

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT: Plaza Midwood

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1712-1714 Thomas Avenue

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: Front Yard Landscaping

APPLICANT/OWNER: Porcha Thomas and Rusty Sowers

The application was continued from November for the following item:

Landscaping and Yards, 8.4, numbers 6 and 9. Provide alternative ground cover methods

Details of Proposed Request

Existing Conditions

The existing structure is a one-story Bungalow duplex constructed c. 1930. Architectural features include a symmetrical façade with a steep pitch center gable and side porches, exposed rafters and 4/1 windows. Lot size is approximately 50' x 150'. Adjacent structures are 1-2 story single-family and multi-family structures.

Proposal

The proposal is changes to the front yard. All grass in the front yard was removed and replaced with gravel. The two front yard trees will remain and a square planting bed will be created around each.

Revised Proposal – December 11

- Photos of alternate ground cover method provided.

Design Guidelines – Landscaping and Yards, page 8.4

1. Historic site features are considered integral parts of historic properties, and cannot be removed without approval.
2. Retain existing trees and plantings that help define the district's character.
3. Replace diseased or dead plants and trees to match the plant to be replaced or with indigenous species (refer to the Charlotte Land Development Standards Manual for Approved Plant Species).
4. Repeat the dominant landscape design (plant, size, and species) found in the historic district when installing new plantings.
5. In residential uses, setbacks must be clear of plantings and structures that obstruct the view of the main building on a property.
6. Do not replace grass in front yards with paving or gravel.
7. In a single-family use, no more than 50% of the rear yard shall be of impermeable material including the roofs of additions to original buildings, paving, decks, patios, pools, and accessory buildings. Wood slatted decks are considered permeable.
8. Certain modern materials for landscape and site features are not allowed including:
 - a. Interlocking concrete blocks with beveled edges
 - b. Bare concrete block
 - c. Treated landscaping timbers
 - d. Railroad ties
 - e. Pre-fabricated lattice
9. Use hardscape materials that complement the historic structure and property.

Staff Analysis

Staff has the following concerns with the proposal:

1. The Commission will determine if the proposed alternative material is not incongruous with the street and district.
2. Minor revisions may be reviewed by staff.



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Playground Mulch



Playground safety surfacing is a critical part of playground safety. The most popular choice is rubber mulch. A close second is Engineered Wood Fiber. Ultimately the safety surfacing you choose will make the difference in having a safe playground or not. To learn more about safety surfacing, visit our [Learning Center](#).

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**Brown Premium Rubber Mulch for
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**Red Premium Rubber Mulch for
Playgrounds**

Description

Make your playground as safe as possible while saving money with rubber mulch. Due to its soft and elastic nature, recycled rubber is the safest playground surface for preventing serious fall injuries. When compared with other playground safety surfaces, rubber mulch will cushion a child's fall better than most other surfaces (please note that grass or dirt are not considered safety surfaces and many children are severely injured after falling on a playground with grass or dirt as a safety surface). Rubber mulch also maintains its beauty even after years of exposure to the elements. Our 12 year color guarantee ensures that your mulch will look fresh year after year.

Our products are made from 100% recycled tire rubber and are IPEMA certified to ASTM standards.

Additional advantages of rubber mulch for playgrounds:

- 99.9% steel free
- Does not blow away or wash away
- Will not fade for up to 12 years
- Resistant to decomposition, compression, wind and water erosion
- Weather-friendly - never freezes
- Does not attract termites, carpenter ants or other harmful insects
- Will not float away in storms
- Rainproof - does not absorb as much water, allowing for quicker drying after rain
- Always dry and ready to play almost immediately after even the heaviest rain
- Environmentally friendly - made of recycled tires which saves trees and valuable landfill space
- ADA approved, in conformance with CPSC guidelines
- Cost-effective - 12 year color guarantee!
- Non-toxic. Non-abrasive. Non-staining.
- Rubber granules are a mixture of 3/8" and 3/4" nuggets

For residential playgrounds, we recommend a 3 inch depth. For commercial playgrounds, the industry standard is a 6 inch depth. Check depth annually to ensure proper protection.

Interested in learning how rubber mulch is made? [Click here for more information.](#)

How is Rubber Mulch Made

Tires are converted into rubber mulch by first shredding them in a tire granulation system, and then placing the shredded chips through a process using magnets to remove the steel cords, which tire manufacturers place into tires to reinforce the rubber compound. (Our mulch is guaranteed 99.9% steel-free. We recommend wearing shoes during play.) Dye is applied using a licensed process, which seals the rubber after the color is applied, so children will stay clean even in the rain, as it will not rub off on hands, shoes or clothes.

Rubber mulch is available by supersack or in bags. The size of the nuggets is a mixture of 3/8" and 3/4" rubber granules and chunks. You can choose either super sack or easy-to-lift bags delivered on a pallet. Both are delivered curbside for your convenience.

November Presentation

1712-1714 Thomas Avenue
June 2014





1712-1714 Thomas Avenue
February 2016

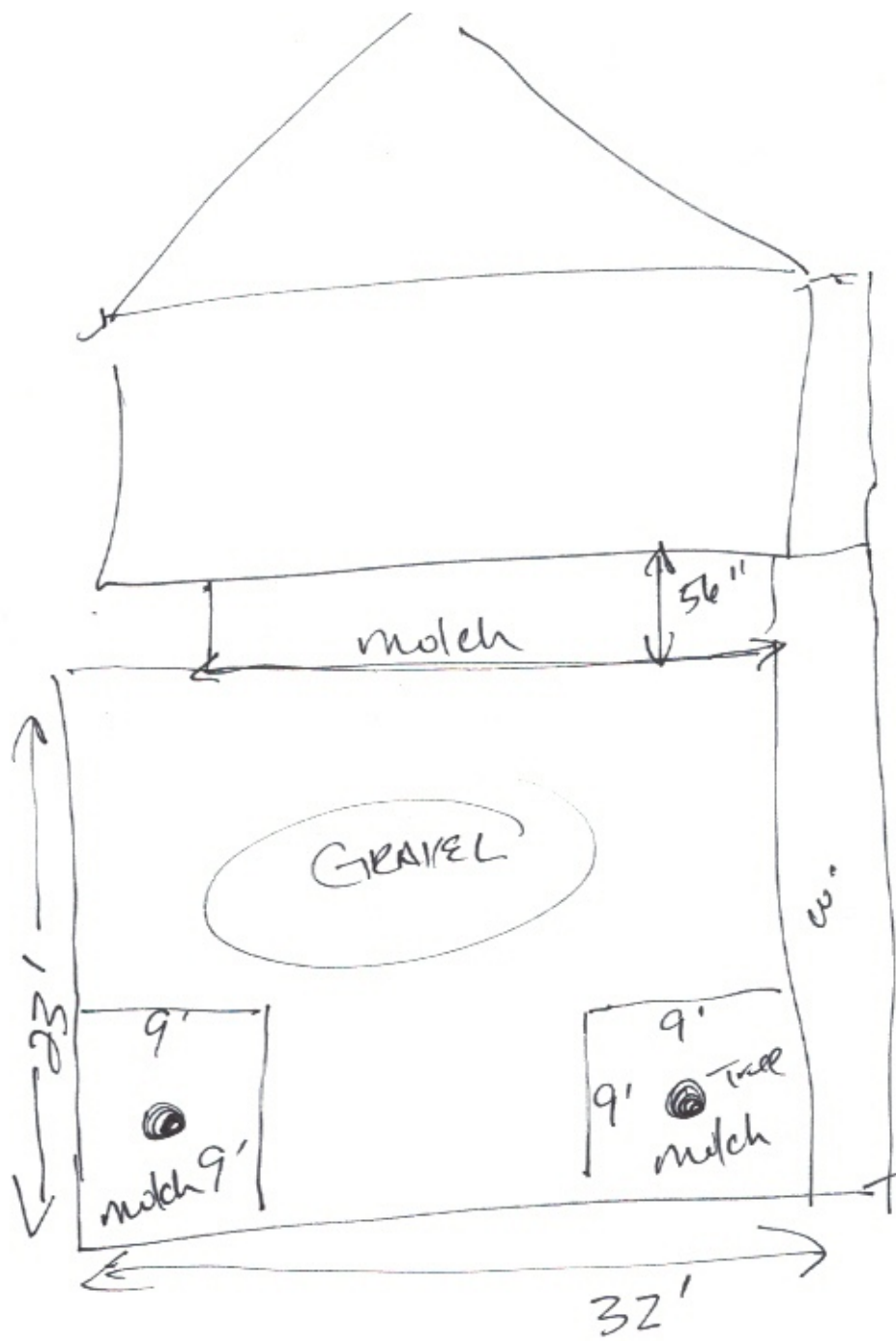


1712-1714 Thomas Avenue
March 2019





1712-1714 Thomas Avenue
2019 Aerial Imagery





1712-1714 Thomas Avenue
September 2019

1712-1714 Thomas Avenue
October 2019





9/9/19

Dear Historic District Commission,

I am writing this letter to officially document my assessment of the current tree and site conditions at 1712 Thomas Ave, 28205. On August 26, 2019, I performed a limited visual assessment of health/structural integrity of Japanese Maple and 2 Crape Myrtles (front). Vigorous growth was expanding uniformly to exterior canopy (towards sunlight) confirming positive seasonal production and resource efficiency. I was asked by the homeowner (Rusty Sowers) about introducing turf to the understory, as well as the necessary tree maintenance requirements to support coexistence of trees and turf.

Turf production requires high exposure to sun and a reliable water source (to start). The mature Maple and Oak overstory (front) negates any efforts to prune customer's trees to accommodate sunlight requirements for desired turf establishment. In addition, Japanese Maples and Crape Myrtles have high water collection requirements; therefore, I do not recommend installing new turf. Please advise me with questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Santigie ("Tig") Kabia

ISA TRAQ Certified Arborist & Municipal Specialist (MA-4553AM)





Kochanek, Cynthia

From: Rusty Sowers <sowersrusty@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 1, 2019 3:37 PM
To: Kochanek, Cynthia; Harpst, Kristina
Cc: Porcha
Subject: [EXT] Re: 1712/1714 Thomas Avenue

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from the Internet. Do not click any images, links or open any attachments unless you recognize and trust the sender and know the content is safe. Please click the Phish Alert button to forward the email to Bad.Mail.

Please let me know you received. Thanks!

Rusty
913.908.4019

On Oct 31, 2019, at 1:17 PM, Rusty Sowers <sowersrusty@gmail.com> wrote:

Cynthia- I'm forwarding an email from our landscaper to provide further information about our front yard and why we added gravel. Please let me know you received.

Thanks!

Rusty
913.908.4019

Begin forwarded message:

From: porcha <porchamt@gmail.com>
Date: October 31, 2019 at 12:57:10 PM EDT
To: Rusty Sowers <sowersrusty@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: 1712/1714 Thomas Avenue

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Debra Lesch <debra@debrasgarden.net>
Date: October 31, 2019 at 12:32:33 PM EDT
To: porchamt@gmail.com
Subject: 1712/1714 Thomas Avenue

Porcha,

Grass will not grow in your front yard due to the trees that are providing too much shade for grass. The crepe myrtle tree's root systems will not allow the grass to grow. You would be spending money when the long term result will not be successful.

Debra
704.995.3339
debra@debrasgarden.net

