

Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Final Review Sheet

HDC-2023-00043

Address: 347 N. 8th Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Nidia Manzueta, tenant

Proposal: Install surface-applied window signage at storefront

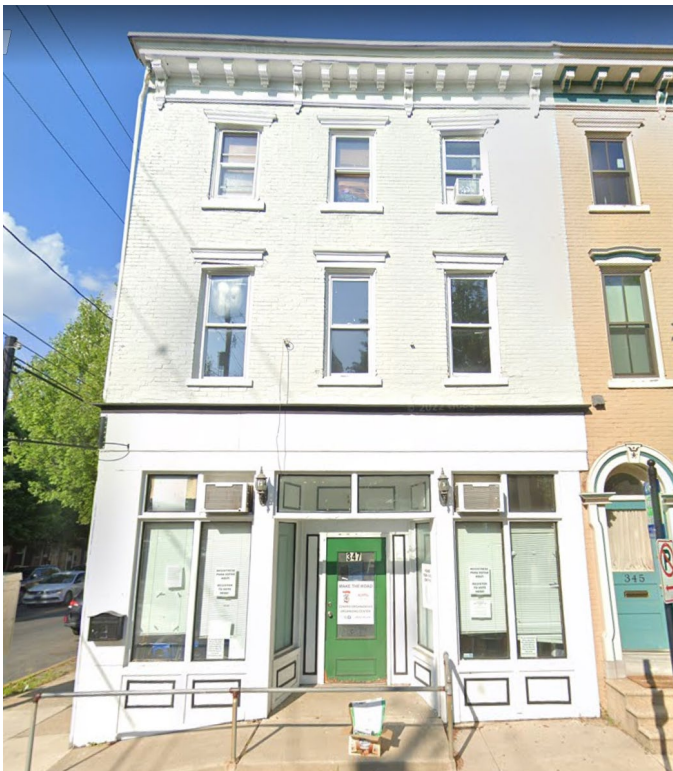
Building Description:

This 3-story painted brick row corner house, ca 1873, is Italianate in style. The 1st floor is a store, and the 2nd & 3rd floors are residential. It has a flat roof with projecting eaves and a double chimney. It has flat lintels on the 3rd floor with 1/1 sash windows, Italianate lintels on the 2nd floor with 2/2 sash windows and carved very ornate brackets on the cornice. There is a fire escape in the rear of the property.

The windows on the 1st floor are flat store front windows. There are six small windows above the door and on the front façade. There is a large awning over the sidewalk in front. There are painted iron grilles on the side of the 1st floor windows which have no glass and are boarded up.

Project Description:

This application proposes to install window signage in three locations within the storefront. Two vinyl decals would be installed on the windows flanking the entrance, and a larger vinyl decal would be installed within the transom.



Front façade of 347 N. 8th Street, 2022.
(Google StreetView)



Front and side facades of 347 N. 8th Street, 2022.
(Google StreetView)



Rendering of signage in the three proposed locations of the storefront.
(Applicant)

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.13 – Commercial Storefronts

3.13.12 Locate new signs in historically appropriate locations, such as the sign band directly below a cornice or the ends of a façade at the second story.

3.13.13 Reuse existing hardware, supports, and brackets if possible to reduce the number of new holes created in exterior walls. Patch and repair holes or similar damage caused by previous sign installations.

3.13.14 Attach signs in a method that does not damage historic materials. For signs attached to a masonry façade, anchors should be placed in mortar joints, not in the masonry unit. Installations should be reversible and should only require minor repairs or patches if removed in the future.

3.13.15 Scale signs to be compatible with the proportions and scale of the storefront and building. Compatible proportions should minimize the visual impact of the sign when looking at the building or streetscape. Small signs are usually the most appropriate. The size of signs and lettering should prioritize pedestrians rather than vehicles. Text heights between 6 and 12 inches is generally recommended.

3.13.18 For window signs (surface-applied or painted), maintain the transparency of the window by using lettering and/or logos without a solid background. High transparency lettering and window-applied signage helps to minimize the

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visual impact to the building and street. Solid backgrounds are not encouraged but are not prohibited. An advantage to windows signs is that they are easily reversible and do not damage historic materials.

3.13.23 Avoid covering or obscuring architecturally significant or distinctive features. Removing or destroying historic elements for the purpose of installing a sign is not appropriate.

Observations & Comments:

The design guidelines support the installation of surface-applied window signage with transparent backgrounds, because the signage type does not damage historic materials. Staff questions whether the sign in the transom includes an opaque background and suggests that no background color be included. Provided none of the signage includes opaque backgrounds, staff finds the application complies with the design guidelines for commercial storefronts, and more specifically with Guideline 3.13.18.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, provided no signage contains an opaque background, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.13 Commercial Storefronts.

HARB Discussion:

The HARB discussed the appropriateness of the proposed signage and inquired whether the sign in the transom would have a transparent or opaque background. Ms. Manzueta confirmed that the sign would have only letters and would include no background. The HARB requested that the lettering be centered across the transom and not contained on one pane of glass so that it was more symmetrical. Ms. Manzueta agreed to the request. The HARB found that the signage complies with the design guidelines.

Actions:

Mr. Jordan moved to approve the application presented on 7/10/2023 for the installation of surface-applied window signage at the storefront of 347 N. 8th Street, with the staff to review details, provided the lettering is centered across both transom lites and the background is transparent, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.13 Commercial Storefronts. Mr. Lichtenwalner seconded the motion, which passed with unanimous support.