

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7103 & 7105 Cedar Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	4/22/2026
Resource:	Outstanding Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	4/15/2026
Applicant:	Jeffrey Beaty & Richard Sawyer	Public Notice:	4/8/2026
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	No
Permit Number:	1152084	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	New Handrail on Front Stairs		

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission **approve** the HAWP application

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Outstanding Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Second Empire
DATE: 1907



Figure 1: The subject property is located at the edge of the historic district, near the boundary with Washington, DC.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to install an additional handrail on the front porch stairs.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

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

Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines

There are two broad planning and design concepts which apply to all categories. These are:

- The design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are all visible from the public right-of-way, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation (it is expected that the majority of new additions will be reviewed for their impact on the overall district), and
- The importance of assuring that additions and other changes to existing structures act to reinforce and continue existing streetscape, landscape, and building patterns rather than to impair the character of the historic district.

Outstanding Resources – Residential: These resources have the highest level of architectural and/or historical significance. While they will receive the most detailed level of design review, it is permissible to make sympathetic alterations, changes and additions to Outstanding Resources.

As a set of guiding principles for design review of Outstanding Resources, the Historic Preservation Commission will utilize the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation".

Specifically, some of the factors to be considered in reviewing HAWPs on Outstanding Resources:

Plans for all alterations should be compatible with the resource's original design; additions, specifically, should be sympathetic to existing architectural character, including massing, height, setback, and materials

Emphasize placement of major additions to the rear of existing structures so that they are less visible from the public right-of-way

While additions should be compatible, they are not required to be replicative of earlier architectural styles

Preservation of original and distinctive architectural features, such as porches, dormers, decorative details, shutters, etc...is encouraged

Preservation of original windows and doors, particularly those with specific architectural importance, and of original size and shape of openings is encouraged.

Preservation of original building materials and use of appropriate, compatible new materials encourages

All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space

Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24A-8

The following guidance which 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;
 - (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied
- (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.
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new constructions shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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

The subject property is a brick duplex constructed in the Second Empire style (Staff notes three duplexes of matching design were constructed in the immediate area, located at 7102 -7104 and 7106-7108 Maple Ave.). The building has a full-width two-story front porch. The centrally located front stairs include a wood handrail on either side, mounted on the bottom stair, and connected to the front porch at one of the wood columns (see *Fig. 2*, below). The applicants propose to install an additional handrail in the center of the stair run. The proposed railing will match the design, material, dimensions, and construction of the existing railings.



Figure 2: The existing railing is mounted on the bottom stair and abuts the existing wood column.

Staff finds the proposed railing is compatible in design and materials and will not visually detract from the character of the house or the surrounding district. Staff finds there is a precedent for installing a central handrail, as both of the duplexes on Maple Ave. had handrails as recently as 2016 (see *Fig. 3*, below). Additionally, staff finds that the proposed, simply detailed handrail could be removed at a future date without damaging the integrity of the subject property. Staff recommends the HPC approve the HAWP under 24A-8(b)(2) and (4); *Standards #2 and 10*; and the *Design Guidelines*.



Figure 3: 7102-7104 and 7106-7108 Maple Ave. photo from 2016, railings circled.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission **approve** the HAWP; under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1),(2) and (4) and (d), 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 and #10*;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present an electronic set of drawings, if applicable, to Historic Preservation Commission (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 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 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:

Work Item 1: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 2: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 3: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:



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