

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

<b>Address:</b>	9601 Dewitt Drive, Silver Spring	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	1/7/2026
<b>Resource:</b>	Chapel; National Park Seminary Historic District	<b>Report Date:</b>	12/31/2025
<b>Applicant:</b>	RMNR LLC Michael Carriere (Agent)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	12/24/2025
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	Partial
<b>Permit Number:</b>	1141192	<b>Staff:</b>	Devon Murtha
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Porch repairs and deck expansion		

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application.



*Figure 1: The subject property at 9601 Dewitt Drive in the National Park Seminary Historic District is indicated with a star. The red cross hatch is the district.*

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

<b>SIGNIFICANCE:</b>	Chapel; National Park Seminary Historic District
<b>STYLE:</b>	Ecclesiastical/Shingle
<b>DATE:</b>	1898



*Figure 2: Chapel building from right-of-way along Linden Lane (GoogleMaps, 2025).*



*Figure 3: View of the façade of the subject property Dewitt Drive (left) and the rear from Linden Lane (right).*

The subject property was constructed in 1898 to serve as the first non-denominational chapel on the National Park Seminary campus. It originally featured a stone foundation, shingle siding, and a full-length front porch. The chapel was expanded twice to accommodate a growing student body at the school during the twentieth century. By 1913, the front porch was enclosed, and the center stairway was demolished to accommodate a curved stone stairway. By 1923, a new front porch was added.<sup>1</sup> The site was owned by the Army from the 1940s until 2004. The chapel was subsequently renovated into a single-family home as part of a large-scale renovation effort.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see <https://saveourseminary.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/House-Tour-brochure-2018.pdf>.



*Figure 4: Photo of the chapel in 1902 (Montgomery History).*



*Figure 5: View of the chapel from Linden Lane (undated, Montgomery History).*



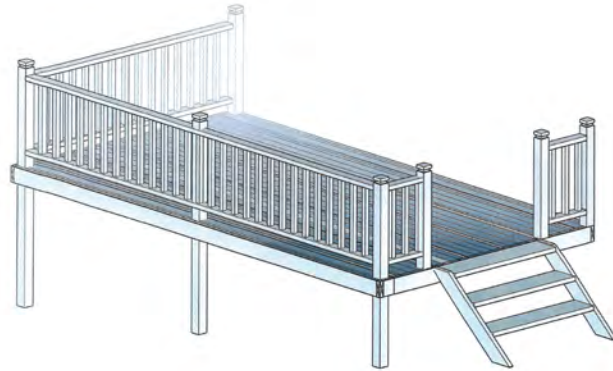
*Figure 6: Documentation of the chapel in 2001 (Historic American Building Survey).*



*Figure 7: Documentation of the chapel in 2001 (Historic American Building Survey).*

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing rear porch and construct a new porch in its place. The new porch will measure 15' x 8' and will be in approximately the same location as the existing porch. The new porch will be constructed with wood decking and new wood railings to match the existing. Additionally, the application is proposing to repair the rotted railings on the front porch with new wood railings to match in-kind.



*Figure 8: Existing rear porch (left) and proposed rear porch (right). Note that the applicant stated that the new railings will be custom milled to match existing railings.*



*Figure 9: Front porch railings to be repaired.*

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

The Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consult several documents when reviewing alterations and new construction within the National Park Seminary Historic District. These documents include the historic preservation review guidelines in the approved and adopted amendment for the *Montgomery County Code, Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)*, and *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these three documents is outlined below.

### ***Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A-8***

The following guidance that pertains to this project are as follows:

- (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;
- (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 the 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 applicable *Standards* are as follows:

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
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 will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, 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 DISCUSSION**

Staff is supportive of the plan to construct a new rear porch and to repair the railing on the front porch.

Staff finds that, per *Standard 2* and 24A-8(b), no historic features will be removed as part of the demolition of the rear porch. The rear porch is not historic and does not appear in photos prior to 2001. It was likely added during the recent rehabilitation efforts. Staff also finds that proposed porch is generally compatible with the resource and can be removed without impacting the essential form and integrity of the property, per *Standards 9* and *10*. The proposed material is wood, and the design will closely match that of the existing porch. Staff finds that the existing profile of the railings is generally in keeping with the resource and the district.

The repair of deteriorated railing posts on the front porch is in-kind work and is eligible for the Montgomery County Historic Preservation tax credit. The construction of the rear porch is only eligible for the tax credit if the applicant can demonstrate that there was historically a porch in that location and that the new porch is a reconstruction based on photographic documentation.

Staff notes that this property is also under an historic easement with the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT). As part of this application, the applicant submitted a conditional approval letter from MHT dated 2017 that referenced the rear porch construction. This approval expired in January of 2018. If they have not done so already, the applicant must seek new approval from MHT prior to commencing work. Staff notes that the other work items listed in the expired MHT approval, including the installation of new light fixtures and concrete repairs, are not included in this review.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application:

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2), and Chapter 24A-8(d), having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with 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 shall present an electronic set of drawings, if applicable, to HPC staff for review and stamping prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

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 HPC as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the HPC 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 301-495-1328 or [devon.murtha@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:devon.murtha@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.

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:

Repair front porch rotting railings

Repair and expand rear porch

Replace rotting deck and railings

Work Item 1: Front Porch

Description of Current Condition:  
Some rotting wood on railings

Proposed Work:  
Replace rotting wood with in-kind wood material for spindles, top and bottom railing. All spindles will be duplicated to match existing spindle.

Work Item 2: Rear Porch (back)

Description of Current Condition:  
Wood is rotting in both railing and deck surface.  
Very restricted use area due to fact that it was build around a tree that no longer exists

Proposed Work:  
Proposed change is to make the porch rectangle over rotted tree stump (drawing attached). All material used will be in-kind for spindles, posts, top and bottom rail. All spindles will be duplicated to match existing spindle.

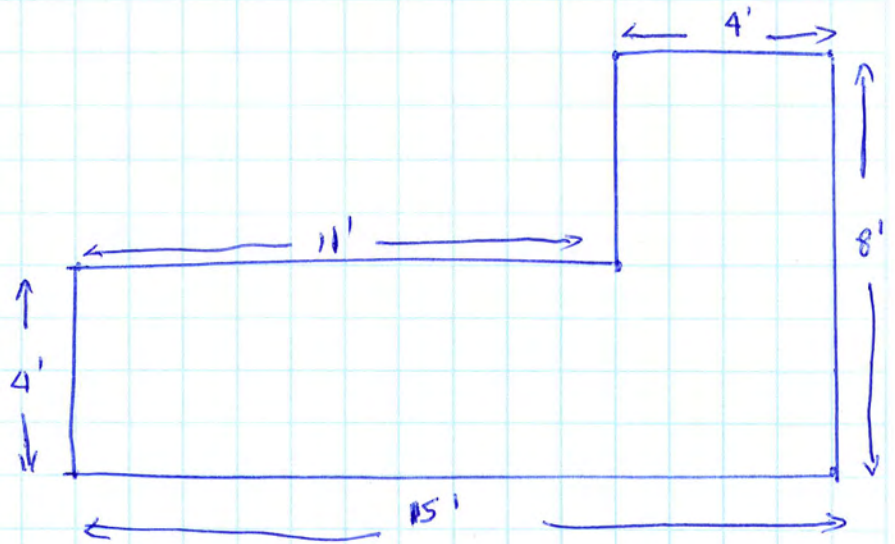
Work Item 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Current Condition:

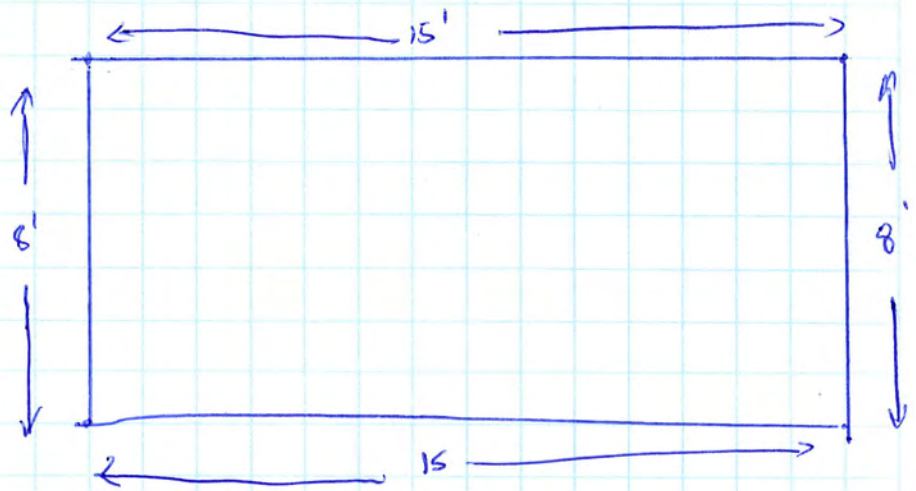
Proposed Work:

DRAWING

CURRENT PORCH



PROPOSED PORCH



SCALE EACH BLOCK = 1 FT



9601  
Cedar Drive

PRIVATE  
RESIDENCE





9601  
Dewitt Drive

















