rather isolated piece.
2 Certainly, plantings might make it less isolated.

3 What I would suggest maybe that you consider since
4 you are looking at how to recover something of what you've
5 done is ways to reduce the height. And we can give you
6 pretty consistently the rules of thumb. Josh did his
7 homework. We've been very consistent. So if you saw a
8 stockade wall, it's going to predate any recent Commission.

9 It's a tough issue, the issue of privacy, the
10 issue of sound. I live on Maple Avenue. In 25 years we've
11 got less privacy and a lot more noise. I had an SUV drive
12 through my fence. So I still have a hole in it. They chose
13 the iron fence to drive through, not the wood fences.

14 But how we dealt with that issue is with
15 plantings. And, you know, that's how we are telling people
16 in Chevy Chase and Kensington to deal with it. And there
17 are a lot of evergreen varieties that grow pretty quickly.
18 And they are fabulous sound barriers.

19 I have relations in Tennessee that now, the
20 highway has gotten big and they use pines. And they are a
21 fabulous visual and sound barrier. And you can grow plants
22 as tall as you like. You don't need our approval. So
23 that's what we suggest for getting as much privacy as you
24 feel you want.

25 And then I would look at, you know, look at maybe

1 what you can recover of what you've done with something that
2 is more in scale. Look at the retaining walls. There are
3 lots of them. But they're modest. They're usually just big
4 enough to hold up the earth. And so I'd look at being
5 within that four-foot range that we've said is generally our
6 limit, and see what you can do with that.

7 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Jester.

8 MR. JESTER: I think Commissioner Anahtar and
9 Commissioner Alderson made some very good points. I concur
10 that what's been constructed really looks kind of like an
11 unfinished wall. And I think the suggestion that was made
12 about kind of stepping it down or creating a more finished
13 portion on each side would actually have the effect that
14 Commissioner Alderson made, that it would make it more
15 uncharacteristic of the district and is probably not
16 appropriate.

17 So I think the suggestion to lower the wall is
18 probably the best, in my mind, is the best way to go. I
19 think I personally could live with something that looks more
20 like just a modest entry piece that relates to the existing
21 retaining walls. I'm not sure what the height is. It
22 probably wouldn't be anything higher than what we would
23 normally approve for a fence, which I think is about four
24 feet over to the rear plane.

25 MR. LOWERY: Correct. Yes.

1 MR. JESTER: And I think the suggestion made about
2 additional buffer plantings is a good one, if you really are
3 looking for some additional privacy and noise abatement.
4 That's kind of where I come out on it.

5 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Fleming.

6 MR. FLEMING: Looking at this wall the way you've
7 got it configured -- I like stone walls, number one. And
8 it's a nice wall you've got here. But what you said
9 tonight, you were trying to integrate the new wall with
10 landscaping, with what is already, that has been there for
11 years. And they don't match, to me. This is like new
12 technology as far as walls and an entrance.

13 Now, brick walls and brick structures, I mean rock
14 structures, which you are trying to get to, there are other
15 configurations to get there that are unique, the existing
16 wall that is there going around the outer, the outer part of
17 your property.

18 So I understand the fact of the noise issue. The
19 thing that I am struggling with is that it is a historic
20 district. It's something that we wouldn't, have not
21 approved of, and it does not, to me, match what was already
22 there. So that's what I think of it.

23 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Well, you've gotten a fair feel
24 for how the Commission feels about the staff report. And I
25 think Josh has done an outstanding job of applying the

1 standards that we have to observe.

2 Before I ask for a motion, I think it might be
3 appropriate for you to take the opportunity to think whether
4 you'd like to withdraw this application and resubmit
5 something that's more reflective of our deliberations
6 hearing the staff report.

7 (Discussion off the record.)

8 MR. LOWERY: Of course. We appreciate everything
9 that's been said. We appreciate your willingness to help us
10 think this through. Ms. Alderson, in particular your
11 comments about neighbors in Takoma Park, and yes, we would
12 like to work this through if we can, based on a reasonable
13 height and potentially as Ms. Anahtar said, some scaling.

14 We'd like to recover some of the investment as
15 well as some of the visual of this in terms of where we are
16 going with some work in the back and all of that.

17 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Sure. And I would encourage you
18 to work very closely with the staff to develop a new
19 proposal that we can look at and approve. It is unfortunate
20 this is retroactive and you've been put in this position,
21 especially after all of the 30 years of work you've put in
22 on the property. But this is something that I think we can
23 resolve. And I think that was very good advice from the
24 Commissioners and from staff.

25 MR. LOWERY: Excellent.

1 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So we look forward to you
2 returning with a new work permit. What's the procedure for
3 a continuance here?

4 MR. WHIPPLE: I believe that they have two
5 choices. They can withdraw their application, or they can
6 postpone consideration of this application. But because the
7 changes are so significant, I think probably the right
8 approach would be to withdraw this application and start
9 afresh.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: That would probably be the best
11 approach. So are you going to do that?

12 MR. LOWERY: I think that's just a formal matter.
13 I don't see an issue there since we'll be back before you as
14 Commissioners.

15 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Right, but I think it has to do
16 with the 45-day clock that --

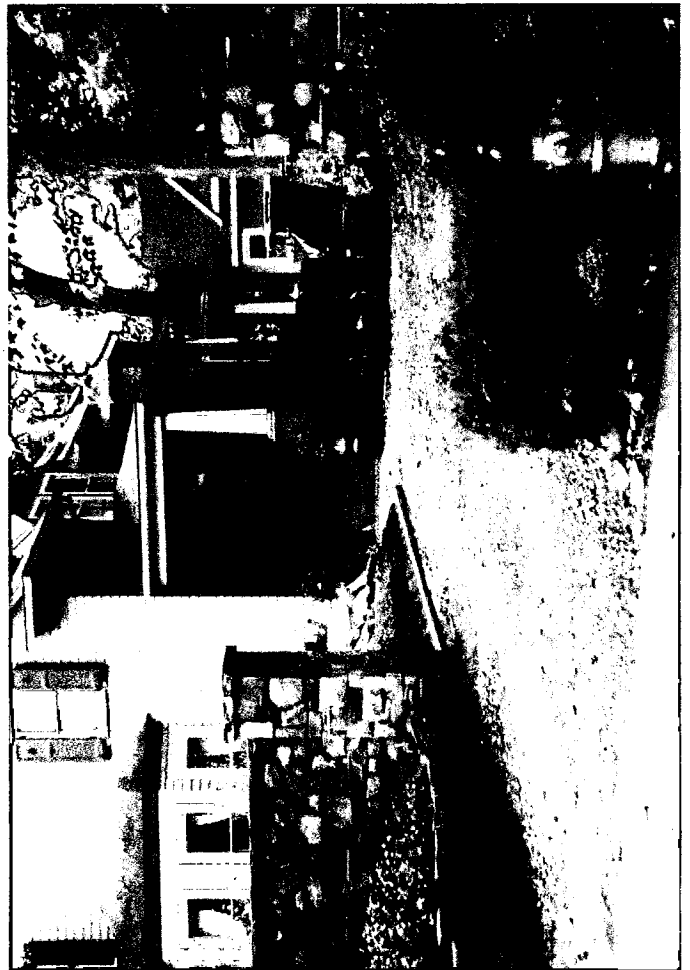
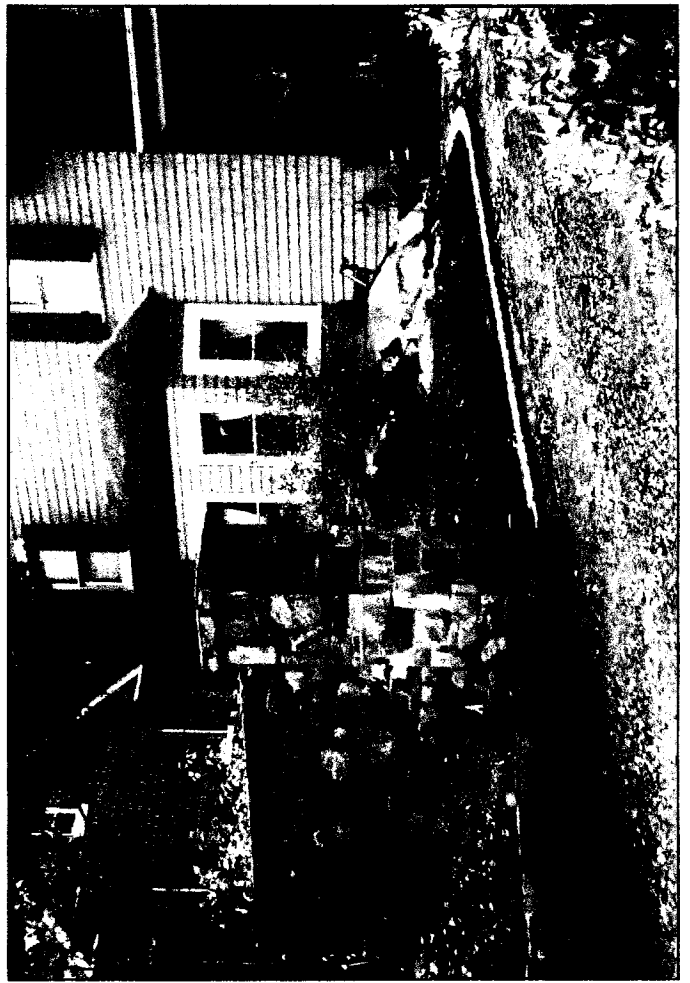
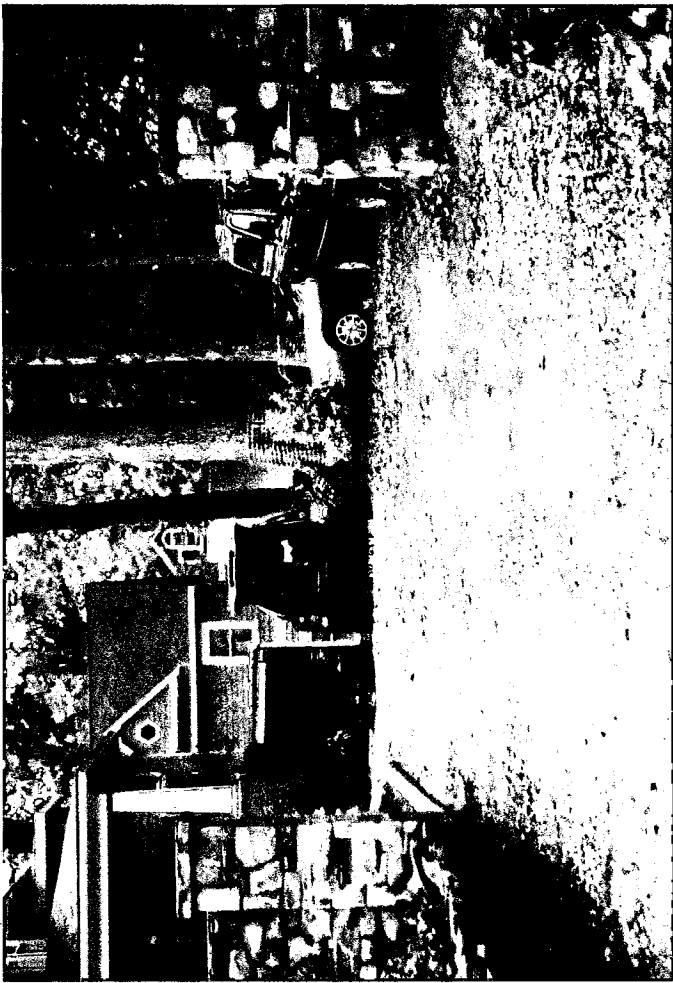
17 MR. LOWERY: Oh, I see.

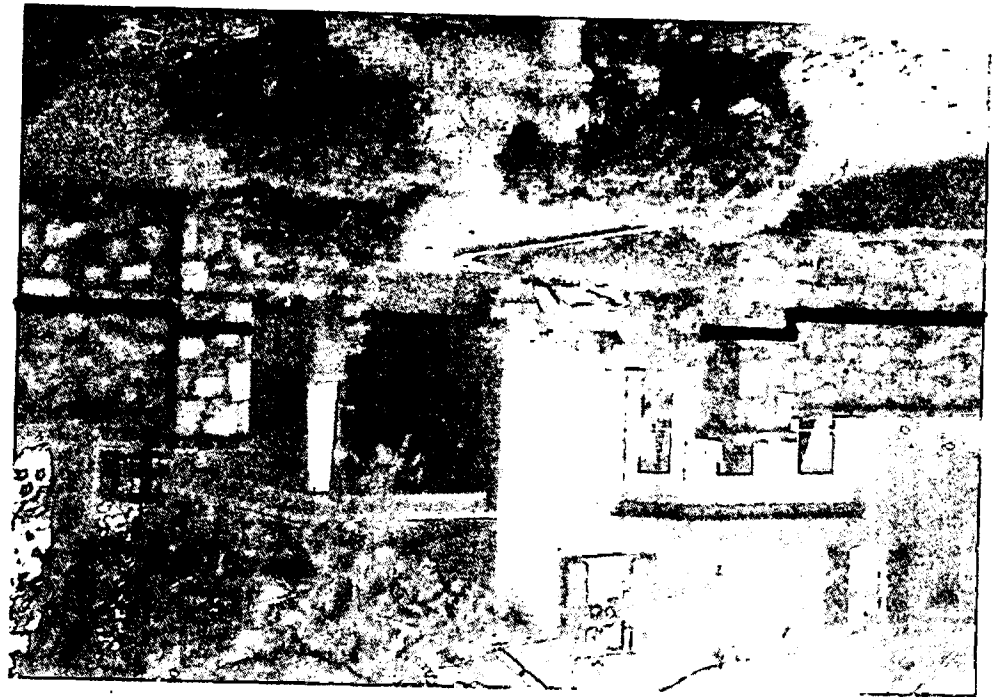
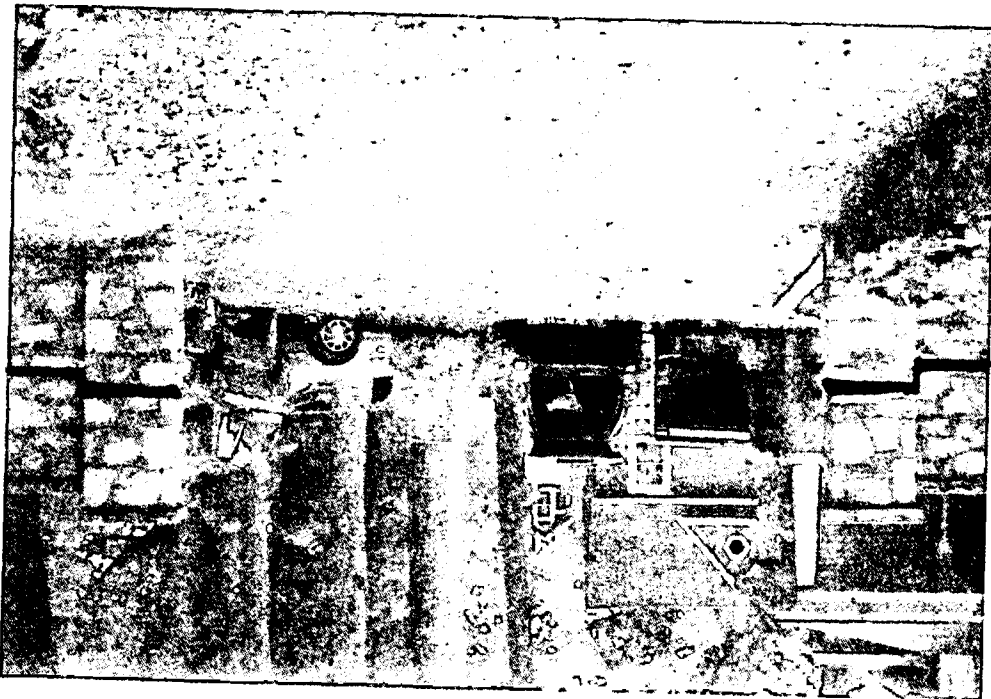
18 MR. WHIPPLE: In essence, it means that you are
19 going to submit a new, you know, you'll submit a new HAWP
20 and, you know, to DPS and start the process over.

21 MS. ALDERSON: Give you more flexibility with your
22 schedule.

23 MR. LOWERY: Right. Okay. Thank you. I
24 appreciate that.

25 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Thank you for coming in.





Submitted
5/20/08

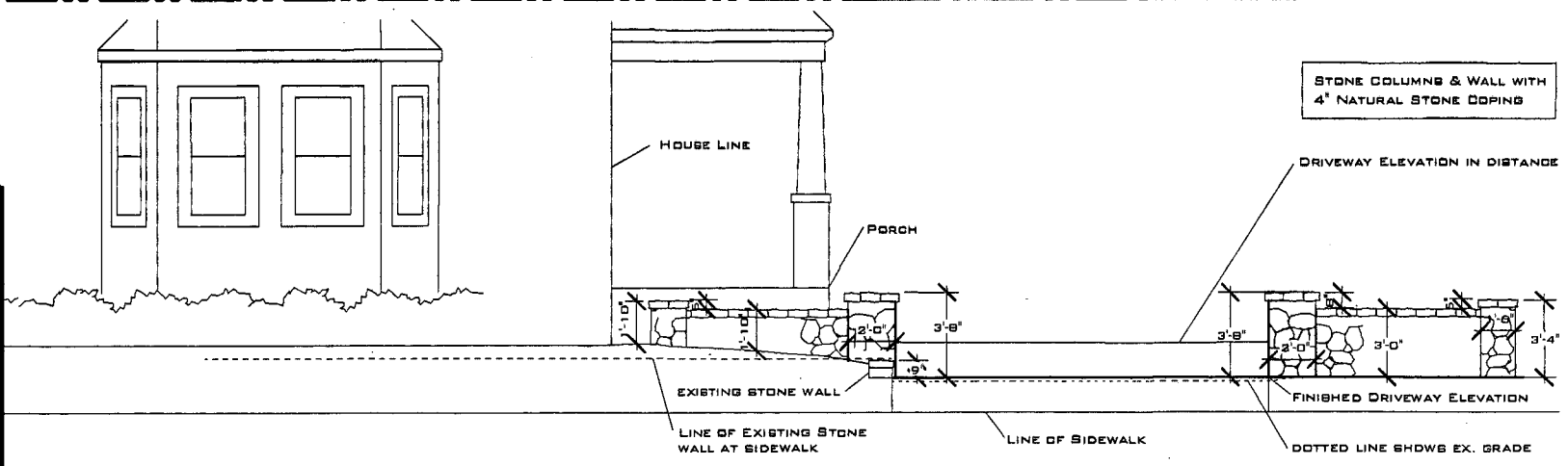
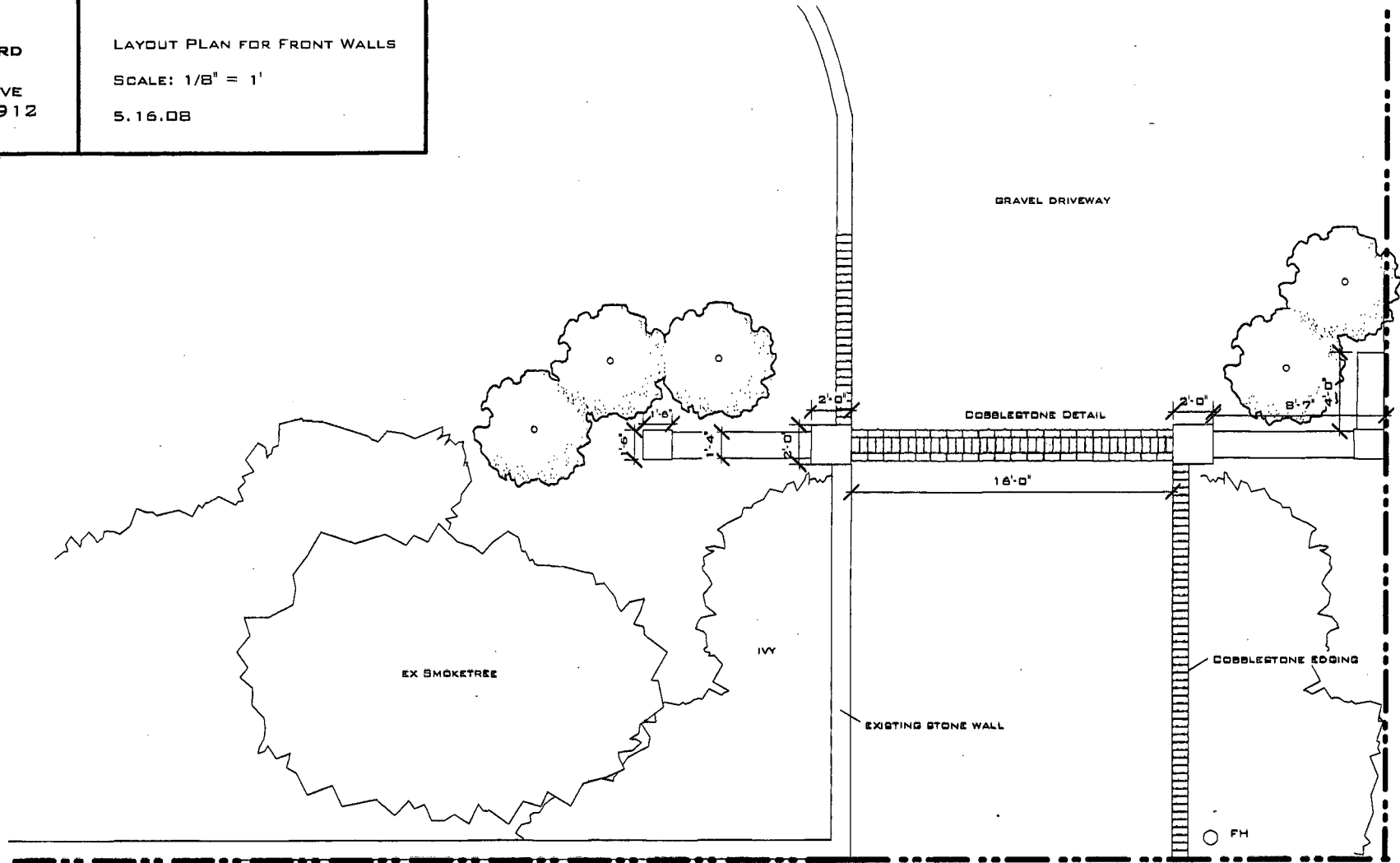
Revised
Proposal

**LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE**
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'

5.16.08



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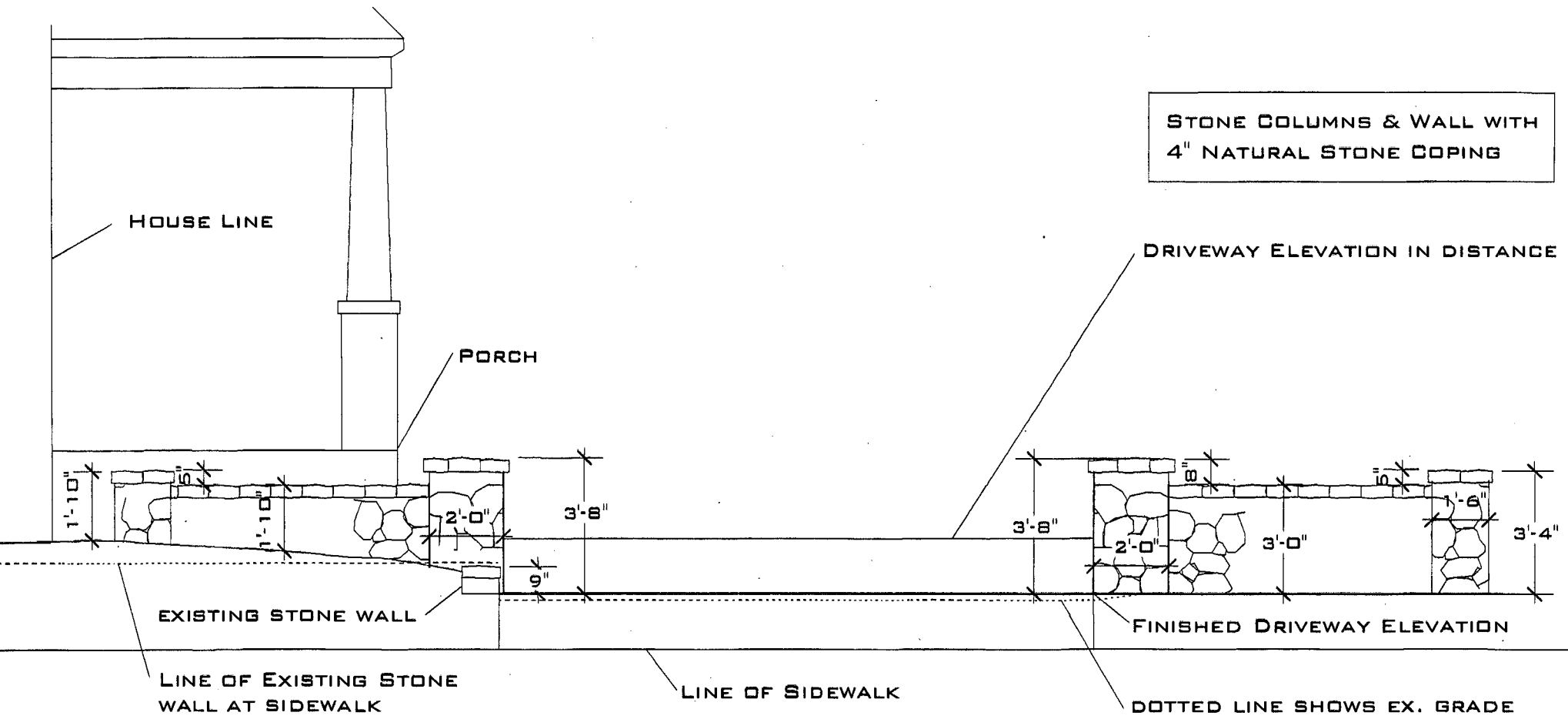
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LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

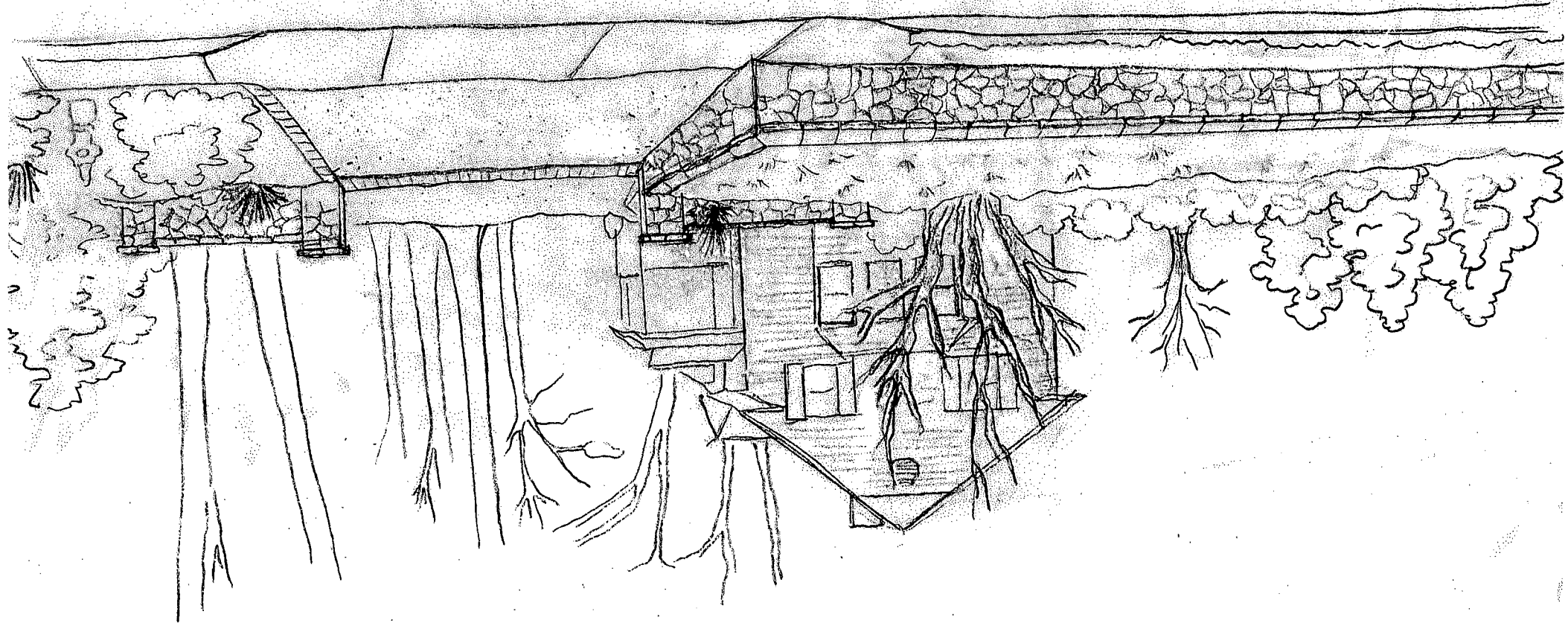
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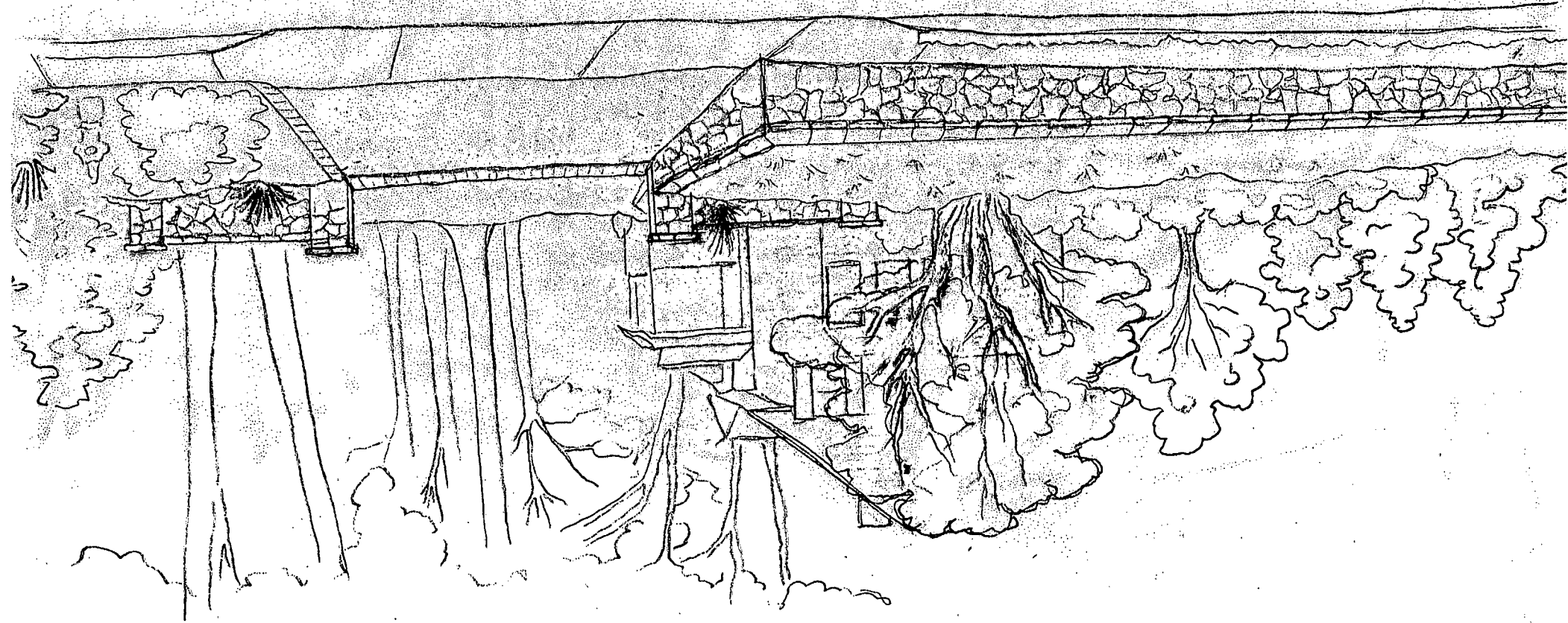
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WINTER



SUMMER

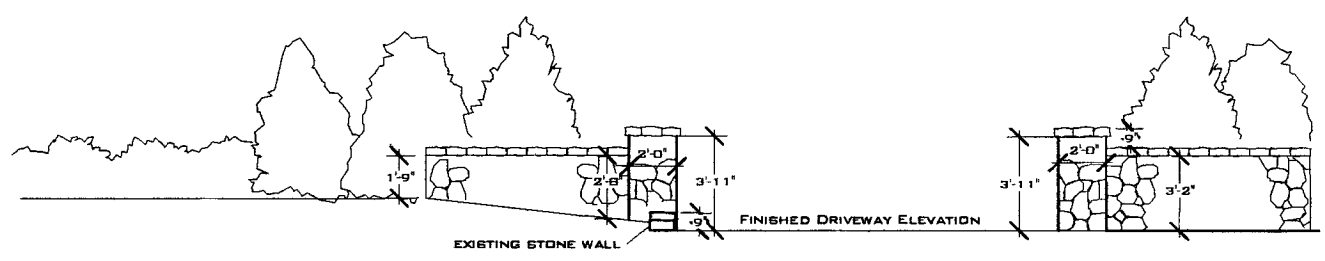
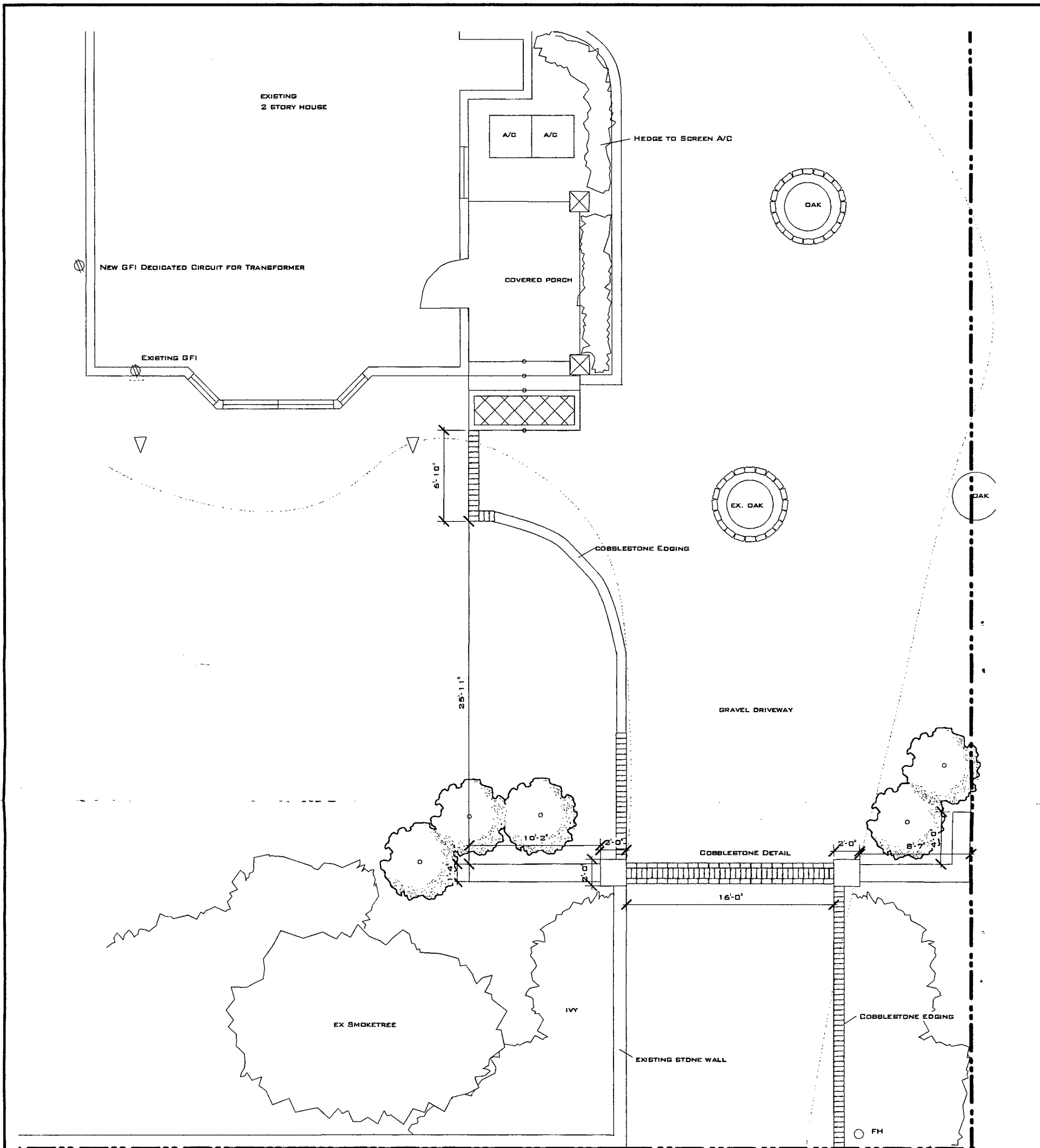




Silver, Joshua

From: Ruth Skafsgaard [ruth.skafsgaard@starpower.net]
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2008 11:21 AM
To: Silver, Joshua
Subject: Hearing Postponement

Good morning, Josh. We would like to postpone our hearing on the stone entryway until May 28 in order to consult further with you on options.
Thanks. Ruth Skafsgaard



STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH 4" NATURAL STONE COPING



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LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
 RESIDENCE
 612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
 TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'
 4.21.08

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING
 [Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<p>Owner's mailing address</p> <p>612 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912 (MARTIN LOWERY + RUTH SKAFSGAARD)</p>	<p>Owner's Agent's mailing address</p>
<p align="center">Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</p>	
<p>FAGAN, DEBORAH + BERNARD 608 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD. 20912</p>	<p>JOHN SANDAGE 704 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912</p>
<p>JAMES EVANS 703 New York Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912</p>	<p>CHERYL SLOAN 613 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912</p>
<p>PEGGY BULLGER DOUG LEATHERBURY 619 PHILADELPHIA AVE TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912</p>	

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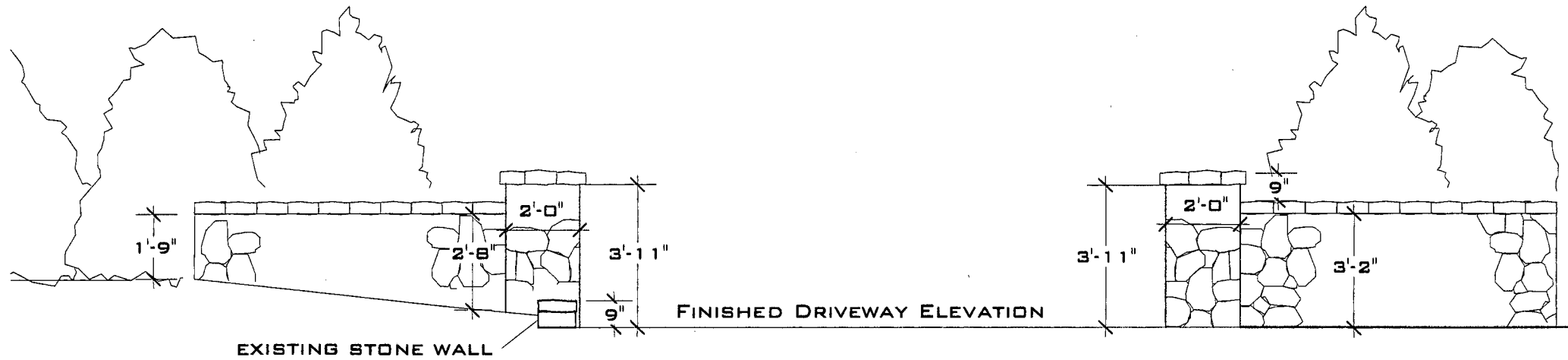
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LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

4.21.08



STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH
4" NATURAL STONE COPING

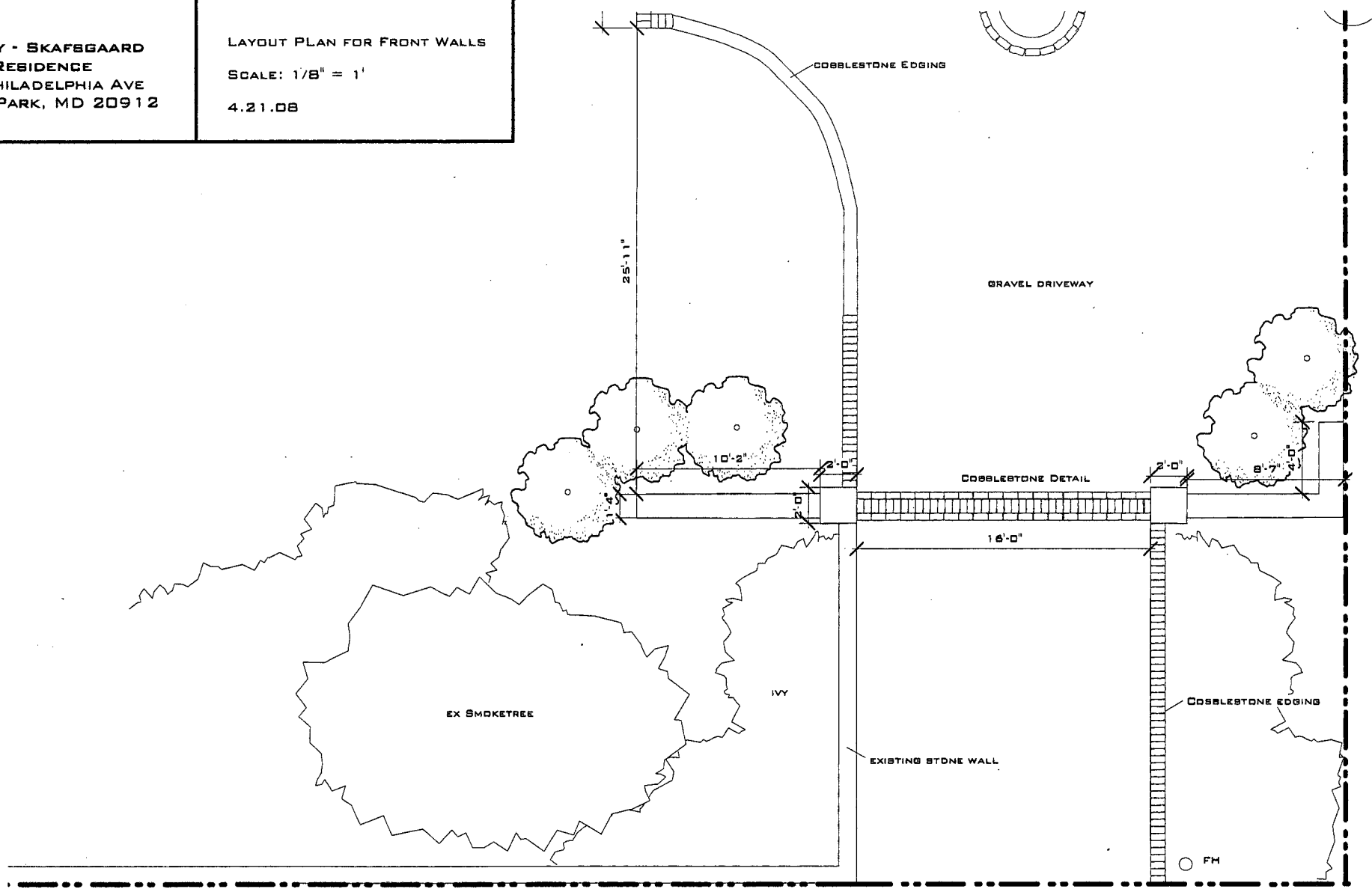


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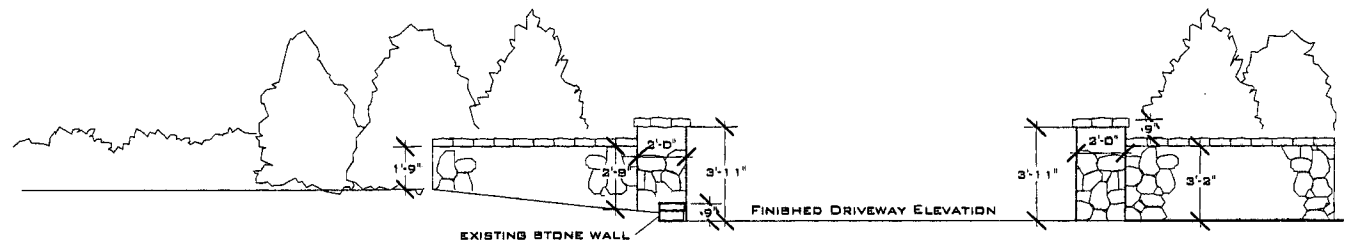
**LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE**
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'
4.21.08

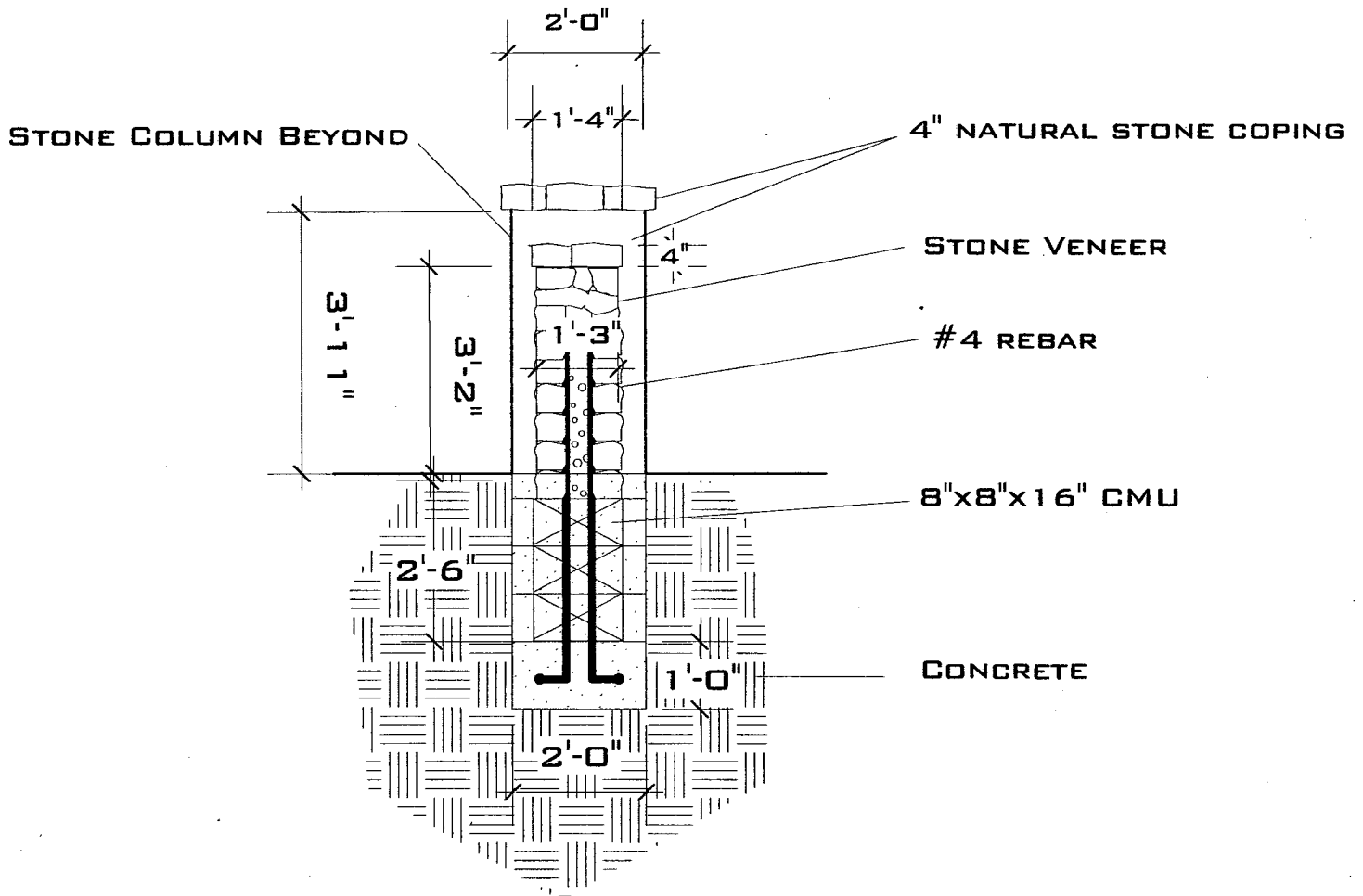


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STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH
4" NATURAL STONE COPING





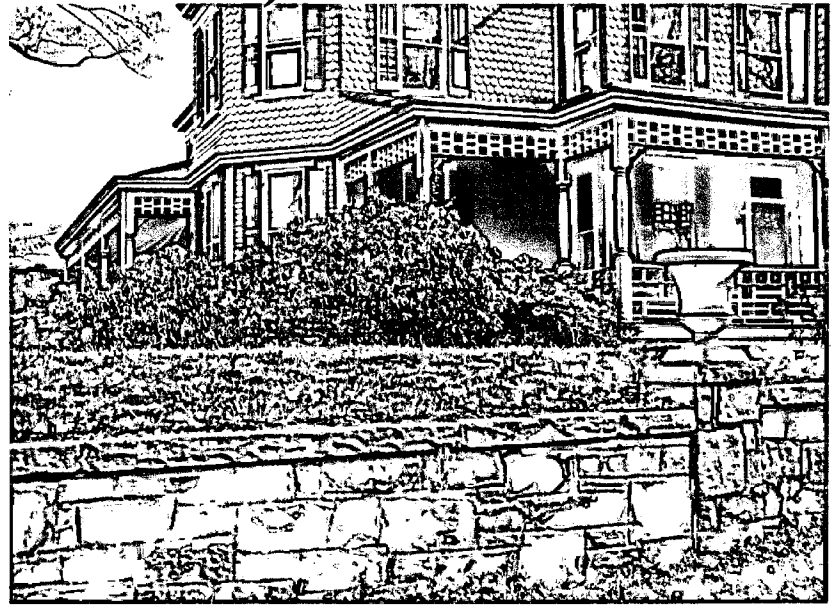


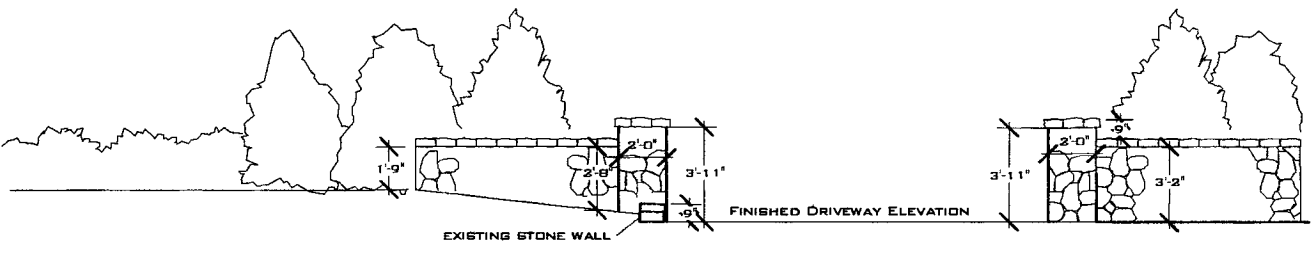
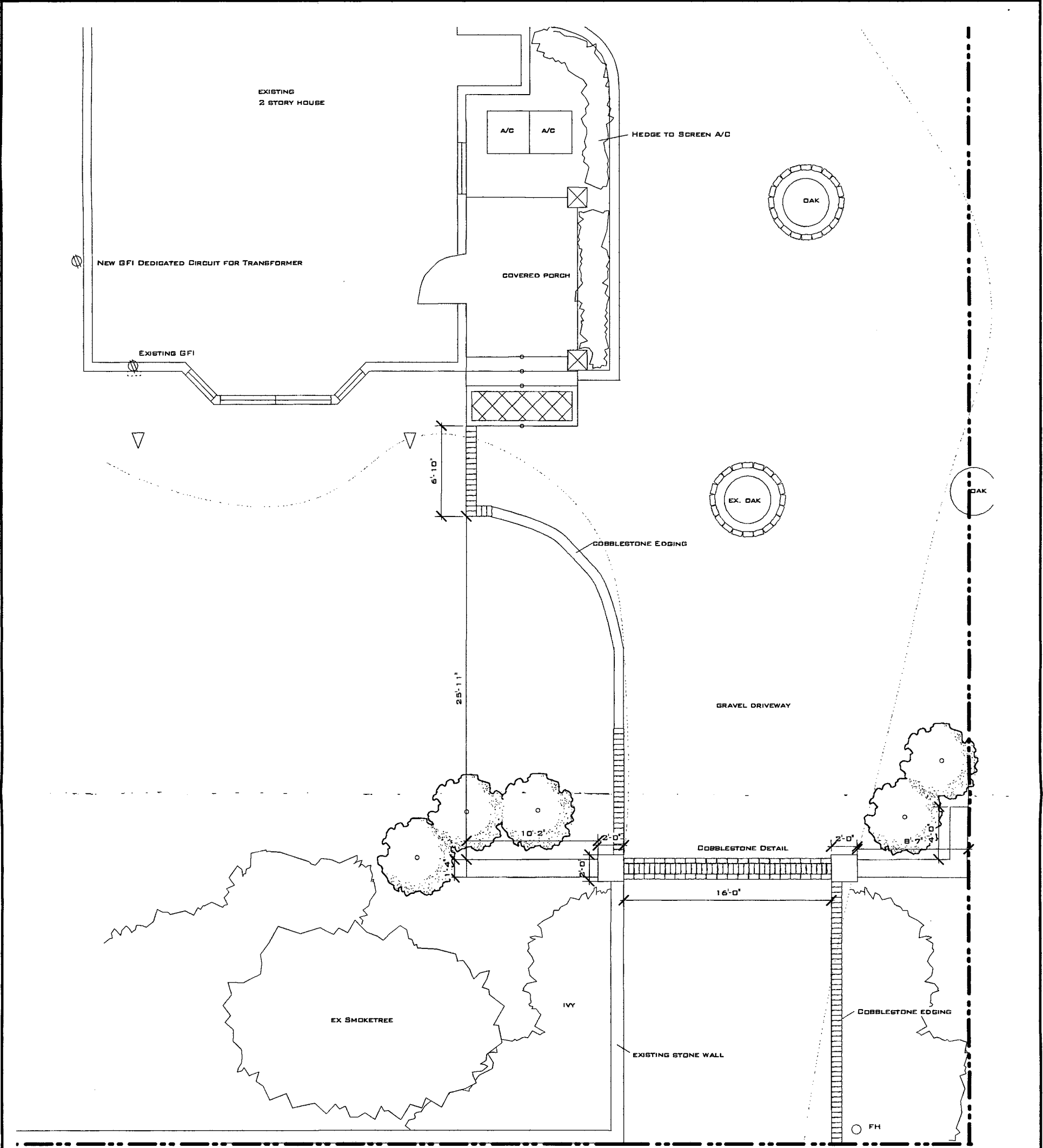
Historic Lasy Lee House



Suggested coping

Yakona Park





STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH
4" NATURAL STONE COPING



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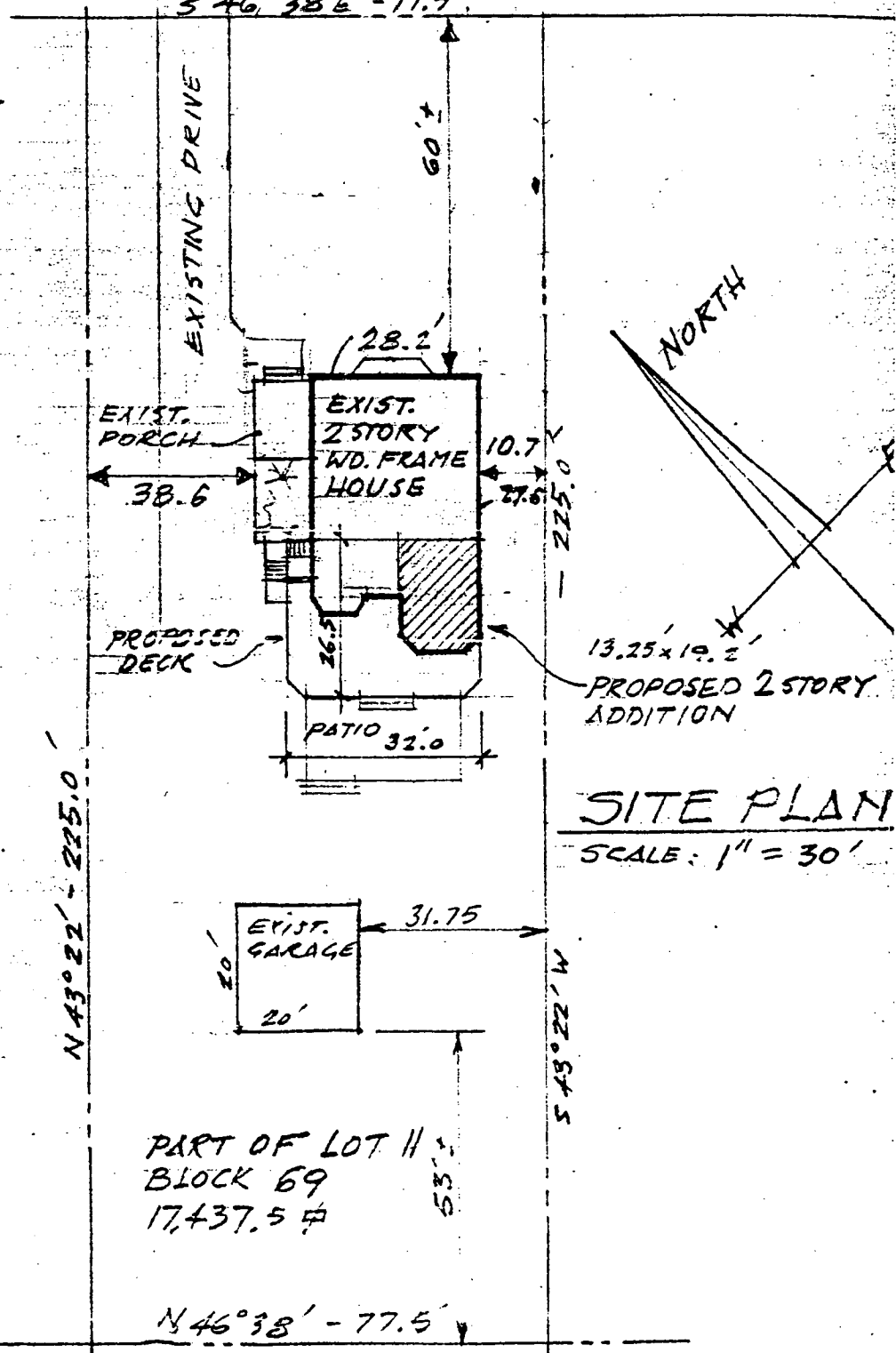
LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'
4.21.08

ATT: CRISS LOPEZ

PHILADELPHIA AVE.

S 46° 38' E - 77.5'



SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 30'

DOOR AREAS: SQ. FEET:

	EXIST.	ADDITION	TOTAL
FRONT	802	-	802.0
REAR	978	240	1,218.0
SIDE	778	346	1,124.0
TOTAL	2,558	586	3,144.0

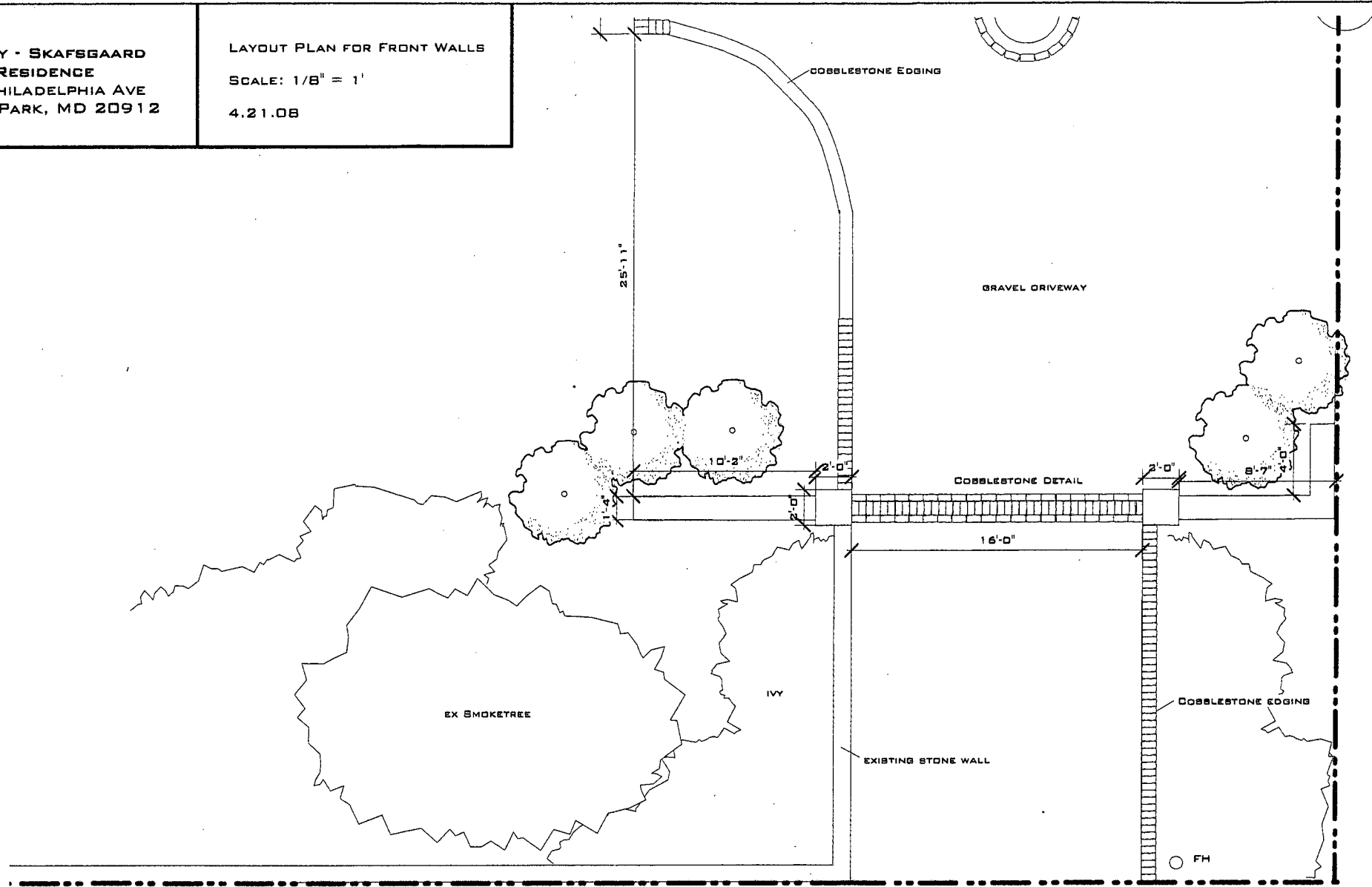
PART OF LOT II
BLOCK 69
17,437.5 sq ft

SKAFSGARD'S RESIDENCE - ADDITION

612 PHILADELPHIA AVE TAKOMA PARK MD - 20012

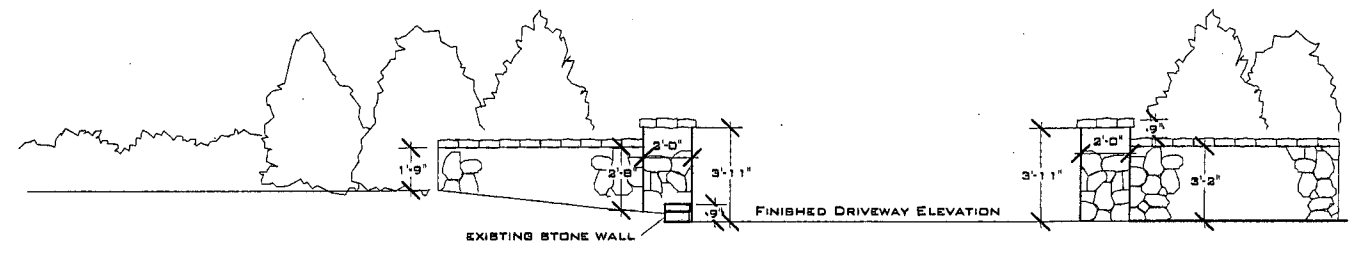
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RESIDENCE
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TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'
4.21.08



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STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH
4" NATURAL STONE COPING

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	612 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	5/14/2008
Resource:	Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	5/7/2008
Applicant:	Ruth Skafsgaard & Martin Lowery	Public Notice:	4/30/2008
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	None
Case Number:	37/03-08AA (RETROACTIVE)	Staff:	Josh Silver
PROPOSAL:	Stone wall installation		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending that the HPC **DENY** this HAWP application.

BACKGROUND

On April 9, 2008 the HPC reviewed a (RETROACTIVE) HAWP application for the installation of an approximately 31 –total linear feet stone privacy wall in the front yard of the subject property. The proposal included installation of a stone wall split into two sections by an existing gravel driveway:

- (Section 1) the left (east) section of the wall is approximately 12'2" long, 2'0" thick, and ranges from 4'6" – 6'6" tall;
- (Section 2) the right (west) section of the wall is 10'7" long (extending east-west across the front of the property), and 8'0" (extending north-south toward the house), 2'0" thick, and ranges from 6'0"– 6'6" tall.

There was general consensus among the HPC that the proposed stone wall was:

- Too tall and out of scale for the site and with the existing retaining walls at the property
- An uncharacteristic feature within the Takoma Park Historic District
- Not approvable if a HAWP application was submitted prior to installation
- Inconsistent with the *Guidelines* and *Standards* with respect to preserving the existing open space pattern of the historic district. (See attached draft transcript not yet reviewed and approved by the HPC Circle 21)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource Within The Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Craftsman
DATE: c1920s

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Takoma Park is historically significant as both an early railroad suburb and a streetcar community. It was the one of the earliest railroad suburbs of Washington. The community was given new lifeblood in the early-20th century with the opening of streetcar lines, which led to the development of new subdivisions in Takoma Park.

Before 1883, the area that became Takoma Park was used for farming and vacation homes for Washingtonians. A few houses from this period still exist.

Benjamin Franklin Gilbert was the developer of Takoma Park, which he promoted for its natural environment and healthy setting. The site offered fresh water, trees, and a high elevation to escape the malaria-ridden District of Columbia. In 1883, Gilbert purchased a 90-acre farm and platted a subdivision with picturesque, winding streets named for native trees, including Sycamore, Chestnut, Hickory, and Oak. Equally reflective of Gilbert's promotion of the natural setting is the use of the Native American "Takoma", meaning "exalted" or "near heaven." Later he added the "Park" appellation to draw attention to its healthy environment.

Takoma Park houses built between 1883 and 1900 were fanciful, turreted, multi-gabled affairs of Queen Anne, Stick Style, and Shingle Style influence. The substantial houses had spacious settings, with deep, narrow lots of 50 feet by 200-300 feet, with 40-foot setback requirements. Extensive numbers of these houses (built from 1883 to 1900) remain, particularly concentrated along Maple, Cedar, and Holly Avenues. The earliest houses were built on Cedar Avenue (originally known as Oak Avenue).

Gilbert was more than just the developer of the community - he was a resident and civic leader. He built one of the first houses in the new community for himself and later became the town's first mayor. By 1886, Takoma Park had a post office

and a new railroad station. Fifteen trains a day ran between Washington and Takoma Park and the population had reached 100.

By 1893, the town's population quadrupled. Four subdivisions had expanded the town, which was incorporated in 1890. Takoma Avenue, Pine Avenue, and Holly Avenue were among the streets to develop during this period.

The first multi-family buildings in Montgomery County were built in Takoma Park. The earliest documented multi-family dwelling is the *Ford House* at 7137-39 Maple Avenue. Brothers Byron and Seth Ford built this large, elaborate, frame double-house in 1885 for their families. The next multi-family dwellings to be built in the county were not constructed until 1907.

The start of streetcar service along Carroll Avenue in 1897, operated by the Baltimore and Washington Transit Company, made the adjacent areas more attractive for residential development, leading to new subdivisions. This line, supplemented in 1910 by the Washington and Maryland line (1910-27), led to the creation of eight additional subdivisions extending out from the trolley lines. The inexpensive electric streetcar, the availability of low-cost house plans and kit houses in combination with smaller lot sizes made home ownership in Takoma Park possible for individuals of more modest income levels than during the previous period. By 1922, the population soared to 4,144, making Takoma Park the tenth largest incorporated town in Maryland. Among the streets, which developed during the 1910s and 1920s in response to the establishment of streetcar, lines are Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Carroll Avenues.

The appearance today of much of the Takoma Park historic district is formed by the large numbers of dwellings constructed from 1900 into the 1920s. The houses built in Takoma Park during this period reveal changing American tastes in house design from the elaborate ornamentation of the late 19th century dwellings to more practical, simplified designs. Many of these early twentieth century houses reflect the aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which emphasized the inherent nature of the building materials and structural elements for ornamentation. Residences put up in the American Four Square, Craftsman, Bungalow, and Colonial Revival designs continued the pattern of suburban development previously established - detached, wood frame single-family residences with uniform setbacks from the streets, though at a smaller scale. Entire streetscapes of these houses, particularly the Bungalow and Craftsman designs, are found along Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Westmoreland Avenues. Scores of Bungalows, and Craftsman-style houses and catalog-order houses were built in this era.

Takoma Park continues to thrive today, with a population of 20,000. Though the train no longer stops there, the town's close relationship with mass transportation continues. The Metro enables residents to continue the tradition, started with the railroad and extended with the streetcars, of living in the suburbs and commuting to the District using mass transit. Two sections of the Montgomery County portion of Takoma Park have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Takoma Park Historic District since 1976.

PROPOSAL:

The applicants propose to install a stone privacy wall in the front yard of the subject property. The proposed wall is approximately 27 -total linear feet and split into two distinct sections by an existing gravel driveway.

Section 1

The left (east) section of the wall is approximately 12'2" long, 2'0" thick, and ranges from 1'9" - 3'11" tall.

Section 2

The right (west) section of the wall is 10'7" long (extending east-west across the front of the property), and 4'0" (extending north-south toward the house), 2'0" thick, and ranges from 3'2" - 3'11" tall.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. 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 4A)*, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

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.

The *Guidelines* that pertain to this project are as follows:

- All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A

A HAWP permit should be issued if the Commission finds that:

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of a historic site or historic resource within a historic district.
2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical archaeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which a historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto of to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter.

In the case of an application for work on a historic resource located within a 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 surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district.

A HAWP should be denied if the Commission 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.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- #2 The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of historical materials or alteration of features and spaces 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 will be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Although staff is discouraged the applicants completed the installation of the stone wall without first receiving an approved HAWP and the review of projects retroactively is undesirable for staff and the Commission this is not the basis for staff recommending denial of this application.

As the *Guidelines* state the design review emphasis for contributing resources are restricted to changes that are *at all visible from the public right-of-way*, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation. The *Guidelines* also state all changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and

patterns of open space. The applicants have reduced the height of the stone wall. However, it still appears as an uncharacteristic and isolated feature with no defined horizontal limits. Furthermore, the stone wall is located in a prominent location in the front yard of the subject property and is very visible when approaching the property from either direction on Philadelphia Avenue.

The *Standards* recommend retaining the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features of a setting. The *Standards* recommend **not** removing or radically changing those features of the setting which are important in defining the historic character. The *Standards* also recommend **not** introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

Staff is opposed to a stone wall at this property in the current location as it does not retain the historical relationship between the house and public right-of-way, it is visually incompatible with the setting of the historic district in terms of size and location in the front yard, and changes the existing pattern of open space found along Philadelphia Avenue.

In summary, staff is recommending that the Commission **deny** this HAWP application for the following reasons:

- The wall is an uncharacteristic feature within the historic district
- The wall is inconsistent with the *Guidelines* [a stone wall in this location does not respect the existing environmental setting and pattern of open space found within the historic district and specifically properties along Philadelphia Avenue within the historic district]
- The wall is inconsistent with the *Standards* [with respect to retaining the historic relationship between the main house and public right-of-way and is visually incompatible with the setting of the historic district].

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Commission **deny** the HAWP application as being consistent with Chapter 24A-8(a):

A HAWP should be denied if the Commission 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.

and inconsistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.



RETURN TO DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES
255 ROCKVILLE PIKE 2ND FLOOR ROCKVILLE MD 20850
240 777 7100

7
DPS - #8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: RUTH SKAFSGAARD
Daytime Phone No.: 301/585-8374
Tax Account No.: 16 13 01069646 MARTIN LOWERY
Name of Property Owner: RUTH SKAFSGAARD & Daytime Phone No.: 301/585-8374
Address: 612 PHILADELPHIA AVE, TKPK MD 20912
Street Number City State Zip Code
Contractor: THE LANDSCAPE GROUP Phone No.: 202/291-1650
Contractor Registration No.: 10480 MHIC
Agent for Owner: _____ Daytime Phone No.: _____

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number: 612 Street: PHILADELPHIA AVE.
Town/City: TAKOMA PARK Nearest Cross Street: TAKOMA AVE.
Lot: P11 Block: 69 Subdivision: 25
Liber: _____ Folio: _____ Parcel: _____

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- Construct
- Extend
- Alter/Renovate
- Move
- Install
- Wreck/Raze
- Revision
- Repair
- Revocable

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- A/C
- Slab
- Room Addition
- Porch
- Deck
- Shed
- Solar
- Fireplace
- Woodburning Stove
- Single Family
- Fence/Wall (complete Section 4)
- Other: FREE STANDING STONE ENTRY TO DRIVEWAY

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 17800.00

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # _____

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 WSSC 02 Septic 03 Other: _____
2B. Type of water supply: 01 WSSC 02 Well 03 Other: _____

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height _____ feet _____ inches
3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
 On party line/property line Entirely on land of owner On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Ruth Skafsgaard
Signature of owner or authorized agent

4/21/08
Date

Approved: _____ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Application/Permit No.: 483309 Date Filed: 4/22/08 Date Issued: _____

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION.**

1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

a. Description of existing structure(s) and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance:

Gravel driveway and stone retaining wall, presumably original from early 1920's. Old retaining wall in need of repair, in part due to traffic accident and would benefit from the addition of coping.

b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource(s), the environmental setting, and, where applicable, the historic district:

Free-standing stone entryway matching and integrating with stone retaining wall, construction set back from the street to create entryway definition. Coping on Retainer wall.

2. SITE PLAN

Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale. You may use your plat. Your site plan must include:

- the scale, north arrow, and date;
- dimensions of all existing and proposed structures; and
- site features such as walkways, driveways, fences, ponds, streams, trash dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and landscaping.

3. PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

You must submit 2 copies of plans and elevations in a format no larger than 11" x 17". Plans on 8 1/2" x 11" paper are preferred.

- Schematic construction plans**, with marked dimensions, indicating location, size and general type of walls, window and door openings, and other fixed features of both the existing resource(s) and the proposed work.
- Elevations (facades), with marked dimensions, clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, context. All materials and fixtures proposed for the exterior must be noted on the elevations drawings. An existing and a proposed elevation drawing of each facade affected by the proposed work is required.

4. MATERIALS SPECIFICATIONS

General description of materials and manufactured items proposed for incorporation in the work of the project. This information may be included on your design drawings.

5. PHOTOGRAPHS

- Clearly labeled photographic prints of each facade of existing resource, including details of the affected portions. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.
- Clearly label photographic prints of the resource as viewed from the public right-of-way and of the adjoining properties. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.

6. TREE SURVEY

If you are proposing construction adjacent to or within the dripline of any tree 6" or larger in diameter (at approximately 4 feet above the ground), you must file an accurate tree survey identifying the size, location, and species of each tree of at least that dimension.

7. ADDRESSES OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS

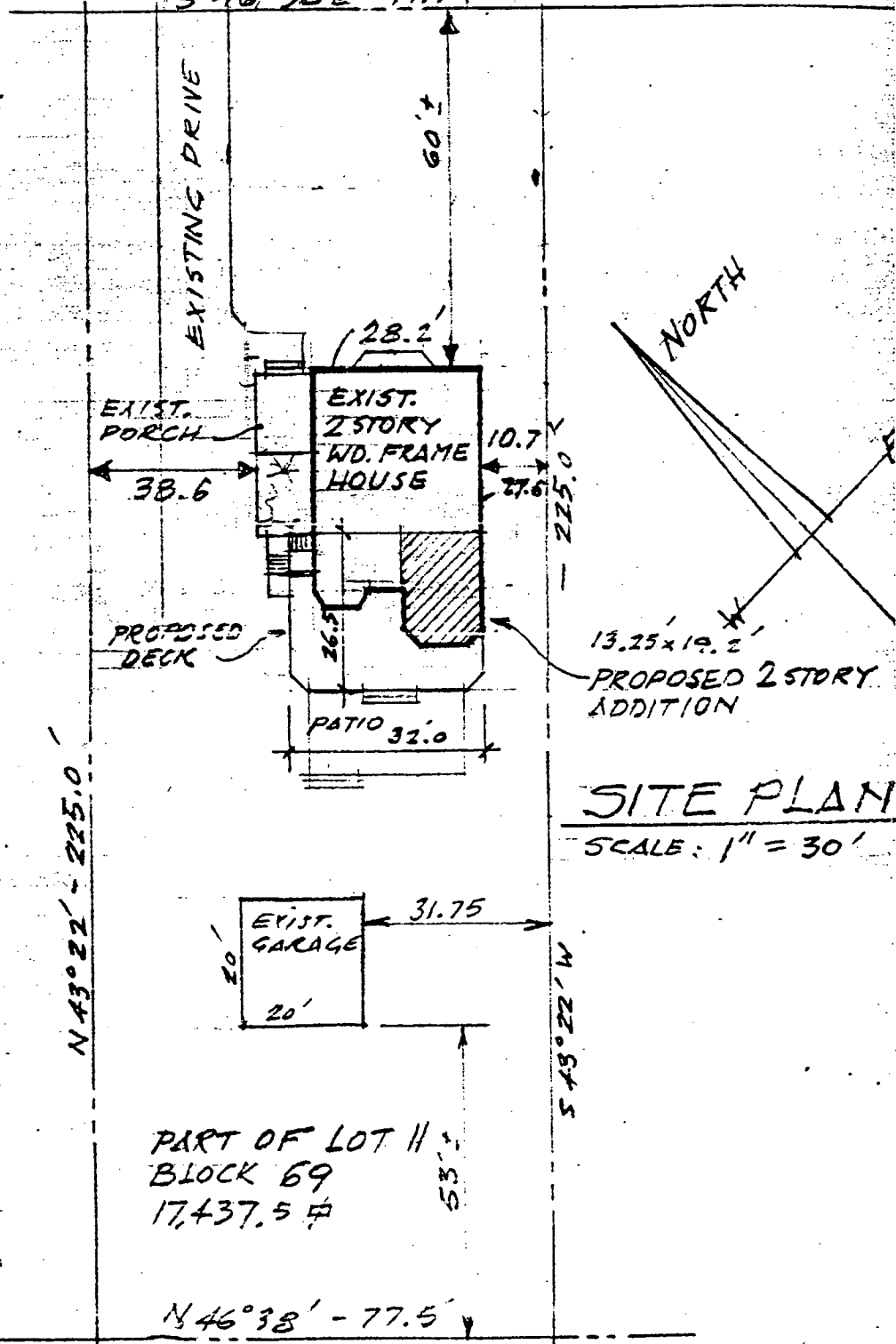
For **ALL** projects, provide an accurate list of adjacent and confronting property owners (not tenants), including names, addresses, and zip codes. This list should include the owners of all lots or parcels which adjoin the parcel in question, as well as the owner(s) of lot(s) or parcel(s) which lie directly across the street/highway from the parcel in question. You can obtain this information from the Department of Assessments and Taxation, 51 Monroe Street, Rockville, (301/279-1355).

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING
 [Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

Owner's mailing address	Owner's Agent's mailing address
612 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912 (MARTIN LOWERY + RUTH SKAFSGAARD)	
Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses	
FAGAN, DEBORAH + BERNARD 608 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD. 20912	JOHN SANDAGE 704 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912
JAMES EVANS 703 New York Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912	CHERYL SLOAN 613 Philadelphia Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912
PEGGY BULGER DOUG LEATHERBURY 619 PHILADELPHIA AVE TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912	

ATT: CRISS LOPEZ

PHILADELPHIA AVE.
S 46°38'E - 77.5'



SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 30'

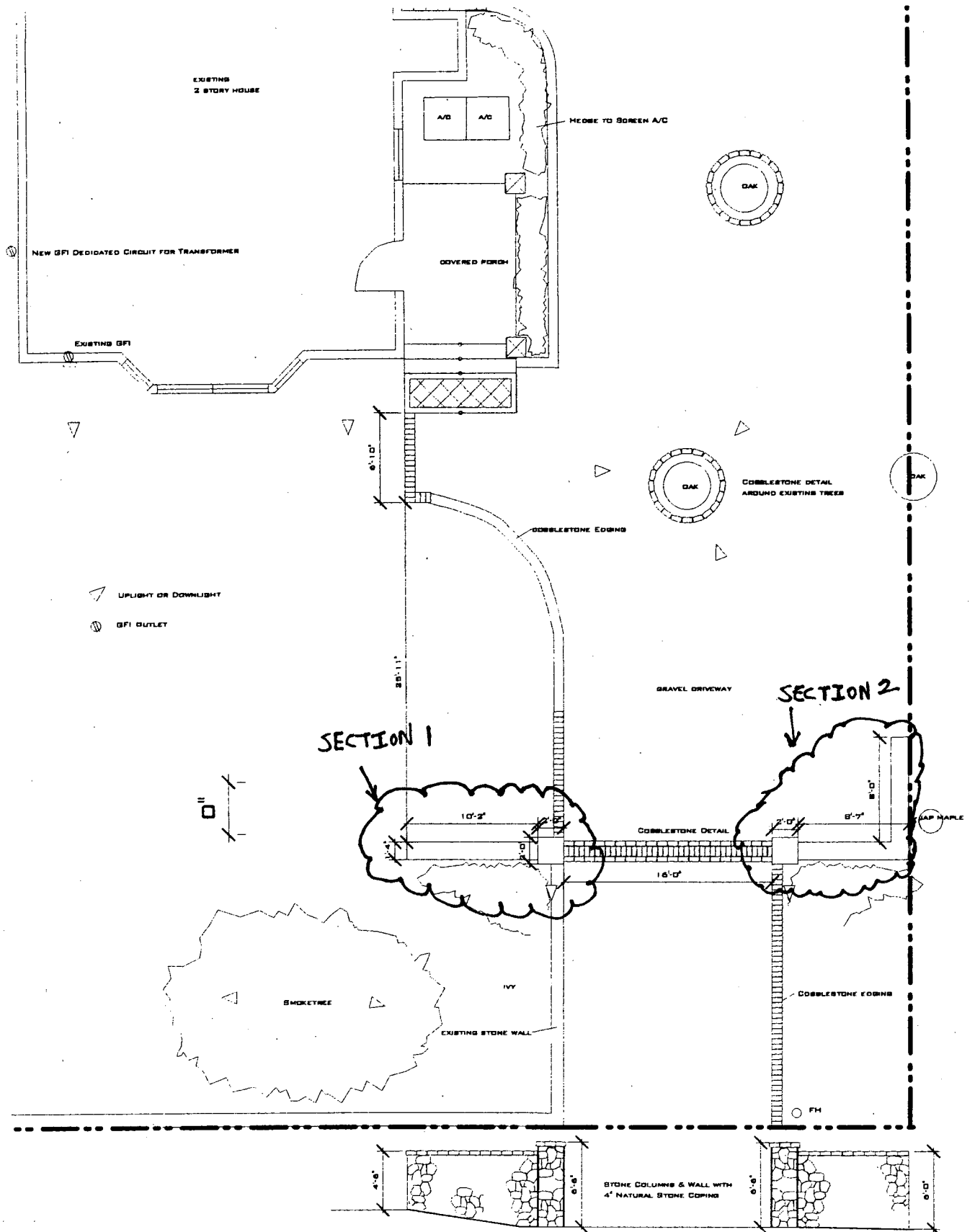
DOOR AREAS: SQ. FEET:

	EXIST.	ADDITION	TOTAL
FRONT	802	-	802.0
REAR	978	240	1,218.0
SIDE	778	346	1,124.0
TOTAL	2,558	586	3,144.0

PART OF LOT 11
BLOCK 69
17,437.5 sq ft

SKAFSGARD'S RESIDENCE - ADDITION

619 PHILADELPHIA AVE TAYOMA PARK MD. - 20012



ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

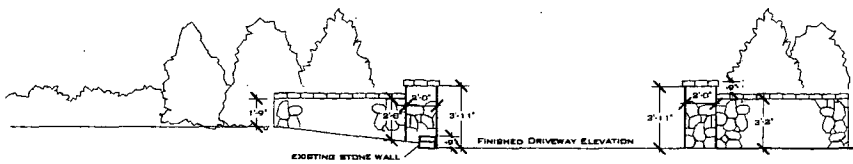
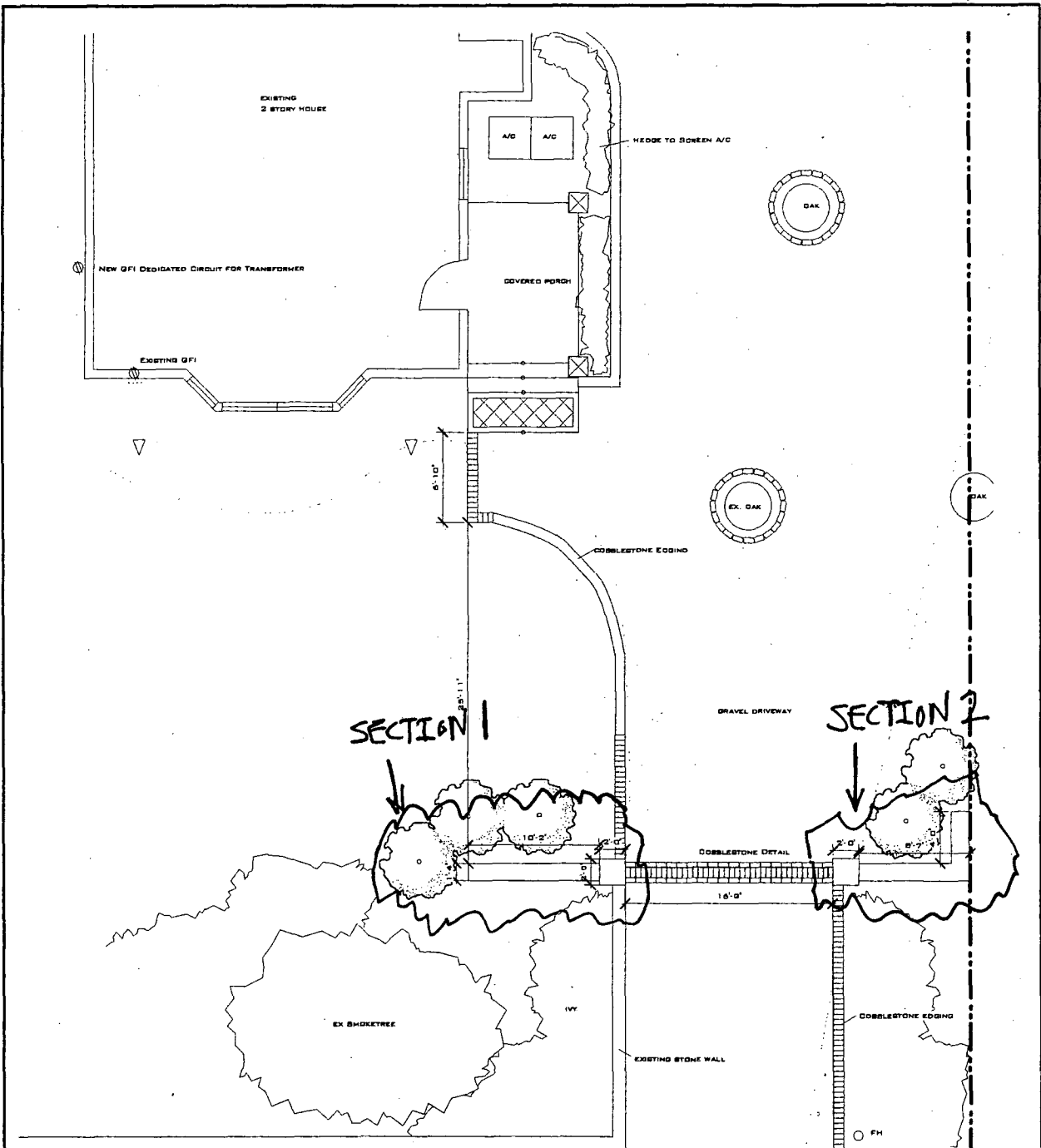


THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD.
7059 BLAIR ROAD NW SUITE 102
WASHINGTON DC 20012

PH: 202.291.1650
FAX: 202.291.2992
EMAIL: INFO@TLGDESIGN.NET

LOWERY - SKAFSGAARD
RESIDENCE
612 PHILADELPHIA AVE
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

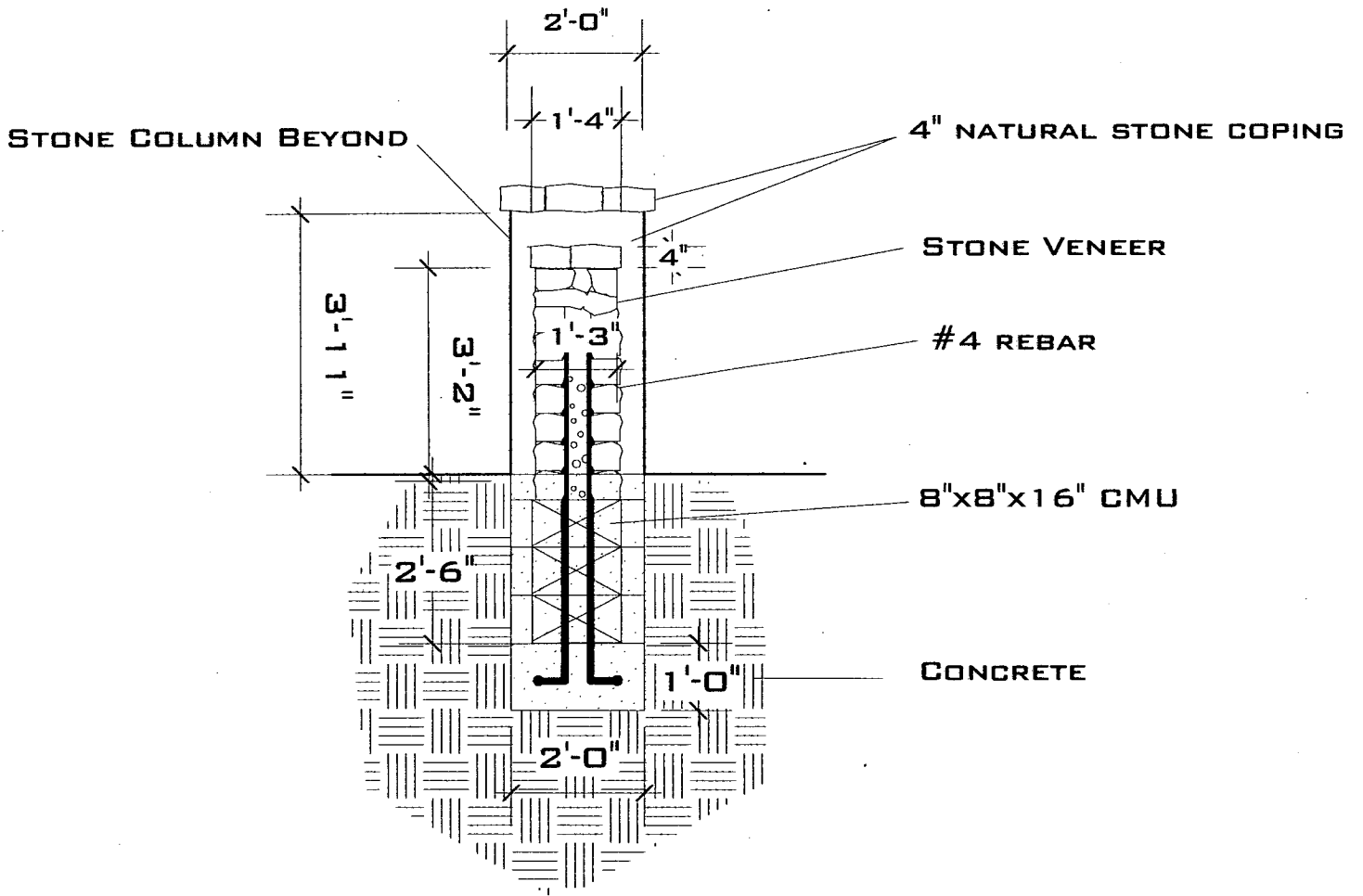
LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS
SHEET NUMBER: 2 OF 3
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'
3.16.08



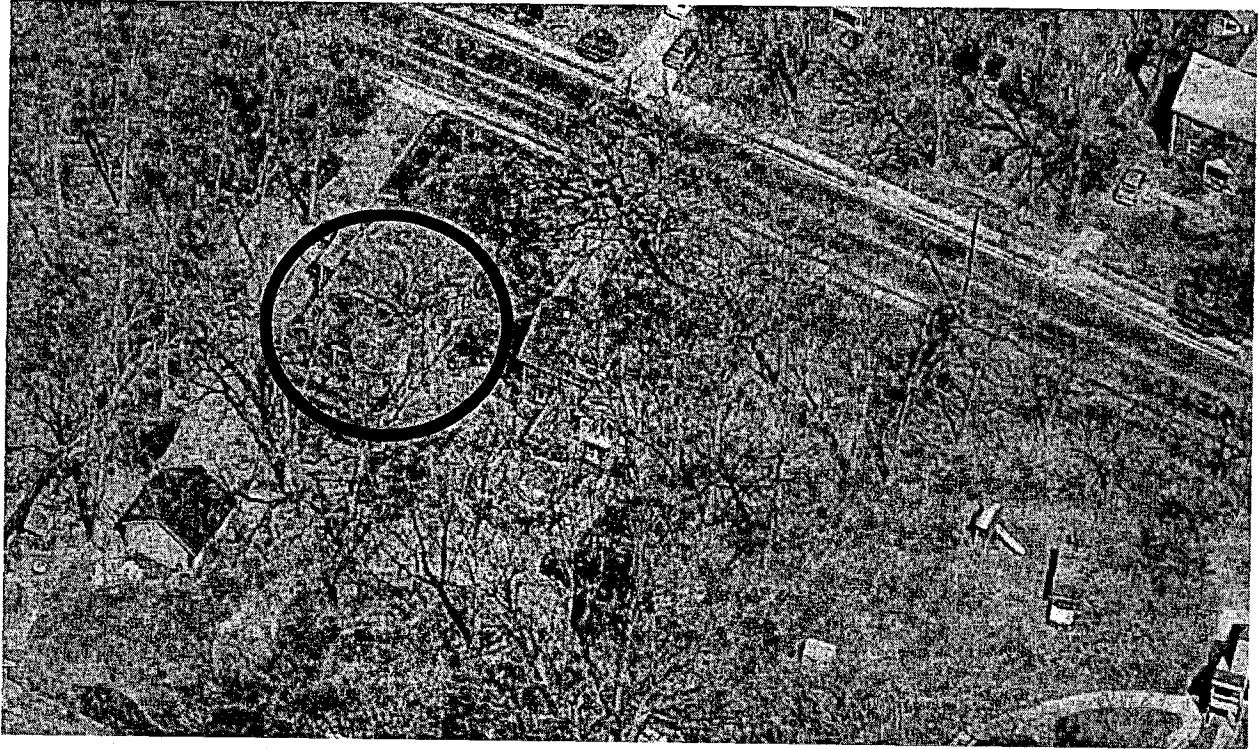
STONE COLUMNS & WALL WITH
4" NATURAL STONE COPING

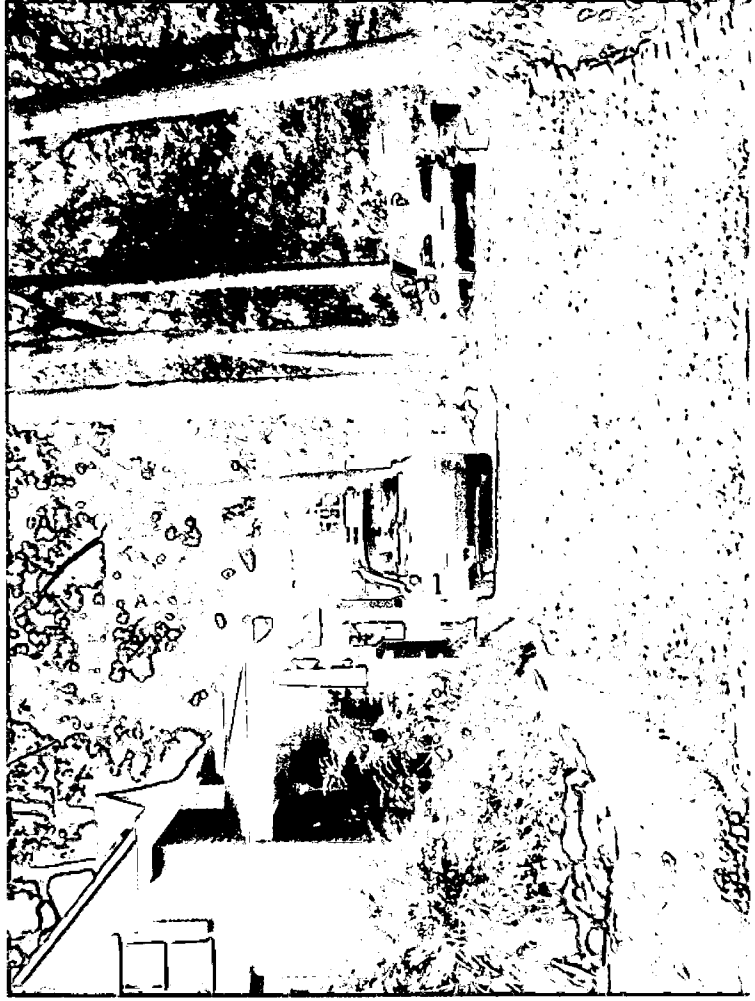
NEW PROPOSAL

	<p>THE LANDSCAPE GROUP LTD. 7059 BLAIR ROAD NW SUITE 102 WASHINGTON DC 20012</p> <p>PH: 202.291.1650 FAX: 202.291.2992 EMAIL: INFO@TLGDESIGN.NET</p>	<p>LOWERY - SKAFSBAARD RESIDENCE 612 PHILADELPHIA AVE TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912</p>	<p>LAYOUT PLAN FOR FRONT WALLS SCALE: 1/8" = 1' 4.21.08</p>
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**612 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park
Takoma Park Historic District**







612 Philadelphia Avenue Takoma Park
Takoma Park Historic District
(Completed Stone Wall Installation Project)



Philadelphia Avenue, facing northwest

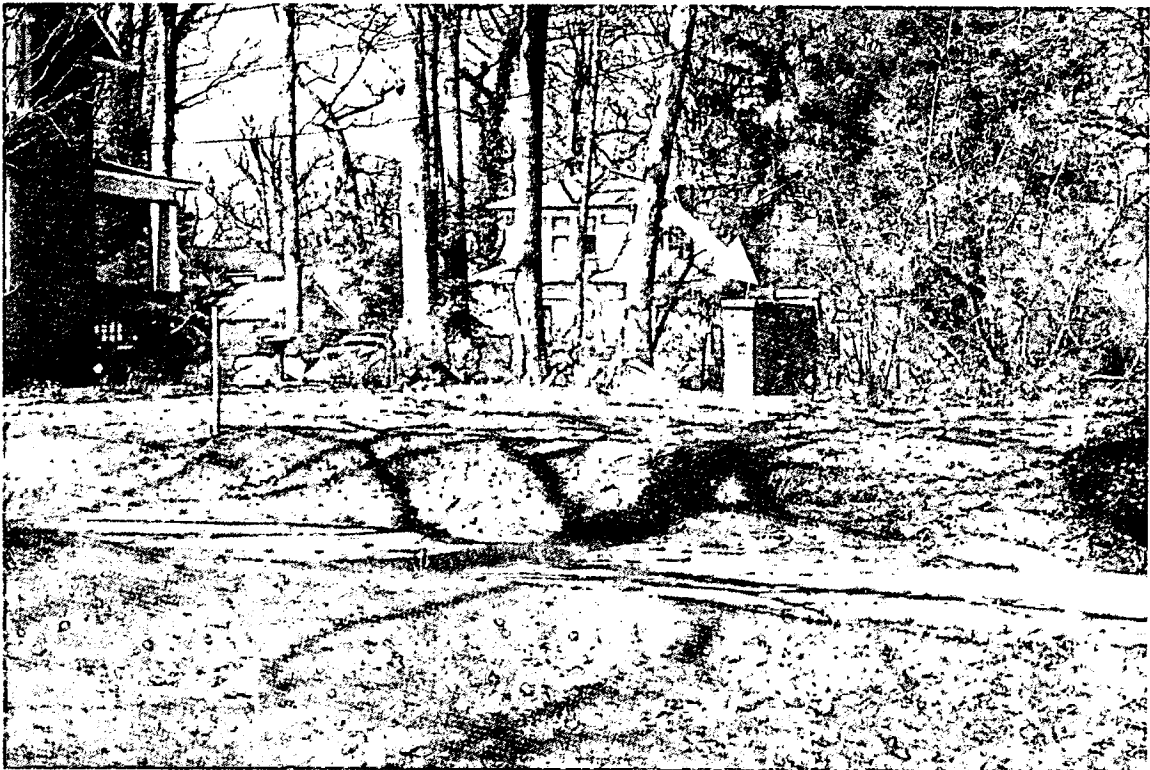


Photo from adjacent property, facing west



Photo from public right-of-way, facing southwest

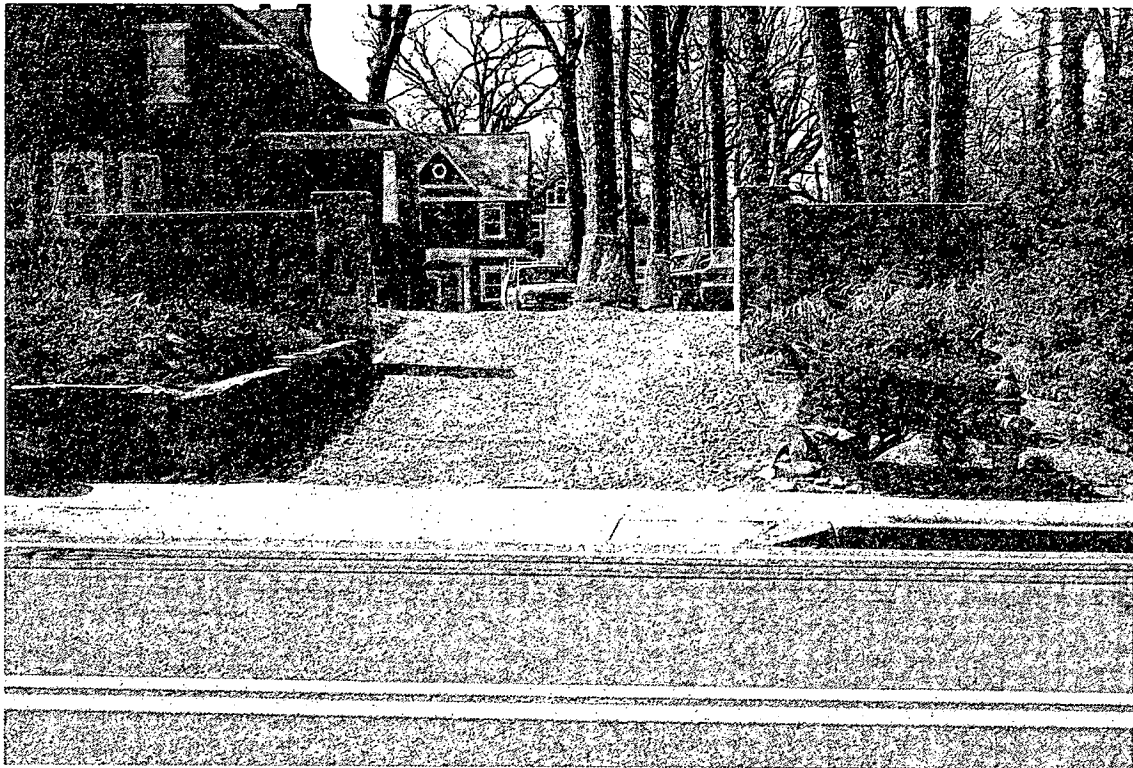


Photo from public right-of-way, facing south

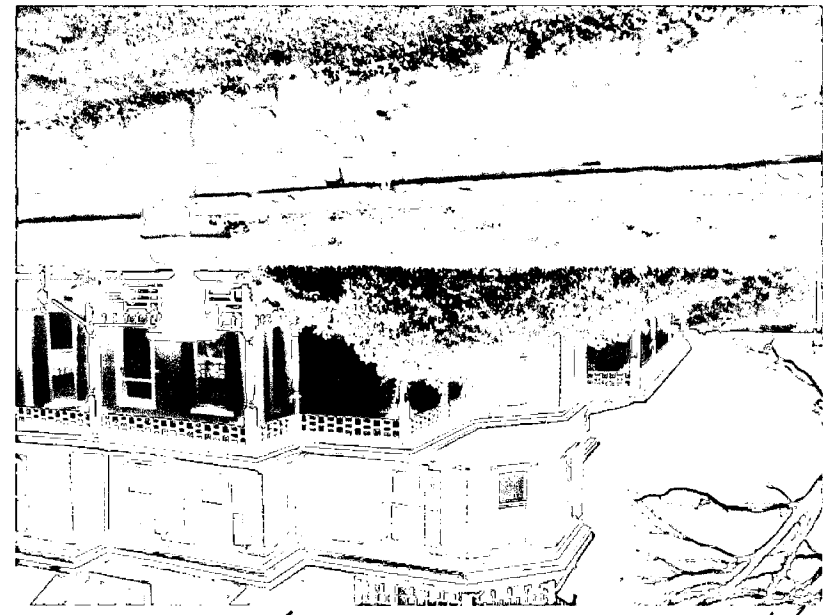


Photo from public right-of-way, facing southeast



Photo from adjacent property, facing east

Amphitheater Capone



Historic Gray de House Alcorn Park



HPC MEETING TRANSCRIPT

APRIL 9, 2008

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

----- X	:	
	:	
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT -	:	HPC Case No. 37/03-08S
612 Philadelphia Avenue	:	Takoma Park Historic
	:	District
----- X	:	
	:	
PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION -	:	Garrett Park Historic
10915 Montrose Avenue	:	District
	:	
----- X	:	

A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on
April 9, 2008, commencing at 7:38 p.m., in the MRO
Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland
20910, before:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

David Rotenstein

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Warren Fleming
Nuray Anahtar
Caroline Alderson
Thomas Jester

Deposition Services, Inc.

6245 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852

Tel: (301) 881-3344 Fax: (301) 881-3338

info@DepositionServices.com www.DepositionServices.com

ALSO PRESENT:

Joshua Silver
Scott Whipple
Anne Fothergill, Staff

APPEARANCES

STATEMENT OF:

PAGE

Martin Lowery

9

Ruth Skafsgaard

9

Steven Mackler

15

Jon Siegel

34

Mark Rockman

1 and reflecting the revised drawings received by staff; case
2 30/13-08B at 10909 Kenilworth Avenue in Garrett Park.

3 MR. WHIPPLE: Mr. Chairman, I just have to correct
4 the record, case C is actually 37/03-080 not zero.

5 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So noted.

6 MS. ALDERSON: Thank you.

7 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Is there any discussion for those
8 cases? Do I have a second there?

9 MR. FLEMING: I second.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: All those in favor? It's
11 unanimous. If those were your case, your application has
12 been approved and you are free to go for the evening. You
13 can speak to staff after the meeting or outside.

14 The first case we're going to hear this evening
15 is case I at 612 Philadelphia Avenue in Takoma Park. Do we
16 have a staff report?

17 MR. SILVER: Yes, we do. 612 Philadelphia Avenue
18 is a contributing resource located in the Takoma Park
19 historic district. This case is being heard retroactively
20 for an installation of a stone wall. Staff is recommending
21 that the HPC deny this application.

22 The applicant is proposing to install a stone
23 privacy wall in the front yard of the subject property. The
24 proposed wall is approximately 31 total linear feet, and
25 split into two section by an existing gravel driveway.

1 I've noted in the staff report on circle 3 under
2 the proposal section of section one and section two, and
3 those correspond to circle 9 of the staff report.

4 Section one, the left east section of the wall is
5 approximately 12 feet two inches long, two inches thick, and
6 ranges from four feet six inches to six feet six inches
7 tall.

8 Section two, the right, the west section of the
9 wall is 10 feet seven inches long, extending east/west
10 across the front of the property and eight feet long
11 extending north/south toward the house. This wall is also
12 two feet thick and ranges from six feet to six feet six
13 inches tall.

14 Although staff has discouraged, the applicants
15 completed the installation of the stone wall without first
16 receiving an approved historic area work permit and the
17 review of projects retroactively is undesirable for staff
18 and the Commission. This is not the basis for staff
19 recommending denial of this application.

20 As the guidelines staff, the design review
21 emphasis for contributing resources are restricted to
22 changes that are at all visible from the public right-of-way
23 irrespective of landscaping or vegetation. The guidelines
24 also state, all changes and additions should respect
25 existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns

1 of open space.

2 The stone wall is located in a prominent location
3 in the front yard of the subject property and is very
4 visible when approaching the property from either direction
5 on Philadelphia Avenue. The standards recommend retaining
6 the historic relationship between buildings and landscape
7 features of a setting. The location of the wall is
8 inconsistent with the historical pattern of open space found
9 in the district and specifically around Philadelphia Avenue.

10 Staff is opposed to a stone wall on this property
11 in the current location that is visually incompatible with
12 the historic character of the setting in terms of size and
13 location in the front yard, and is detrimental to the
14 historic relationship of the house with the streetscape of
15 the historic district.

16 In summary, staff is recommending that the
17 Commission deny this Historic Area Work Permit application
18 for the following reasons. One, the wall is forward of the
19 rear plane of the house, and it is higher than four feet and
20 approximately two feet thick.

21 It is the general policy of the Commission and it
22 is with any fence that it's either typically wood or
23 historically appropriate when forward of the rear plane of
24 the house, and that it cannot exceed four feet in height,
25 and should be open picket style in sections facing the

1 public right-of-way to preserve transparency of the historic
2 structure and environment setting for the streetscape of the
3 historic district.

4 Two, the wall's uncharacteristic feature within
5 the historic district; and three, the wall is inconsistent
6 with the guidelines and standards with respect to preserving
7 the existing open space pattern of the historic district and
8 specifically properties along Philadelphia Avenue within the
9 historic district.

10 Staff would also like to add that they received a
11 phone call from Historic Takoma to discuss the project, and
12 I believe that I was supposed to receive a letter but I left
13 the office before receipt of that letter this afternoon or
14 this evening.

15 But the discussion, without going into any great
16 detail that's important for this, for the purpose of the
17 hearing, is that Historic Takoma agreed with staff that the
18 wall was inappropriate and that it should either be removed
19 or lowered significantly. And I do have some slides that I
20 can share with you.

21 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Please.

22 MR. SILVER: This is across the street probably
23 about three houses down on the opposite site of the street.
24 This is the property to the left of the house. This would
25 be standing close to the public right-of-way. And of course

1 directly across the street. That's all I have for slides.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Thank you. Are there any
3 questions for staff? Would the applicant like to come up,
4 please? Good evening. Could you please state your name,
5 for the record? Just press the --

6 MR. LOWERY: My name is Martin Lowery, and I'm the
7 co-owner of the property, along with Ruth Skafsgaard, my
8 wife.

9 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Do you have any comments on the
10 staff report?

11 MR. LOWERY: Definitely. First of all, we
12 appreciate Josh's efforts. We worked closely with him when
13 this first came out, and there are a number of things that I
14 would like to state for the record.

15 Number one, it was not our intent not to apply for
16 permit. We've been before you numerous times in the past,
17 like the back house, which you can see there, the two-story
18 building there; a bump out on the side, and so on.

19 While we accept full responsibility for not having
20 gotten a permit, we were actually thinking of this not as a
21 wall but as an entryway that framed the driveway. In
22 addition, you can see in the front there, the retaining wall
23 is a stone wall that goes back, to the best of our
24 knowledge, to the origins of the property. And our goal was
25 to see that integrated, as an integrated space coming into

1 the driveway, which will remain gravel, and we intend to
2 make some changes respecting the tree lines. You can see
3 the orange tree protection there.

4 We did go to the City of Takoma Park, actually, to
5 review the tree protection plan before we proceeded. So
6 that was a bit ironic. We had fully intended to enhance
7 this with plantings as well.

8 Our contractor, design contractor is here,
9 landscape contractor, to answer any questions in terms of
10 visual integrity and so on. I do have, if you are
11 interested in looking at it, since it was after the staff
12 filing, I do have a couple of drawings that show what this
13 looks like, ultimately, with the plantings, if the
14 Commission would be interested in seeing those.

15 MR. ROTENSTEIN: If you'd like to pass them up.

16 MR. LOWERY: Sure. And see, it is sort of a
17 before and after image of the whole thing. While it was not
18 our intention to think of this, other than architectural
19 enhancement, we do have a noise problem that has been
20 growing for years and years.

21 We've been in our house since 1978, so we are 30-
22 year residents, and we believe that everything we have done
23 to date has been actually a positive improvement to the
24 neighborhood that we moved into in '78. We love Takoma Park
25 and think very highly of what's happened around the

1 neighborhood, especially the historic district. But the
2 noise continues to grow in terms of traffic volume, and
3 traffic volume especially given the revitalization of Silver
4 Spring is significant.

5 While that is not a noise abatement project, the
6 section over to the, looking at it this way, to the right,
7 with that slight L in it, does, in fact, help in terms of
8 traffic noise that's coming toward the house from Silver
9 Spring. Again, that was, that was an incidental outcome of
10 the whole thing, but something that we kind of liked.

11 We also talked to numerous neighbors about this,
12 and shared, I think, and Josh you may have added that to our
13 filing.

14 MR. SILVER: Yes, it's in the staff packet.

15 MR. LOWERY: We have signatures of 16 neighbors
16 all of whom feel very positive about the project, and
17 appreciate the effort that we've made there.

18 We were not aware of an Historic Takoma objection,
19 and would certainly understand the right to do that, and
20 would love to hear more. But you don't have the
21 documentation, I don't think, so there is nothing more we
22 can say about that tonight. But we were not aware of a
23 concern on the part of Historic Takoma.

24 We also did photographs that may not be directly
25 relevant to this assessment of fences and walls both in the

1 historic district and outside in Takoma Park and Chevy Chase
2 to attempt to show that, in fact, that kind of a facade look
3 is not uncommon, and in our opinion, not entirely
4 uncharacteristic of either the old neighborhoods or any
5 current construction.

6 When you go along Philadelphia Avenue, you see
7 numerous stockade fences, tall noise abatement type efforts,
8 lots of landscaping in that regard. And so we, again, while
9 we, it was a lapse on our part not thinking about the
10 permitting process, we fully understand that that is an
11 important issue for you. But we do appreciate staff's
12 recognition that that wouldn't be the basis for just saying
13 no.

14 We think highly of the aesthetics of it, frankly,
15 as do many, many of our neighbors, and saw this as an
16 improvement; saw it as something that integrates nicely,
17 especially as we looked to continuing landscaping in the
18 back. Ruth, anything you'd like to say?

19 MS. SKAFSGAARD: No.

20 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Okay. Are there any questions
21 for the applicant?

22 MR. JESTER: Could you tell me where, you said you
23 mentioned the back, I guess the back of the house. Do you
24 have outdoors space that you use on the other side of the
25 house, away from Philadelphia?

1 MR. LOWERY: Yes. There's about a quarter to a
2 half an acre back there. You can see in the -- well, a
3 total of a quarter. Yes, there's a lot of lawn back there,
4 and so on. I'm not sure whether I'm directly answering your
5 question or not.

6 MR. JESTER: Yes.

7 MR. LOWERY: Okay. Are there any others?

8 MR. ROTENSTEIN: I appreciate your efforts in the
9 past at this property. I have a few questions myself. The
10 original retaining wall, is that all stone?

11 MR. LOWERY: Yes.

12 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Yes.

13 MR. LOWERY: It's all stone.

14 MR. ROTENSTEIN: And your new wall/entryway,
15 that's concrete with stone facing?

16 MR. LOWERY: No, that's all stone.

17 MR. ROTENSTEIN: It's all stones?

18 MR. LOWERY: Uh-huh.

19 MS. SKAFSGAARD: There's all stone there. A large
20 part of the stones were already on the property, and we
21 matched it up to the existing retaining wall.

22 MR. LOWERY: I must say, the stone masons did an
23 enormously interesting job in building that. It's a
24 beautiful piece of work. But it's all stones.

25 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Okay.

1 MR. JESTER: You mentioned that the noise
2 abatement or that part of the project was an incidental
3 outcome, but it seems to me that -- I just have a hard time
4 believing that that's an incidental outcome and it's not
5 something a little more deliberate than that. The height of
6 the wall is more than just the height of an entry. It's
7 very, it seems like that was part of your thinking when you
8 decided to build it that high. Is that accurate or --

9 MR. LOWERY: Actually, our landscape designer is
10 here, and I think he would attest to the fact that we just
11 had a very interesting conversation about what would look
12 nice in terms of an entryway there.

13 MS. SKAFSGAARD: But furthermore, we had mentioned
14 to our landscaper that it was troublesome in terms of the
15 noise from the streets.

16 MR. LOWERY: That's true.

17 MS. SKAFSGAARD: So that, in my mind, certainly
18 was a large part of it.

19 MR. LOWERY: We had, over the years we thought
20 about other options like a berm, for example. There's a
21 very nice berm in Chevy Chase on -- what's the street? I
22 can't think of it off the top of my head.

23 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Bradley Boulevard.

24 MR. LOWERY: Bradley Boulevard, and would a large
25 berm in there help. You'll see in the second story there,

1 it's a direct hit in terms of traffic, and you know,
2 plantings help, and that type of thing. And as I've said,
3 all along Philadelphia Avenue you'll find folks are doing
4 their best to figure out how to avoid that.

5 But no, I have to stick with the sense that the
6 original, the original intent there was primarily an
7 aesthetic integration.

8 MR. ROTENSTEIN: What was your reasoning on the
9 height of the wall and its ultimate horizontal limits?

10 MR. LOWERY: That I'd like to call on our
11 landscape designer, if you don't mind, who is here. Would
12 that be all right?

13 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Sure.

14 MR. LOWERY: Let me. Steve Mackler. Come up
15 here, Steve. Steve is the principal of the Landscape Group.
16 He lives in Takoma Park. He's been there 35 years, and has
17 done a lot of award-winning gardens and landscaping design.
18 And I'd ask you, Steve, to answer that question as to the
19 reasoning, in terms of height for this.

20 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Please take a seat and identify
21 yourself of the record, please.

22 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Press this, Steve.

23 MR. MACKLER: This? Steven Mackler. I'm
24 president of the Landscape Group, a design and build
25 company, 30 years in business.

1 In response to the question directly, if you look
2 closely at the photograph, you can see the ink line of the
3 hill. It should be noted that from the street, or from this
4 perspective here, it doesn't just get a little bit taller,
5 but when you are at the top of the hill, for example, and
6 you're at the front porch and you are looking out at the
7 street, it's significantly lower, and it appears such.

8 One of the problems, among other things, with
9 Philadelphia Avenue, you know, it has changed dramatically
10 with the development of Silver Spring. It just gets a huge
11 amount of traffic.

12 And one of the original concepts to developing the
13 garden per se was to give the sense of protection, give the
14 sense of enclosure to the space. Clearly, with all respect
15 to the Historic Commission and the community in which I've
16 lived for 35 years, as I moved to Takoma Park in 1973, you
17 know, we tried to really stay in the character of the wall,
18 the stone.

19 We used the exact same stone that you have at
20 Carderock Quarries on River Road. We tried to keep the same
21 style. We left a larger mortar joint to try to, again, keep
22 consistent with this. And if you look at the schematic
23 drawings that I gave you, I mean, the intention, we were
24 stopped at a point before completion. But if you look at
25 it, we really had the intention to put in some lovely plants

1 going along the crest of the hillside, and minimize any
2 scale, any overage that the scale might appear in this
3 particular issue here.

4 If the wall was any shorter, it would still give
5 you the sense of an entranceway. It would give you the same
6 effect, I believe, of protection for the front porch and so
7 on.

8 Right now there's just ivy sitting on top of that
9 stone wall. And we had hoped, it was our intention to level
10 the top of the existing stone wall by putting in four inch
11 coping, which is what is on that, those two walls now, the
12 four-inch piece of cut stone coping which is hand quarried
13 to give it that very rustic and age-old look.

14 And you can see the masons are on point, have
15 started to lay some of the stone. It was not laid in
16 cement. It was just cut to fit and laid out there. And
17 that was our intention was to keep this continuous, you
18 know, raise the wall about four inches by putting this nice
19 dressing on top. Because you can see, it was sort of broken
20 right there on the corner.

21 The gravel driveway is going to remain exactly
22 intact. We're just going to put a fresh coat of top, pea
23 gravel on top there. And again, between plantings, we just,
24 I just thought it was very consistent with this kind of
25 house. I mean, they've done a wonderful job of trying to

1 restore the house to its original grandeur.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: What was prohibiting you from
3 just using all vegetative screening, to not only ensure your
4 privacy, but also abate some of the noise from Philadelphia
5 Avenue?

6 MR. MACKLER: Two reasons. One, the stone wall,
7 and two is the, you know, vegetative screen works very well.
8 It's very nice to mix and match. For example, I'm sure
9 you've all seen in the past a lovely picnic bench with
10 stones, you know, a wood fence with stone columns in
11 between.

12 Well that's really the idea here. We had two
13 stone columns. Instead of having a wood fence, which I felt
14 would have been extremely inconsistent, you know, we just
15 carry a little bit of the wall over there, you know, for the
16 protection, and remember the idea was to continue the
17 plantings all the way across on the left.

18 MR. ROTENSTEIN: If I may ask, how many walls have
19 you installed in the Takoma Park Historic District that have
20 required work permits, historic area work permits?

21 MR. MACKLER: Nothing I've done.

22 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Have you done wells in any
23 designated historic district, or in a property that's been
24 designated historic?

25 MR. MACKLER: Down in D.C., Kalorama, we did a

1 privacy wall in Kalorama.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: But in Montgomery County, you've
3 not done any?

4 MR. MACKLER: Walls, stone walls in Montgomery
5 County historic district, no. Oh, yes, I'm sorry, there is
6 one around the corner from us. I forgot, it's not a stone
7 wall. It's a stucco wall, the old pebble-dashed stucco
8 that's one the front of the house in Takoma Park. It's
9 there to match the house, and match the wall.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Jester, you have a
11 question?

12 MS. SKAFSGAARD: We have a picture of it.

13 MR. MACKLER: You brought a picture?

14 MS. SKAFSGAARD: Yes.

15 MR. LOWERY: The homeowner had applied for permit,
16 I don't know how many years ago.

17 MR. JESTER: Question. When you mentioned your
18 intent was to use this wall to enclose space, are you
19 referring to the area between the wall and the residence?

20 MR. MACKLER: No.

21 MR. JESTER: What's really the driveway area?

22 MR. MACKLER: I was really referring to visual
23 enclosure, you know, out of sight, out of mind. It was just
24 a sense of entrance, framing, respected, and there's a
25 little bit of an L on the wall on the right, a little bit of

1 an L-shape to it. It only goes back around four feet, just
2 to give it a bit of an anchor, because as the grade inclines
3 to four feet, the wall really levels out and becomes much
4 shorter. The top of the wall remains level, but the grade
5 goes like this. So as it goes back four feet, it really,
6 you know, just turns in.

7 MR. JESTER: I think the problem is what you
8 describe, it may have that feeling spatially from the
9 residence looking out towards the wall, but from the street
10 it does, because of the grade increase, and the wall is over
11 six-feet tall in places, it really does look out of scale as
12 a site wall, I mean, even as an entrance feature. It really
13 has a sense of enclosure, is really walling off a portion of
14 the property.

15 I realize it's not continuous, and it's not all
16 the way across the site, but it just seems a little out of
17 scale with the other site, the existing retaining walls that
18 are there.

19 MR. ROTENSTEIN: And I'd also like to add that,
20 yes, it is true that you find enclosures around gardens and
21 yard areas in properties of this age and this type, and even
22 though you may think that it meets your aesthetic needs,
23 there are still certain criteria that have to be complied
24 with in order for the guidelines to be met in the historic
25 district.

1 And those criteria include not just materials and
2 not just finish, but they also include scale. And they
3 include the location of features and how they relate to the
4 surrounding property and the historic district at large.

5 And even though we can take into account your
6 aesthetic concerns and your desires to abate the noise, we
7 really need to address solely how this feature, as built or
8 proposed, meets the criteria that we have to evaluate under
9 Montgomery County's historic preservation ordinance.

10 MR. MACKLER: I understand. That's why I tried to
11 draw you the schematic, to give you a sense. You know, I
12 just want to say in our defense, in my defense, you know, I
13 have been doing this 30 years, and I feel like we have a
14 good handle on it. I mean, our work has been recognized
15 significantly, so I do have some sense of scale and
16 proportion to these things.

17 I allow for the disagreement by the Board and the
18 Commission and I value your opinion to look at it because I
19 am always learning from each and every person that I meet on
20 the street. And I'm willing to, working with the
21 Lowery/Skafsgaard, perhaps if need be taking it down a foot
22 or two, I initially and outright don't feel it is too large
23 for that hill. When I put in a three foot plant, four foot
24 plant, a lovely rhododendron, laurel, whatever, something
25 that is going to just site, the scale will go down.

1 I mean, that tree that's on the left leafs out,
2 it's going to be beautiful. I mean, I think on your picture
3 that I have drawn for you here, I mean, this is a purple
4 smoke tree that's been existing, and that's going to, you
5 know, give it a whole -- that too will help diminish --

6 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Right, but our guidelines as
7 established under chapter 24A require us to look at things
8 outside of vegetative screens. Trees die. Trees change.

9 MR. MACKLER: Exactly.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So in that respect, we really
11 can't evaluate what this might look like relative to an
12 existing tree. At this time I would like to open up the
13 case for deliberation.

14 MS. ANAHTAR: Well, actually, I have a comment and
15 a question. Originally, we would not have approved a wall
16 this high, this tall. And it still it tall, but it's a
17 lesser concern for me at this point. I can understand that
18 you can reduce the height by proper landscaping.

19 But I'm more concerned about the look from the
20 lower side, and how abruptly this wall stops. And it's like
21 a freestanding little piece there. I don't know how you are
22 going to resolve it by landscaping only. I'm wondering if
23 you could have created a transition piece with a gradual,
24 you know, reduction of the height. And please tell us about
25 what kind of plants you had in mind that would stay there

1 summertime and wintertime as well, so that it doesn't look
2 different depending on the season.

3 MR. MACKLER: Well, I think that's actually a good
4 idea, you know, given the concerns of the Board. I think
5 there is merit in taking the wall and perhaps putting a
6 scoop and sloping it down to, you know, to bring it down to
7 two and a half or three foot at the end coming off the
8 column and then scooping it down. I think that too could be
9 very pretty, you know, if that was an option that the
10 Commission would like to consider. Does that answer your --

11 MS. ANAHTAR: And plants, I thought plants that
12 you have in mind?

13 MR. MACKLER: Well, along the front, the left
14 side, which is really the predominant area along there, as
15 you see in the schematic here, I thought something that
16 would be both hardy and evergreen and give him protection
17 from the street, white flowering, evergreen laurel lileukin,
18 not to large, not to tall, something that perhaps gets to be
19 around four to five foot, very loose, very natural, that
20 would ungate in a bit of a hedge going across. It pretty
21 much maintains a pretty good year round color and shape.

22 Something, for example, like a rhododendron is way
23 too woody. We would use those in the background. There are
24 some new varieties, also, if the Board felt that it would be
25 better to keep the plant material, you know, two and a half

1 to three foot height versus four to five foot, there are
2 some great new azaleas called Dorothy Haden, again, very
3 lustrous, flowering, white flowers and very dark green
4 leaves.

5 You get a fair amount of shade in the area, so you
6 need something that's fairly shade tolerant. It's not full
7 sunlight area.

8 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Yes, yes. We've ended the
9 questions. We need to get into deliberations here, so,
10 Commissioner Alderson.

11 MS. ALDERSON: Yes. I always look at these are
12 the applications that are the most painful for me, when
13 someone has invested in something, when it's a neighbor, at
14 that, a neighbor has gone through the process. We've worked
15 together, I think for 20 years, since I was on the LAC. So
16 this one was a difficult one for me, especially driving by
17 and seeing that it is very high quality materials, quality
18 construction.

19 When we talk about that this blends, this blends
20 with an estate on River Road. It's not characteristic of
21 Takoma Park. The nature of the houses and their
22 surroundings, their enclosures is more modest, more
23 vernacular community, early 20th century. It's not in the
24 nature of the great estates with the grand approaches. And
25 so it's too tall and too solid to be characteristic of this

1 neighborhood, and it does seem a rather isolated piece.
2 Certainly, plantings might make it less isolated.

3 What I would suggest maybe that you consider since
4 you are looking at how to recover something of what you've
5 done is ways to reduce the height. And we can give you
6 pretty consistently the rules of thumb. Josh did his
7 homework. We've been very consistent. So if you saw a
8 stockade wall, it's going to predate any recent Commission.

9 It's a tough issue, the issue of privacy, the
10 issue of sound. I live on Maple Avenue. In 25 years we've
11 got less privacy and a lot more noise. I had an SUV drive
12 through my fence. So I still have a hole in it. They chose
13 the iron fence to drive through, not the wood fences.

14 But how we dealt with that issue is with
15 plantings. And, you know, that's how we are telling people
16 in Chevy Chase and Kensington to deal with it. And there
17 are a lot of evergreen varieties that grow pretty quickly.
18 And they are fabulous sound barriers.

19 I have relations in Tennessee that now, the
20 highway has gotten big and they use pines. And they are a
21 fabulous visual and sound barrier. And you can grow plants
22 as tall as you like. You don't need our approval. So
23 that's what we suggest for getting as much privacy as you
24 feel you want.

25 And then I would look at, you know, look at maybe

1 what you can recover of what you've done with something that
2 is more in scale. Look at the retaining walls. There are
3 lots of them. But they're modest. They're usually just big
4 enough to hold up the earth. And so I'd look at being
5 within that four-foot range that we've said is generally our
6 limit, and see what you can do with that.

7 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Jester.

8 MR. JESTER: I think Commissioner Anahtar and
9 Commissioner Alderson made some very good points. I concur
10 that what's been constructed really looks kind of like an
11 unfinished wall. And I think the suggestion that was made
12 about kind of stepping it down or creating a more finished
13 portion on each side would actually have the effect that
14 Commissioner Alderson made, that it would make it more
15 uncharacteristic of the district and is probably not
16 appropriate.

17 So I think the suggestion to lower the wall is
18 probably the best, in my mind, is the best way to go. I
19 think I personally could live with something that looks more
20 like just a modest entry piece that relates to the existing
21 retaining walls. I'm not sure what the height is. It
22 probably wouldn't be anything higher than what we would
23 normally approve for a fence, which I think is about four
24 feet over to the rear plane.

25 MR. LOWERY: Correct. Yes.

1 MR. JESTER: And I think the suggestion made about
2 additional buffer plantings is a good one, if you really are
3 looking for some additional privacy and noise abatement.
4 That's kind of where I come out on it.

5 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Fleming.

6 MR. FLEMING: Looking at this wall the way you've
7 got it configured -- I like stone walls, number one. And
8 it's a nice wall you've got here. But what you said
9 tonight, you were trying to integrate the new wall with
10 landscaping, with what is already, that has been there for
11 years. And they don't match, to me. This is like new
12 technology as far as walls and an entrance.

13 Now, brick walls and brick structures, I mean rock
14 structures, which you are trying to get to, there are other
15 configurations to get there that are unique, the existing
16 wall that is there going around the outer, the outer part of
17 your property.

18 So I understand the fact of the noise issue. The
19 thing that I am struggling with is that it is a historic
20 district. It's something that we wouldn't, have not
21 approved of, and it does not, to me, match what was already
22 there. So that's what I think of it.

23 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Well, you've gotten a fair feel
24 for how the Commission feels about the staff report. And I
25 think Josh has done an outstanding job of applying the

1 standards that we have to observe.

2 Before I ask for a motion, I think it might be
3 appropriate for you to take the opportunity to think whether
4 you'd like to withdraw this application and resubmit
5 something that's more reflective of our deliberations
6 hearing the staff report.

7 (Discussion off the record.)

8 MR. LOWERY: Of course. We appreciate everything
9 that's been said. We appreciate your willingness to help us
10 think this through. Ms. Alderson, in particular your
11 comments about neighbors in Takoma Park, and yes, we would
12 like to work this through if we can, based on a reasonable
13 height and potentially as Ms. Anahtar said, some scaling.

14 We'd like to recover some of the investment as
15 well as some of the visual of this in terms of where we are
16 going with some work in the back and all of that.

17 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Sure. And I would encourage you
18 to work very closely with the staff to develop a new
19 proposal that we can look at and approve. It is unfortunate
20 this is retroactive and you've been put in this position,
21 especially after all of the 30 years of work you've put in
22 on the property. But this is something that I think we can
23 resolve. And I think that was very good advice from the
24 Commissioners and from staff.

25 MR. LOWERY: Excellent.

1 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So we look forward to you
2 returning with a new work permit. What's the procedure for
3 a continuance here?

4 MR. WHIPPLE: I believe that they have two
5 choices. They can withdraw their application, or they can
6 postpone consideration of this application. But because the
7 changes are so significant, I think probably the right
8 approach would be to withdraw this application and start
9 afresh.

10 MR. ROTENSTEIN: That would probably be the best
11 approach. So are you going to do that?

12 MR. LOWERY: I think that's just a formal matter.
13 I don't see an issue there since we'll be back before you as
14 Commissioners.

15 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Right, but I think it has to do
16 with the 45-day clock that --

17 MR. LOWERY: Oh, I see.

18 MR. WHIPPLE: In essence, it means that you are
19 going to submit a new, you know, you'll submit a new HAWP
20 and, you know, to DPS and start the process over.

21 MS. ALDERSON: Give you more flexibility with your
22 schedule.

23 MR. LOWERY: Right. Okay. Thank you. I
24 appreciate that.

25 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Thank you for coming in.