

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CONCEPTUAL PRELIMINARY REVIEW**

APPLICATION NUMBER..... COA-2024-07-1328
DATE..... August 21, 2024
PETITIONER..... Christopher Evans/ E+E Architecture
REQUEST..... Concept of Design Options for Rear Porch Steps
LOCATION..... 279 Meigs St.
PROPERTY INFORMATION.....Tax Parcel #171A1 O001, Landmark, C-D
RECOMMENDATION..... Comments Only

REQUEST

Comments are sought for design options to replace the straight set of steps on the rear porch with several stair design options.

BACKGROUND

Parcel Status: The property was designated as a local landmark in 1990. It known as the Camak House and was constructed in 1834/1835. Landmark properties are those with significant importance even on their own without the need for a district context to be eligible for designation. This means that changes on the property are carefully reviewed for their impact on the historic character of the subject property. The Sanborn Maps first included the area of this structure in 1903.

Parcel History: A Certificate of Appropriateness application on replacing these steps was heard in August of 2024. The request was a stair that went down to a landing and then had a set of steps at each side of the landing. The design that was approved was straight stairs with a landing midway through. Previous Certificate of Appropriateness on file for this property that received HPC approval include a 1993 approval to open an area of the rear porch and a 1999 approval of a landscape and site plan. A recent staff level approval was granted for in-kind replacement of some deteriorated porch elements.

Lot Features: The subject property is located on the southern side of Meigs Street and occupies much of the block aside from the surface parking lot at the eastern side along Newton Street. The property has about 320 feet of frontage on Meigs Street, about 255 on Hancock Avenue, and about 389 feet or the full length of the block along Finley Street. Topographically, the house sits atop a hill with about 10 feet of drop from the front of the house to Meigs Street, about 14 feet of drop to Finley Street, and about 24 feet of drop to Hancock Avenue.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The rear or south side of the structure is known to have had an enclosed area to the east of the rear porch added between 1903 and 1908. This enclosed area remained in place until about 1993 when a COA to modify this area to the design seen today was approved. Photographs indicate that the access steps on the rear porch were not changed at this time and that the current position matches that known to have been in place as early as 1934 with the steps east of being centered with the rear entry door.

The proposed condition in August of 2024 included two main modifications. The first was the use of “T” stair having a centered stair existing the rear entry down to a landing and then matching steps to the east and west extending to access the rear yard. This would also mean an adjustment of the porch

columns with the adjustment of the stair to be centered. The second part of the project was that the area to the east of the central steps would include an accessibility lift to the porch level and provide accessible access to the space. The lift would include a vertical metal frame aligned with the eastern corner porch post. The approved design was for central steps straight down aside from a central landing along with use of the lift as proposed.

The request is for comments on reconsidering the “T” shaped stair as well as considering an “L” shape or a “U” shape. All option would be of wood construction. The stated concern in the revisiting of the design of this feature is utilizing less yard area for the steps. The distance from grade to the porch floor is 8’3”.

RECOMMENDATION

Review of this application utilizes Chapter 2 of the General Design Guidelines covering Building Materials and Features, specifically 2D: Porches.