

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

June 28, 2021

FINAL REVIEW

Property located at: 1601 Chew Street

Agenda Item: #2.A.a.

Historic District: West Park

Case: HDC-2021-00016

Meeting date: June 28, 2021

Property Owner/Applicant: Rigo Art Studio, c/o Mario Peralta

Address: 27 N. 2nd Street, Allentown, PA 18101

Building description, period, style defining features:

This 3-story brick end of row house, ca 1905 is Edwardian. The house is used for commercial and has multiple dwelling units. There is a 2-story turret with a projecting cornice, brackets and wood shingles, the windows are capped with aluminum. The windows are 1/1 sash double hung with brick lintels. There is a concrete stoop with railings and a single door with side lights, transoms, and commercial windows. There is a basement slanted door at the front. The N 16th Street side has visible basement window grilles, billboard and a side entrance. There is a brick garage with a hip roof at the rear.



Proposed alterations:

1. Installation of new sign for art gallery. Lettering not to exceed 2' 5 1/2" in height and total length of lettering not to exceed 7' 2" +/- . Multiple options provided in order of

preference on application.

- a. Option 1: Wall sign on first floor cornice & above existing awning (would require additional zoning approval).
 - b. Option 2: Sign on existing awning (zoning preference)
2. Application of window stickers on both existing storefront windows

Staff Approvals: None

Violations: None

Prior COA(s): None

Secretary of Interior Standards: Rehabilitation Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Design Guideline Section(s): 5: Guidelines for Existing Buildings and Structures: 5.11. Signage.

Signs: Signs located in designated historic districts must be compatible with and appropriate for the style and character of the historic buildings. The material and style used for the sign should be compatible with the buildings historic character. When mounting signs on masonry walls, anchors should be placed in mortar joints instead of in brick, stone, or other historic masonry.

- ✓ Window lettering, wall signs, hanging or projecting signs, window awnings and portable signs are acceptable options for signage.
- ✓ Commercial Storefront with long horizontal proportioned signs above are appropriate.
- ✓ Lighting for signs should be external white light from projecting lamps at the top of the sign and all wiring should be discrete and concealed. Gooseneck style lights are historically appropriate.
- Signs should not cover or conceal architectural features or ornament and signs should be mounted in a way that does not damage historic materials
- All signs must also comply with the City's zoning ordinance, which regulates, among other things, the size of the sign.

Evaluation of Proposed Project: The proposed Option 1 for new signage has the most visual impact on the historic building. The existing awning is already a dominant visual feature and not in keeping with the historic architectural style of the building. The cumulative visual impact of the awning, the new wall sign applied above the existing awning, and applique window signs is not preferred. Option 2 to place the sign on the existing awning is more appropriate as a reduced visual impact and minor alteration to a non-historic feature. Removal of the awning and option to use a flat sign band and applique signs would also be appropriate and lessen the overall impact of new signage. According to the Guidelines, removal of an awning is a staff-level approval.

Historic District Impact: Option 1 will have the most impact to the character of the surrounding historic district and is therefore not preferred. Option 2 to add to the existing awnings or the

option to eliminate the awning and using only a flat wall sign and window signage would not negatively impact the surrounding streetscape or architectural character of the surrounding historic district.

The design of the sign lettering is appropriate and has a low visual impact. As a precedent, the existing applique window signage at this business' current location in the Old Allentown Historic District is compatible with the historic building and surrounding district:



Recommendation(s): The recommendation is to eliminate the awning and use appropriate signage options of the flat sign band and window applique sign types. If the awning must be retained, the recommendation is to place the new signage on the existing awning rather than above it.

Action:

Motion to approve the application for awning and window signage (Option 2) as submitted was made by HARB member Patricia Jackson, motion was seconded by HARB member AJ Jordan. Motion carried with unanimous support.