



**Historic District Commission Staff Report:
Evaluation of Significance (for demolition)
2026-331-EOS | 24 Martins Lane**

MEETING DATE: June 18, 2026

REPORT DATE: June 11, 2026

FROM: Megan Flick
Principal Planner
mflick@rockvillemd.gov

APPLICATION: Evaluation of Significance (demolition proposed)

APPLICANT: Jason Ekus (Pavilion Real Estate)
4414 Hallet St, Rockville, MD 20853

OWNER: NRHQ LLC
2 Alleghany Ctr Nova Tower 2 Ste 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

FILING DATE: April 15, 2026

RECOMMENDATION: Finding that although the property at 24 Martins Lane meets *Historic Significance Criteria a, b, c, and d*, and *Architectural, Design and Landscape Criteria a*, the property is in extreme disrepair as evidenced by the structural report, and as such staff recommends against historic designation due to neglect of the structure.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Location	West End
Land Use Designation	Residential Detached
Zoning District	R-60
Existing Use	Residential
Parcel Area	35,369 SF
Subdivision	0503 (West End)
Building Floor Area	1,524 SF
Dwelling Units	1



Birdseye View of 24 Martins Lane

This application was originally scheduled to be heard by the Historic District Commission (HDC) at its May 21 meeting. At that meeting, the HDC moved to postpone the case to a later meeting due to the need to investigate additional information about the property's history. The HDC Rules of Procedure state that once an item has been placed on the agenda and advertised, the postponement must come at the request of the Chair or two commissioners during the meeting for which the case is advertised. The Chair requested the postponement and all present commissioners voted in favor of postponement. When this type of postponement occurs for an

Evaluation of Significance, the case must be heard at the next regularly scheduled meeting unless otherwise specified. Therefore, the case is being heard at the June 18 meeting.

INITATION OF PROCESS

The owner filed an Evaluation of Significance application in anticipation of filing a demolition permit. In accordance with Section 25.14.01. of the Zoning Ordinance, and section 5-96(3) of the Rockville City Code, the HDC will evaluate a property for historic significance if the owner proposes demolition of a building. The owner is seeking to demolish the existing residential structure due to neglect and has provided a structural report detailing its deteriorating condition. See the attached structural report for more information (Exhibit F).

SITE ANALYSIS

Lot Description

The interior lot is a narrow yet deep half-acre lot that faces east to North Washington Street but is accessed by a lane west of the house that connects to Martins Lane. The lot is unique in that its direct frontage on Martins Lane is not where the vehicular access to the parcel is located. The lot is on the south side of Martins Lane, down a private drive that stretches south from the road and crosses another parcel. However, the parcel does have a small stretch of road frontage on Martins Lane, in the northeast corner of the parcel, located between 14 and 16 Martins Lane. The driveway access to the property does not use this frontage, however. The house is configured on a 35,369 square-foot lot and is surrounded by residential land uses.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The two-story side-gable Victorian style house is estimated to have been built sometime between 1882 and 1897 and was later enlarged in the 1920s. The house is an example of a late-nineteenth century homestead, originally in a semi-rural setting, and is commonly referred to as the Powell/Crutchfield House. The house is featured in the Rockville Historic Buildings Catalog, although it is not formally designated.

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form (Exhibit G) describes the house as a 2 ½ story frame four-bay by one-bay vernacular house with a rear L-shaped 'kitchen wing.' The main north bay is an early 20th century addition. The tri-gabled roof was clad in composition shingles and the exterior finish is a large-pebbled stucco painted white. Two plain brick chimneys are located in the interior at the junction of the blocks and the exterior on the northwest façade of the main block, respectively. The foundation was rusticated concrete block which is exposed on the east side. Typical vernacular character is formed by the simple block mass and original symmetrical fenestration rather than ornamentation. The windows vary, but 2/2 double sash windows originally flanked by wooden louvered shutters are original to the home, and first story windows are longer than second story windows. Door and window surrounds were originally plan unmitred stock, now nearly flush with the stucco. The only outbuildings original to the property that appear to still exist is a one-bay frame garage southwest of the house opening to the east, accessed by the asphalt lane and parking apron.

The house is in severe disrepair due to decades of vacancy and neglect, as detailed in the attached structural report (Exhibit F). The structural engineer determined that "the property cannot

be repaired or restored at this time,” as “most of the structural members are either collapsed or rotten” and recommends that the structure be “entirely demolished and rebuilt.”

Front (East) Elevation

The front (east) façade of the house consists of a four-bay second story with four evenly spaced windows and a full-width shed-roofed one-story porch originally supported with six turned wooden columns on brick piers, later covered with plain stock boards which formed frames for screen panels. The screened-in porch has severely deteriorated and the door to the porch has fallen off, as have some of the railings on the porch. The steps up to the front porch are also in disrepair. Ivy has grown over the right side of the house.



Front (east) elevation in 2026.



Front (east) elevation in 1988.



Front (east) elevation in 1988.

North Side Elevation

The one-bay main block north façade is quite simple, with two double-hung windows centered and stacked on top of one another. There is an additional opening where there was once an attic window, and a gable roof. Ivy has grown on the side of the structure, and the siding is deteriorating. The foundation is also crumbling. The north side elevation also shows another wall seen in the right foreground of the photo and in the next photo. This wall has two smaller windows on the bottom with one double-hung window above, and also has deteriorating siding.



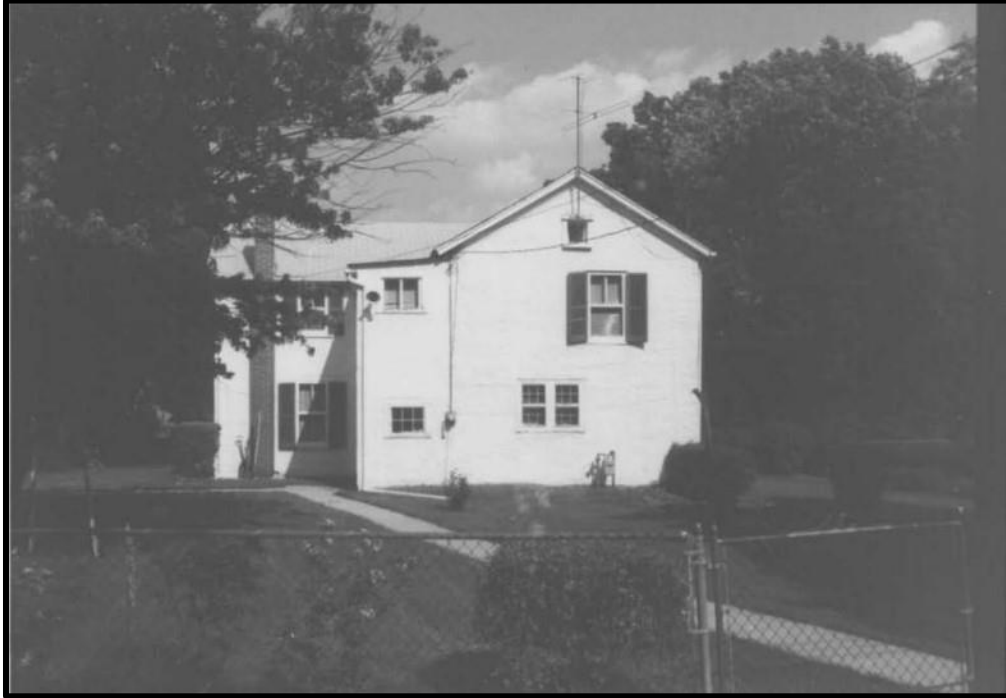
North side elevation.

Rear (West) Elevation

The three-bay rear (west) façade includes the north bay of the main block, the 2-1/2 story kitchen wing, and a two-story enclosed porch on the north façade of the kitchen. The main block has an exterior brick chimney near the north corner, with two stacked double-hung windows to the right. The back side of the house, the 'kitchen wing,' has a two-story enclosed porch on the north side with another set of smaller stacked windows, plus a double-hung window on the first story and additional window above on the second story. The attic window remains intact. The gable roof is in severe disrepair and has collapsed in a large area and the siding has been neglected.



Rear (west) elevation in 2026.



Rear (west) elevation in 1988.

South Side Elevation

The one-bay south façade is similar to the north. It contains two sets of stacked and centered double-hung windows with a smaller opening on the first floor where a window once existed. The smaller attic window is intact. The roof is in severe disrepair, with shingles falling off, and the siding and foundation have deteriorated.

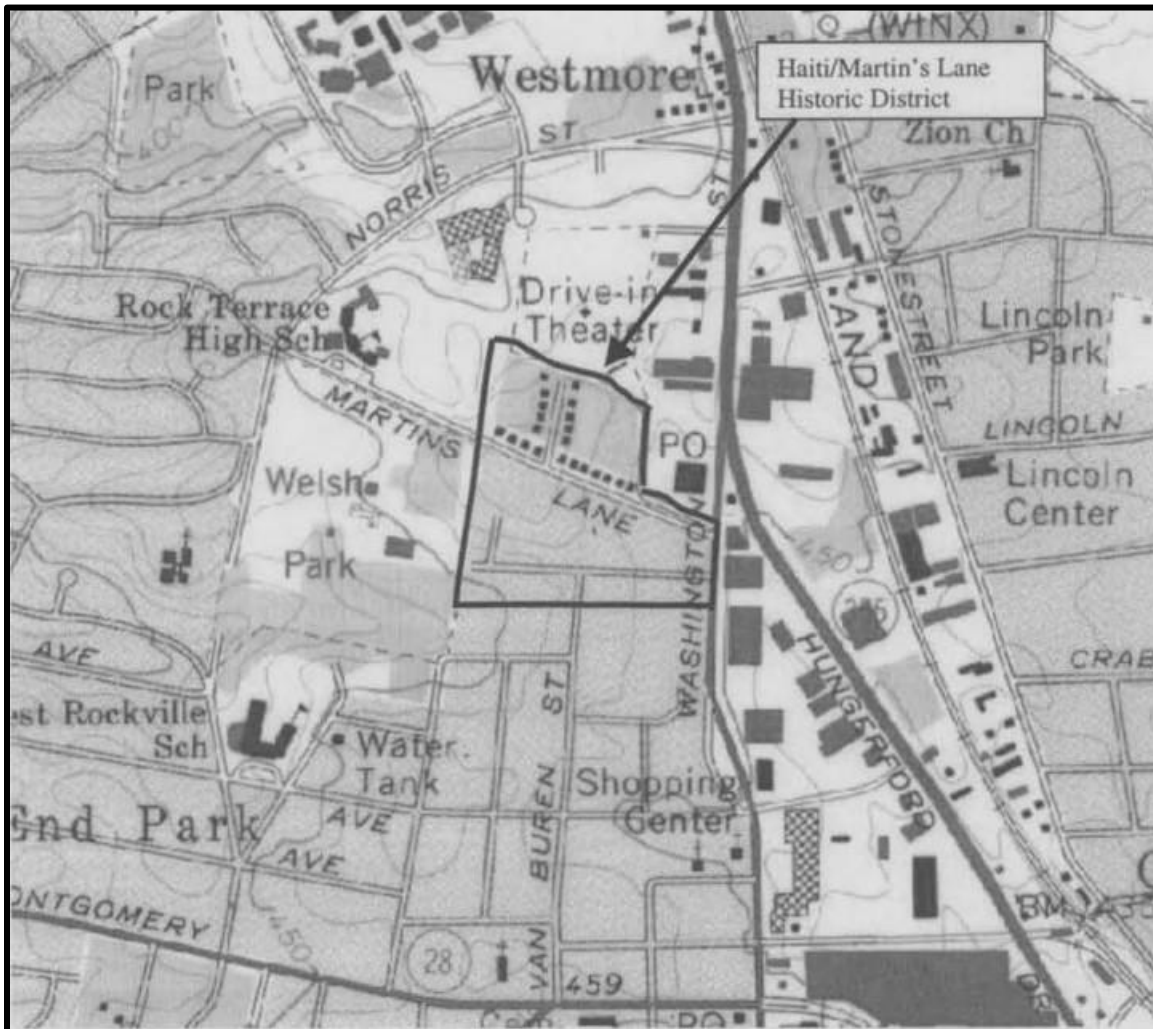


South side elevation.

SITE HISTORY

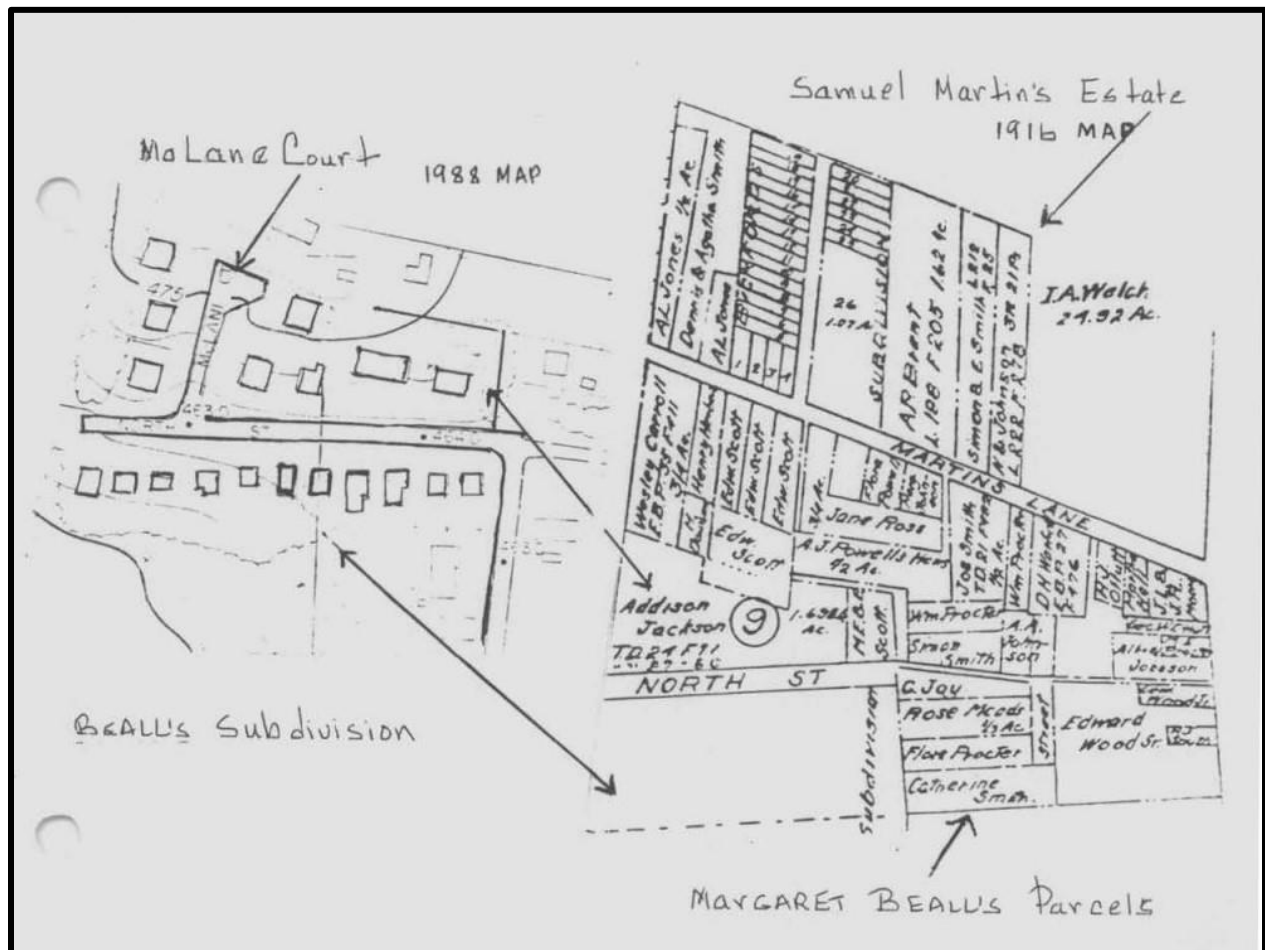
Historic Haiti Community

24 Martins Lane is a historic residential property located in a historically significant community in Rockville known as “Haiti,” on a street historically inhabited by freed Black families and descendants of formerly enslaved people. Haiti was established in the 1830s by Samuel Martin, a freed Black man, and is considered the oldest Black community in the city. Martins Lane itself once served as the dividing line between land owned by Margaret Beall and Samuel Martin, who owned property in the area as early as 1831. The Beall family sold numerous small parcels of their land to freed people and other Black families along Martins Lane in addition to Middle Lane, both of which became two of Rockville’s Black neighborhoods. The Martins Lane area in Haiti remained in the hands of the descendants of the original Martin, Wood, Ross, and Smith families for generations. Haiti Cemetery is located on the north side, opposite of the deeded lands on the south side, which serves as a burial ground for local Black families and is a designated local historic district. The Haiti/Martins Lane Historic District includes the cemetery and deeded lands.



Haiti/Martins Lane Historic District

While the central portion of the community was settled by formerly enslaved people later in the 19th century, the southwestern portion was developed in the early 20th century as Black families and investors started purchasing building lots in "Beall's Subdivision." After 1940, modern development reached Bickford Avenue with regular rows of similar buildings and McLane Court was subdivided for duplexes. The Haiti/Martin's Lane survey district is approximately 28 acres and contains three distinct geographic areas: Martin's Lane, Margaret Beall parcels, and Beall's Subdivision, in addition to the modern developments on McLane Court and Bickford Avenue.



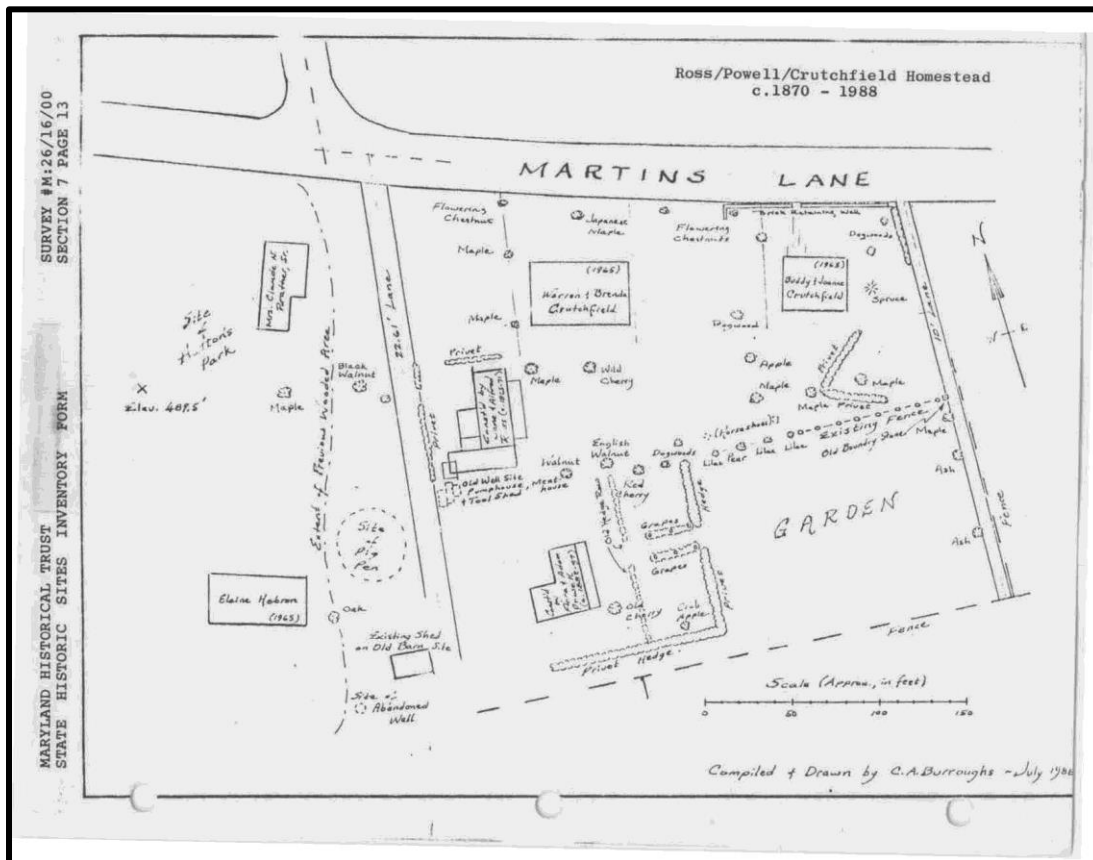
Geographic Areas in Haiti Community

Haiti was annexed into the City of Rockville in 1949 and remains a culturally significant community today. In addition to the physical development of traditional, vernacular 19th century house types, the Haiti/Martin's Lane Community is united by family ties and institutional bonds, a legacy of self-sufficiency in a semi-rural setting, and a tradition of responses to the legal and economic restrictions of segregation. Additional information can be found in Exhibit G.

Family History

The home at 24 Martins Lane (previously 22A Martins Lane) was originally constructed by and for Flora Ross, whose parents had been enslaved in the Beall household on Commerce Lane, and later purchased their home from Margaret Beall. In 1882 and 1885 respectively, Flora Ross and her husband Adam J. Powell (who is buried in nearby Haiti Cemetery) purchased two additional parcels of land from Margaret Beall just south of the Ross family property. The original south section of the home at 24 Martins Lane is estimated to have been built sometime between 1882 and 1897 on the property which had been in the Ross-Powell family for a generation. In the 1920s, Flora (Ross) Powell built a large addition to the north of the house, nearly doubling its size.

Flora Ross Powell later purchased her parents' home at 22 Martins Lane from her sister and then sold it to her daughter Gertrude and husband George N. Prather. Gertrude Prather lived in the house at 22 Martins Lane and then a new home constructed nearby until she died in 1974. Gertrude and George Prather's daughter, Frances, and her husband Henry Crutchfield lived with their family at 22 Martins Lane until Flora Powell died in 1945, when they then moved from 22 to 22A Martins Lane (now 24 Martins Lane) and lived with Mrs. Crutchfield's mother, Gertrude Prather McKnight, until she moved next door. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Crutchfield continued to live in the house built by Mrs. Crutchfield's grandparents at 24 Martins Lane until they sold the property in 2023. The Crutchfield family lived on this land for four generations, as detailed in the deed history below. Additional information on the family history can be found in Exhibits G and H.



Ross/Powell/Crutchfield Homestead c.1870-1988.

OWNERSHIP HISTORY

Deed Research
24 Martins Lane
West End Park (0503)
Parcel 649

Liber/Folio	Date	Grantor	Grantee
40/332	9/14/1893	Margaret J. Beall et al	Flora (Ross) Powell
Unknown	Unknown	Flora (Ross) Powell	Gertrude P. McKnight and Chester McKnight
1318/410	11/5/1949	Gertrude P. McKnight and Chester McKnight	Frances P. Crutchfield
33471/660-663	12/1/06	Warren G. Crutchfield, Rep Estate of Frances P. Crutchfield	Gertrude Elaine (Crutchfield) Hebron
60927/223	9/15/2020	Gertrude Elaine (Crutchfield) Hebron	Gertrude E. Hebron and Kelly Rolaine Faison
66936/280	3/17/2023	Gertrude E. Hebron and Kelly Rolaine Faison	Blu Spot Investments LLC
69018/490	4/2/25	Blu Spot Investments LLC	LHome Mortgage Trust
69953/1	12/10/25	LHome Mortgage Trust	Kiavi Properties LLC
70021/430	12/17/25	Kiavi Properties LLC	NRHQ LLC

Staff received information from Peerless Rockville indicating a discrepancy in the historic deeds describing the parcel on which the property is located. Staff's position is that the chain of title is not relevant to the evaluation of significance review, as the significance of the property is being evaluated regardless of ownership. However, the city will require the applicant to address the discrepancy and demonstrate good title to the property before issuance of any demolition permit.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The evaluation of historic significance is based on the adopted Historic District Commission criteria per Appendix A of the Historic Resources Management Plan.

Historic Designation Criteria

The following criteria is used to assist in evaluating the significance of nominated properties. Standing structures and sites, including archaeological sites, must be determined to be significant in one or more of the following criteria to be found eligible for historic designation:

Historic Significance

- a. Represents the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city.
The property represents the Black heritage of the city.
- b. Site of an important event in Rockville's history.
The site is one of the earliest Black settlements in the city.
- c. Identified with a person or group of persons who influenced the City's history.
The property is identified with Samuel Martin, an influential figure in the City's history who formed the earliest Black community in the city.
- d. Exemplified the cultural, economic, industrial, social, political, archeological, or historical heritage of the city.
The property is part of the earliest Black community in the city and exemplifies the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the city.

Architectural, Design, and Landscape Significance

- a. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.
The property embodies distinctive characteristics of early vernacular home construction in the city, dating back to 1906.
- b. Represents the work of a master architect, craftsman, or builder.
No, the property does not represent the work of a master architect, craftsman, or builder.
- c. Possesses a style or elements distinctive to the region or City.
No, the vernacular house style is found elsewhere in the City and region.
- d. Represents a significant architectural, design, or landscape entity in the City.
No, it is not a significant architectural, design, or landscape entity in Rockville.
- e. Represents an established visual feature of the neighborhood or City because of its physical characteristics or landscape components.
No, there is nothing outstanding about the house or the landscape.

STAFF FINDINGS

The property meets the following adopted Historic District Commission criteria for historic designation:

Historic Significance

- A - Represents the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city.
- B - Site of an important event in Rockville's history.
- C - Identified with a person or group of persons who influenced the City's history.
- D - Exemplified the cultural, economic, industrial, social, political, archeological, or historical heritage of the city.

Architectural, Design, and Landscape Significance

- A - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The required posting of the sign on the property occurred two weeks prior to the HDC meeting date and postcard notices were also sent out two weeks prior to the meeting to all property owners and residents within 500 feet of the property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Finding that although the property at 24 Martins Lane meets *Historic Significance Criteria a, b, c, and d*, and *Architectural, Design and Landscape Criteria a*, the property is in extreme disrepair as evidenced by the structural report. As such, staff recommends against historic designation due to the severe neglect of the property and lack of integrity.

EXHIBITS

- A. Aerial Map
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Definition and Criteria for Historic Resources in the City of Rockville
- D. City of Rockville, Maryland Zoning Ordinance
- E. Application
- F. Structural Report
- G. MIHP Forms
- H. Public Testimony

EXHIBIT A – AERIAL MAP



EXHIBIT B – ZONING MAP

Zoning Districts		
Town Center Performance District	R-400 - Residential Estate	MXB - Mixed-Use Business
South Pike	R-200 - Suburban Residential	MXC - Mixed-Use Commercial
Rockville Pike Core	R-150 - Low Density Residential	MXCT - Mixed-Use Corridor Transition
Twinbrook Metro Performance District	R-80 - Single Unit Detached Dwelling, Restricted Residential	MXCD - Mixed-Use Corridor District
Lincoln Park Conservation District	R-75 - Single Unit Detached Dwelling, Residential	MXE - Mixed-Use Employment
Planned Developments	R-60 - Single Unit Detached Dwelling, Residential	MXNC - Mixed-Use Neighborhood Commercial
Residential Clusters	R-40 - Single Unit Semi-detached Dwelling, Residential	MXT - Mixed-Use Transition
Local Historic Districts	RMD-10 - Residential Medium Density	MXTD - Mixed-Use Transit District
Special Exceptions	RMD-15 - Residential Medium Density	PARK - Park Zone
	RMD-25 - Residential Medium Density	IL - Light Industrial
		PD - Planned Development

EXHIBIT C: DEFINITION AND CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE

DEFINITION

Historic Resource: Includes architectural, historic, cultural, archaeological, and landscape resources significant to Rockville's development. Intangible resources such as folklore and oral histories are important, but for this purpose are to be considered supportive resources. Physical resources must retain their integrity, as defined by the Federal Register, September 29, 1983, Department of Interior Archeology and Historic Preservation; Secretary of the Interior's Standards-and Guidelines."

Integrity: the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period.

CRITERIA

Historic Significance

- a. Represents the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City; or
- b. Is the site of an important event in Rockville's history; or
- c. Is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced the City's history; or
- d. Exemplified the cultural, economic, industrial, social, political, archeological, or historical heritage of the City.

Architectural, Design, and Landscape Significance

- a. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or
- b. Represents the work of a master architect, craftsman, or builder; or
- c. Possesses a style or elements distinctive to the region or City; or
- d. Represents a significant architectural, design, or landscape entity in the City; or
- e. Represents an established visual feature of the neighborhood or City because of its physical characteristics or landscape components.

EXHIBIT D: CITY OF ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND ZONING ORDINANCE**Article 14 – Special Zones****25.14.01 – Historic District Zones****a. Purpose – The Historic District Zone is an overlay zone. The purpose of the zone is to:**

1. Safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving sites, structures, or areas which reflect elements of cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological, or architectural history;
2. Stabilize and improve the property values of those sites and structures, and the adjacent neighborhood;
3. Foster civic beauty;
4. Strengthen the local economy; and
5. Promote the preservation and the appreciation of those sites and structures for the education and welfare of the residents of the City.

b. Location

1. *Underlying Zoning* - The regulations of the Historic District Zones are in addition to the underlying residential or nonresidential zoning regulations.
2. *Established Location* – The Historic District Zones are depicted on the Zoning Map incorporated into these regulations in Article 2.
3. *Future Location* – The Mayor and Council may establish, change, layout, and define future Historic District Zones which are of local, state, or national or historical, archaeological, or architectural significance.

c. Historic District Commission – The Historic District Commission is subject to the provisions of Section 25.04.04.**d. Designation of Properties**

1. *Initiation of Process* – The process of evaluating a property for possible historic designation due to its historic, archaeological, or architectural significance begins upon the occurrence of any of the following items in subsection (a) below. If the nomination application is filed by a person other than the property owner, the person making the nomination must provide notice of the nomination by first class mail to the property owner at the time of application. A copy of the notice must also be provided to the Historic District Commission.
 - (a) The filing of an application nominating the property for historic designation by one (1) or more of the following:
 - (i) The property owner;
 - (ii) The Historic District Commission;
 - (iii) The Mayor and Council;

- (iv) The Planning Commission; or
 - (v) Any other person;
 - (b) The filing of an application by the property owner requesting the evaluation of the property for eligibility for historic designation; or
 - (c) The filing of an application for a demolition permit for the property; or
 - (d) The filing of a Natural Resources Inventory identifying a potentially significant historic resource on the property.
2. *Application Review* – Upon the filing of an application for nomination, evaluation, or demolition, the Chief of Planning must evaluate the subject property for compliance with the City's criteria for historic designation, and make a recommendation to the Historic District Commission.
 3. *Historic District Commission Review and Decision*– The Historic District Commission will consider the application at a meeting of the Commission following notice given in accordance with the notice provisions of Section 25.05.03, to determine if the property meets the adopted City of Rockville Historic District Designation Criteria. If the Historic District Commission finds that a site meets the criteria to be eligible for historic designation, it will make a written recommendation that the Mayor and Council rezone the property to the Historic District Zone.
 4. *Mayor and Council Authorization* – Upon receipt of the Historic District Commission's recommendation, the Mayor and Council may authorize the filing of a sectional map amendment (Section 25.06.01.b.2) to place the property in the Historic District Zone.
 5. *Completion of Designation Process* – The designation process shall be complete upon the occurrence of any of the following:
 - a) The determination of the Historic District Commission, that the property does not meet the criteria for historic designation; or
 - b) The determination of the Mayor and Council not to authorize the filing of a sectional map amendment for historic rezoning;
 - c) The determination of the Mayor and Council to take final action to grant or deny a map amendment for historic rezoning.
 6. ***Restrictions on Property During Interim Historic Review Period*** – No exterior change may be made to any property identified in the Historic Building Catalog, as revised, that is the subject of an application for nomination, historic evaluation, or a demolition permit under this Section 25.14.01 until the designation process is complete, unless the property owner first obtains a Certificate of Approval from the Historic District Commission in accordance with the provision of Section 25.07.13.

The restriction of this subsection will not apply for more than 210 days from the date of the filing of the application that initiated the historic designation review period.

25.07.13 – Certificate of Approval in Historic Districts

a. **Requirement** – A Certificate of Approval issued by the Historic District Commission is required prior to any actions affecting a site or exterior of a building or structure in a Historic District Zone consistent with the provisions of Article 66B of the Maryland Code for Historic Area Zoning.

b. **Exceptions** – A Certificate of Approval is not required for exterior paint colors, routine maintenance, normal gardening and landscaping, or driveway repairs. Routine maintenance is defined as repair or replacement of building and site features with features of the same design and same material.