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

Property Address:	520 Butternut Street, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Takoma Park Historic District	X Consent Calendar
		X Concept Review
Meeting Date:	September 26/October 3, 2019	X Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	19-498	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	Demolition
		Subdivision

Owner Derek Murrow seeks conceptual design review for a new driveway and curb cut for a detached single-family house in the Takoma Park Historic District.

Property History and Description

The property consists of a four-square frame house that was constructed in 1908, designed by architect A.D. Haller. It features a full-width front porch that wraps to one side, stucco cladding, and is capped by a hipped roof. The house sits on an unusually large lot raised on a berm with a concrete retaining wall lining the sidewalk.

Proposal

The project calls for a curb cut and 10' wide driveway on the west side of the house. The concrete retaining wall, which is failing, would be reconstructed in kind. The driveway would extend back to the rear yard to a 20' x 20' parking pad.

Evaluation

The blocks that make up the Takoma Park Historic District are not served by alleys, and driveways leading from the street to rear yard parking pads and garages are widespread. The proposed location and width of the driveway are consistent with the pattern of driveways found in the historic district. The reconstructed front retaining wall would match the height and materials of the existing wall.

As is typical of existing driveways in the neighborhood, it is recommended that the driveway be set 18"-24" below the top of the grade to minimize the visual impact of parked cars and paving, with either natural grading or retaining walls on each side. The final plans should include a topographical plan and a plan for the retaining walls.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept compatible with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District contingent on the final plans recessing the driveway below the existing grade to minimize its visual impact, and that final approval be delegated to staff.