

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF ALLENTOWN
December 15, 2021
FINAL REVIEW

Property located at: 809 -811 W. Gordon St.

Agenda Item: #2.a

Historic District: Old Allentown

Case: HDC-2021-00031/32

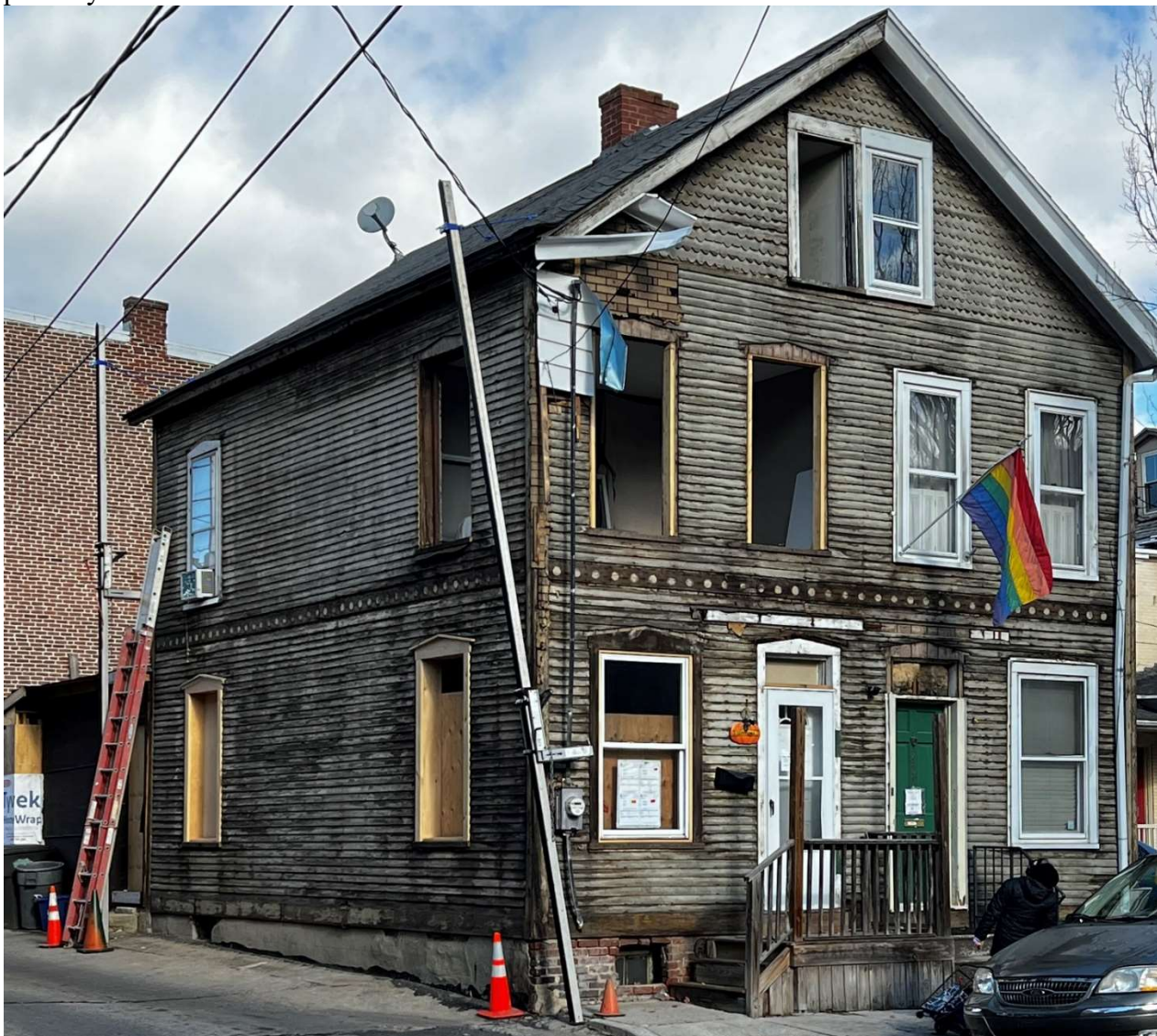
Meeting date: December 6, 2021

Property Owner (809 W. Gordon): Kim Hood

Property Owner (811 W. Gordon): Tim Driscoll

Building description, period, style defining features:

This 2½-story frame twin house, ca. 1870, is a Federal style home. The building had been covered with aluminum siding and all details had been hidden. Removal of the siding revealed a wood construction home with clapboard siding and wood fishscale shingles on the front gable and a decorative band between the first and second floors. The gable roof has shingles and a shared chimney. The windows are 1/1 sash, there are no visible lintels. There is a basement window grille visible. The main entry for 809 is a ¾-glazed single door with a transom and storm door. The front entry door for 811 is a wood 6-panel door. The transom windows over the entry are currently missing. The stoop for 809 has concrete bull-nosed steps and a wood front porch has been partially removed.



Description	809 W. Gordon	811 W. Gordon
Proposed Alterations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, repair, and paint existing wood siding to match 811 W. Gordon. Based on the submitted photograph, the existing siding is wood clapboard with scalloped wood shingle below the roof gable. Non-original aluminum siding (previously approved by HARB) has already been removed. Any additional siding needed to complete the repairs will match the original wood in dimension and style. • Exterior repair will include removal of a non-function rear door and infilling the opening with new plywood substrate and clapboards to match existing. • Provide new custom window and door trim to match the trim proposed at 811 W. Gordon. Paint to match new surrounds at 811 W. Gordon St. • Install new wall sconce. The number of fixtures is not specified, so it is assumed that one (1) fixture will replaced the one (1) existing at the front door. • Demolition of the existing concrete steps and iron railing. Construct a new tandem stair (shared landing) with 811 W. Gordon. New stair to be concrete with bullnose treads and new wrought iron railing with straight balusters. • Install new transom window above front door in the existing opening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, repair, and paint existing wood siding to match 809 W. Gordon. Based on the submitted photograph for 809 W. Gordon, the existing siding is wood clapboard with scalloped wood shingle below the roof gable. Non-original aluminum siding (previously approved by HARB) has already been removed. Any additional siding needed to complete the repairs will match the original wood in dimension and style. • Install new custom window and door surrounds, constructed of pine, at all openings. Surrounds will include new wood hood (lintel), sill, and casing. Recycled material to be used as possible. The submitted “Window Trim Sample_811 W. Gordon” photograph is understood to be a sample already on the building. The new lintel profile matches the evidence of the original lintels on the siding. New surrounds will be painted to match 811 W. Gordon. • Install new wall sconce. The number of fixtures is not specified, so it is assumed that one (1) fixture will replaced the one (1) existing at the front door. • Demolish existing wood stairs and railing. Construct a new tandem stair (shared landing) with 809 W. Gordon. New stair to be concrete with bullnose treads and new wrought iron railing with straight balusters. • Replace existing door with new 6-panel wood door to match 809 W. Gordon. • Install new transom window above front door in the existing opening.
Staff Approvals	None	None
Prior COA(s)	<p>1985: Installation of plain wrought iron railing.</p> <p>2011: Removal of aluminum siding, restoration of wood siding, addition of decorative wood details if evidence of previous exits, replacement of front steps with brick and bluestone stoop, to be shared with 811.</p>	<p>1983: Installation of smooth double 4” siding to replace asbestos shingles, installation of new gutters, downspout and overhangs.</p> <p>2010: Construction of wooden steps with wood railing consisting of top and bottom rails with 2” square stock spindles and turned post for porch roof support.</p>

	2019 (Denied): Solar panel installation	<p>2011: Removal of aluminum siding, restoration of wood siding, addition of decorative wood details if evidence of previous exits, replacement of front steps with brick and bluestone stoop, to be shared with 811.</p> <p>2020: The existing aluminum siding on the entire house will be replaced smooth wood or smooth fiber-cement siding with a 4” reveal. 2. The existing rear-side door on N Refwal Street will be closed in and a new door on the rear of the building created. The step at the old door location on N Refwal Street will be removed. 3. The new door will be a single light wood or smooth fiberglass door with 2 lower panels. 4. The existing vinyl windows will be replaced with new vinyl windows that fit the size of the existing openings. They will be 1 over 1 in configuration. 5. The windows will have 3” casing and added sills. 6. The existing side basement window will be infilled. 7. The front porch and roof will be removed and replaced with a new set of steps similar to the attached house coming straight out from the house. 8. New steps in brick with bluestone treads or new concrete steps with bullnose treads will be installed. 9. New wrought-iron railings will be installed. The railings will have shaped top rails, lamb’s tongue terminations, and square balusters. 10. New gutters on the rear attachment will be half-round with round downspouts.</p>
Violation(s)	07: Satellite Dish	09: Satellite Dish

Secretary of Interior Standards:

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

Rehabilitation Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Design Guidelines, Section 4-Walls, Siding and Trim:

Siding: Although the majority of the buildings found in Allentown’s Historic districts are masonry, wood siding is found on some buildings. It is also very common on additions constructed at the rear of all styles of buildings.

- ✓ In-kind replacement of deteriorated wood siding is acceptable and is the preferred treatment. The material selected for in-kind replacement of wood siding should be of a similar dimension, profile and appearance as the historic wood siding. Whenever possible the same species of wood should be used.

- ✓ Removal of aluminum or vinyl siding to expose historic brick or wood siding is acceptable and only requires staff approval.
- Fiber cement siding (smooth, with no grain texture) as a substitute material in the replacement of wood siding requires staff approval.
- Replacement of existing aluminum siding with fiber cement siding is acceptable and requires staff approval.
- Replacement of existing aluminum siding with vinyl siding on primary facades must be reviewed by the HARB.
- Vinyl or aluminum siding as a substitute material on a secondary facade is not recommended but may be acceptable.
- Vinyl or aluminum siding as a substitute material on a primary facade is not typically approved.
- Covering bay windows with vinyl or aluminum siding is historically inappropriate.

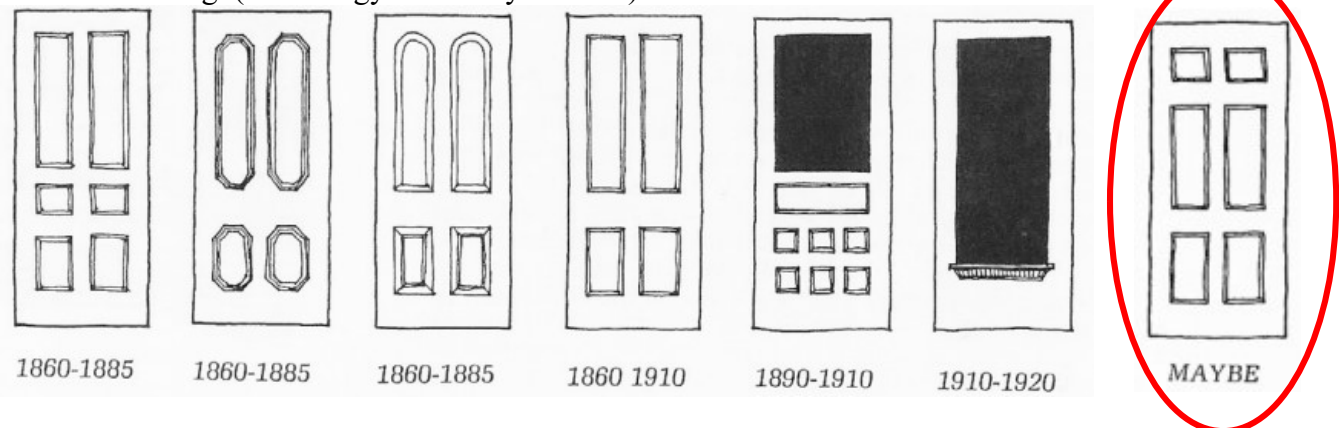
Trim and Detailing: The terms trim and detailing refer to corner boards, window and door surrounds, brackets, moldings and other decorative features. Wood trim and detailing should be repaired or replaced to match the historic appearance.

- ✓ It is highly encouraged to remove existing vinyl or aluminum capping or pieces covering historic trim and to repair or recreate historic trim and detailing.
- Capping or covering trim and detailing with vinyl or aluminum is not acceptable. Capping can trap moisture and lead to deterioration and decay of historic features

Design Guidelines, Section 6-Doors:

A replacement door refers to the installation of a custom sized new wood door utilizing the existing door frame. The replacement of a door is only appropriate for doors with irreparable damage or deterioration. If a door requires replacement, the new door should match the historic unit in design, dimension, and glazing configuration. A replacement door must match the existing opening exactly and must match or be of an appropriate style and panel or light configuration for the door to be replaced. Typical configurations appropriate in designated historic districts include 6 panel doors, 4 panel doors, 3/4 light doors and 1/2 light doors depending on the architectural style of the building.

- ✓ Restoring a door opening to the historic door opening dimensions is encouraged.
- ✓ The replacement of an existing prehung door with a new prehung door is permitted, but replacement with an historic wood door hung in the historic wood door jamb is encouraged.
- Fiberglass doors may be acceptable as a substitute material for the replacement of a non-historic wood door. Specifications of the proposed door must be provided for staff approval.
- Removing, covering or concealing an existing transom is not appropriate.
- New installation of prehung doors are typically not acceptable on primary facades because dimensions of prehung doors are not exact matches for historic openings.
- The replacement of a door for the purpose of improving thermal performance is not recommended. The thermal performance of an existing historic wood door can be improved with proper weather stripping and caulking. (See energy efficiency section.)



Design Guidelines, Section 7- Porches, Stoops and Steps:

The character defining features, materials, configurations, details and dimensions of porches and stoops should be preserved and repaired. "Allentown" porch roofs, such as the one shown above, should be preserved and repaired. The removal of an "Allentown" porch roof in some circumstances may be acceptable and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If features of porches and stoops require replacement, the component used for replacement should replicate the historic material, configuration, dimension, detail and design. Deteriorated tongue and groove or bead board decking should be replaced in-kind. New construction of porches and stoops should be of an appropriate style and configuration consistent with the building's character and designated historic district.

- Use of vinyl railing systems and unpainted pressure treated lumber is typically not appropriate.
- Covering wood porch floor decking with ceramic tile is not historically appropriate.
- Covering wood porch floor decking with carpet is not historically appropriate and will lead to further damage and rotting of wood.
- Installing ceiling fans on porch ceilings is inappropriate and not recommended

Design Guidelines, Section 12-Lighting:

If historic lighting fixtures remain, they should be preserved. Fixtures selected for replacement or addition of lighting fixtures to a historic structure should be simple in style, appropriate in scale and compatible with the character of the building. Conduit should be concealed or painted to minimize visual impact.

- Floodlights and spotlights on primary facades are not appropriate

Evaluation of Proposed Project:

The work proposed under this application will repair and restore existing historic materials. The proposed restoration of the existing wood siding is appropriate and encouraged. The new window and door surrounds are based on physical evidence on the building and are an appropriate reconstruction of missing features. The two attached buildings will be restored to a more united exterior appearance, which is appropriate as they were constructed as a pair. The proposed light fixtures (one at each entrance) are historically appropriate wall sconce lantern types. Restoration of the transom windows above each door is appropriate; no lite or configuration description was submitted, so single-lite transoms are appropriate based on the existing openings and lack of other documentation. The replacement of the entry stairs with a new tandem stair appears to be an appropriate alteration; the existing wood and concrete stairs do not appear to be historic materials and are not character-defining features of the property. At 811 W. Gordon, the proposed replacement of a non-original front door with a new wood front door with 6-panel configuration to match the existing historically appropriate door at 809 W. Gordon is appropriate.

Historic District Impact:

The proposed project will have a positive impact on the surrounding historic district. It will restore the historic character of the two attached buildings and will restore historic wood materials that have been covered. The proposed work will restore the historic united appearance of the facade and restore historic materials at a corner lot with multiple visible facades. Tandem stairs are common for attached historic building and concrete stairs with wrought iron railings are present on the surrounding blocks. The new construction appears to be "consistent with the building's character and designated historic district."

Recommendation(s):

Overall, the proposed project appears to be appropriate. It is recommended by the HARB to include adding weepholes to the porch construction, confirm the concrete porch will have a brick veneer, the design of the new handrail should match the existing gate not the extant railing, the new door, transom and trim for #809 should match the same on #811.

HARB Discussion

AJ-asked why secondary door was being removed. Owner confirmed it a non-functioning door not on a primary façade and the infill would be preferred by the owner.

Front Door of #811 to match the 6 panel Colonial door and custom make the transom with the numbers in the transom above at #809.

AJ asked for clarification on how stair would be rebuilt., Owner referenced another property (814 W Gordon) as a precedent example with brick veneer on the stoop. Concrete with bullnose treads.

AJ noted the proposed railing is inappropriate to this building, GL agreed, noted the extant wrought iron gate is more appropriate to use as a precedent for the new railing design. GL suggested the new railing meet code and it is preferred if the spacing and shape were more similar to the gate versus the extant railing there now.

Windows: replaced with white, vinyl

Action

A motion to approve the application as presented with conditions including incorporate weepholes into the porch, concrete shall be faced with brick, railing details to be round or square with closer spacing, new door to match 809, new light fixture presented will be used at both 809 & 811 addresses was made by HARB Chair David Huber, motion was seconded by HARB member AJ Jordan. Motion carried with unanimous support.