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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Property Address:	<b>6825 Piney Branch Road, NW</b>	(X) Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>October 25, 2018</b>	(X) Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>18-604</b>	(X) Alteration
		New Construction
		Demolition
		Subdivision

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Owner and applicant Scott Patterson seeks concept review for the replacement of windows, modification of window openings, and a second-story side addition on a house in the Takoma Park Historic District.

**Property Description**

6825 Piney Branch Road, NW is a free-standing two-story house constructed in 1925, designed by The Architects' Small House Service Bureau (ASHSB), a group created by several Minnesota architects in 1914 to provide a solution to a shortage of middle class housing in the United States. The firm published hundreds of plan books and a monthly magazine to assist homeowners and builders.<sup>1</sup> The firm designed one other extant property in Washington, located outside the Takoma Park Historic District at 236 Walnut Street, NW.

The house is wood frame and features six-over-six and eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows. The roof is a side-gable clad in asphalt shingles and the primary entrance is accented by a front-gable portico supported by Doric columns. There is a one-story side addition at the south elevation clad in wood siding to match the main house and which features eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows.

The applicant has provided photographic documentation on the existing wood windows as part of the application to the Board. In some instances, portions of the windows are physically missing as in the half-moon fan-light located at the attack level. Other typical conditions include rotted and warped wood sashes; broken sash cords; and shattered glass panes. These conditions are likely a combined result of the age of the windows and lack of maintenance by previous owners.

**Project Proposal**

The plans call for construction of a second-story addition conforming to the foot-print of the existing one-story side addition. The addition would have an asphalt-shingle clad hipped roof. The second-story would be clad in wood siding and feature six-over-six double-hung windows. The window opening sizes and configuration at the second floor would conform to the size and configuration of the existing second floor fenestration at the main house. Additional alterations

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<sup>1</sup> Tucker, L. "The Architects' Small House Service Bureau and the American Institute of Architects". *Enquiry: A Journal for Architectural Research*, Vol. 6, no. 2, Dec. 2009, doi:10.17831/enq:arcc.v6i2.38.

would include enlarging an existing window at the first-floor south elevation. The addition would be seen from Piney Branch Road.

Additionally, the proposal calls for the removal and replacement of all the windows at the primary north and secondary east and west elevations. These three elevations can be seen from the street. The application proposes to remove the existing combination of eight-over-eight, six-over-over six, four-over-four, fixed and fan-light windows with new windows to replicate existing configurations. The material of the new windows would be wood with an exterior aluminum cladding. The applicant has provided dimensioned elevation and section window drawings.

### **Evaluation**

The proposed addition's form, massing, materials and architectural detailing are compatible with the character of this house and with the historic district. The addition's two-story height and hipped roof result in a clearly subordinate relationship to the historic house, and the location of the addition would not result in the loss of any important character-defining features. The addition's asphalt roof, wood siding, six-over-six double-hung window configuration and regular fenestration pattern are all contextual for the character of the property.

The Board has approved preservation and design guidelines for window repair and replacement at designated properties. The chapter *Preservation Goals and Considerations* states<sup>i</sup>

**Level of property significance:** Historic properties may merit different levels of treatment depending on their relative significance. Buildings of greater architectural or historical character may warrant more careful treatment. Changes to properties in historic districts are reviewed in the context of their relative significance to the district

**Quality of design and materials:** Historic buildings typically display a high quality of design and materials which should be retained. Special features that are custom designed or crafted, or that represent an unusual degree of styling or detailing warrant particular care and all reasonable efforts should be made to preserve or replicate them accurately. A more flexible standard may be applied to elements that were mass-produced, do not have distinguishing characteristics or that are easily replicable.<sup>2</sup>

The 1925 building permit for 6825 Piney Branch Road notes that the architect of record as the Minnesota based firm The Architects' Small House Service Bureau (ASHSB). Most likely the property was built by a local builder that purchased the architectural plans via a plan book or the firm's monthly magazine. The professional intent of ASHSB was to provide affordable architectural plans to facilitate the construction of affordable houses. Thus, compared to other properties within the Takoma Park Historic District, 6825 Piney Branch Road is of a simpler design with less architectural ornamentation. It is possible that the existing wood windows are original to the house, however they are representative of standard window configurations that were mass-produced by the 1920's.

When existing historic windows are present at a property the guidelines say, "Historic windows on primary elevations should be repaired unless it can be documented that repair is not a

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<sup>i</sup>

reasonable option.”<sup>ii</sup> Based on the photographic documentation, the existing wood windows are beyond reasonable repair. Repairing the existing wood windows would essentially require complete replacement with new materials. When discussing appropriate replacement windows, the guidelines state:

**2.1** Replacement windows on primary elevations should closely match the historic appearance. New windows should fit properly within the original openings, replicate the pane configuration, dimensions and profiles of the sash, framing elements and muntins, and match the finish and visual qualities of the historic windows.

**2.7** Replicating the material of the historic windows on primary elevations of historic buildings is the most appropriate option. However, alternative materials may be acceptable if they can closely match the visual characteristics of the original.<sup>iii</sup>

The proposed aluminum clad wood windows would accurately replicate the configuration and operation of the existing windows. The dimensions and details at the proposed replacement windows would closely match the existing wood windows. The addition of aluminum cladding at the exterior windows will not detract from the building’s architectural character. The addition of un-clad wood brickmold would go even further to accurately replicate the look of the historic windows.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept for replacement windows, modified window openings, and a side addition as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act with the stipulation that the replacement window feature a profiled un-clad wood brickmold; and delegate final approval to staff.*

*Staff contact: Gabriela Gutowski*

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<sup>i</sup> *Window Repair and Replacement Preservation and Design Guidelines* D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, page 1.

<sup>ii</sup> *Window Repair and Replacement Preservation and Design Guidelines* D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, 1.2, page 2.

<sup>iii</sup> *Window Repair and Replacement Preservation and Design Guidelines* D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, pages 3-4.