

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

<b>Address:</b>	3914 Baltimore St., Kensington	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	7/14/2010
<b>Resource:</b>	Primary One (Outstanding) Resource Kensington Historic District	<b>Report Date:</b>	7/07/2009
<b>Applicant:</b>	David P. Reynolds	<b>Public Notice:</b>	6/30/2010
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	None
<b>Case Number:</b>	31/06-10D	<b>Staff:</b>	Scott Whipple
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Demolition of Primary One (Outstanding) Resource		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff is recommending that the HPC **deny** this HAWP application, *unless the HPC finds that this application is consistent with criteria for approval at sections 24A-8(b)(4) or 24A-8(b)(5).*

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Primary One (Outstanding) Resource within the Kensington Historic District  
**STYLE:** Transitional Queen Anne  
**DATE:** c1900

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The Kensington Historic District (#31/6) was found to meet the following criteria, as established in section 24A-3 of the County Code: 1(a) and 2(a). The Findings of Historic and Architectural Significance prepared for the Kensington Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation (1986) state the following:

The town of Kensington began as a small crossroads settlement along the Bladensburg Turnpike, an early market road between the County's major north/south route, Old Georgetown Road, and the port of Bladensburg... When the B&O Railroad was built in 1873, the crossroads settlement became known as Knowles Station...

By 1890, Knowles Station had developed into a village of several hundred people most of whom were living north of the railroad. In that year, Washington financier, Brainard Warner purchased and subdivided property to the south and southwest of the railroad, naming the area Kensington Park, after the famous London suburb. The subdivision was designed in the Victorian manner with ample sized lots and a curvilinear street pattern.

Warner established his own summer residence and invited his friends to join him in this park-like setting away from the heat and congestion of Washington. It is this concentration of Victorian period, residential structures located in the center of the town which constitutes the core of the historic district.

The district is architecturally significant as a collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses exhibiting a variety of architectural styles popular during the Victorian period including Queen Anne, Shingle, Eastlake and Colonial Revival. *The houses share a uniformity of scale, setbacks and construction materials that contribute to the cohesiveness of the district's streetscapes. This uniformity, coupled with the dominant design inherent in Warner's original plan of subdivision, conveys a strong sense of both time and place [emphasis added]*, that of a Victorian garden suburb.

The Kensington Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation (1986) identifies the subject property as a Primary One Resource.

The Kensington Historic District is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

### **PROPOSAL:**

The Applicant is proposing to demolish a Primary One (Outstanding) Resource. The Applicant would then stabilize and maintain the real property. The proposal does not include plans for new construction.

### **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:**

In accordance with the Historic Preservation Commission Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures (Regulation No. 27-97) ("Regulations"), the Commission uses several documents to assist it in developing its decision when reviewing a Historic Area Work Permit application for an undertaking within the Kensington Historic District. As established by section 1.5 of the Regulations, these documents include section 24A-8 of the Montgomery County Code ("Chapter 24A"); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation ("Standards") and the "Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan" ("Vision"). The pertinent information in these documents, incorporated in their entirety by reference herein, is outline below.

Sec. 24A-8. Same-Criteria for issuance.

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
- (b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:
  - (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
  - (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
  - (3) The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
  - (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
  - (5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; or
  - (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.
- (c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.

(d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. (Ord. No. 9-4, § 1; Ord. No. 11-59.)

### *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” Standards 2, 5, and 6 most directly apply to the application before the commission:

**Standard #2:** The *historic character of a property will be retained* and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or *alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided* [emphasis added].

**Standard #5:** Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

**Standard #6:** Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

### *Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan*

The HPC formally adopted the planning study entitled “Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan,” which as directed by the Executive Regulations §1.5(a)(4), it uses when considering changes and alterations within the Kensington Historic District. The goal of this preservation plan “was to establish a sound database of information from which to produce a document that would serve the HPC, M-NCPPC, their staff and the community in wrestling with the protection of historic districts amidst the pressures of life in the 21st century.” (Vision, page 1). The plan provides a specific physical description of the district; an analysis of character-defining features of the district; a discussion of the challenges facing the district; and a discussion of proposed strategies for maintaining the character of the district while allowing for appropriate growth and change.

Of particular relevance to the application before the commission is the following analysis of the district’s character defining features:

- **Existing Architectural Character** (p. 18): “The Kensington Historic District is architecturally significant as a collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses exhibiting a variety of architectural styles... The houses share a uniformity of scale, set backs and construction materials that contributes to the cohesiveness of the district’s streetscapes... The majority of Kensington’s historic resources date from 1880 to 1925...”
- **Building Setbacks** (p. 19): “The majority of houses extant in Kensington are sited on ample-sized parcels, oftentimes consisting of two or three lots. The original subdivision with its curvilinear streets and park-like setting encouraged development of large, free-standing structures surrounded by substantial garden settings... Uniform in size and scale, they are characterized by irregular massing, wrap-around porches, towers, bays, multiple window types, patterned shingles, and a strong sense of continuity... The overriding impression is of a turn-of-the-century garden suburb



with widely spaced houses set on expansive lots among mature trees and pleasant vistas. The average lot coverage within the Kensington Historic District is 15%...

- **Rhythm of Spacing Between Buildings** (p. 20): “Kensington has a distinctly residential ambience, one associated with the visual imagery of a late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburb. This appearance results from the carefully sited and landscaped, architecturally significant structures which comprise the historic streetscape.
- Also pertinent is the analysis included at “**Review of Physical Characteristics**” (p. 45-50).  
(Circle 7-12)

## STAFF DISCUSSION

Outstanding resources (Primary One in the Kensington district) are so designated in recognition that these resources embody the character-defining features of a historic district. As such, outstanding resources are extended the highest level of design review in the Commission’s consideration of a HAWP. In appraising a demolition request, the HPC must carefully evaluate the significance of the resource to the historic district and assess the condition of the resource and other related factors based on the supporting documentation in the record before reaching a decision on the necessity of demolition and whether such an action is consistent with the evaluation criteria established in the Regulations.

The subject property, a Primary One (Outstanding) Resource within the Kensington Historic District, consists of three recorded lots (lots 28, 29, and 30), with the dwelling constructed upon the middle lot (lot 29). The property is zoned R-60. The dwelling suffered a fire in May, 2007. The fire caused extensive damaged portions of the interior, exterior, and roof, as further described in the application and below. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) has condemned the property as unsafe (unfit) for habitation and it has remained vacant since May, 2007.

### *Time Line:*

*October 10, 2007:* Historic Preservation staff, accompanied by DHCA Inspection staff, visited the site. The dwelling was largely secured, although a portion of the roof was open to the weather and certain windows were not boarded up.

*October 17, 2008:* The Applicant and his wife, DHCA Inspector Robert Goff, Historic Preservation Supervisor Scott Whipple, and neighbors attended a meeting on site. At that time, it was noted that the roof remained open to the weather. It was readily apparent that the roof had suffered further deterioration since the time of the fire. The Applicant was directed to place a tarp on the roof to enclose it and protect the interior from additional water damage. The roof was left open to the weather until the spring 2009, when it was covered with a tarp. DHCA issued a citation for Failure to Demolish, Remove or Repair a Condemned Structure.

*July 8, 2009:* The HPC scheduled a hearing on a HAWP application to demolish the dwelling. The staff recommendation was to deny the application. At the request of the Applicant, the HPC deferred consideration of the application. Subsequently, the Applicant listed the property for sale.

*April 15, 2010:* HPC staff attended a meeting on site, attended by the Applicant and his wife, and their representatives (attorney, builder, and structural engineer), to tour the resource and to discuss issues related to the HAWP submission. Commissioner Swift, a Maryland-registered structural engineer, also attended this meeting. Commissioner Swift walked the dwelling’s exterior and interior, limiting his contact with the Applicant and Applicant’s representatives. Commissioner Swift was not a party to discussions about the HAWP application. At the time of the meeting, it was noted that the roof was no longer tarped, possibly as a result of snow load during the winter’s several snow storms.

July 14, 2010: The HPC is scheduled to hold a hearing on the Applicant's HAWP application.

In support of their application to demolish the dwelling, the Applicant has submitted an enumerated summary of the basis of their application (Application Packet, Addendum A); a report (dated April 28, 2010) prepared by Structural Concepts, Inc., a structural engineering firm based in Winchester, VA (Application Packet, Exhibit B) and cost estimates for several scenarios, prepared by Runey Construction Co., of Purcellville and Round Hill, VA (Application Packet, Exhibit C). Also included at Exhibit E-1 is an extensive suite of photographs illustrating the damage to the dwelling, and plans (Exhibit E-2).

Staff notes that in Addendum A the Applicant makes several arguments that the application is consistent with the review criteria based on issues related to the rehabilitation of the existing dwelling or the construction of a new dwelling. Staff reminds the Commission that the Applicant has submitted for the Commission's review an application proposing the demolition of the dwelling; a rehabilitation plan or proposal for new construction is not before the Commission as part of the application under consideration at this time.

Based on the information included in the application, staff makes the following findings in consideration of the application's consistency with the Commission's review criteria:

Section 24A-8(b)(1): By definition, the demolition of a Primary Resource would substantially alter the exterior features of a historic resource within an historic district. Therefore, staff finds that the application is inconsistent with §24A-8(b)(1).

Section 24A-8(b)(2): The proposal under consideration is not compatible with the character of the features of the district. The demolition of the resource would remove a Primary Resource – which contributes significantly to the architectural character of the district (*Vision*, p 18) – as well as interrupts the rhythm of the spacing of between buildings (*Vision*, p 20), both character-defining features of the historic district. Therefore, staff finds the demolition of the historic resource, without contemplating at this time the redevelopment of the parcel, to be inconsistent with §24A-8(b)(2).

Section 24A-8(b)(3): The proposal under consideration would not aid in the protection or preservation of the historic resource in a manner compatible with the Kensington Historic District. Therefore, staff finds that the application is inconsistent with §24A-8(b)(3).

Chapter 24A does provide for a process to allow the HPC to approve an application, notwithstanding the above, as outlined in 24A-8(b)(4)-(6). The burden of persuasion is on the applicant to establish that an application is consistent with the review criteria.

Section 24A-8(b)(4): The Applicant has submitted testimony that “the the condition of the home is dangerous and a partial or complete collapse of the home is possible” (*Structural Report*, p 2) and that the fire damaged “approximately 40%” – and perhaps more – of the building's structural elements and siding, with greater damage to the roof and roof framing. The report notes significant damage to interior finishes, due to fire and water damage, and the possibility of mold. The report references various requirements under the current International Residential Code 2006 (IRC 2006), which the report asserts may mandate significant structural enhancements to the dwelling, should it be rehabilitated.

Staff has seen firsthand the extensive damage the fire and the subsequent water infiltration through the opening in the roof and exposed walls inflicted on this dwelling. Staff notes that the application includes documentation outlining the specific damage. Should the HPC determine that it is persuaded that, based on all the evidence in the record, that the demolition of the resource is necessary and that no other appropriate alternatives exist to remedy any unsafe or unhealthful conditions at the subject property, the HPC may approve the application finding it consistent with §24A-(8)(b)(4).

Section 24A-8(b)(5): The Applicants have asserted that the rehabilitation of the structure would be more “dangerous, difficult and costly than demolition and construction of a new home” and have provided testimony in support of this claim. In considering an application, the HPC should not take into consideration arguments comparing the costs of various preservation treatments. However, an applicant’s economic hardship claims may be considered should the Commission be prepared to deny an application. Chapter 24A provides a mechanism for the approval of an application should the applicant establish that the proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship as a result of the HPC’s action. Staff recommends that, should the HPC be prepared to deny the application, the HPC provide the Applicant with an opportunity to demonstrate that a denial of the application to demolish the subject property would deny the owners all reasonable beneficial use of the property or reasonable return on the investment.

Staff notes that the basis for finding that an application is consistent with the undue hardship provisions in Chapter 24A-8(b)(5) relies on an evaluation of information separate from that required to find that an application is consistent with other review criteria. Therefore, staff recommends that the HPC first consider the issue of whether the proposed application to demolish the resource is appropriate as outlined above before turning to the Applicant’s claim that the application is necessary under 24A-8(b)(5). At such time as the HPC considers the question of consistency with §24A-8(b)(5), the HPC may request that the Applicant provide such additional information for the record as it determines may be necessary in order to provide sufficient evidence for the HPC to make a finding. Staff recommends that the HPC continue such consideration to a future meeting.

24A-8(b)(6): Staff finds that the application does not establish that the public is better served by granting the application and therefore recommends that the HPC find that the application does not satisfy criteria 24A-8(b)(6).

Staff finds no basis to recommend approval of the application based on criteria 24A-8(c) or 24A-8(d).

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission deny the application, consistent with section 24A-8(a), *unless the HPC finds that this application is consistent with criteria for approval at sections 24A-8(b)(4) or 24A-8(b)(5).*

Attached at the conclusion of this staff report is a letter received from Kensington Mayor Peter Fosselman and the Town Council (dated July 7, 2009), which was submitted at the time of the public hearing that had been scheduled for last year (Circle 13). The Mayor and Town Council have scheduled an agenda item to discuss this matter at their July 12, 2010 meeting (which will take place after this staff report was written). Any subsequent correspondence received from the Town of Kensington will be included in the public records for the Commission’s consideration. Also attached is a letter from the Kensington Historical Society (dated July 8, 2009), which was received for the hearing last summer (Circle 14).

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **deny** the HAWP application, finding that:

- the application is inconsistent with Chapter 24A-8(a), 24A-8(b)(1)-(3); *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* Nos. 2, 5, and 6; and the *Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan*, and
- the application failed to establish consistency with Chapter 24A-8(b)(4)-(6).

## REVIEW OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Historic districts, generally, identify and recognize geographic areas where historic buildings, structures, patterns of development, and/or remains occur that are related to one another through their common history, significant events, or aesthetic qualities. Historic districts may also derive significance from a combination of the interplay of buildings and their relationship to streets, their rhythm of spacing, their plan of streets, and other aspects of the historic setting of the community. It is important to acknowledge that the significance of an historic district may encompass characteristics beyond specific architectural, cultural, or archaeological resources, and that the less visible relationships of land use, building siting, vegetation, and other elements are important contributors to the historic character.

The Kensington Historic District derives special significance from the cohesiveness of its many well-preserved late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings, its strong plan of streets, and its historic landscaped setting as a "suburban village" in the tradition of the "garden city". The intent of this section is to examine the land use characteristics within the Kensington Historic District in order to identify the important patterns of historical development which contribute to the character of the district.

In Kensington, these patterns include relationships between lot sizes, lot coverage (lot occupancy), the distance between building fronts and the street (front yard setback), the open space between buildings and the variation of these characteristics from one building type to another to recognize a hierarchy of uses. The following analysis examines these relationships based on tax map records and building locations identified from topographic maps of the County. Dimensions for setbacks and area takeoffs were scaled at 1"= 200' and are approximate.

### **Lot Area and Ownership**

Kensington was platted from the outset as a suburban-scaled community with a complete set of carefully ordered streets which remains the primary subdivision plan and lot structure today (Figure 33). Three periods of development can be identified within the historic district. The first period covers the initial development of the suburb from 1890 to 1910. The larger houses constructed of this period in the heart of district usually occupied more than one lot. The second period of development includes buildings constructed between 1910 and 1930. Houses constructed over this period were generally smaller and most were built on single lots. Buildings built over these two periods are considered primary historic resources. The third period of development covers post-1930 construction which typically consists of small residences and buildings on single lots.

The table titled Kensington Historic District Lot Characteristics presents the lot area, lot coverage, front yard setback, and typical building spacing characteristics for properties within the Historic District of Kensington. Ownership was determined by notations on the tax maps. These characteristics have been tabulated for (1) the entire district, (2) properties developed between 1890 and 1910; and (3) properties developed between 1910 and 1930.

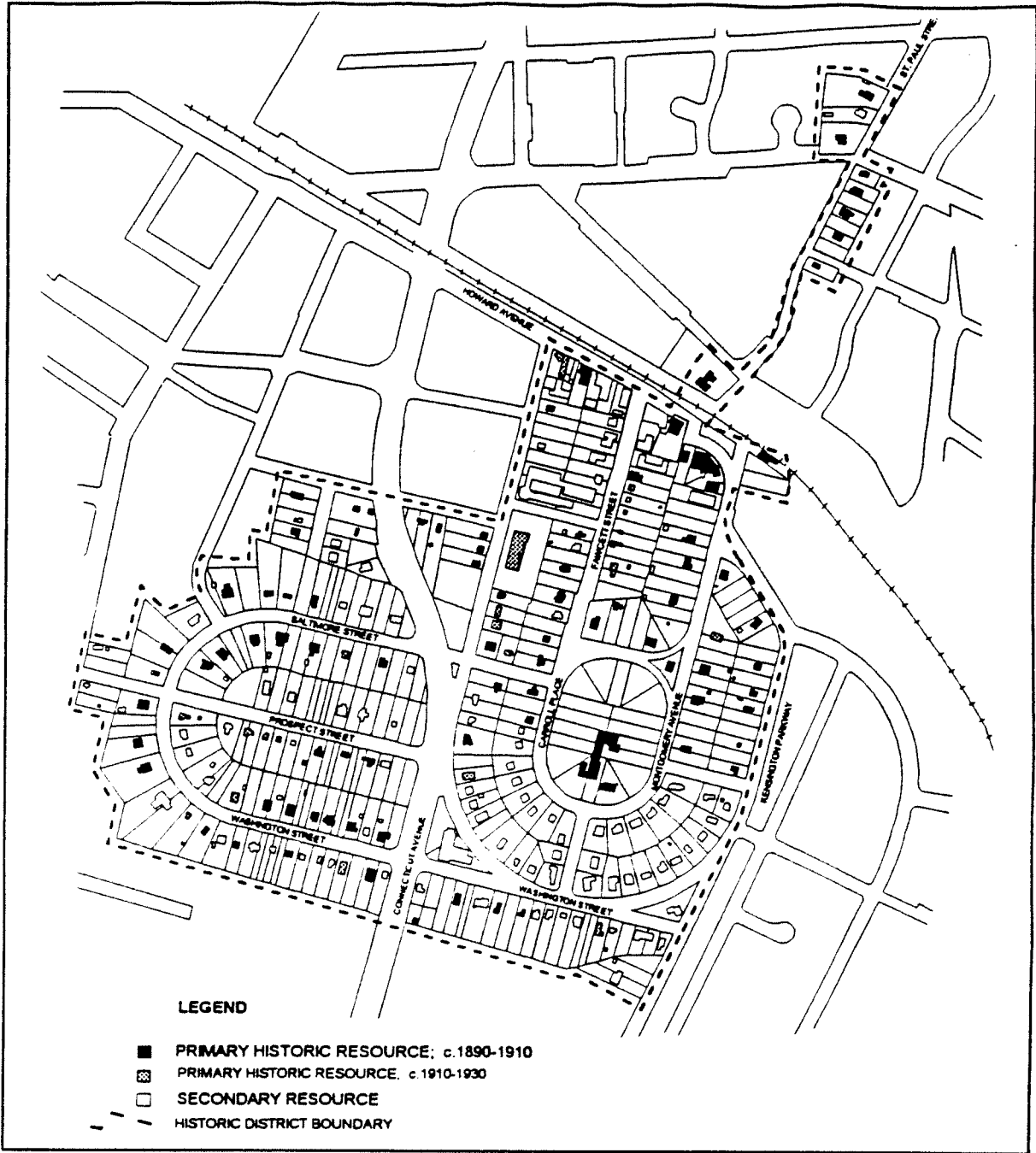


Figure 33: Lot Structure of Kensington

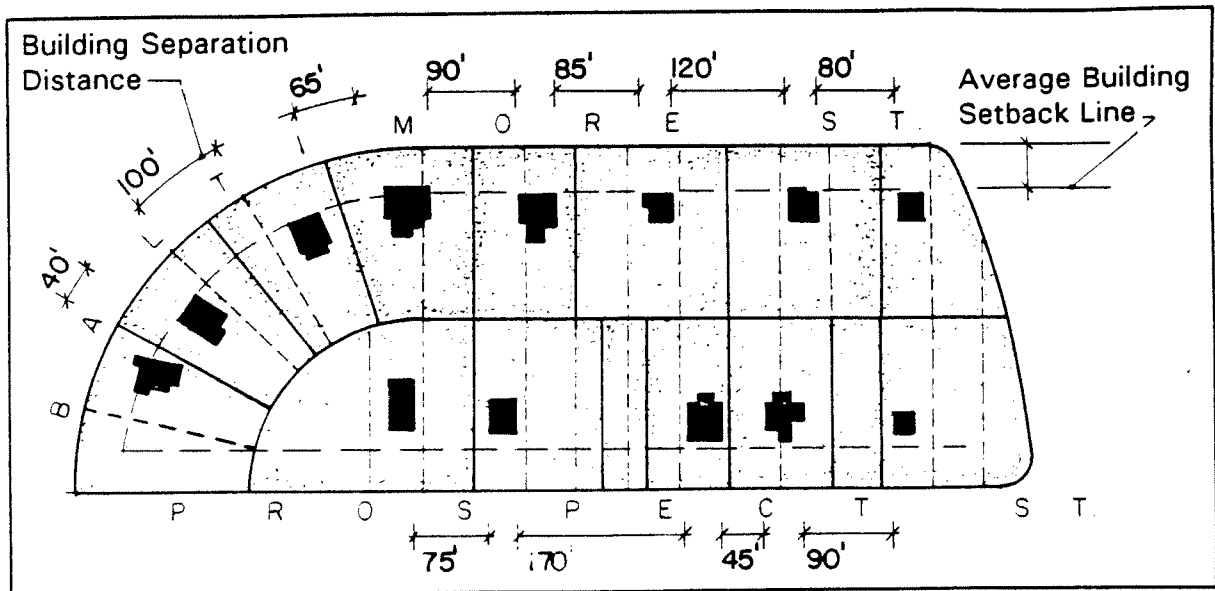
**Lot Coverage Patterns**

Lot coverage is the ratio of the building footprint area to the overall lot area, and it reflects the density of development on a given parcel of land. Lot coverage was identified using planimeter take-offs of the building footprint area from the County's topography maps and compared with lot areas to determine percent of coverage as given in the table Kensington Historic District Lot Characteristics. Analysis of lot coverage in Kensington reveals that the density of development is greater for the overall district than in the areas where the primary resources are located. This is related to the inclusion of the commercial district for the calculation, as well as the use of fewer lots per dwelling for post-1930s' construction. The lower lot coverage figures for primary resources reflects the pattern of using multiple lots for the older primary resource dwellings.

<b>Kensington Historic District Lot Characteristics</b>				
<b>Category</b>		<b>Entire District</b>	<b>All Primary Resource Properties</b>	<b>1890 - 1910 Properties</b>
<b>Lot Area</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	3.3 acres	3.3 acres	3.3 acres
	<b>Average</b>	0.40 acres	0.38 acres	0.42 acres
	<b>Minimum</b>	0.15 acres	0.15 acres	0.18 acres
<b>Lot Coverage</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	25%	25%	25%
	<b>Average</b>	15%	10%	9%
	<b>Minimum</b>	5%	5%	5%
<b>Front Yard Setback</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	65 ft	65 ft	65 ft
	<b>Average</b>	33 ft	35 ft	38 ft
	<b>Minimum</b>	0 ft	20 ft	20 ft
<b>Building Separation</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	170 ft	170 ft	170 ft
	<b>Average</b>	40 ft	55 ft	75 ft
	<b>Minimum</b>	15 ft	20 ft	50 ft

**Relationships of Front Yard Setback and Building Separation**

The front yard "setback" is the distance a building is set away or back from the property line on the street or road which it fronts. The front yard setback determines how prominent a building is in the streetscape of a community. When many buildings are involved, a pattern can be established which helps to define the character of the streetscape through the width of sidewalks, the amount of green space (lawn or vegetation area) between street and building, the apparent scale of the buildings in relation to pedestrians, and other subtle qualities of the community. In combination with setbacks, building separation distances establish the openness or visual porosity of the streetscape. Buildings which are separated allow for view and landscape elements in the interstitial space. These relationships are illustrated in the map titled Kensington Historic District Vacant Land and Open Space(Figure 34).



Pattern of Building Setbacks and Separation Distances for Block #11

### **Characteristics of Streets and Vegetation**

The streetscape is an important element of the Kensington Historic District. These important characteristics include relatively narrow street widths, sidewalks, the relationship of the building setbacks to street width, the relationship of building scale and massing, as well as the presence of trees, and vegetation. The residential section of the district is characterized by prominent homes, typically surrounded by expansive lawn areas which are planted with large mature trees and low level landscaping vegetation. The commercial area along antique row has a distinctly different pedestrian feeling which is characterized by buildings with shallow setbacks from the street, wider sidewalks, and a garden wall used on the north side to screen the railroad tracks from view.

### **Identification of Open Space and Vacant Land**

The district was examined to identify existing vacant parcels and open space which contribute to the character of the district. Several criteria were used to identify where open space contributed to the historic character as follow.

- . Open space which distinguished landmarks or important historic resources which would be compromised if the land were not vacant.
- . Open space between buildings which reflected the historic relationships and patterns identified in the district.
- . Open space at important areas of each district which is instrumental in maintaining historical design relationships which contribute to the historic identity of the district.

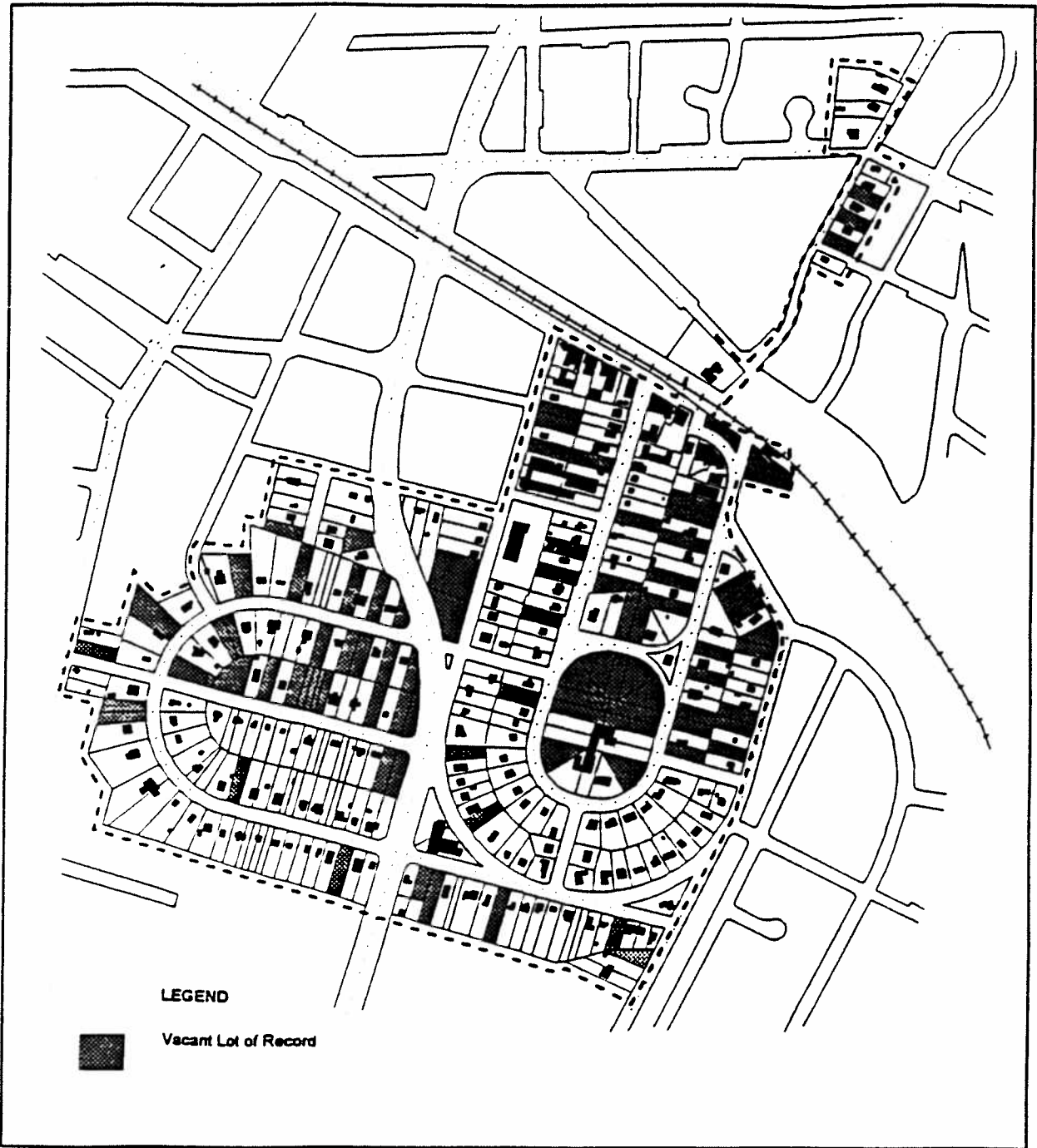


Figure 34: Kensington Historic District Vacant Land and Open Space

Mayor Peter C. Fosselman

**Council Member Mackie Barch**  
**Council Member Mary Donatelli**



**Council Member Sean McMullen**  
**Council Member John Thompson**

July 7, 2009

Historic Preservation Commission  
Montgomery County Planning Department  
M-NCPPC  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring MD 20910

Re: HPC Case No. 31/06-09H

Dear Commissioners,

On Wednesday's agenda you will be discussing the request, by David P. Reynolds, for permission to demolish the fire damaged house at 3914 Baltimore Street in Kensington. On behalf of the Town Residents and the Town Council, we would like to see the following priorities given for this property which is located within our Historic District:

- 1) The Council would prefer to have the home restored to its pre-fire condition.
- 2) If the Commission allows demolition, we strongly urge the Commission to recommend another home be built ONLY in the footprint of the existing home. The Town wishes to retain the historic character of the street and in particular, this property. The Town's major concern however, is the existing home will be demolished, with new houses built on each lot. The integrity of the Town's founding garden style is in jeopardy if additional homes are permitted to be constructed.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Peter C. Fosselman

3710 Mitchell Street Kensington, MD 20895 (301) 949-2424 [www.TOK.md.gov](http://www.TOK.md.gov)

Kensington Historical Society, Inc.

PO Box 453

Kensington, MD 20895

July 8, 2009



Dear Commissioners:

In reference to HAWP Application 31/06-09H for 3914 Baltimore Street, the Kensington Historical Society supports the staff report recommending denial.

This house is one of our Primary Resources and is shown in a c. 1902 photo taken by Frank Chapman. It also appears on the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. It is a Primary Resource in the **main core** of our Historic District. Its design is unique as I believe it is the *only* house in Kensington with a corner window on the front porch and another above it on the second story.

The Secretary of Interior Standards defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while *preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.*”

You’ll note that Baltimore Street, Prospect Street, and Washington Street replicate the rhythm and spacing of houses placed on multiple lots which is seen in the area around Warner Circle. The Master Plan for Historic Places describes this rhythm as a primary feature of the District with houses sharing “a uniformity of scale, set backs and construction materials that contribute to the cohesiveness of the district’s streetscapes.” This information is thoroughly detailed as adopted in the *Vision of Kensington* guidelines.

In 1994 the Kensington Historical Society, in an effort to clarify their preservation focus, adopted a Policy Statement, attached below. In particular we stated that “...the Society’s principal goal in interpreting those [Secretary of Interior] standards and that ordinance [County Code 24 A] is the preservation of the appearance of individual historical structures and the sites upon which they are located to assure that the late-Victorian atmosphere of the historic district is maintained.” The loss of this home on the center lot surrounded by ample gardens on both side lots would be extremely detrimental to the district.

It is with that in mind that we firmly agree with the report prepared by staff, and ask that “the HPC consider whether the application before them establishes that the demolition of the resource *is necessary* under criteria 24 A-8(b)(4) and that *no other appropriate alternatives exist* to remedy any unsafe or unhealthful conditions at the subject property.”

I am sure you are aware of houses in other districts which have been rehabilitated after the County condemned them. In this case, much of the difficulty is due to the negligence of the heirs. The greater part of the water damage is a “self imposed condition,” the result of the owners’ failure to cover the roof for a year and a half. We would ask that the house be restored if possible or rebuilt on the same foundation on the same parcel of land, maintaining the historical pattern of rhythm and spacing on Baltimore Street.

Julia O’Malley, KHS President

Kensington Historical Society, Inc Policy Statement on Historical Preservation  
Adopted May 10, 1994

First, that the Society's goals in historic preservation will be governed by the goals, standards, and procedures of the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for renovation and new construction in historical districts, and by the provisions of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Ordinance. Second, the Society's principal goal in interpreting those standards and that ordinance is the preservation of open space and the garden suburb ambiance that is the essential historical quality of the Kensington Historical District. An important characteristic is the preservation of the appearance of individual historical structures and the sites upon which they are located to assure that the late-Victorian atmosphere of the historical district is maintained. Finally, the Society is committed to supporting a consistent interpretation to assure that residents of the community have stable expectations on the appearance of the historical district, and what modifications to their property should be permitted under the County ordinance and the Secretary of Interior Guidelines.

Montgomery County  
Historic Preservation  
Ordinance  
Section 10-101

Montgomery County  
Historic Preservation  
Ordinance  
Section 10-101