

DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission

Monday, October 19, 2026- 6:00 P.M.

Staff Report

New Construction Agenda

I. 924 Clifton Road, David Price. Demolish and construct a nonhistoric house, and install a driveway, pool, deck, porch, and accessory structures in on the rear of the property. **1248326.**

Built in 1950 - Nonhistoric (18 003 01 015)

This property is in the Druid Hills Character Area #2 and the Druid Hills National Register Historic District.

Summary

The applicant proposes the following work:

1. Demolish a nonhistoric house. The existing nonhistoric, split-level house, built in 1950, will be demolished and removed from the property.
2. Build a two-story, nonhistoric brick house. A two-story house will be constructed in the footprint of the original structure on the property, roughly 50' setback from Clifton Road. The proposed house will be constructed with brick siding on the front and side elevations and cast stone elements on the front façade over the windows and around the front entrance. The proposed house will be constructed with an asphalt shingle, side gable roof with a hipped gable roof connecting to a rear cross section. The rear section of the house will be constructed with lap siding. A porch will be constructed on the rear of the house.
3. Construct a driveway. A concrete driveway will be constructed along the Southern property line, connecting Clifton Road to the rear of the proposed new construction and the attached garage. The proposed driveway will include a guest drop-off area connected to a walkway in the front-yard of the property and a parking apron in the rear of the property. The portion of the driveway that forms the rear parking apron will be constructed with pavers rather than concrete.
4. Install a swimming pool, fencing, and pool deck. A 14'x22' inground pool with a connecting hot tub will be installed in the rear yard, towards the Southern property line. A 5' metal fence will be installed around the perimeter of the backyard, connecting to the front corners of the house, will fulfil the health code requirements for the swimming pool installation. A wood pool deck with a black metal guardrail will be installed around the swimming pool.
5. Construct an accessory structure in the rear yard. A two-story "cabana" structure will be constructed in the backyard of the property, to the rear of the proposed swimming pool and deck. The proposed structured will be constructed with Hardi plank siding, fixed windows, and a fiberglass shingle hipped roof. A two-story screened porch will be constructed on the front façade of the structure, facing towards the rear of the proposed house.

Recommendation

Defer. Staff recommends deferring the application, in order to work with the applicant on the proposed design of the new construction in order to ensure that the materials, form, and style are

not replicating the appearance of a historic home within the area of influence or the district as a whole, and therefore creating a false sense of history.

If the applicant does not consent to a deferral⁸, then staff recommends that the Commission **deny** the application in accordance with Guidelines 7.0, 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3.2, and the Druid Hills Design Manual as the proposed design for the new construction of the historic house is an “imitation of historic design” rather than a modern design that respects historic character as stated in Guideline 7.3.2. The application is also denied in accordance with Guideline 7.3.3 of the Design Manual, as the demolition of the nonhistoric property shall not be approved unless the plans for a new structure to replace the existing structure are submitted and approved as well.

Relevant Guidelines

5.0 *Design Review Objective* (p45) - When making a material change to a structure that is in view from a public right-of-way, a higher standard is required to ensure that design changes are compatible with the architectural style of the structure and retain character-defining features. When a proposed material change to a structure is not in view from the public-right-way, the Preservation Commission may review the project with a less strict standard so as to allow the owner more flexibility. Such changes, however, shall not have a substantial adverse effect on the overall architectural character of the structure.

7.0 *Additions & New Construction - Preserving Form & Layout* The Druid Hills Local Historic District continues to change and evolve over time. For this area to meet contemporary needs, additions are built, uses change, and new buildings are constructed. The challenge is not to prevent change but to ensure that, when it does inevitably happen, it is compatible with the historic character of the area.

A new building is compatible with its historic setting when it borrows design characteristics and materials from adjacent buildings and integrates them into a modern expression. Before undertaking new development, be it a new building or changes or additions to existing buildings, take time to evaluate what makes the property and the neighborhood distinctive. Evaluate what type of impact the new development will have on the property and neighborhood. Decide how the development can best be designed to complement the property and area.

The underlying guideline for new construction and additions is to consider one's neighbors and nearby structures and reinforce the existing historic character through sensitive, compatible design.

Note that many of these guidelines refer to new development or new construction but are equally applicable to additions to existing buildings.

7.1 *Defining the Area of Influence* (p64) Guideline - In considering the appropriateness of a design for a new building or addition in a historic district, it is important to determine the area of influence. This area should be that which will be visually influenced by the building, i.e. the area in which visual relationships will occur between historic and new construction.

7.2 *Recognizing the Prevailing Character of Existing Development* (p65) Guideline - When looking at a series of historic buildings in the area of influence, patterns of similarities may emerge that help define the predominant physical and developmental characteristics of the area. These patterns must be identified and respected in the design of additions and new construction.

7.2.1 *Building Orientation and Setback* (p66) Guideline - The orientation of a new building and its site placement should appear to be consistent with dominant patterns within the area of influence, if such patterns are present.

⁸ **Section 13.5-8(7) of DeKalb County Code of Ordinances** – “The preservation commission shall approve, approve with modifications or deny an application for a certificate of appropriateness within forty-five (45) days after the filing thereof by the applicant unless an extension is requested by the applicant and granted by the preservation commission.”

- 7.2.2 *Directional Emphasis* (p67) Guideline - A new building's directional emphasis should be consistent with dominant patterns of directional emphasis within the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.3 *Shape: Roof Pitch* (p68) Guideline - The roof pitch of a new building should be consistent with those of existing buildings within the area of influence, if dominant patterns are present.
- 7.2.3 *Shape: Building Elements* (p68) Guideline - The principal elements and shapes used on the front facade of a new building should be compatible with those of existing buildings in the area of influence, if dominant patterns are present.
- 7.2.3 *Shape: Porch Form* (p68) Guideline - The shape and size of a new porch should be consistent with those of existing historic buildings within the area of influence, if dominant patterns are present.
- 7.2.4 *Massing* (p69) Guideline - The massing of a new building should be consistent with dominant massing patterns of existing buildings in the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.5 *Proportion* (p70) Guideline - The proportions of a new building should be consistent with dominant patterns of proportion of existing buildings in the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.6 *Rhythm* (p71) Guideline - New construction in a historic area should respect and not disrupt existing rhythmic patterns in the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.7 *Scale/Height* (p72) Guideline - New construction in historic areas should be consistent with dominant patterns of scale within the area of influence, if such patterns are present. Additions to historic buildings should not appear to overwhelm the existing building.
- 7.2.7 *Scale/Height* (p72) Guideline - A proposed new building should appear to conform to the floor-to-floor heights of existing structures if there is a dominant pattern within the established area of influence. Dominant patterns of cornice lines, string courses, and water tables can be referenced to help create a consistent appearance.
- 7.2.8 *Individual Architectural Elements* (p73) Guideline - New construction and additions should be compatible and not conflict with the predominant site and architectural elements—and their design relationships—of existing properties in the area of influence.
- 7.3.2 *New Construction and Subdivision Development* (p75) Guideline - To be compatible with its environment, new construction should follow established design patterns of its historic neighbors, including building orientation, setback, height, scale, and massing.
- 7.3.2 *New Construction and Subdivision Development* (p75) Guideline - New construction should respect the historic character that makes the area distinctive, but it should not be a mere imitation of historic design.
- 7.3.3 *Demolition and Relocation* (p76) Guideline – The demolition of a historic or a nonhistoric structure shall not be approved unless plans for a new structure to replace the existing structure are also submitted and approved as well. The demolition of a historic or a nonhistoric structure shall not be approved if there are no plans to construct a new structure in the existing structure's place.
- 9.4 *Enclosures and Walls* (p90) Guideline - Fences and walls should not be built in front yard spaces and are strongly discouraged from corner lot side yard spaces. Retaining walls should only be used in situations where topography requires their use. In the review of the installation of fencing, the front yard shall be defined as the portion of land between the front entrance of the main structure on the property and the Right of Way of which the property is addressed.
- 9.4 *Enclosures and Walls* (p90) Guideline – The plantings of shrubbery to create a hedge is considered fencing and will require review by the preservation commission.
- 9.4 *Enclosures and Walls* (p90) Recommendation - Fences are appropriate in rear yard spaces. Rear yard fences should be coordinated with existing county codes. Suggested materials include wood and chain link. Vinyl- covered chain link

fencing, typically in bronze, brown, or black, assist in making fences less obtrusive. Vines are suggested to “soften” the appearance of metal chain link fencing. If wood fencing is used, the paint color and design should be compatible with the architecture of the adjacent residence. Fence heights can range from 4' to 6' depending on the reason for the enclosure.

- 9.5 *Parking* (p90) Guideline - Parking should be addressed in a manner that does not distract from the overall character of the district. Parking to serve private residential lots should be accommodated on-site, when at all possible, using the pathway of original drives and parking. Front yard parking should not be allowed unless it is a public safety issue. When front yard parking is necessary, it should be added in a manner that does not destroy the unbroken landscaped character of the front yard spaces in Druid Hills. Rear yard spaces should be considered for expansion of parking areas.
- 9.5 *Parking* (p90) Guideline - Curb cuts should not be added or expanded in order to protect the character of the district's streets.
- 9.5 *Parking* (p90) Recommendation - It is preferable to expand an existing driveway for parking rather than to add a separate parking pad, since the result is usually less paved surface. Plant materials can be added around parking spaces to visually buffer the parking from the street.
- 9.5 *Parking* (p90) Recommendation - In surfacing new parking areas, the use of impervious paving materials is discouraged. The intent is to limit the amount of run-off within the district's watershed. Consideration should be given to the use of porous materials that allow water penetration and preserve the open character of the landscape.
- 9.6 *Accessory Buildings* (p91) Guideline - New accessory buildings, such as garages and storage houses, are to be located in rear yard spaces and visually buffered from adjacent property owners and the public right-of-way. Accessory buildings that complement the architecture of the adjacent residence do not require the same level of buffering and may remain more visible within the local district. If the new building will be visible from the street, it should respect the established setbacks and orientations of the historic buildings in the area.
- 10.0 *Archaeological Resources* (p94) Guideline - When planning new construction, additions, site improvements, or demolition, minimize disturbance of terrain to reduce the possibility of destroying unknown archaeological materials.
- 10.0 *Archaeological Resources* (p94) Recommendation – Contact the Historic Preservation Planner on staff with the County in the planning stages to see if the subject property is an area of low or high archaeological site potential or an area of recorded historic occupation.
- 10.0 *Archaeological Resources* (p94) Recommendation – Hire Secretary of the Interior qualified professionals to survey areas where major terrain alteration is planned to identify potential archaeological resources. In the event that an archaeological artifact is found, work shall stop and the County Preservation Planner shall be contacted.
- Plat Patterns* (p97) Recommendation - Preserve Historic plat patterns through respect for existing site development patterns and rhythms.
- 11.0 *Nonhistoric Properties* (p94) Guideline - In reviewing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a material change to a nonhistoric building, the Preservation Commission should evaluate the change for its potential impacts to any historic development (architecture and natural and cultural landscapes) in the area of influence of the nonhistoric property. Guidelines presented in *Section 7.0: Additions and new Construction* are relevant to such evaluations.