Government of the District of Columbia
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-23-0803

Requesting Applicant Engagement with Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B and Highlighting Stormwater Mitigation Needs for 6817 5th Street, NW (HPA 23-364) and 6819 5th Street, NW (HPA 23-365)
Adopted August 28, 2023

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Commission) takes note of the following:

- Jermaine Howard (the "Applicant"), representing the owner, seeks concept review by the Historic Preservation Review Board for construction of two-story additions and one-story decks, as well as demolition of existing garages, of two residences in the Takoma Park Historic District: 6817 5th Street, NW (HPA 23-364) and 6819 5th Street, NW (HPA 22-365). The properties are located within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B in Single Member District 4B04 (previously Single Member District 4B02).

- Commissioner Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04, has attempted to contact the Applicant by telephone and email on numerous occasions, without success. In addition, Commissioner Yeats asked Historic Preservation Office staff to direct the Applicant to contact the Commissioner, which Staff informed Commissioner Yeats they did.

- The Historic Preservation Review Board considers public comment from the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission when conducting concept review. As noted in the Historic Preservation Review Board's instructions to applicants regarding concept review: "In addition to the requirement that applicants share their plans with neighbors and the [Advisory Neighborhood Commission], the [Historic Preservation Review Board] encourages applicants to consult with the community to hear any concerns that are raised to see if they can be resolved."

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has a specific interest in these properties based on the larger issue of stormwater management in the neighborhood:

- On July 10, 2019, Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 (who represented the area prior to redistricting), held a community walkthrough with representatives from the District Department of Energy and Environment to address blockwide stormwater challenges, including severe and pervasive backyard flooding, along the 400 block of Aspen Street, NW.

- The District Department of Energy and Environment issued recommendations later that month (attached), highlighting upland contributing drainage from the 6800 block of 5th Street, NW. The Department noted that there is only one catch basin along this block at the north-east corner of the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Aspen Street, NW, and "[t]his storm drain appears to manage the majority of the upstream drainage coming to the area" and is often clogged. The Department recommended "[f[urther investigation … to see how stormwater flows from the upstream areas and how much of the runoff from the adjacent block and Butternut St. NW is making its way into the area of concern."

- Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, worked with the neighbors residing along the 400 block of Aspen Street, NW, throughout 2019 to sign up for RiverSmart Homes audits and installations.

- In addition, Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, supported neighbors residing along the 400 block of Aspen Street, NW, in obtaining a Community Stormwater Solutions grant from the District Department of Energy and Environment and Chesapeake Bay Trust to work with a green infrastructure firm to address blockwide stormwater management issues. The grant included engaging neighbors via two educational events in April 2021 to solicit input regarding a design solution.

- With support from Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, the neighbors obtained a second round of Community Stormwater Solutions grant funding from the District Department of Energy and Environment and the Chesapeake Bay Trust in 2022 to implement the plan to address blockwide stormwater management issues. The design firm, along with a local landscaping company, installed stormwater mitigation features, including retention, trench drains, vernal pools, rain gardens, plantings, and floodgates, throughout 2022 and 2023.

- The installations focused on the grant applicants – the neighbors residing along the 400 block of Aspen Street, NW. They have mitigated but failed to fully address stormwater challenges for the neighbors residing along the 400 block of Aspen Street, NW, in part due to upland contributing drainage from the 6800 block of 5th Street, NW.

- The design firm that worked with the neighbors residing along the 400 block of Aspen Street, NW, has provided additional detail regarding the residences along the 6800 block of 5th Street, NW (attached), and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has continued to look for opportunities to mitigate stormwater challenges along this block. Additional green infrastructure installations at 6817 5th Street, NW, and 6819 5th Street, NW, would be beneficial.

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, and specifically Commissioner Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04, and Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, seek to consult with the Applicant about the importance of stormwater management for these two properties, including as related to demolition of the garages on each property.

- As noted in the Staff Report and Recommendation for these applications, removal of the garages at 6817 5th Street, NW, and 6819 5th Street, NW, do not raise preservation concerns. Specifically, "In its brick work, form and detailing, the two-car garage at 6817 is clearly of mid-20th century construction. While the garage at 6819 does likely date from the time of construction of the house – they share the same stucco and window – garages have not been recognized by the community, the Board, or in the National Register nomination as contributing to the Takoma Park historic district as they have in other districts (such as Cleveland Park)."

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B strongly agrees with the Staff Report and Recommendation with regard to removal of the garages at 6817 5th Street, NW, and 6819 5th Street, NW, particularly in light of the broader community interest in stormwater management instead of additional impervious surface area. As noted in the Historic Preservation Review Board's *Sustainability Guide for Older and Historic Buildings*, "rainwater harvesting and the installation of bioswales and cisterns is most appropriate in side or rear yards." Here, given the additional footprint of rear additions and decks, and in consideration of the larger neighborhood stormwater challenges, it is especially important to reduce impermeable surfaces and install additional green infrastructure on these properties.

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has previously noted the importance of efforts to address climate change, including within historic districts. *See* Resolution 4B-19-0903, Supporting Adoption of 21st Century Guidance for Installing Solar in Historic Districts (Sept. 23, 2019) ("If we do not preserve our planet against the catastrophic impact of climate change, we will not be able to historically preserve anything. Failure to actively pursue measures to effect a major reduction in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in renewable energy sources will have devastating and irreversible effects on the viability of the District as a place to live."). The Commission similarly believes the

Historic Preservation Review Board must strike a better balance regarding secondary buildings and stormwater management features, even when such secondary buildings are visible from streets, alleys, and other public rights-of-way. *See* Landscaping, Landscape Features, and Secondary Buildings in Historic Districts ("Removing an original secondary building or one that was added at a later date should only be done after careful consideration and consultation with the Historic Preservation Office. This is particularly true of secondary buildings that can be seen from streets, alleys or other public rights-of-way.") (updated Apr. 29, 2009).

- This Resolution recognizes the challenges presented by historic districts when faced with important neighborhood-wide challenges. The applications for 6817 5th Street, NW, and 6819 5th Street, NW, when viewed in a vacuum, seem relatively inconsequential but upon consideration of broader community needs and years' long efforts to address stormwater challenges, demand a more holistic consideration of climate impacts. Better coordination and consideration of sustainability and resiliency within historic districts are essential to the District's ability to mitigate and respond to climate change.

RESOLVED:

➢ That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests the Applicant to engage with the Commission – specifically, Commissioner Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04, and Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 – with regard to 6817 5th Street, NW (HPA 23-364) and 6819 5th Street, NW (HPA 22-365) and in consideration of neighborhood stormwater management concerns.

➢ That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B strongly agrees with the Staff Report and Recommendation with regard to removal of the garages at 6817 5th Street, NW, and 6819 5th Street, NW, and requests approval of removal of these garages, particularly as related to reducing impermeable surface area and improving stormwater management for these properties.

➢ That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls for reconsideration of the Historic Preservation Guidelines on Landscaping, Landscape Features, and Secondary Buildings in Historic Districts to better address the need for green infrastructure and stormwater management, including more flexibility for the replacement of these secondary buildings with green infrastructure.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

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That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, and Commissioner Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioners cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

ADOPTED by voice vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of _ members was present) on August 28, 2023, by a vote of _ yes, _ no, _ abstentions.

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