

Date: May 06, 2026

Case No. 260091
Address: 15 Forest Ave.

Staff Report

The applicant has submitted an application for Project Approval for work at 15 Forest Ave., a Contributing structure located in the Forest Hill Planning Unit in the City of Deadwood.

Applicant: Adrian Newkirk
Owner: NEWKIRK, ADRIAN A, Jr
Constructed: 1892

CRITERIA FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A PROJECT APPROVAL

The Historic Preservation Commission shall use the following criteria in granting or denying the Project Approval:

General Factors:

1. Historic significance of the resource:

This building is a contributing resource in the Deadwood National Historic Landmark District. It is significant for its historic association with the founding and initial period of growth of the town of Deadwood. Spurred by the tremendous mining boom of 1876, Deadwood grew quickly and became the first major urban center of western South Dakota. Deadwood's economic prominence during the late 1800s and early 1900s was reflected by the construction of a number of large residences such as this one. These houses displayed a variety of architectural styles: Queen Anne, Second Empire, Colonial, and even Gothic variants are found locally. Together, these houses are among the strongest reminders of Deadwood's nineteenth-century boom.

2. Architectural design of the resource and proposed alterations:

The applicant is requesting permission to construct a six-foot-high retaining wall in front of the house, two feet higher than original. The reason for the request is a safety issue as the slope degree for upper lawn at four feet wall is too steep for mowing and slippery. A six-foot wall reduces slope degree from 45 degrees to 32 degrees when completed. I'm planting Arborvitae Topiary fir trees, below and across front of the wall.

Attachments: Yes

Plans: Yes

Photos: Yes

Staff Opinion:

This historic wall which was originally between three and four feet tall but has for the most part deteriorated and failed. The applicant entered into the retaining wall program in April of 2025. The applicant is requesting an additional two feet in height to the wall. Currently, the engineering plans show an eight-foot-tall wall with two options at the request of the owner. It is shown with two options or methods of construction, one with a poured concrete wall and stone veneer and the other with a redi-rock but shows no stone veneer.

If approved, staff recommends allowing not greater than a six foot wall with either construction option having a stone veneer to recreate the original material of the wall and walls in the immediate vicinity of the project.

With the previous conditions adopted, it is staff's opinion, the proposed work and changes do not encroach upon, damage, or destroy a historic resource or have an adverse effect on the character of the building or the historic character of the State and National Register Historic Districts or the Deadwood National Historic Landmark District.

Motions available for commission action:

A: If you, as a commissioner, have determined the Project DOES NOT Encroach Upon, Damage or Destroy a historic property then:

Based upon all the evidence presented, I find that this project **DOES NOT** encroach upon, damage, or destroy any historic property included in the national register of historic places or the state register of historic places, and therefore move to grant a project approval.

If you, as a commissioner, have determined the Project will Encroach Upon, Damage or Destroy a historic property then:

B: First Motion:

Based upon all the evidence presented, I move to make a finding that this project **DOES** encroach upon, damage, or destroy any historic property included in the national register of historic places or the state register of historic places. [If this, move on to 2nd Motion and choose an option.]

C: Second Motion:

Option 1: Based upon the guidance in the U.S. Department of the Interior standards for historic preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects adopted by rules promulgated pursuant to SDCL 1-19A & 1-19B, *et seq*, I find that the project is **NOT ADVERSE** to Deadwood and move to **APPROVE** the project as presented.

OR

Option 2: Based upon the guidance in the U.S. Department of the Interior standards for historic preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects adopted by rules promulgated pursuant to SDCL 1-19A & 1-19B, *et seq*, I find that the project is **ADVERSE** to Deadwood and move to **DENY** the project as presented.

OR

Option 3: Based upon the guidance in the U.S. Department of the Interior standards for historic preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects adopted by rules promulgated pursuant to SDCL 1-19A & 1-19B, *et seq*, I find that the project is **ADVERSE** to Deadwood, but the applicant has explored **ALL REASONABLE AND PRUDENT ALTERNATIVES**, and so I move to **APPROVE** the project as presented.