

**EXPEDITED**  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	End of Dewitt Dr., Silver Spring	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	6/28/2023
<b>Resource:</b>	Parking Garage National Park Seminary Historic District	<b>Report Date:</b>	6/21/2023
<b>Applicant:</b>	Eddie Baron, National Park Seminary Association President (Lois Todhunter, Association Rep.)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	6/14/2023
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	n/a
<b>Case No.:</b>	1033513	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Safety railing installation and other improvements in the landscaped area of the Associate commons		

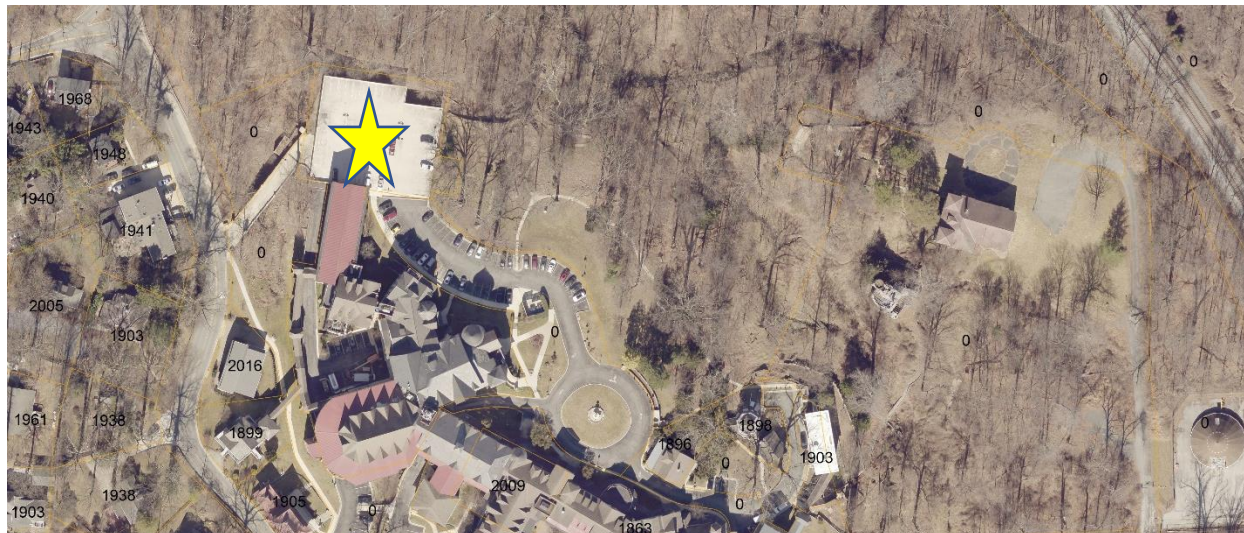
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve**  
 **Approve with conditions**

1. The text of the easement letter from MHT states the approval is, “valid for period of six months from the date of this letter.” The applicant needs to provide documentation from MHT that the approval is either a) still valid or b) has been reissued before Staff is authorized to issue the approval documents.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

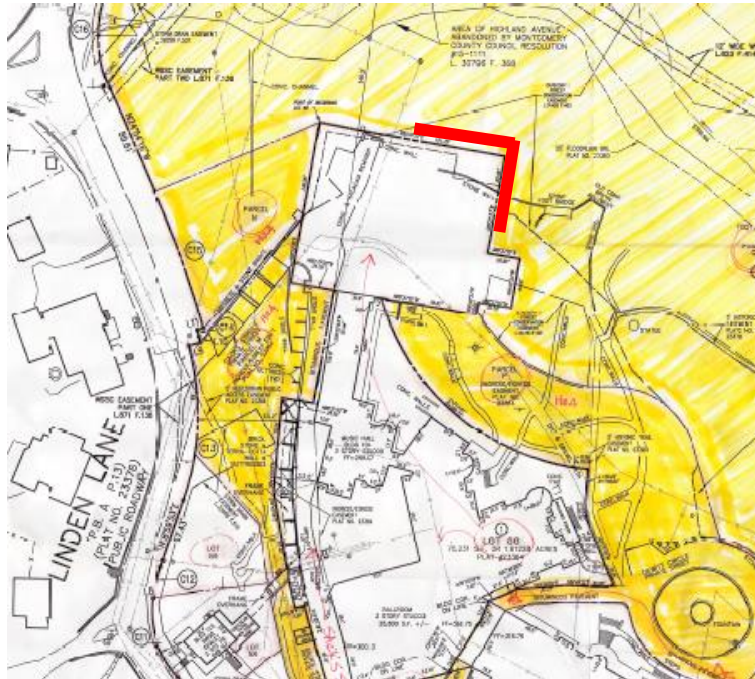
**SIGNIFICANCE:** Parking Garage/HOA Common Area within the Historic District  
**STYLE:** Eclectic  
**DATE:** c.1890-1916



*Figure 1: The proposed alterations are to the non-historic parking garage.*

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to construct a concrete walkway with a simply detailed wrought iron safety railing on the rear of the non-historic parking deck (see below). The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) Director reviewed the proposal at their October 26, 2021 meeting and issued the approval letter on November 15, 2021. The text of the approval letter states the approval is valid for six months (April 21, 2022). Because the approval expired more than 12 months ago, Staff recommends the HPC add a condition to the approval that the applicant provide verification from MHT that the approval is still valid before Staff issues approval documents.



*Figure 2: Site plan showing the location of the walkway and railing shown in red.*

**APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

**Policy On Use of Expedited Staff Reports for Simple HAWP Cases**

IV. The Expedited Staff Report format may be used on the following type of cases:

1. Alterations to properties on which the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) holds an easement and which have been reviewed and approved by the MHT Easement Committee.
11. Construction or replacement of walkways, parking areas, patios, driveways or other paved areas that are not readily visible from a public right-of-way and/or are compatible in material, location, and design with the visual character of the historic site or district.

## Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to ensure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:
  - (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
  - (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
- (d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. (Ord. No. 9-4, § 1; Ord. No. 11-59.)

### *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” The relevant *Standards* are as follows:

- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportions, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with one condition** the HAWP application:

- 1. The text of the easement letter from MHT states the approval is, “valid for period of six months from the date of this letter.” The applicant needs to provide documentation from MHT that the approval is either a) still valid or b) has been reissued before Staff is authorized to issue the approval documents;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2), having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the district and the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #2, #9, and #10;

and with the general condition that the applicant will obtain all other applicable Montgomery County or local government agency permits. After the issuance of these permits, the applicant must contact this Historic Preservation Office if any changes to the approved plan are made;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact the staff person assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or [dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.  
visit.



**APPLICATION FOR  
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT**  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301.563.3400

FOR STAFF ONLY:  
HAWP# \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE ASSIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICANT:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Account No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE:** MIHP # of Historic Property \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Property Located within an Historic District?    Yes/District Name \_\_\_\_\_  
   No/Individual Site Name \_\_\_\_\_

Is there an Historic Preservation/Land Trust/Environmental Easement on the Property? If YES, include a map of the easement, and documentation from the Easement Holder supporting this application.

Are other Planning and/or Hearing Examiner Approvals /Reviews Required as part of this Application? (Conditional Use, Variance, Record Plat, etc.?) If YES, include information on these reviews as supplemental information.

Building Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Nearest Cross Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel: \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: See the checklist on Page 4 to verify that all supporting items for proposed work are submitted with this application. Incomplete Applications will not be accepted for review. Check all that apply:**

- |                                             |                                              |                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction   | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck/Porch          | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addition           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence               | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardscape/Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree removal/planting           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grading/Excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Roof                | <input type="checkbox"/> Window/Door                     |
|                                             |                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                    |

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct and accurate and that the construction will comply with plans reviewed and approved by all necessary agencies and hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

  *Loris C Toddhunter*     *June 6, 2023*    
Signature of owner or authorized agent Date

**HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING**  
[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<b>Owner's mailing address</b>	<b>Owner's Agent's mailing address</b>
<b>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</b>	

**Description of Property:** Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

**Description of Work Proposed:** Please give an overview of the work to be undertaken:

National Park Seminary  
HAWP Application 1033513 for the Installation  
of Concrete Steps and Wrought Iron Safety Railing by Parking Garage

Description of Property

The National Park Seminary Master Association (NPSMA) plans to construct steps and a pathway and install a safety railing by a parking garage located at the end of Dewitt Drive. The concrete steps and pathway at the rear of the garage would be constructed in place of an informal footpath on the slope leading from an existing pedestrian opening and landing by the parking deck to the covered parking level below, and extending along an informal pathway at the rear of the garage to a second existing pedestrian opening. A wrought-iron safety railing with balusters, matching similar railings on the NPS campus, would be installed on the garage side of the steps.

The slope is used as an informal path by residents to access their cars in the garage, or by those who are strolling the campus. There is a low curb alongside the parking structure between the levels, but it is open to the garage floor and parked cars below. The footpath is uneven, and can be slippery when wet, snowy, icy, or leaf-covered. Without secure footing and a safety railing, there is a risk of someone slipping on the path or falling into the garage and being injured. In addition to potential personal injury, the lack of secure footing and a safety railing creates a liability for the NPSMA.

The Garage Steps and Safety Railing Project was approved by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) in the fall of 2021. While we were unable to complete the project at that time, the NPSMA is now ready to proceed with the project, and MHT has extended their approval (see Attachments 1 and 2).

We have met with Stephen Peck, Montgomery Planning Forest Conservation Inspector. He has confirmed that the project area does not impinge on the forest conservation easement.

Description of Work Proposed

The NPSMA is seeking to formalize and make safer the informal pathway alongside and behind the parking garage. The proposed work is to construct concrete stairs and install a wrought-iron safety railing with balusters from the pedestrian opening and landing by the upper-level deck, along the slope leading to the covered garage below, and to continue the walkway along the back of the lower garage to another existing pedestrian opening, providing access into the lower garage.

Constructing the steps, safety railing, and walkway will create a safe access along the slope and into the garage. This construction aligns well with the existing pedestrian openings and landing, which seem incomplete without the steps and walkway. In addition, the project will convert what is now an unsightly, dangerous, rugged dirt path into more formal steps, railing, and walkway consistent with similar features elsewhere on the campus, and add to the beauty of NPS.



Work Items

Item	Current Condition Description	Proposed Work
1. CONCRETE STEPS (see Attachment 3)	Rugged, unsightly slope with informal footpath	Excavate as needed and install a walkway 45 feet by 3 feet (eighteen risers at 6 inches beginning at the existing landing and extending to the lower-level garage); new concrete at 6-inch depth on compacted stone base; apply broom finish.
2. WROUGHT IRON SAFETY RAILING (see Attachment 3)	Currently no safety railing exists along slope, risking a fall along the informal path or into the lower-level garage	Fabricate an approximately 35-foot wrought-iron safety railing with balusters to match existing railings found on campus; install the railing into the concrete steps along the garage-side opening between the parking levels.
3. CONCRETE WALKWAY (see Attachment 3)	Rugged, informal footpath at the back of the garage	Excavate as needed and install 3-foot by 3-foot concrete pavers on compacted CR6 subbase along the 30-foot length to the pedestrian opening; apply broom finish. The pavers are spaced to provide some permeability to the walkway.



**Maryland**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**  
**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

November 15, 2021

Robert Biersner  
President, NPSMA  
2747 Linden Lane, #103  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: National Park Seminary, Montgomery County – Change/Alteration  
Maryland Historical Trust Preservation Easement

Dear Mr. Biersner:

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) is in receipt of your application, received on October 17, 2021, requesting approval to construct a new stepped walkway with an associated handrail on the side of the parking garage and construct a new walkway on the back of the parking garage. MHT's Easement Committee (Committee) reviewed the information on October 26, 2021.

Based on the review and recommendation of the Committee, I approve the request to construct a new stepped walkway with an associated handrail on the side of the parking garage and construct a new walkway on the back of the parking garage.

This work is consistent with the Secretary of the *Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, General Rehabilitation Standards*, in particular *Standards 2, 8, and 10*.

This approval is valid for period of six months from the date of this letter. Should you require additional time to complete the project, make any changes to the scope of work as approved, or have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Casey DeHaven, Easement Administrator at (410) 697-9545 or by email at [casey.dehaven@maryland.gov](mailto:casey.dehaven@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Hughes".

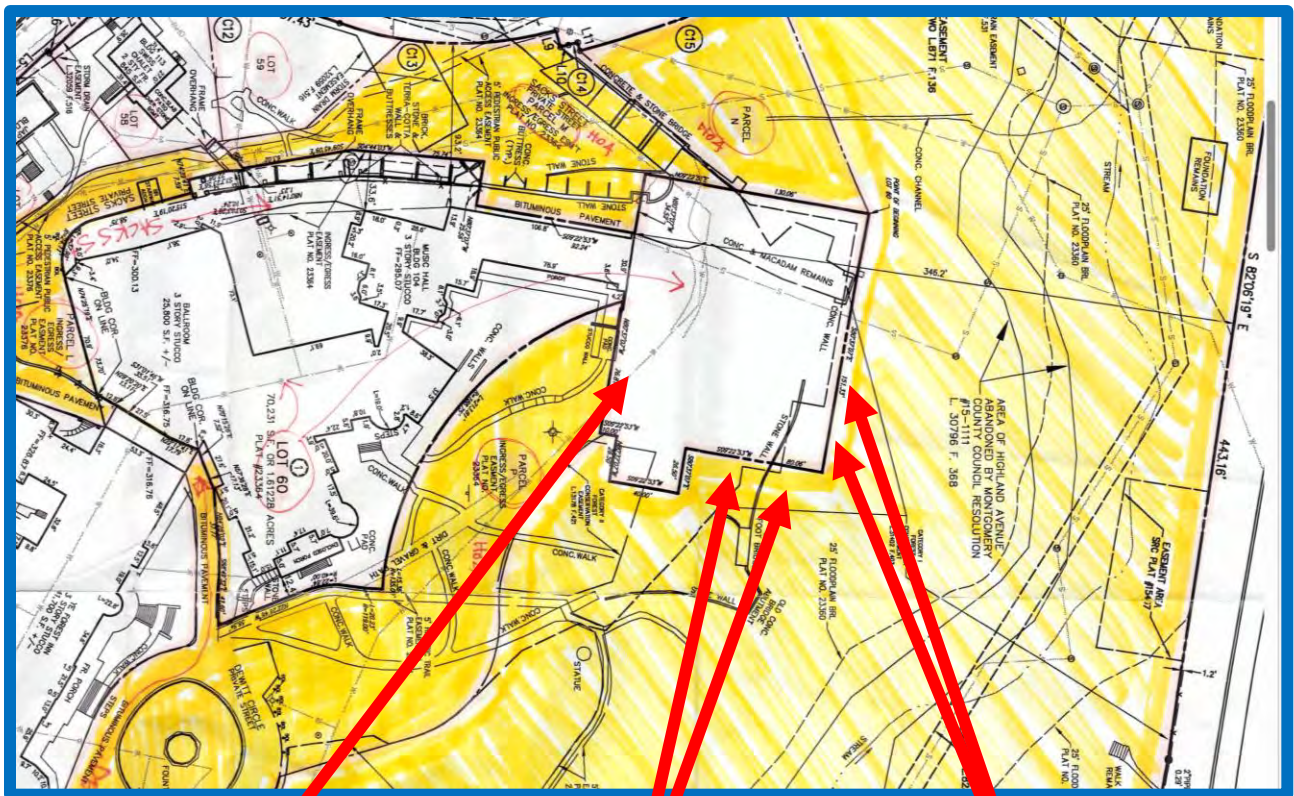
Elizabeth Hughes  
Director  
Maryland Historical Trust

EH/CD

National Park Seminary  
HAWP Application 1033513 for the Construction of Concrete Steps  
and Installation of a Wrought Iron Safety Railing by the Parking Garage

Attachment 4

Location of the Concrete Steps, Walkway and Safety Railing Project  
Plat Detail



Parking Deck

Location of steps  
and safety railing

Location of  
rear walkway



