



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

August 14, 2018

REQUEST: Rehabilitate Church structure, Install new windows, remove crosses,

ADDRESS: 1700 South Road (Mount Washington Historic District)

STAFF: W. Edward Leon, Historic Preservation Planner

APPLICANT: Warschawski

ARCHITECT: SM+P Architects, Charles Patterson

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Area:

The structure is located on the east side of the Mount Washington Historic District. The church is located facing South Road at the entrance to the historic district. Mt. Washington is considered by some sources to be Baltimore's first suburb. Until the annexation of 1914 Mt. Washington was located in Baltimore County. Mt. Washington traces its origins to 1854 when two men, George Gelbach and Elias Heiner, purchased 314 acres of land near the mill village of Washingtonville. It was Gelbach's intention to establish a rural suburban retreat for Baltimore middle class professionals. Mt. Washington was only 15 minutes from downtown by train. The residents of this suburb could have both the conveniences of the city and the health and moral advantages of the country.

During its early years, the 1850s and into the 1860s, Mt. Washington consisted mostly of summer homes. It served as a retreat for Baltimoreans trying to escape the heat and humidity of the City. It was the intention, however, from the beginning for it to become a full-time suburb. Mt. Washington's growth slowed during the 1860s due to the Civil War and an economic recession. In the latter half of the 1860s building began again in earnest. It continued in the 1870s, often the product of developers who built small groups of houses. John Graham, a resident of Mt. Washington, is an example of such an entrepreneur. He was responsible for a great portion of what is now the South Road section of the district.

Mt. Washington's development continued into the mid-twentieth century, resulting in a varied community with homes representing a wide variety of architectural styles.

Site Conditions:

The property at 1700 South Road is one of handful of religious structures located in the historic district. The complex was the St. John's Episcopal Church built in the Romanesque Revival style in 1928 and home to the congregation until 2013. The congregation relocated nearby in the Mount Washington neighborhood. The church was designed by the nationally recognized firm of Wyatt and Nolting. They were responsible for numerous well recognized works through Baltimore and the mid-Atlantic region such as the 5th Regiment Armory, the Garrett Building, the Pikeville Armory, Homewood Campus of JHU, the Baltimore City Courthouse (Clarence Mitchell Jr. Courthouse) and the Roland Park Shopping Center to name just a few of their notable works.

The church sits at the intersection of South Road and Kelly Avenue. (can you describe the church and identify character defining characteristics.

BACKGROUND

This property was reviewed in May 2017. The applicant's at the time was Blue Ocean Realty which proposed a more elaborate changes to the exterior and interior of the buildings. At the May 2017 hearing the Commission approved the following Motion:

- Approve lowering window sills on the Kelly Avenue facades of the sanctuary and the fellowship hall. **CHAP approved the lowering windows sills on South Road as well.**
- Approve removing stained glass windows on the north elevations of the sanctuary. Prior to removal present a detailed scope-of-work and drawings for removal and storage. **Commission altered this bullet by approving the removal of all stained glass and replacing them with windows that replicate the historic configuration, but with lower sills. The Commission also requested that the applicant [submit] a plan for conservation and relocation or disposition of the windows in a safe and appropriate location for review.**
- Explore removing the middle portions of the stained glass windows on the gable end of the sanctuary (window facing Kelly Avenue) and the windows in the altar area (one window facing west and another window facing South Street). **The Commission disapproved this bullet. The applicant is not asked to explore this bullet.**
- Staff recommends disapproval of the current design on introducing a new interior level in the main sanctuary that is flush with the outer wall and crosses the window opening. The applicant is encouraged to explore moving the new interior floors back from the window openings as well as reconfiguring the office space in the sanctuary to better respect the volume of the sanctuary. This may include creating mezzanine levels, reconfiguring hallways, allowing for double-height space. **The Commission felt that a 12-18 inch setback from the window mullions, as proposed by the applicant would be acceptable. The applicant should present this as a final detail.**
- Staff recommends concept approval of keeping the stone crosses in place and covering them with a design compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Staff recommends a CHAP hearing for final review.

PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The applicant's have purchased the property from Blue Ocean Realty which had purchased the property from the former congregation that resided at the church. The applicant's will be converting the religious structure into their main corporate office. Interior changes will have no visible impact on the exterior.

The applicant proposes:

- To replicate window louvers with clear glass in the bell tower,
- Repaint all exterior trim to match existing.
- Paint, clean and repair existing windows on existing side addition.
- Install new zinc canopy on South Road side ramp entrance,
- Install new zinc planter bed and stone bench.
- Install frameless glass window system in existing open entry.
- Remove stair to existing exterior entry.
- Remove existing ground sidewalk to entry staircase.
- Widen and restore current handicap entrance.
- Replicate window pattern in main church structure and install new clear windows (As approved for the previous applicant's plans).
- Remove and relocate existing stained glass windows (Applicant's plan to return one window set to the family of the original donor and donate the remaining windows to a new church in Central America).
- Remove and relocate exterior crosses.
- Install new Board and batten siding on addition east elevation.

The staff applied Preservation Guidelines, 1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric, 1.3 Wood, 1.7 Windows, 1.6 Doors, 1.9 Porches, Steps, and Railings, 1.10 Paint and Color, 1.16 Accessibility.

ANALYSIS

At the May 2017 Hearing, the Commission reviewed another renovation proposal for this property. The previous owner received approval to remove the stained-glass windows. This owner requests the removal of the stained-glass windows. We have received information on how they will be removed and packaged for storage and shipment (see packet).

The majority of the applicant's request meet CHAP Guidelines (i.e. Windows rehab, paint, entry plans, siding and landscaping).

As per the previous CHAP Commission regarding the property, the applicants have provided information regarding the removal and storage of the stain glass. They have also provided concept plans for the structure that is to be built that will incorporate these windows. The enclosing of the entry preserves the entry space and allows for additional natural light to enter the interior. This applicant as the previous is requesting the removal of the Christian crosses located on the rooftops. The original congregation which continues to operate in the Mount Washington Community has requested the crosses which they would keep in the former parish house located next to the church.

Notification: The following community organizations have been notified of this action: Mount Washington Improvement Association ARC. The ARC has indicated they would like to see some of the finished final plans but are overall in support of the proposals.

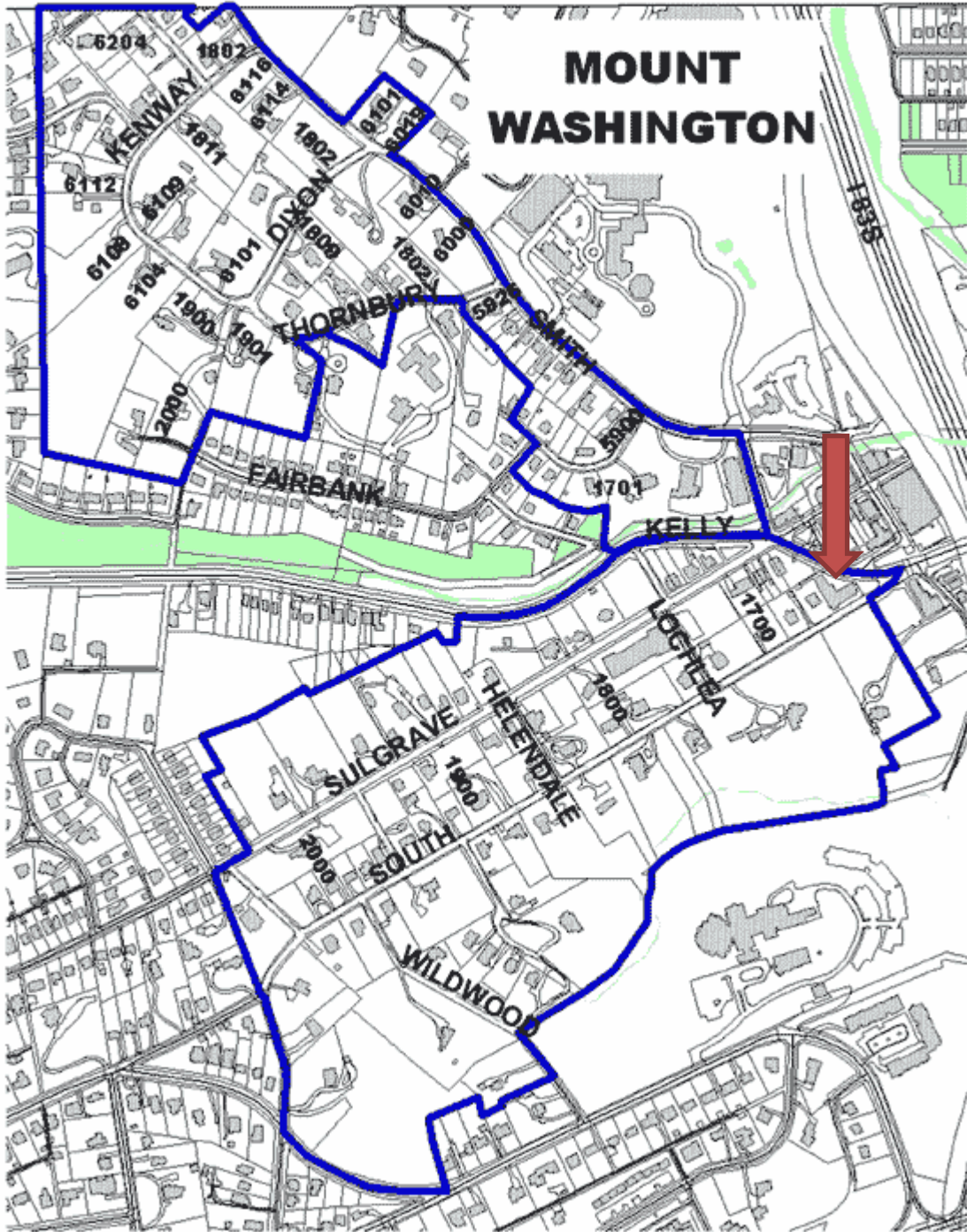
RECOMMENDATION: Approval as the Rehabilitation meets the CHAP Guidelines (i.e. Windows rehab, paint, entry plans, siding and landscaping).

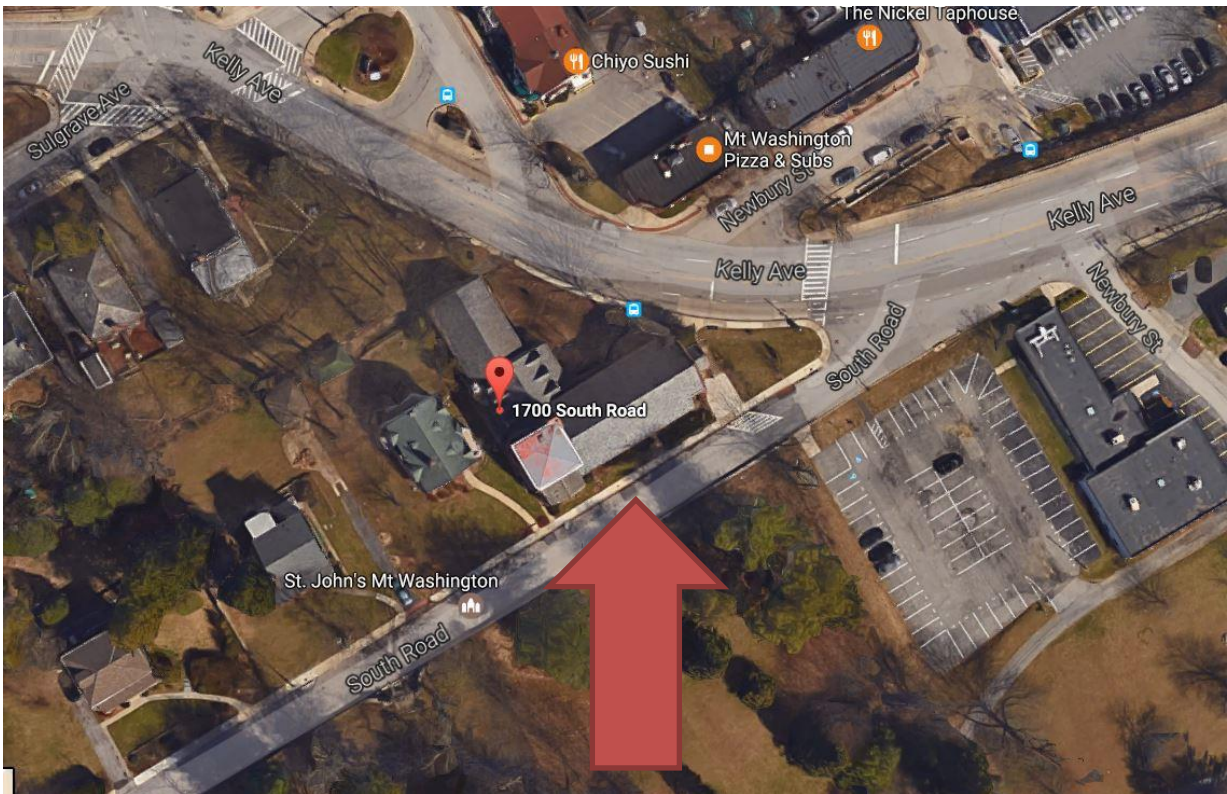
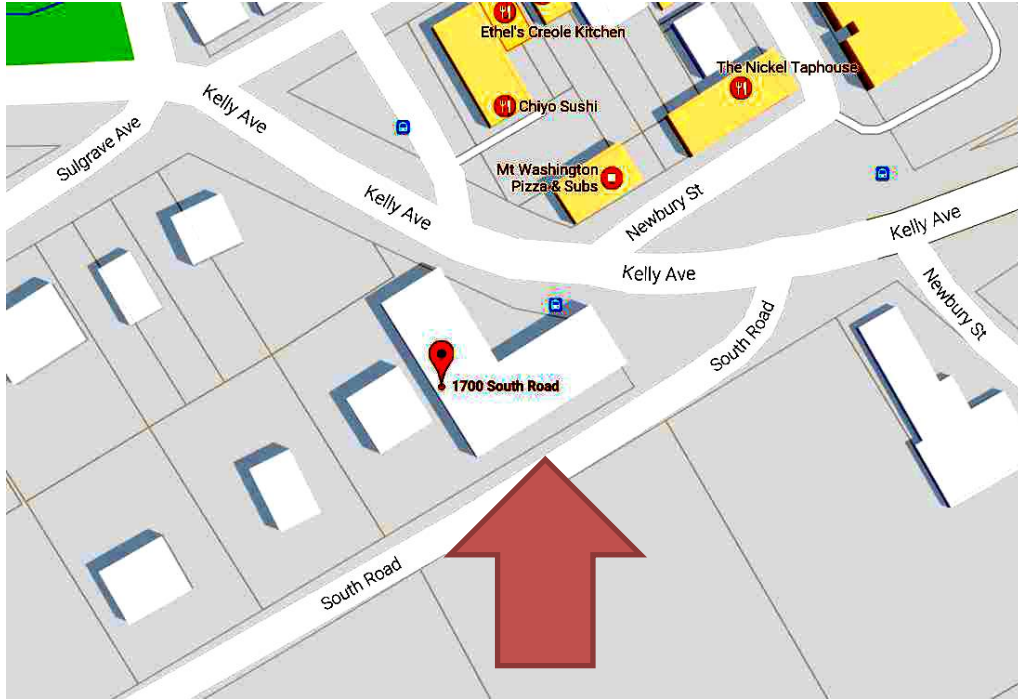
Staff recommends the following:

1. The removal and reinstallation of the stained glass windows be documented and an interpretive historic panel be located at the site that describes the history of the church and the shows the stained glass windows as they are now and in their new location.
2. That the crosses remain and be incorporated or covered over with an artistic interpretation or graphic for the commercial entity that will next occupy the building.

Eric L. Holcomb
Executive Director

Historic District

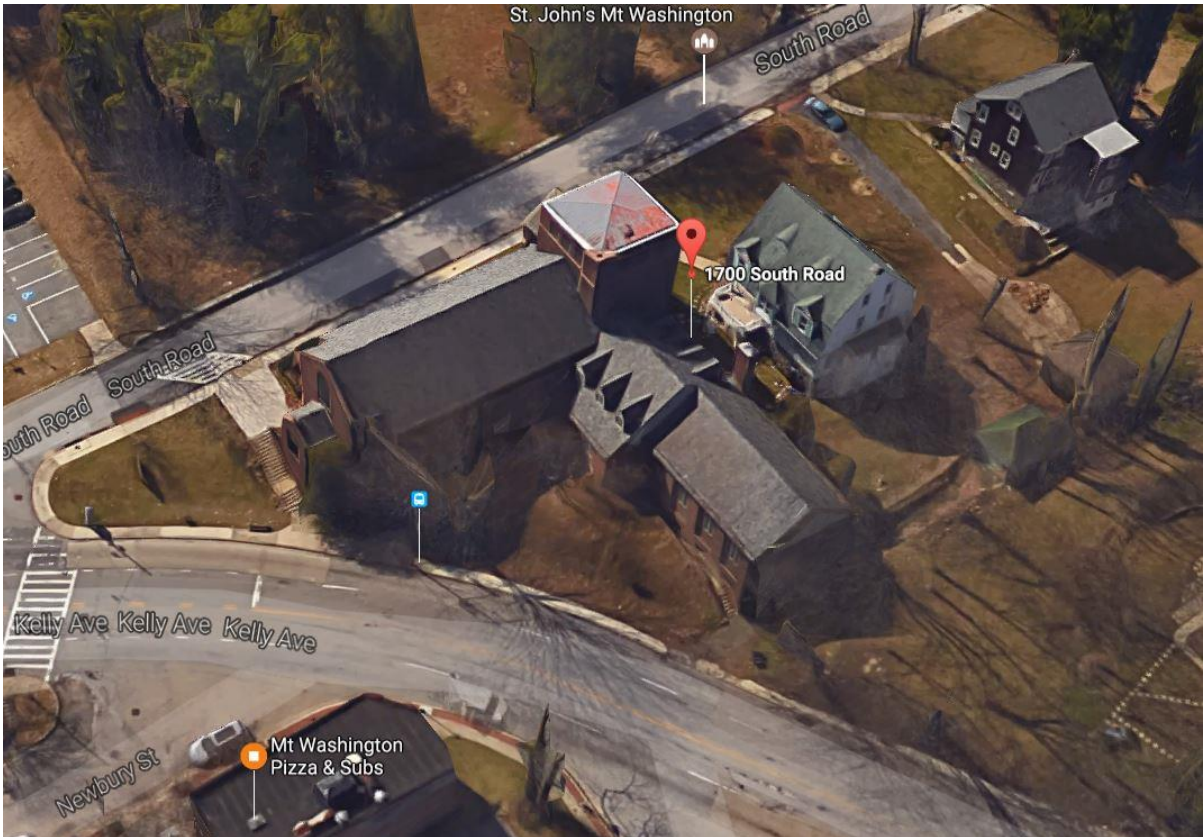




View from the South



View from the East



View from the North

