

# Montgomery County Historic Preservation

## Staff Report

<b>ADDRESS:</b> 14 Hickory Ave., Takoma Park	<b>MEETING DATE:</b> 5/27/2026
<b>RESOURCE:</b> Takoma Park Historic District	<b>REPORT DATE:</b> 5/20/2026
<b>APPLICANT:</b> Kenneth P & Linda S Norkin	
<b>REVIEW:</b> HAWP	<b>PUBLIC NOTICE:</b> 5/13/2026
<b>CASE NO.:</b> 1156263	<b>TAX CREDIT ELIGIBLE:</b> No
<b>PROPOSAL:</b> Deck Alterations	<b>STAFF:</b> Dan Bruechert

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### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the HPC approve with one (1) condition the HAWP application with final approval delegated to Staff.

1. Detailed specifications for an all-wood railing in a traditional design, with the balusters installed between the top and bottom rails must be submitted before final approval documents can be issued.

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### Architectural Description

**Significance:** Outstanding Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District

**Date:** 1887

**Style:** Queen Anne



Figure 1: The location of the subject property (outlined in blue) is located in the east side of the Takoma Park Historic District (hatched and outlined in red).

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## Proposal

The applicant proposes to remove the existing wood deck and railing and install composite decking and a wood railing.

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## Applicable Guidelines

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County Maryland for Takoma Park (*Design Guidelines*), Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A-8 (*Chapter 24A-8*), and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (*Standards*). The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below. As a deck replacement the HPC is also guided by Policy No. 24-01 ADOPTED POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS FOR PORCH AND DECK FLOORING (*HPC Porch Flooring Policy*).

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

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is

sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.

(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.)

### **Design Guidelines**

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

The design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are at 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 district.

Outstanding 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. The guiding principles to be utilized by the Historic Preservation Commission are 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 is encourages
- All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space

### ***Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation***

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will 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.

### ***Policy No. 24-01 -ADOPTED POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS FOR PORCH AND DECK FLOORING***

2. Historic districts are comprised of groups of cohesive historic resources that collectively contribute to the county’s historic, architectural, archaeological, or cultural values. Resources in many districts are categorized as ‘Outstanding,’ ‘Contributing,’ or ‘Non-Contributing’ and the treatment of these resources varies based on their categorization.
3. Outstanding Resources/Primary – These resources have the highest level of architectural or historical significance in the historic district and the objective for Outstanding/Primary resources is to preserve the historic and architectural character to the greatest extent possible. Wood should be used on all porches and decks for Outstanding/Primary resources. The wood should be painted and installed in a historically appropriate method. Porches on building additions and new construction to Outstanding/Primary resources will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. As with Master Plan Sites, the HPC does not evaluate wood species and the applied finish needs to be appropriate for the material selected.
6. Compatible substitute materials for replacement porch flooring/decking – On buildings where a substitute material is acceptable under this policy, the material must satisfy the following criteria:

- It must match the dimensions and installation method (i.e.) of the existing material or a historically appropriate porch flooring, (e.g., boards must run perpendicular to the house for porches);
- It must be millable;
- It can be painted without voiding the product warranty; or,
- Has a uniform appearance consistent with painted wood;
- It has a minimal (or no) stamped or embossed texture on the surface; and,
- It has a finished edge that appears as a cut solid board.

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## Staff Discussion

The subject property is a clapboard sided, two-story, Queen Anne house. Sometime after 1963, a two-story addition with a walk-out basement was constructed at the rear of the house. In 2005, the HPC approved the construction of a rear deck off of the rear of the non-historic addition. The existing wood decking, stairs, and railing has deteriorated. The applicant proposes replacing the existing decking and stair treads with Trex composite, and replacing the railing with a pressure treated wood railing; the deck structure will be retained. Detailed specifications for the railing were not provided.



Figure 2: The subject house with the deck visible to the left.

Staff finds the existing decking is not historic fabric, and its removal should be approved as a matter of course.

Under the HPC’s Porch Flooring Policy, wood should be used on historic porches, but the policy indicates that porch flooring materials on building additions and new construction to Outstanding/Primary resources will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The primary question for this HAWP application is whether a replacement porch flooring at the subject property needs to satisfy the criteria for “compatible substitute materials” or if any substitute material is appropriate.

In its evaluation, Staff’s primary consideration is the impact the proposed material will have on the historic character of the house and surrounding historic district. Staff first considers the impact the feature has on the historic construction. The existing deck is attached to a non-historic addition at the rear of the house and does not impact any historic fabric. Staff next evaluates the visibility of the rear deck and stairs as viewed from the surrounding streetscape. These features are partially visible from the public right-of-way (as shown in Fig. 2, above), but are clearly differentiated from the historic construction, and Staff finds will not be mistaken for historic construction. Staff’s final consideration is the visual impact the material will have due to its distance from the public right-of-way. Staff finds the approximately 75’ (seventy-five feet) distance is sufficient, so the fine-grained details of the material will

not be visible from the adjacent streetscape. For these reasons, Staff finds that the new deck and stair material do not need to satisfy the heightened criteria of a ‘compatible substitute material’ to satisfy the requirements of the Design Guidelines; Chapter 24A-8(b)(2); and *Standards #2, 9, and 10*.

Details regarding the proposed railing were not provided with the application, but the narrative indicates the material will be pressure-treated wood. Staff finds that an all-wood railing is an appropriate material for the deck (Staff does not support a wood railing with metal balusters). Because of the visibility of the railing, Staff finds a traditional railing design, with the balusters installed between the top and bottom rails, is compatible with the character of the house and surrounding historic district. Staff recommends that the HPC add a condition for the approval of this HAWP that railing design and material specifications need to be submitted to Staff for final review and approval.

With the recommended condition, Staff finds the HAWP is compatible with the Design Guidelines; 24A-8(b)(1), (2) and (d); *Standards #2, 9, and 10*; and the HPC’s Porch Flooring Policy.

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## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve with one (1) condition the HAWP application;

1. Detailed specifications for an all-wood railing in a traditional design, with the balusters installed between the top and bottom rails must be submitted before final approval documents can be issued;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1), (2) and (d) having found that the proposal is consistent with the *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines* identified above, and therefore 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 Policy No. 24-01 -ADOPTED POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS FOR PORCH AND DECK FLOORING;

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](mailto: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:

**HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT  
CHECKLIST OF  
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

	Required Attachments						
Proposed Work	I. Written Description	2. Site Plan	3. Plans/ Elevations	4. Material Specifications	5. Photographs	6. Tree Survey	7. Property Owner Addresses
New Construction	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Additions/ Alterations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demolition	*	*	*		*		*
Deck/Porch	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fence/Wall	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Driveway/ Parking Area	*	*		*	*	*	*
Grading/Excavation/ Landscaping	*	*		*	*	*	*
Tree Removal	*	*		*	*	*	*
Siding/ Roof Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Window/ Door Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Masonry Repair/ Repoint	*	*	*	*	*		*
Signs	*	*	*	*	*		*







S 20 DEG. E

LOT #10

LOT #11

16,874 SQ. FT.

76'-7 1/2"

N 66 DEG. E 172.5'

LOT #9

EXIST.)

CONC. DRIVEWAY (EXIST.)

4'-0"

FRAME GARAGE

EXIST. SPA

NEW 1 STY. FRAMED ADDITION

EXIST. DECK @ GRADE

EXIST. HOUSE

EXIST'G. 2 STY. HOUSE

SCREENED PORCH

34'-5 1/2"

9'-5 1/2"

16'-0"

S 66 DEG. W 165.0'

37'-0"

24.3'

27'-6"

FIRST FLOOR

OPEN ROOF (EXIST.)

N 24 DEG. W 100.0'

# HICKORY AVENUE











DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Rabbiah Sabbakhan  
*Director*

# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

Application Date: 4/28/2026

Application No: 1156263  
AP Type: HISTORIC  
Customer No: 1552614

## Comments

Deck was installed in 2005. The pressure-treated railing has been maintained, but has reached its useful life and must be replaced. While the Tigerwood decking may have years remaining, upkeep of cleaning and oiling has become labor intensive and expensive. We want to replace with Trex composite.

## Affidavit Acknowledgement

The Homeowner is the Primary applicant  
This application does not violate any covenants and deed restrictions

## Primary Applicant Information

Address 14 Hickory AVE  
Takoma Park, MD 20912-4622  
Homeowner Norkin (Primary)

## Historic Area Work Permit Details

Work Type RESREP  
Scope of Work Replace Tigerwood deck boards and stair tread with Trex. Replace all pressure-treated railing system with new pressure-treated railing.

