

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Fournier Porch Railing Minor Alterations Case PLNHLC2012-00080 153 North C Street May 17, 2012



Planning and Zoning Division
Department of Community
Development

Applicant:

Carmen Fournier

Staff: Thomas Irvin (801) 535-7932
thomas.irvin@slcgov.com

Tax ID: 09-31-411-014-0000

Current Zone: RMF-35 Moderate
Density Multi-Family Residential

Master Plan Designation:

Avenues
Medium-Density 8-20 Units per Gross
Acre

Council District:

District 3- Stan Penfold

Community Council:

Greater Avenues
John K. Johnson, Chair

Lot size: 0.13 acres or
5,660 sq ft

Current Use:

Single Family Residence

Applicable Land Use Regulations:

- Chapter 21A.24.130 RMF-35
Zoning District
- Chapter 21A.34.020 Historic
Preservation Overlay District
- Design Guidelines for Residential
Historic Districts

Notifications:

- Notices Mailed on 5/3/12
- Agenda posted on the Planning
Division and Utah Public Meeting
websites 5/3/12
- Property posted on 5/7/12

Attachments:

- A. Proposed Site Plan and Elevations
- B. Details and Materials
- C. Site Photos

Request

This is a request by the property owner, Carmen Fournier, to construct a 36 inch wood railing around an existing elevated front porch. The home is a contributing structure located at 153 North C Street within the Avenues Historic District and the RMF-35 (Moderate Density Multi-Family Residential) zoning district. This request is before the Historic Landmark Commission since staff had recommended locating the railing at the foot of the stairs in order to preserve views of the front entryway. The owner would prefer to locate the railing between the columns on the elevated porch and provide a gate for access.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the findings listed in the staff report, it is Planning Staff's opinion that the proposal fails to comply with the design objectives of Standard 2 of section 21A.34.020G of the Zoning Ordinance. If the Commission concurs with this finding, then staff recommends the petition for this alteration be denied.

Alternatively,

If the Commission does not agree with the staff findings in this report then the Commission may approve this request based on findings expressed by the Commission and consider attaching the following condition in order to reduce the street view impact of this alteration:

- 1- That the gate and railing be moved to the bottom of the steps in order to retain the view of the historic entryway.

VICINITY MAP



Background

The Fournier residence, constructed in 1895, is a one-and-half story Victorian Eclectic home with Queen Anne and Greek Revival characteristics. It is one of the few homes designed by noted Salt Lake City architect Richard Kleeting, whose work also included the Utah State Capitol.

Project Description

The owner is proposing to construct a 36 inch high wood railing designed to fully enclose the elevated porch. A hinged gate will be provided at the stop of the stairs. The covered porch is in the Greek Revival style with a gable end supported by Roman Tuscan columns. The proposed railings will be situated between these columns while the entry gate will be set back 36 inches from the steps in order to meet building code requirements.

Project Details

The contractor has been discussing the project with the Building Services Division to ensure that it meets building code requirements for landings and entryways. The property is located within the Avenues Historic District and subject to the current base zoning which is RMF-35, Moderate Density Multi-Family Residential District.

Analysis: Current building code requires that porches exceeding 30 inches in height be provided with protective railing. Also, if there are 4 or more steps, an adjacent hand rail is also required. A 36 inch landing would be required behind the gate and prior to the steps. There are no specific zoning requirements for railings constructed on existing porches. The contractor has ensured that the proposed plans meet building code and zoning requirements.

Findings: The changes to the home meet the applicable base zoning requirements.

Comments

Public Comments

No public comments have been received at the time of this writing.

Analysis and Findings

Options

The owner's initial proposal was to install wrought iron railing along the perimeter of the porch and provide two gates, one at the front steps and another on the north side. The purpose of the request was concerns over safety and as a means to keep the owners dogs on the porch. Since the Design Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts specifically state that wrought iron is not a permissible material for porches, staff recommended that the owner evaluate other materials.

The second proposal showed a 36 inch wood railing at the same locations as before. This design was reviewed by the building permits office in order to ensure compliance with building code. The north gate would not be allowed while the main entry gate would be required to have a landing at least 36 inches wide. As a solution to both the landing requirement and concerns about blocking views of the entryway, staff suggested the railing be continued into the yard area where the gate could be provided at grade level. The home owner felt that this suggestion did not alleviate her safety concerns and requested that the latest design be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Findings

21A.34.020 H Historic Preservation Overlay District:

G. Standards for Certificate of Appropriateness for Alteration of a Landmark Site or Contributing Structure:

In considering an application for a certificate of appropriateness for alteration of a landmark site or contributing structure, the Historic Landmark Commission shall find that the project substantially complies with all of the general standards that pertain to the application and that the decision is in the best interest of the City.

Standard 1: A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be used for a purpose that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment;

Analysis: The use of the structure will not change. It has been historically used as a single family dwelling and there is no plan to change this designation. Historical research reveals that a portion of the home was temporarily used as a rest home. This is no longer the case.

Finding: The proposed project is consistent with this standard.

Standard 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided;

Applicable Design Guidelines

4.1 Preserve the functional, proportional and decorative features of a primary entrance. Maintain features important to the character of a historic doorway. These may include: the door, door frame, screen door, threshold, glass panes, paneling, hardware, detailing transoms and flanking sidelights. Avoid changing the position and function of original front doors and primary entrances.

Analysis: The proposed railing will partially obscure views of the doorway from the public way. Staff has recommended that the railing be continued to the bottom of the stairs and the hinged gate be installed at grade in order to retain the view of the entry. Additionally, Greek Revival entryways traditionally do not include railing between columns.

Finding: While providing a wooden porch railing would not significantly alter the character of the home, allowing the railing to extend across the entryway would significantly change the intended character and view of the home. The project as proposed is not consistent with this standard.

Standard 3: All sites, structures and objects shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create a false sense of history or architecture are not allowed.

Analysis: The owner has submitted various suggested designs, initially starting with wrought iron railing intended to match the existing fence around the property. The currently planned wood railing is simple in design and does not seek to appear historic.

Finding: The railing is designed in such a manner as to be clearly a product of its own time and will not create a false sense of history. The proposed project is consistent with this standard.

Standard 4: Alterations or additions that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved;

Analysis: The appearance of the home has not been significantly changed over time. There are not applicable alterations or additions.

Finding: The project is consistent with this standard.

Standard 5: Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

Analysis: There is no proposed change to the construction characterizing the historic home.

Finding: This standard is not applicable for the project.

Standard 6: Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced wherever feasible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other structures or objects.

Analysis: The proposal does not include any treatment of historic materials.

Finding: This standard is not applicable for the project.

Standard 7: Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Analysis: The proposal does not include any treatment of historic materials.

Finding: This standard is not applicable for the project.

Standard 8: 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 archaeological material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.

Analysis: The proposed railing is compatible with the character of the neighborhood as many other homes contain railing around their elevated porches. Adding railing does not require the destruction or replacement of any historical features on the home.

Finding: The project is consistent with this standard.

Standard 9: Additions or alterations to structures and objects shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible in massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Analysis: If the proposal were approved, the form and integrity of the home would not be impaired in a manner that would prevent its re-establishment in the future. Removal of the railing could be easily accomplished if desired.

Finding: The project is consistent with this standard.

Standard 10: Certain building materials are prohibited including the following:

- a. Vinyl or aluminum cladding when applied directly to an original or historic material, and
- b. Any other imitation siding material designed to look like wood siding but fabricated from an imitation material or materials.

Applicable Design Guidelines

5.1 Preserve an original porch when feasible. Replace missing posts and railings when necessary. Match the original proportions and spacing of balusters when replacing missing ones. Unless used historically, wrought iron, especially the “licorice stick” style that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, is not allowed.

Analysis: The initial proposal submitted by the owner was for a wrought iron railing designed to match the existing fence. This was modified to wood as it would not meet the necessary design guidelines. The current proposal is for a wood railing painted to match the existing façade.

Finding: No inappropriate materials are being used to replace historic materials. The project is consistent with this standard.

Standard 11: Any new sign and any change in the appearance of any existing sign located on a landmark site or within the H historic preservation overlay district, which is visible from any public way or open space shall be consistent with the historic character of the landmark site or H historic preservation overlay district and shall comply with the standards outlined in chapter 21A.46 of this title;

Analysis: No signs are proposed.

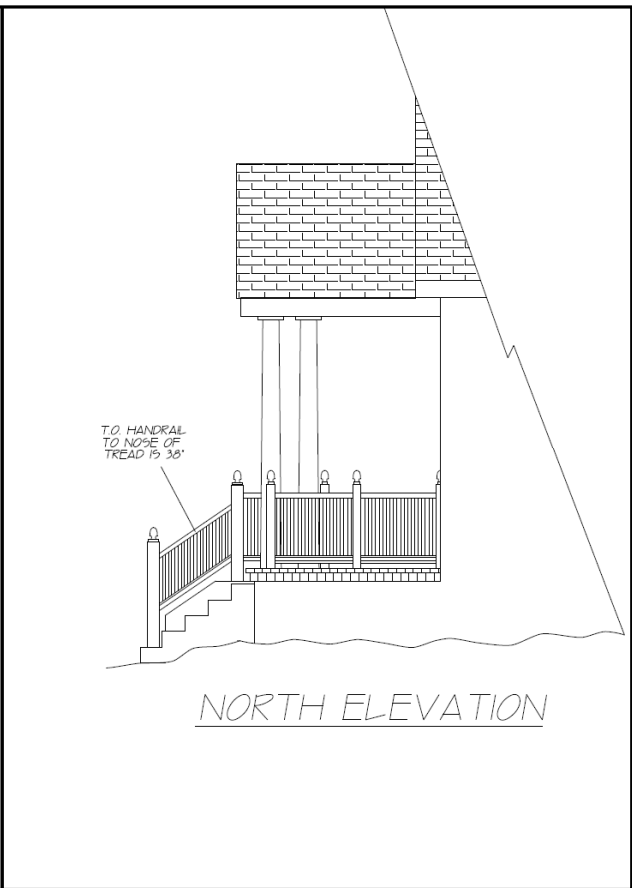
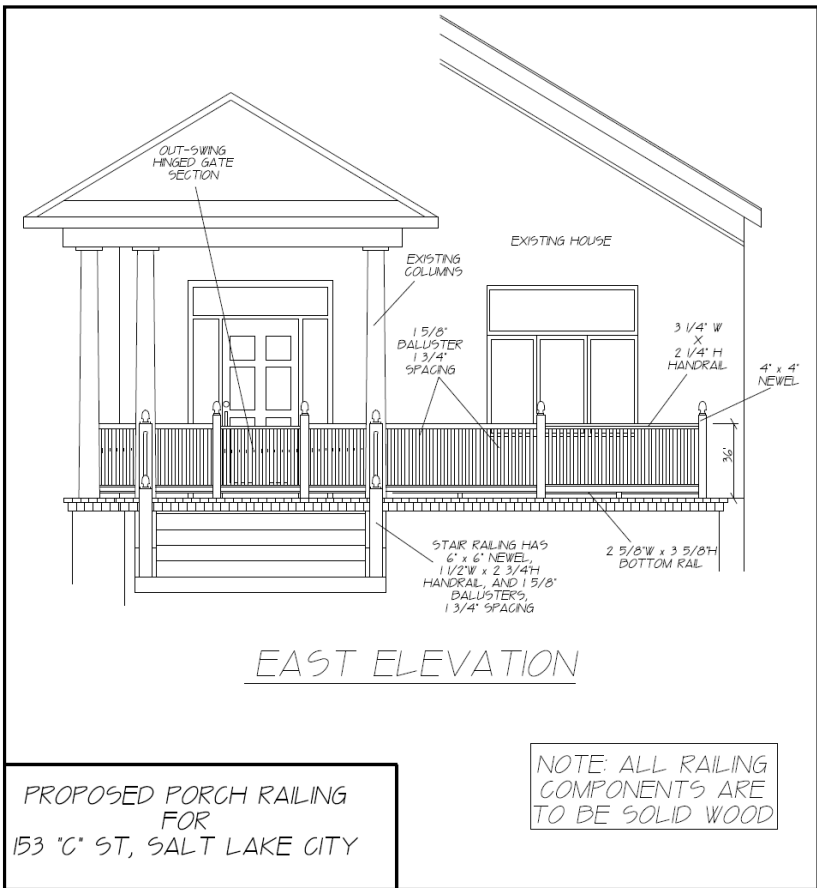
Finding: This standard is not applicable.

Standard 12: Additional design standards adopted by the historic landmark commission and city council.

Analysis: No other design standards apply to this project.

Finding: This standard is not applicable.

Exhibit A:
Proposed Plans



PROPOSED PORCH RAILING
FOR
153 "C" ST, SALT LAKE CITY

NOTE: ALL RAILING
COMPONENTS ARE
TO BE SOLID WOOD

Proposed Porch Rail Elevations

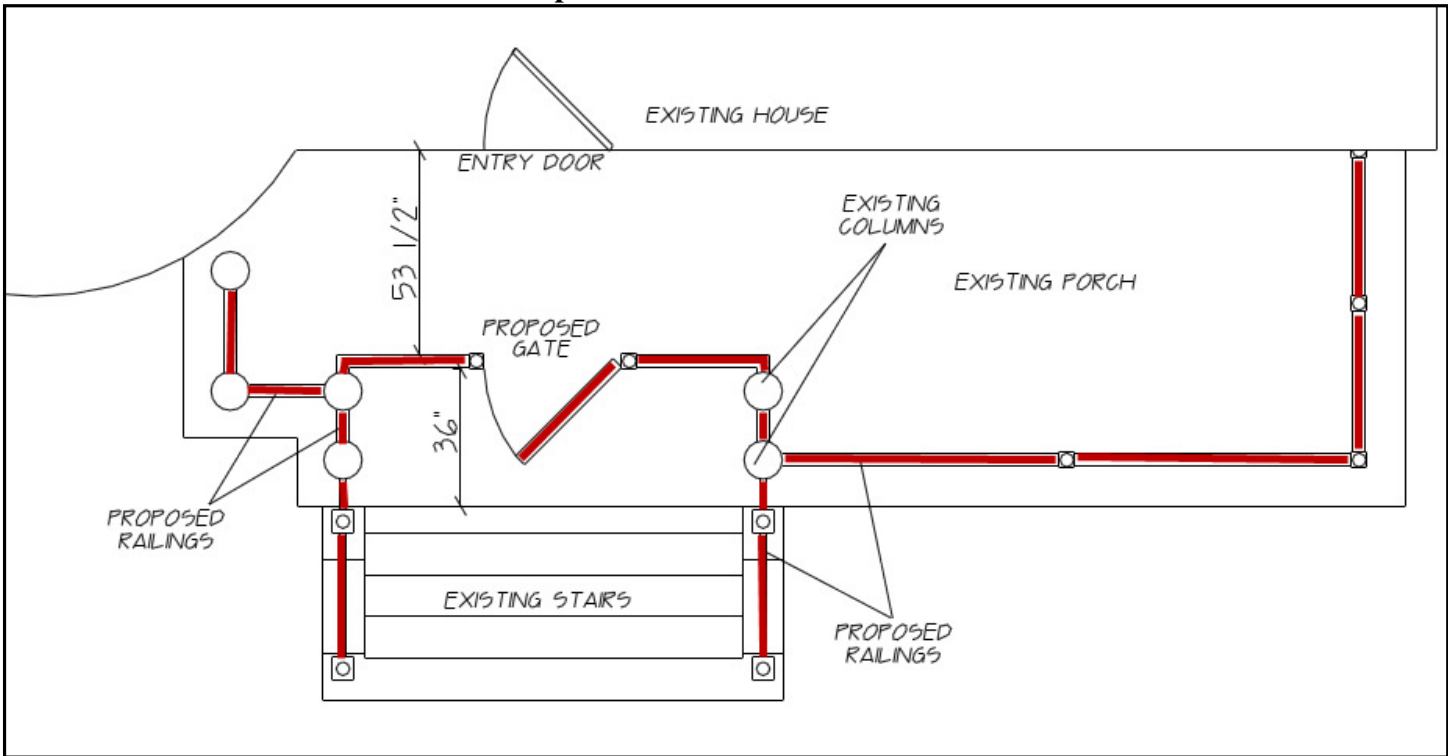


Exhibit C:
Site Photos



Historic Photographs



Front Elevations



Steps Constructed off of Porch



View of Elevated Porch