

**HDC-2022-000XX (Temporary HDC-2022-00021)**  
**Address: 1448 W. Linden Street**  
**Applicant: Owners, David and Carmit Bach**  
**HARB Meeting Date: May 02, 2022**

**Building Description:**

This building is in the West Park Historic District. This 3-story brick end of row house, ca 1900 is a porch house with multiple units. The roof is flat with brick pilasters from the 2nd floor to the roof with flat tops. The 3rd floor has a half circle brick lintel, the center window is a 1/1 sash with ¼ circle windows on either side. The 2nd floor has a triangle bay with 1/1 sash windows and a vignette in the wood lintels; on either side are lancet windows with arched brick lintels. The bay has a projecting cornice with brackets. The 1st floor has a two 1/1 sash windows with brick lintels and a single glazed door with transom. The wooden porch has classic columns, a basement window, bull-nose steps with wrought iron railing, projecting cornice, turned wood balustrades and railings. There is a below ground grocer’s alley door and the end wall of the porch has closed with siding.

**Project Description:**

The proposed work at the front porch consists of:

- Replacement of structural porch header with new wood header.
- Replacement of two porch columns with new fiberglass columns (preferred) or wood columns.
- Replacement of porch floor decking with composite wood decking.

It is noted that the Applicant supplied a detailed description of work and proposed materials; all materials were supplied with this Preliminary Review to HARB members prior to the meeting per standard procedure.

**Primary Façade, view looking south  
(Applicant)**



**Porch Column and Header  
(Applicant)**



**Porch Floor Decking (Applicant)**



**Applicable Guidelines:**

**Chapter 3.7 - Porches & Steps**

**3.7.3** Repair and restore existing porches and steps whenever possible. Salvage, repair, and reuse existing components including deck floorboards, railings, balusters, posts, and decorative trim. Repair and restore basement level windows or metal grates that are part of the porch base.

**3.7.4** Replace individual components in-kind with new materials matching the original in material composition, size, shape, profile, dimension, appearance, and finish. Custom fabrication is encouraged and may be necessary to provide an exact match. Where an exact match of the historic element cannot be found or fabricated, the new element should match the original as closely as possible.

**3.7.8** If in-kind replacement is not feasible, replace with appropriate alternate materials that respect the original appearance and are durable. Composite wood decking is an appropriate alternate for tongue-and-groove wood floors if boards are similar to the original dimensions. Ceramic tile, carpet, or cementitious coatings over wood are not appropriate floor materials. Steel, iron, and aluminum railings are acceptable replacements. Vinyl railings and trim are not appropriate alternate materials for wood elements. Use of dimensional lumber for visible parts of a porch is not appropriate.

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### **Observations & Recommendations:**

**Header:** Structural header replacement with new wood is consistent with the Guidelines. The header is encased in vinyl (or similar sheet material, as shown in the photographs); removal of the vinyl is appropriate and encouraged. Non-breathable materials like vinyl sheet traps moisture and can lead to wood deterioration. The most appropriate treatment for the new structural header would be to finish the exterior with wood. Flat wood trim would be appropriate or trim that matches the historic appearance (as an attached row house, neighboring properties may have existing original examples). All wood should be painted.

**Columns:** The Applicant described the column conditions as follows:

“Two white columns stand on either side of the porch entrance. (See attached photo). The cap and top of the column (on western side of stairs) are deteriorating and should be replaced. The other column (on eastern side of stairs) is also starting to show its age and will likely require replacing in the near future. As such, it makes sense to replace both columns under same project.” (Detailed Work Description, page 2)

It is observed that the west column shaft is wrapped in what appears to be sheet metal (or vinyl sheet). This conceals the current condition but the wood is likely in poor condition below because of trapped moisture; wood deterioration is visible at the capital and base. The base appears to have been previously replaced because it no longer has the round profile seen on other original columns.

In-kind replacement with wood is the most appropriate treatment and consistent with the Guidelines. Generally, fiberglass is not recommended from a sustainability perspective.

Retaining the east column is the most appropriate treatment rather than pre-emptive replacement. Small-scale repair treatments can treat conditions as needed and can keep the historic material intact.

**Floor:** Use of composite decking is consistent with the Guideline 3.7.8 as an alternate material. Either of the two submitted composite products would be appropriate from a material perspective. The dimension of the selected boards should be as similar to the existing dimensions as possible.

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### **HARB Discussion:**

Applicant presented additional information prepared in slide format to present the conditions of the porch in the scope of work area showing deterioration of wood header, soffit, columns, and decking and provided a succinct description of the existing wood materials and their condition. Identified intent to replace the header in-kind with wood, and composite decking material for the porch floorboards and replace the two porch columns with two alternative (fiberglass) materials.

Presented the column conditions in detail stating the column bases have already been replaced at least once and the shaft of the west column has been wrapped with a non-historic material. The east column is showing initial signs of deterioration, and acknowledged the east column can be repaired, he is seeking approval to replace the cap and base of the east column as part of this application.

He proceeded to present materials on two manufacturers for fiberglass replacement units, Permacast and Endura Stone Columns. If a wood column is required, he would like approval for the cedar column with the Tuscan specifications provided in the application materials.

AJ reiterated the basis for the Guidelines recommendations referencing the sustainability aspects of alternative materials. And stated he does not see the evidence to support fiberglass in this category.

LE referenced the applicants report, page 10 identifying fiberglass as an inappropriate alternative material in numerous historic districts across the country, in some locations it can be used on non-primary facades.

GL referenced page 21 of the Guidelines which identifies the information needed for the HARB to consider the alternative material.

AJ stated the application can be approved as submitted with the columns and header replaced with wood and the decking replaced with the composite material as presented.

AJ asked for clarification on the shape of the column cap and base, based on the material presented.

SO clarified the shape and profile of the column as presented is a round, smooth, Tuscan style column to match the existing. The base of the east column is in keeping with the original and existing on the neighboring buildings and is to be used as reference in size, profile and dimension for the new units.

The applicant confirmed that the new column base and cap will match the existing east column.

**Action:**

HARB member Glenn Lichtenwalner made a motion to approve the application presented on 05/02/22 for replacement of the structural porch header with wood, two columns with wood and replacement of porch floor decking with composite wood decking at 1448 W Linden St. as submitted.

The application is in compliance with the following sections of the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3.7-Porches & Steps, Sections 3.7.3, 3.7.4, 3.7.8 and there are no circumstances unique to the property.

Motion to approve made by HARB member Glenn Lichtenwalner, motion was seconded by HARB member Alex Encelewski. Motion carried with unanimous support.

Therefore, the Approved Alterations for the purpose of writing and issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness are:

1. Replacement of the structural porch header with new wood header.
2. Replacement of two wood porch columns with new wood columns. The new columns shall match the existing east column.
3. Replacement of wood porch floor decking with composite wood decking.