



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

April 13, 2021

REQUEST: Construct rear addition and raise roof.

ADDRESS: 640 Melvin Drive (Ridgely's Delight Historic District)

PETITIONER(S): Neil Junker (Consultant) and Division LLC - Decceco Dockins (Owner)

STAFF: Walter Edward Leon

RECOMMENDATION: Approve final design.

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT:

General Area: The site is located in the middle of the Ridgely's Delight historic district. The district is a wedge-shaped residential neighborhood just south of the University of Maryland downtown campus. It is generally bounded by Pratt Street, Russell Street, and Martin Luther King Boulevard. The district is home to excellent examples of traditional rowhouse architecture and industrial/manufacturing buildings. Ridgely's Delight has always been a socially and economically mixed neighborhood. The district's residential buildings represent the first phase of development for Baltimore's rowhouses. The unusual street pattern in Ridgely's Delight produces an intimate human scale and irregular building sites.

Site Conditions: The property consists of a two-story tall and two-bay wide formstone covered rowhouse with no cornice. The main building is one room deep on the ground level and divided into two rooms on the 2nd floor. It has a one-room rear addition built after 1890. The building is part of a continuous row of similar houses that were built in the early 19th century for the working class. They were originally built with brick and had a single entrance, stood two stories high and had low detailed cornices.

BACKGROUND

The building was reviewed at the February 2021 Consent Agenda and at the request of the community and Commissioners it is returning for a public review of the final design

PROPOSAL

The applicants propose to remove a one-story shed-roofed rear addition with a dirt floor and to construct a two-story rear addition similar in plan and scale to the rear additions on the adjoining rowhouses. The plans also call for raising the existing roof height to match the adjacent building to the east with a low pitch gable roof. In order to have usable interior floor height on the second-story

without raising the front cornice, the roof will need a low pitch gable roof with a ridge point setback approximately eleven feet back from the front elevation. The rear addition will have no window openings on the exposed west side, which is on the property line. The rear elevation will have three windows and a single door.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

CHAP staff applied the following design guidelines from *Chapter 1, specifically:*

1.18 Alterations and Additions

- *Retain historic character defining features when planning alterations and additions to a historic building.*
- *Design alterations and additions to be compatible and sympathetic to the character of the historic building.*
- *Design additions to be compatible with the existing historic structure in massing, height, form, and scale. Place additions on a secondary elevation.*
- *An addition may be contemporary in design, or it may replicate the historic character of the main building. Where an addition replicates the historic character of the main building, create subtle differences to clearly distinguish it as a later structure.*
- *Document existing historic conditions in drawings and photographs before beginning any alterations and additions.*

Application of Guidelines

The rear elevation of the existing rowhouse has no significant architectural features or details. The shed-roof wood frame addition is severely deteriorated and has no significant architectural features. (Exhibit 9) The proposed addition is designed to mimic other additions on neighboring rowhouses in its height, massing and scale. The addition will increase the volume of the building by one-third and match the similar enlargements found along the rear of the other adjacent rowhouses on both the east and west sides. The proposed addition also includes matching the neighbor's low pitched gable roof at 638 Melvin Drive. (Exhibit 14) The new rear addition will copy the shape and rectangular form of the other adjacent rear additions but will have subtle differences with applied siding materials and fenestration (varying window sizes and door locations). The applicants will fully photograph the existing rear addition prior to demolition so that a record exists of this style of rowhouse addition.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The proposal has been shared with the Ridgely's Delight ARC. The ARC has provided several comments and concerns about the original rear brick wall.

ANALYSIS

The proposal meets the CHAP Design Guidelines for height, massing and scale. The design is similar to other rear additions that have been approved in this historic district. The proposed addition will be constructed on the rear elevation and will not be seen from any public right of way.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve final design.

Eric Holcomb Director



Maps and Drawings
Exhibit 1. Ridgely's Delight Historic District

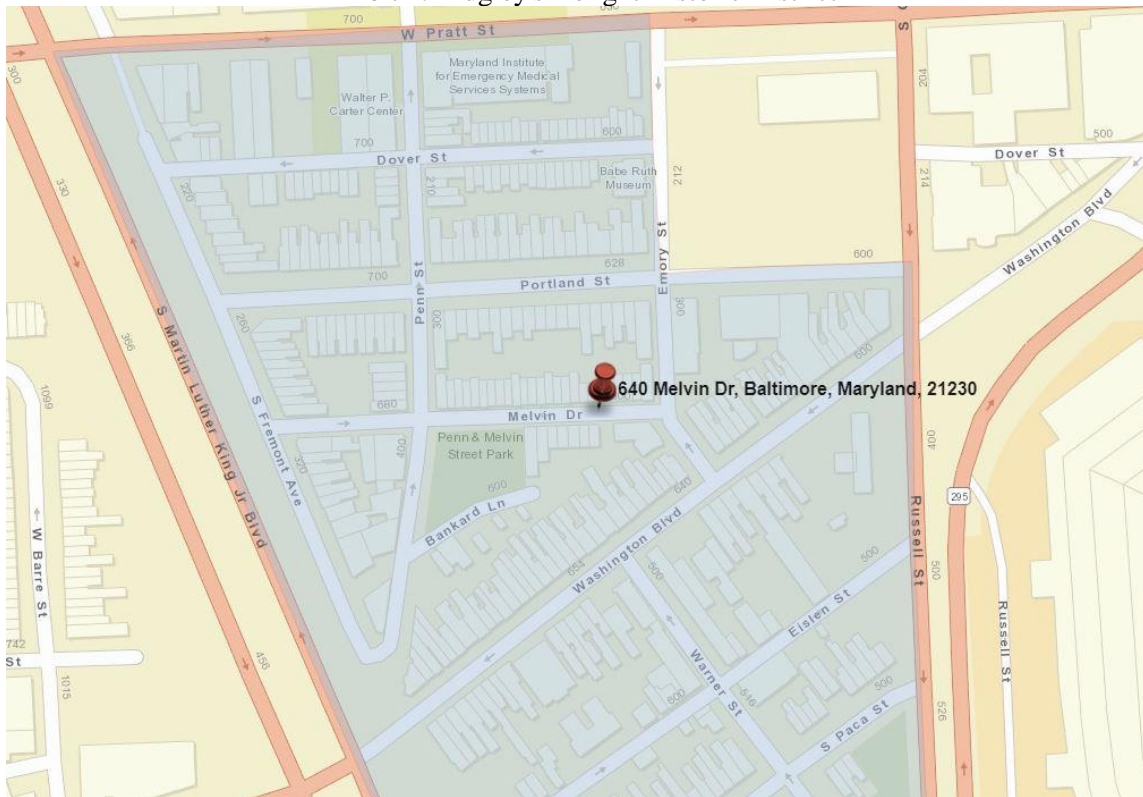


Exhibit 2. Property Location

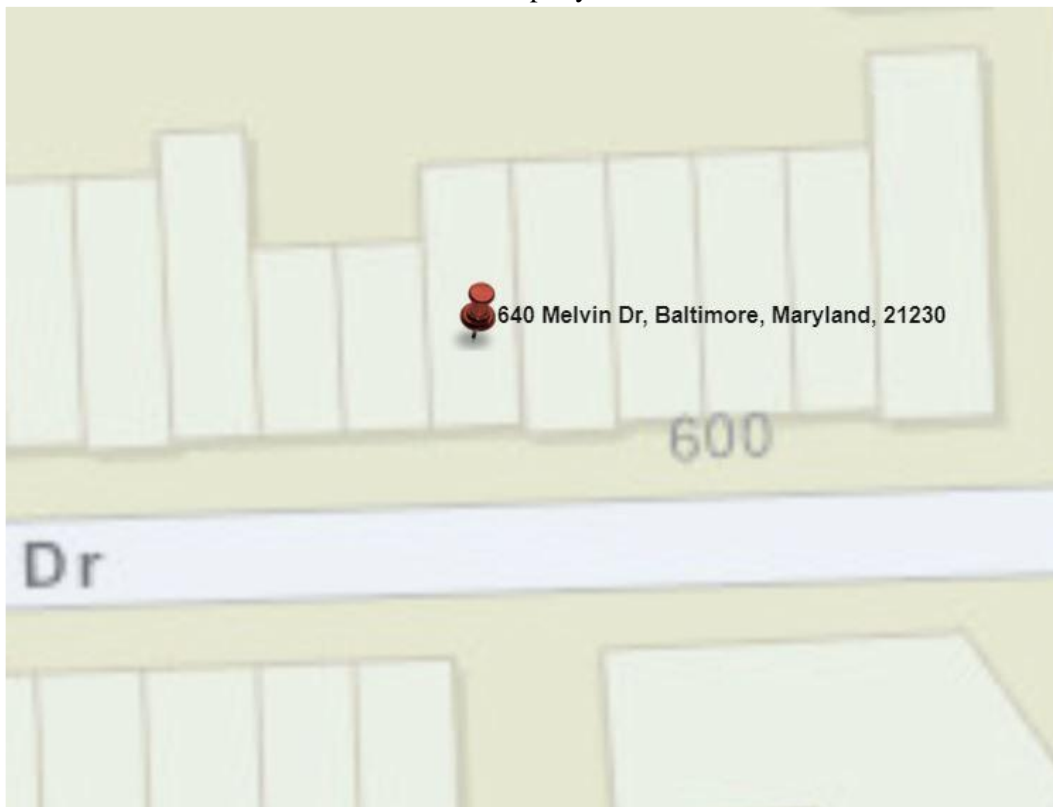


Exhibit 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Baltimore 1890 vol. 3, Sheet 83_b

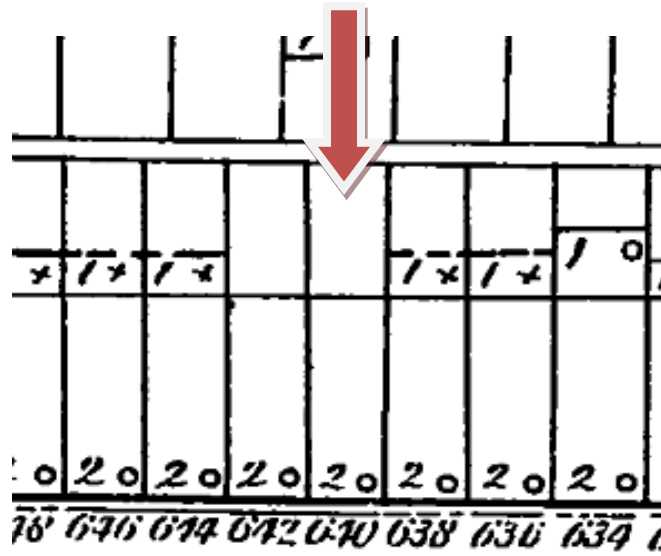


Exhibit 4. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Baltimore 1914-1953 vol. 1A, 1914; Republished 1952, Sheet 51a

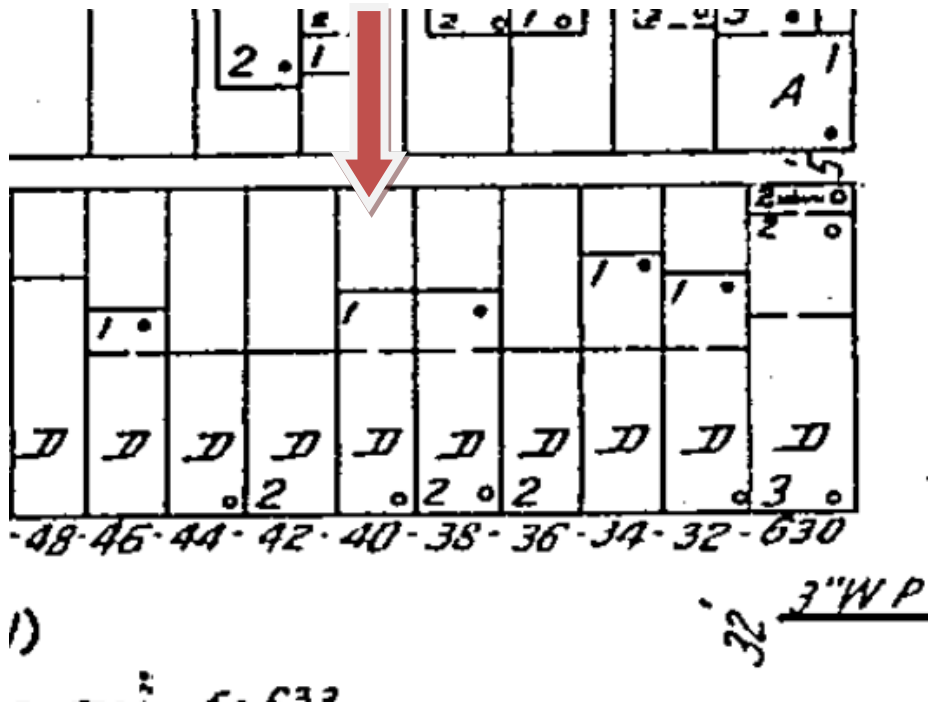


Exhibit 5. Aerial view of 640 Melvin Drive, Pictometry 2020



Exhibit 6. View South looking North, Pictometry 2020



Exhibit 7. View from North looking South, Pictometry 2020



Exhibit 8. Front Elevation 640 Melvin Drive, Applicant's submission



Exhibit 9. Rear elevation of existing one story shed addition, Applicant's submission



Exhibit 10. Adjacent rear addition to be copied at 640 Melvin Drive, Applicant's submission



Exhibit 11. Melvin Drive Streetscape . Google Street view 2020



Exhibit 12. Rear elevation plans

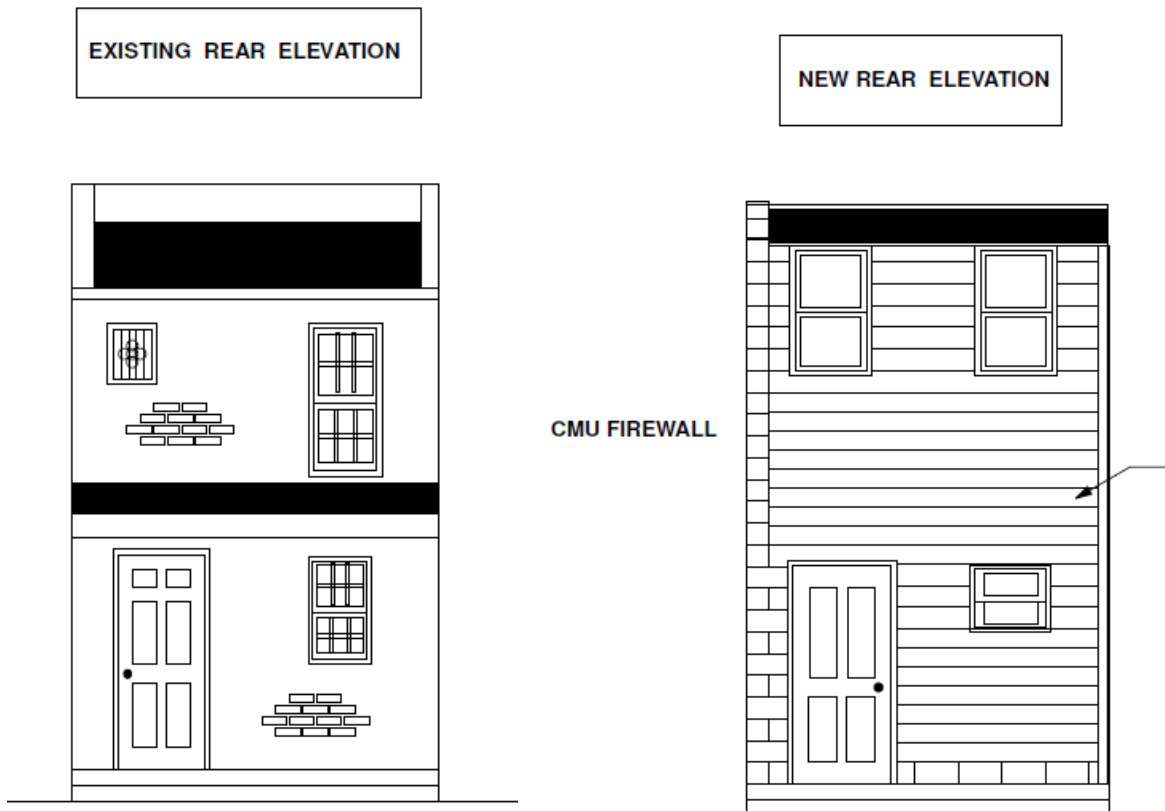


Exhibit 13. Existing cross section.

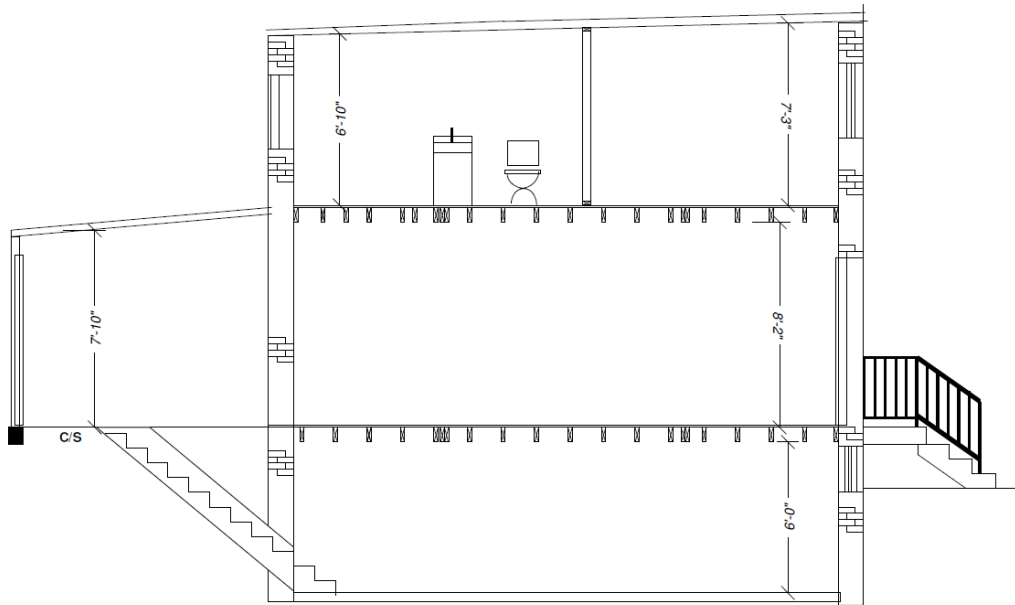


Exhibit 14> Proposed new addition and gable roof.

