19 Coakley Road carport enclosure

Variance application supporting statement 20 October 2026

Adam Kaplan | 19 Coakley Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Project BLDG-26-668 | Single Residence B district
The following statement addresses the five variance criteria in Section 10.233.

Project and requested relief

I request setback relief under Section 10.521 to enclose the attached carport at 19 Coakley Road as a mudroom, pantry and usable interior space connected to the house. The enclosure measures 12 ft by 24 ft outside wall to outside wall, or 288 sq. ft. Existing posts define a 12 ft by 22 ft rectangle. The front wall extends 2 ft forward of the front post beneath the retained roof, reducing that overhang from 30 inches to 6 inches. The request concerns the carport location at the rear/right corner of the house and the wall positions shown in the accompanying exhibits.

Planning staff has advised that Section 10.320 applies even with the existing roof retained. I am therefore requesting relief for the enclosure rather than treating the roof as eliminating the variance requirement.

Public interest

The project replaces the open carport with a finished residential exterior beneath the existing roof. In my view, closing the open face will improve the appearance of the house and screen the kind of vehicles, yard equipment and household storage that an open carport exposes. The roof is retained, and the building-coverage increase is 24 sq. ft., from 15.56% to 15.83% of the lot. I believe this limited conversion supports the public interest by improving an existing home without extending its roof farther into the yard.

Spirit of the ordinance

I believe the proposal respects the yard provisions' purposes concerning light, air, privacy and access. The roof remains without extension or an increase in its modeled height, and the new walls stay beneath it. This retains the roof profile affecting light and air. Solid walls replace open bays, with the proposed window and door positions shown in the views. The site information documents 35 ft to the proposed front wall, an 18-ft driveway width and 12 ft 6 in from the rear/right corner to the angled boundary. These separations and the proposed openings are the basis for considering privacy and access on this particular site.

Substantial justice

The conversion would provide useful mudroom, pantry and interior space directly connected to our home. Our family has outgrown the original two-bedroom, one-bath layout, and this project would help us remain in the neighborhood while making the home more useful to future families. Denial would prevent this full enclosure in the proposed location while leaving the existing house and carport arrangement in place. I believe the benefit of adapting the already-covered space, weighed against the actual effects shown in the plans and photographs, supports substantial justice.

Variance criteria continued

Surrounding property values

The proposal retains the existing roof and adds a finished exterior with vinyl siding, residential windows and doors. I have observed many carport conversions in the neighborhood, including the adjoining neighbor's, so this type of finished exterior is familiar in the surrounding residential setting. I also plan to improve insulation, including above the ceiling, where I understand insulation is currently absent. Based on the finished appearance and planned improvements, I believe the project will make the home more desirable and will not diminish surrounding property values.

Unnecessary hardship

The property’s irregular shape and angled boundary, together with the existing placement of the house and attached carport, constrain the area available for this enclosure. The proposal adapts the existing roofed space directly adjoining the house for a mudroom and pantry, retaining the roof rather than extending it farther into the yard.

Requiring the enclosure to meet the full yard requirement would reduce or reconfigure this existing covered space. A separate addition elsewhere would involve a different location and roof arrangement; we have not established whether such an alternative would conform. Given the retained roof, limited 24-square-foot increase in building coverage and documented separations, I believe strict application of the yard requirement to this enclosure bears no fair and substantial relationship to its purposes concerning light, air, privacy and access. The proposed residential use is a reasonable adaptation of these particular property conditions.

Current Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance, amended through 28 September 2026: Sections 10.121, 10.233, 10.320, 10.521 and 10.1530. https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/files/planning/ZoningOrd.pdf

Building coverage and area schedule

The existing carport area is 12 by 22 ft, or 264 sq. ft. The proposed outside-wall enclosure is 12 by 24 ft, or 288 sq. ft. The front 2-by-12-ft strip was excluded from the original carport area calculation and is included in the proposed enclosure.

Component	Existing	Proposed
House footprint	968 sq. ft.	968 sq. ft.
Carport or enclosure	264 sq. ft.	288 sq. ft.
Shed	192 sq. ft.	192 sq. ft.
Total building coverage	1,424 sq. ft.	1,448 sq. ft.
Coverage on 9,149 sq. ft.	15.56%	15.83%

Lot area is 9,149 sq. ft. The house footprint remains 968 sq. ft., and the existing 12-by-16-ft shed remains 192 sq. ft.

Building coverage increases by 24 sq. ft. Existing coverage is 968 + 264 + 192 = 1,424 sq. ft. (15.56%). Proposed coverage is 968 + 288 + 192 = 1,448 sq. ft. (15.83%).

Proposed lot areas

Buildings 1,448 sq. ft.; deck 176 sq. ft.; driveway 733 sq. ft.; open space 6,792 sq. ft. Total 9,149 sq. ft.

Assessor area record

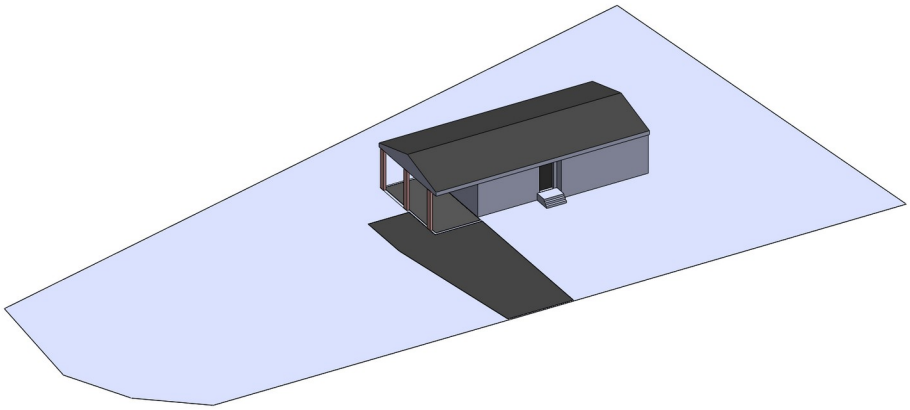
The assessor-reported existing total is 2,376 sq. ft.: 968 main floor + 264 carport + 968 unfinished basement + 176 wood deck. The house is unchanged. The carport component increases from 264 to 288 sq. ft. This record is assessor area, distinct from zoning gross floor area.

Existing and proposed model comparison

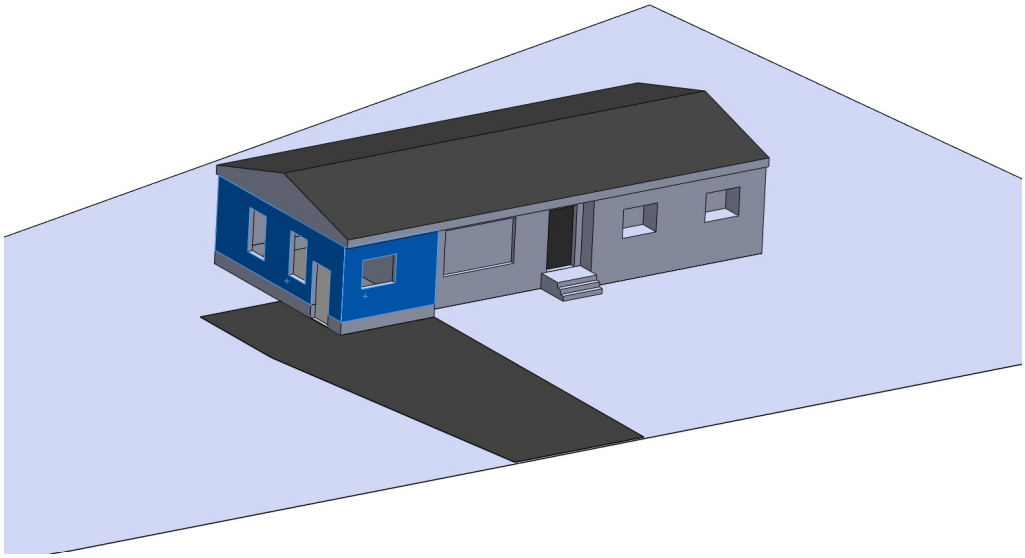
Existing and proposed models 20 October 2026

The proposed enclosure and openings remain below the retained roof. Perspective views are not to scale.

Existing open carport



Proposed enclosure



Dimensions: eaves 11 ft; peak 14.33 ft; existing posts 9 ft tall; maximum eave width 25 ft. Proposed enclosure outside walls: 12 by 24 ft.

The existing roof is retained without extension or increase in height.

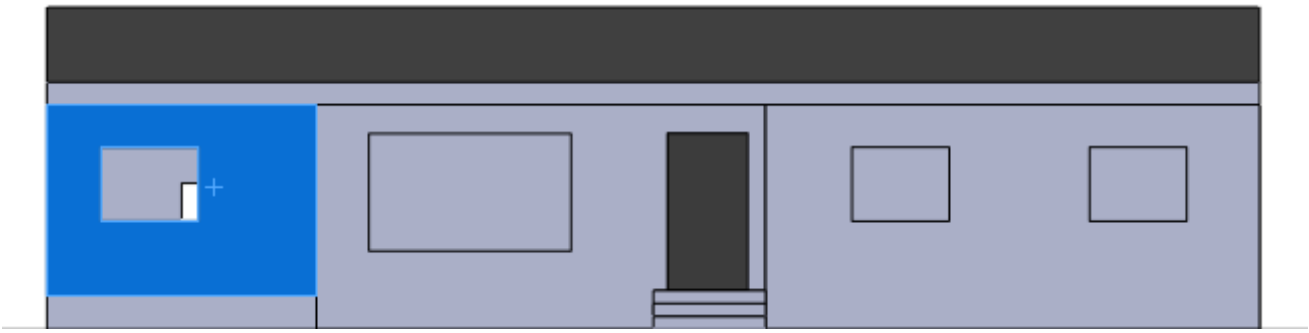
Site dimensions: 12 ft 6 in to the angled lot line; 37 ft to the existing front post and 35 ft to the proposed wall. Two cars are parked side by side in the existing 18-ft-wide driveway.

Proposed exterior views

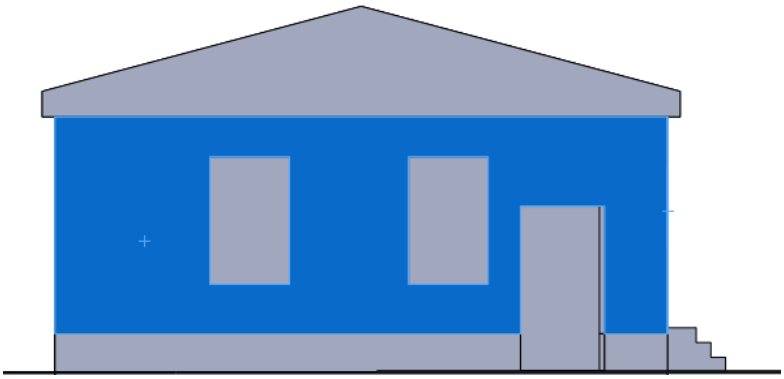
Front side and rear 20 October 2026

Model views are not to scale. Stated dimensions govern.

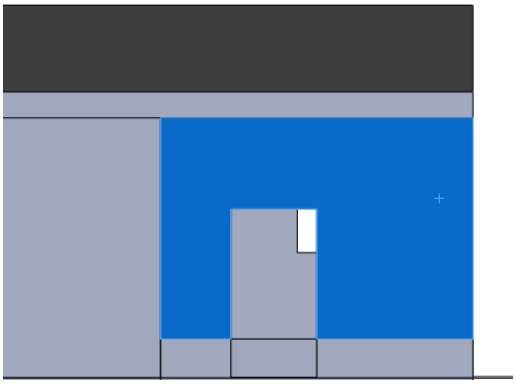
Front view Window rough opening 52 by 40 inches



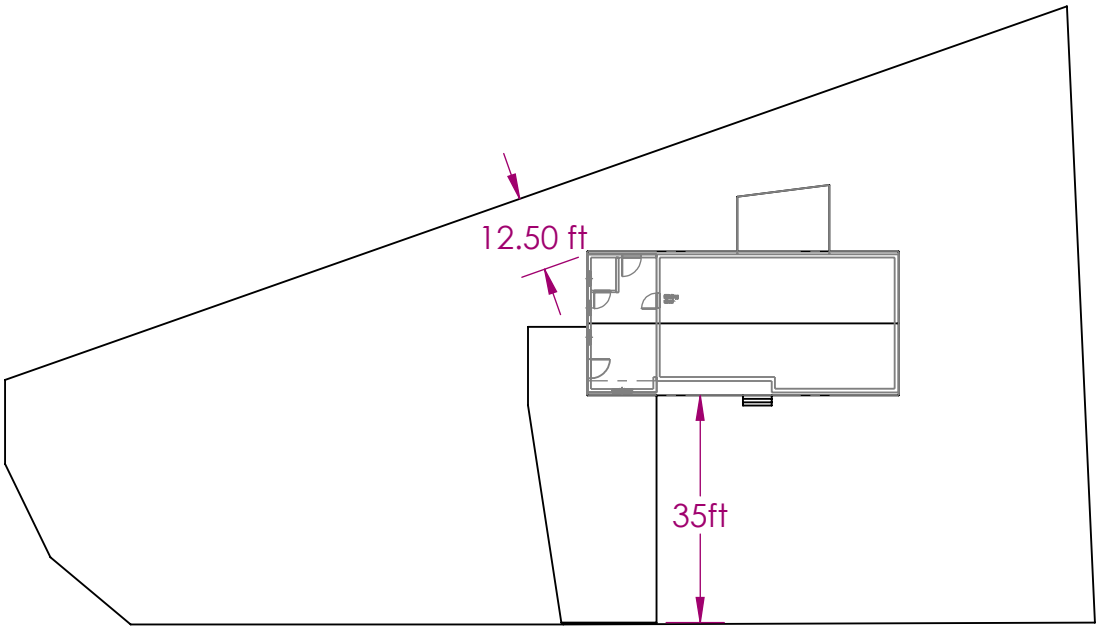
Side gable end Two windows each 37.5 inches wide by 60 inches high



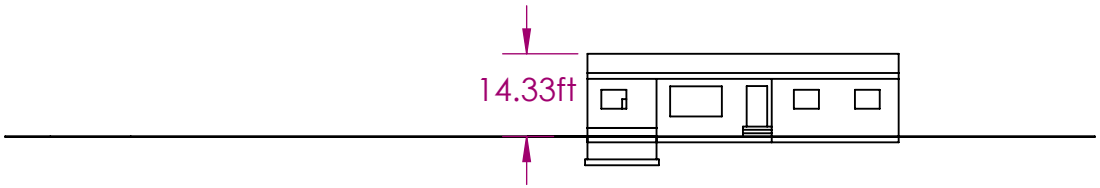
Rear enclosure detail

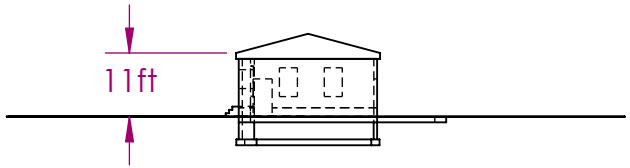


Window dimensions are rough openings. The dimensioned site plan and front and end elevations are included on the accompanying Letter landscape drawing.









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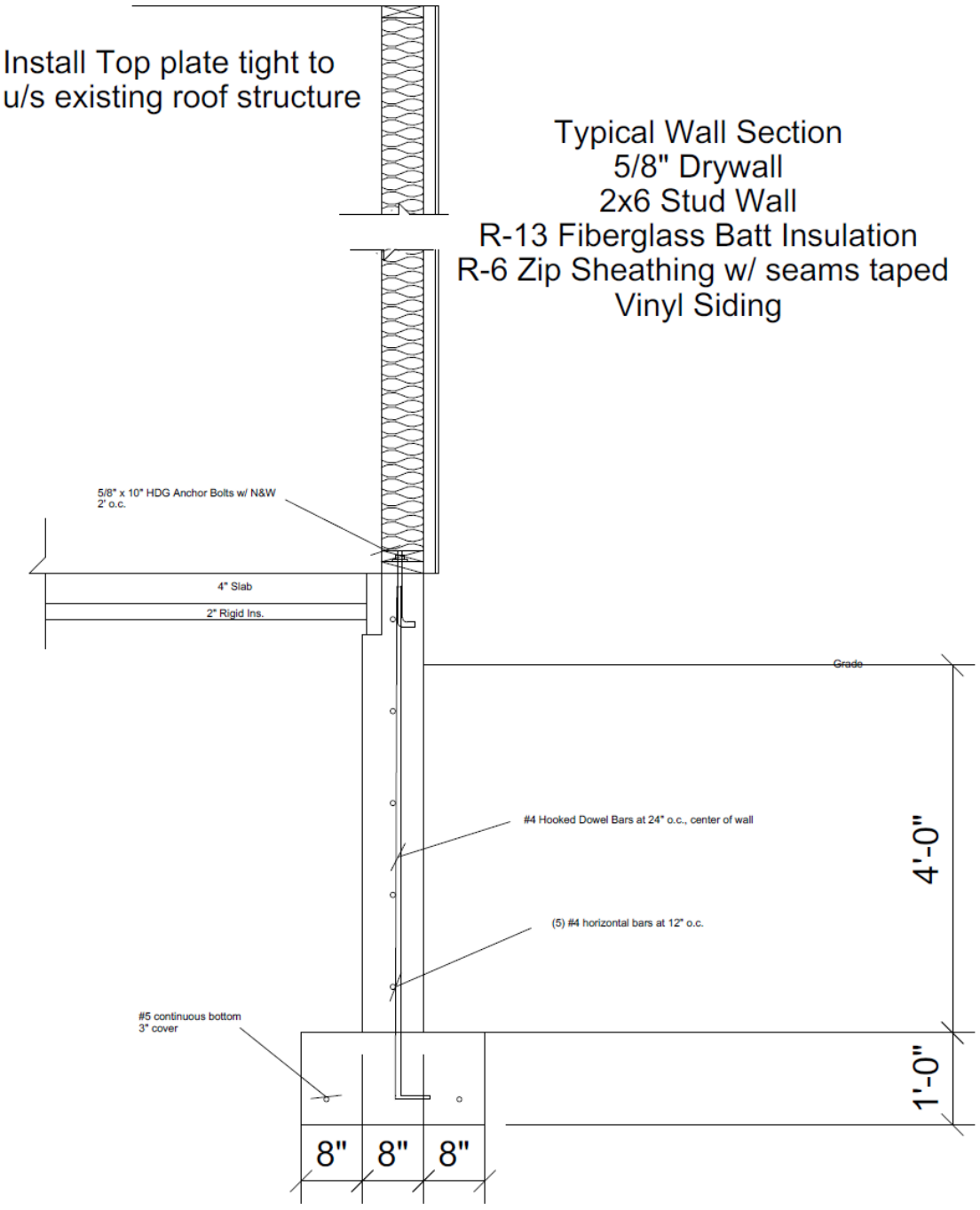
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Construction detail drawing

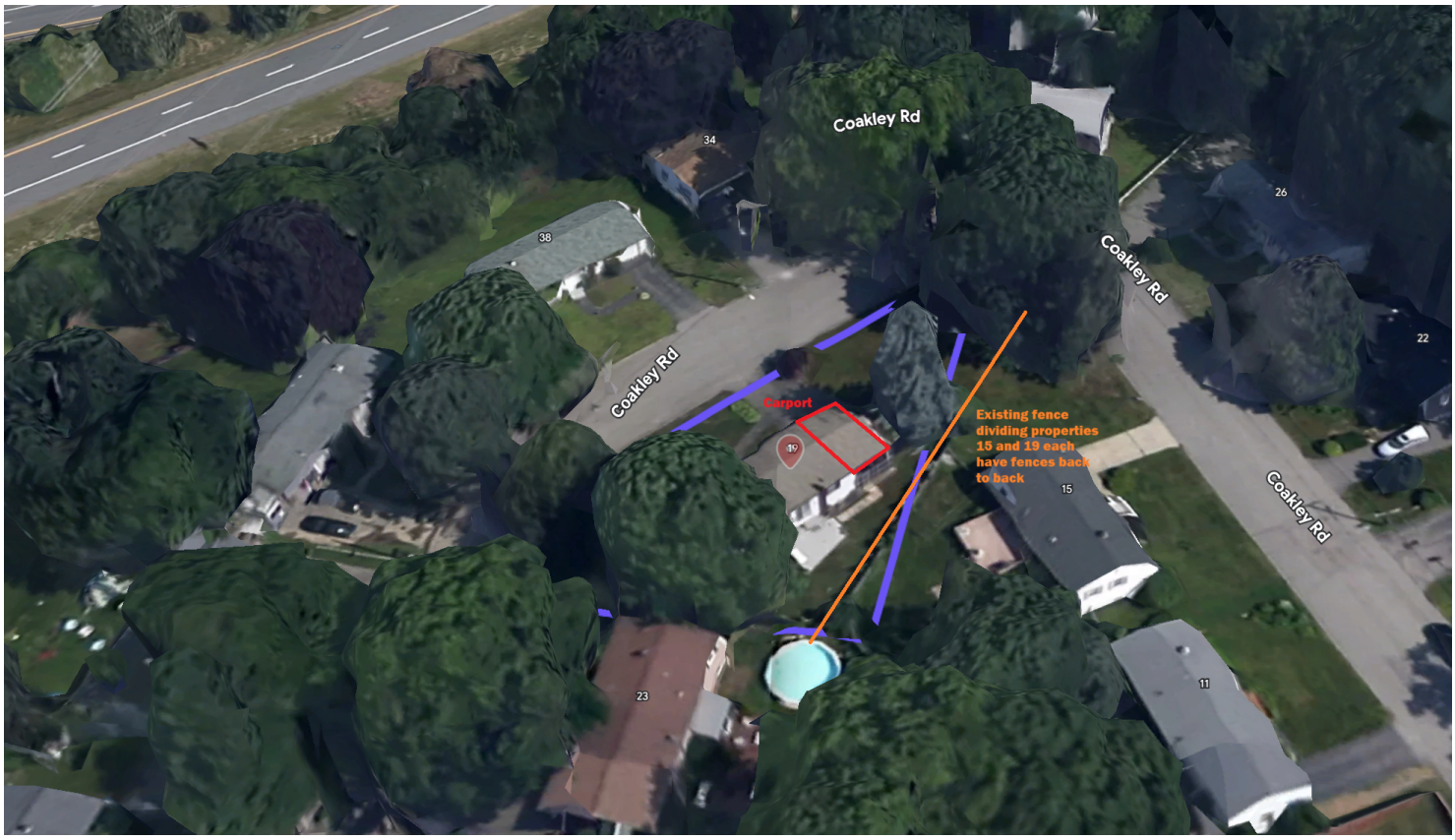


Typical New Exterior Wall Section

19 Coakley Road site photographs

BLDG-26-668 | 19 Coakley Road, Portsmouth, NH

A. Google Maps 3D context



Contextual imagery, not a survey. Existing image labels are part of the supplied source.

B. Site photograph 1



Carport and adjacent house exterior.

19Coakley_Carport.webp

C. Site photograph 2



House, deck and carport-side exterior.

19Coakley_Carport2.webp