

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE**

**PUBLIC HEARING
13 CARROLL STREET**

TO: Chair Romano and Members of the Historic Preservation Board

FROM: Rob Wiener, Preservation Compliance Coordinator

DATE: November 28, 2012

RE: December 5, 2012 Public Hearing

Application For: Certificate of Appropriateness for handicap ramp construction (After-the Fact Review)

Address: 13 Carroll Street

Applicants: Benjamin Crocker & Gladys Garcia

Contractor: Lance Yule

Introduction

The applicants are requesting after-the-fact approval for a half-completed ramp along the left side of 13 Carroll Street. The project is being constructed for a disabled, elderly family member who lives at the subject property. Work has been suspended until the necessary permits and a zoning disability variance can be approved.

Subject Property and Context

This three-story, brick Queen Anne house was constructed in 1892, and is the westerly side of the Samuel Lawson Block, a duplex with 11 Carroll Street on the right. The immediate neighborhood includes a variety of brick buildings, ranging from a Colonial Revival single family home next door at 15 Carroll and an 1870's Italianate rowhouse on the other side, to the Williston West Church and the Romanesque McClellan School building across the street. The front door and first floor of 13 Carroll are elevated almost four feet above the sidewalk, with six granite steps flanked by cheek walls and an iron pipe railing down the center divider.

Project Description

The project consists of a forty-eight foot long ramp which begins about eight feet back from the front corner of the building and continues around the back corner. The house sits 8'-10" from the side property line, requiring a Disability Variance for the four foot wide ramp. (The project has not yet been presented at Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.) The ramp flares slightly at the bottom, where the composite decking feathers nicely into the brick walk. A series of four basement windows has been protected with safety glass panels, which preserve the intact appearance. The windows are increasingly hidden by the ascending ramp towards the rear of the house. Pairs of Azek-sleeved and capped posts in a dark brown color will support a profiled rail and 1-3/8" square balusters of the same material. Skirting of square, lap-jointed, painted wood lattice will enclose the area below the ramp. At the rear of the house the ramp connects to a pre-existing, reconstructed rear deck that is not visible from Carroll Street.

Staff Comments on General Proposal

The applicant describes the ramp as a temporary installation that can be removed when it is no longer needed, though solid construction and durable materials give it the appearance and solidity of a permanent structure. While there is no disguising that the ramp is appended to the side of the house to meet a modern-day need, the Board will no doubt consider whether the location, design and materials are compatible with the subject building and the surrounding context.

Applicable Review Standards

The following ordinance standards apply in the review of this project:

- (1) *Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for the property which requires minimal alteration to the character-defining features of the structure, object or site and its environment or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.*
- (2) *The distinguishing original qualities or character of a structure, object or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.*
- (9) *Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant cultural, historical, architectural or archeological materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment*

- (10) *Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures and objects shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.*

Motion for Consideration

On the basis of plans and specifications submitted by the applicant for the 12-5-12 Public Hearing and information included in the accompanying staff report, the Board finds that the handicap ramp installation at 13 Carroll Street **meets (fails to meet)** the Standards for Review of Alterations within the historic preservation ordinance, **(subject to the following conditions...)**

Attachments

1. Plans and specifications for ramp installation.
2. Photographs of the subject property with the partially completed ramp.