

## Jeanie Bourke - Re: 71 Quebec Street - Exterior stair

---

**From:** Jeanie Bourke  
**To:** Richard Lo  
**Date:** 10/15/2015 1:51 PM  
**Subject:** Re: 71 Quebec Street - Exterior stair  
**CC:** Phil Kaplan

---

Hi Richard,

Thank you for your time in presenting the code allowances for the stairway elements. This is to follow up on this email and our discussion on the handrail/guardrail requirements on stairs in an R-3 occupancy. The code does address the guard height and the top rail as handrail in the exceptions in the R-3 use, but not specifically for the exterior stair requirements for 2 handrails, handrail extensions or allowing openings up to 4-3/8".

In my judgement, the intent of these code references is for R-3 uses of child or adult care facilities, and not single family homes such as this property. As such, I am confirming that the exterior stair is allowed to have 1 handrail, openings of less than 4-3/8", and no handrail extensions.

For the record, I will file this email in the approved plan folder.

Best,  
Jeanie

*Jeanie Bourke*  
*CEO/LPI/Plan Reviewer*

**City of Portland**  
**Planning & Urban Development Dept./ Inspections Division**  
**389 Congress St. Rm 315**  
**Portland, ME 04101**  
**[jmb@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:jmb@portlandmaine.gov)**  
**Direct: (207) 874-8715**  
**Office: (207) 874-8703**  
**Permit status can be viewed at: <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/792/Permit-Status>**

>>> Richard Lo <[richard@kaplanthompson.com](mailto:richard@kaplanthompson.com)> 10/15/2015 12:37 PM >>>  
Hi Jeannie,

The house at 71 Quebec Street is nearing completion. We have a question regarding the handrail & guard requirements for the exterior stair from the 2nd floor deck down to the rear garden.

You'll recall the following features of the project:

- The project is being assessed under the IBC (as the house includes 4 floors above grade plane), in the R3 use group.
- The exterior stair is entirely within the residential project, providing access from one part of the house to another part of the property

- The exterior stair is not directly accessible from a public way.

You'll also recall that there are a number of IBC exceptions for handrails & guards that apply to the interior & exterior stairs, for the R3 use group. These exceptions include:

- Guards not less than 34" high permitted (IBC 1013.2 exception 1).
- Handrail may serve as the top of the guard (IBC 1013.2 exception 2).

In addition however there are some further exceptions that only apply to stairs that are considered to be "within the dwelling unit":

- Handrail on only one side of the stair permitted (IBC 1009.12 exception 2).
- Handrail extensions at top & bottom of stair not required (IBC 1012.6 exception 1).
- Openings in stair guards to be 4 3/8" max (IBC 1013.3 exception 6).

We believe the exterior stair at Quebec Street may be considered to be "within the dwelling unit", as it is clearly part of a "dwelling", & entirely within the dwelling project (providing private access between the 2nd floor deck & the rear garden of the same dwelling). Other considerations are that the same handrail & guard exceptions apply to interior stairs on the same project, including stairs up to the 4th floor.

Can you please provide a confirmation that you would also consider the exterior stair to be "within the dwelling"?

If you have any questions or would like further information about the project please call me to discuss it further. Note that as the house is under construction your soonest response would be greatly appreciated by the project team. Thank you for your attention.

Regards,  
- Richard

RICHARD LO, PROJECT MANAGER  
KAPLAN THOMPSON ARCHITECTS  
424 FORE STREET  
PORTLAND, ME 04101

207-842-2888 x 206

[RICHARD@KAPLANTHOMPSON.COM](mailto:RICHARD@KAPLANTHOMPSON.COM)  
[WWW.KAPLANTHOMPSON.COM](http://WWW.KAPLANTHOMPSON.COM)