



**Consulting & Municipal
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October 20, 2025

West Orange Township – Zoning Board
66 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052

**Re: Patricia Neil – Planning Review #1
13 Lowell Avenue
Block 46.02, Lot 10
Zone: R-5 Residential**

Dear Chairman and Board Members:

1. Summary

The property is located at 13 Lowell Avenue, across the street from Gregory Elementary School. The applicant proposes to construct a new front porch on an existing two and one half story home. A bulk variance is required for encroaching into the front yard setback. 30 feet is required where 25.66 feet of setback is proposed.





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2. Property and Project Description

The property is located at 13 Lowell Avenue, mid-block between Walker Road and Winding Way, and across the street from the Gregory Elementary School in the southeastern end of the Township. The property is 50'x150' (7,500 square feet) in area and is developed with a two and one half-story single family home.

Surrounding the site are other single family dwellings on similarly sized properties, and the Gregory Elementary School across the street to the east.

The applicant is proposing to construct a front porch addition to the existing home. The porch will be an "L" shape wrapping around the existing entryway of the house, occupying approximately 175 square feet in area in front of the building from the garage to the edge of the house. Existing concrete steps in front of the entrance will be removed to accommodate the proposed porch.

3. Zoning Compliance

The property is located within the R-5 Residential district of the Township. Single family dwellings are permitted as principal uses in the district.

All development in the R-5 district is subject to the following bulk requirements:

R-5 Zone Bulk Requirements			
	Required	Proposed	Variance
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 s.f.	7,500 s.f.	ENC
Minimum Lot Width	75 feet	50 feet	ENC
Minimum Front Yard	30 feet	25.66 feet	YES
Minimum Side Yard	8 feet / 18 feet total	8.75' / 18.22' total	No
Minimum Rear Yard	30 feet	+/- 70 feet	No
Maximum Building Coverage	35%	19%	No
Maximum Impervious Coverage	45%	30%	No
Maximum Building Height	2.5 story / 35 feet	2.5 story / 28 feet	

4. Variances & Waivers Required

It appears that the following variances will be required of this application as proposed:

- a. **§25 Attachment 3 Front Yard** – The minimum required front yard setback is 30 feet, where the proposed porch will be setback 25.66 feet from the Lowell Avenue Right-of-Way.



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- b. **§25 Attachment 3 Lot Area** – The minimum required lot area is 10,000 square feet, where a lot of 7,500 square feet is provided. This is an existing non-conforming condition.
- c. **§25 Attachment 3 Lot Width** – The minimum required lot width is 75 feet, where a lot width of 50 feet is provided. This is an existing non-conforming condition.

5. Master Plan

The Township's Master Plan was last reviewed in 2019. The December 2019 Reexamination Report does not directly address porches or setbacks in the R-5 district directly. One of the primary goals noted in the Master Plan is the preservation of the Township's neighborhoods.

6. Planning Comments

- a. The applicant will require a bulk variance to permit a front porch addition to encroach into the required minimum front yard setback. For any bulk or 'c' variance, the applicant must address both the positive and negative criteria:
 - i. Positive: The applicant must show that either there is a practical hardship or undue burden in complying with the requirements of the ordinance (c-1 hardship variance), or that the proposed conditions are a preferable alternative to compliance with the code, that the proposed conditions would advance one of the purposes of zoning, and that the benefits of doing so would outweigh any detrimental impacts (c-2 flexible variance).
 - ii. Negative: The applicant must demonstrate that the variance can be granted without substantial detrimental impacts on the public good – meaning that allowing the porch to encroach into the setback would not substantially have a negative impact on the quality of life for nearby residents or character of the surrounding community. The applicant must also show that granting the variance would not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the zoning plan.
- b. We note that the existing property is non-conforming in terms of lot area and width for the requirements of the R-5 district. These are both existing non-conforming conditions that will not be impacted by the application.
- c. We note that Township code permits uncovered porches or terraces to encroach into a setback by up to 8 feet, and steps to encroach by up to 6 feet.
- d. It appears that the other homes on the west side of Lowell Avenue have front porches or entry features that are setback approximately 32 feet to 28 feet from the ROW.
- e. We defer any comment on grading, drainage, utilities, and stormwater management to the Board Engineer.



7. Neighborhood Context Photos

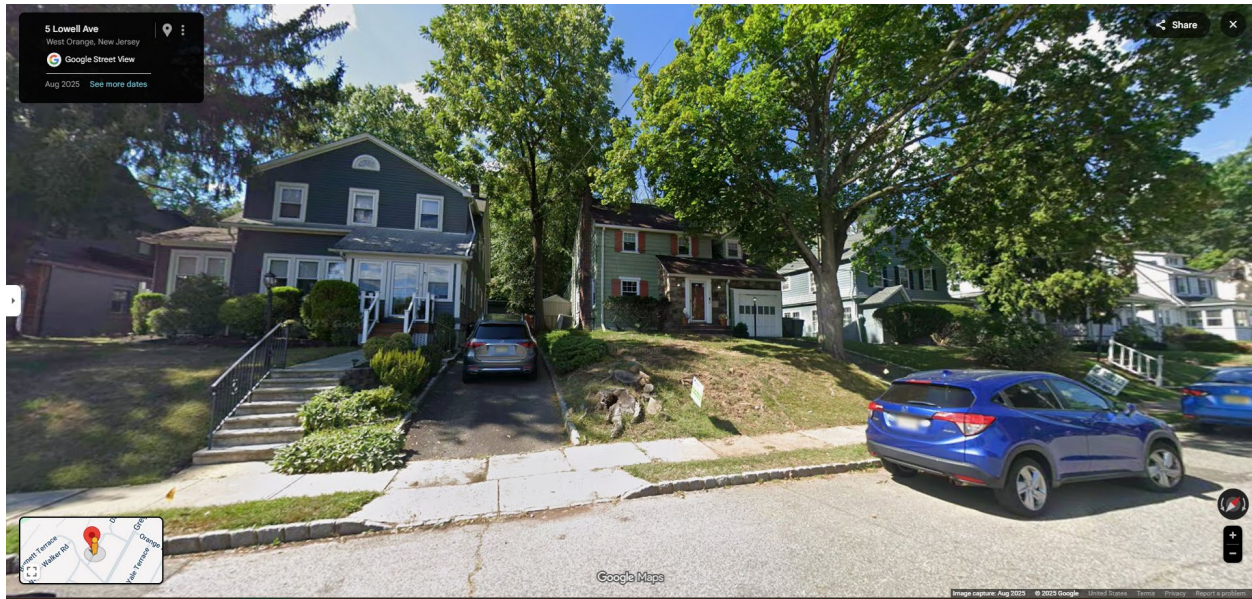


Figure 1: Subject house (center) looking west from Lowell Ave



Figure 2: subject property (center) looking south on Lowell Ave



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Figure 3: Residences to the north

If you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.

Sincerely,

CME Associates

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Dochney'.

Christopher N. Dochney – PP, AICP
Board Planner

cc: Geniece Gary-Adams – Zoning Official
Zayibeth Carballo, PE, PLS, PP, CME, CFM. – Township Engineer
Steve Warner, Esq. – Board Attorney
Alexander Fisher, Esq. – Board Attorney
John Hess, PE, PP. – Board Engineer
Patricia Neil – Applicant
John Ginocchio – Applicant's Architect



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8. Materials Submitted

The following materials have been submitted and reviewed in association with this application:

- Application form and submission checklists dated July 28, 2025;
- Two (2) sheet set of architectural drawings prepared by Ginocchio Architecture, dated June 9, 2025;
- One (1) sheet property survey prepared by Richard J. Hingos Inc, with proposed porch overlayed, dated May 25, 1998;
- One (1) page variance justification report prepared by Ginocchio Architects, undated;
- Two (2) page zoning memorandum prepared by Zayibeth Carballo, PE, PLS, PP, CME, CFM, dated September 22, 2025;