



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

No. 30744

RESOLUTION

R181 - 2023

Introduced by the Administration on October 18, 2023

Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness – 932 W. Gordon Street

Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That

WHEREAS a Certificate of Appropriateness is required under the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania No.167, June 13, 1961 (P.L.282) known as the Pennsylvania Historic District Act; and City of Allentown has adopted a Historic District Ordinance, Article 1391, under the provisions allowed in the Pennsylvania Historic District Act; and

WHEREAS the owner, Shaadi Elias, applied to the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) for a Certificate of Appropriateness to legalize the installation of vinyl siding, as described in the attached final report; and

WHEREAS the HARB held a meeting on said matter on October 2, 2023, where the owner and legal counsel were in attendance; and

WHEREAS based on the statements and evidence presented, the HARB made the following findings of fact, as detailed in the attached case report:

1. On August 18, 2023, HARB staff requested that work to install vinyl siding be stopped and that the owner apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
2. Work was about 93% complete when staff intervened.
3. The front and west facades are highly visible from the street.
4. The building was previously clad in asbestos siding.

WHEREAS, based on the above findings of fact, the HARB agreed on the motion not to legalize the installation of vinyl siding, and recommended to City Council denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness as detailed in the attached case report; and

WHEREAS, after review, Council finds a distinction between the front and west facades;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Allentown that a Certificate of Appropriateness is hereby approved provided that the front façade to be replaced with wood or fiber cement bond.

AMENDMENT TO ACCEPT WAIVER AND MAKE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES PASSED, 7 – 0

- **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Allentown that a Certificate of Appropriateness is hereby approved provided that the front façade to be replaced with wood or fiber cement bond.
- **WHEREAS** after review, Council finds a distinction between the front and west facades;

	Yea	Nay
Candida Affa	X	
Ce-Ce Gerlach	X	
Cynthia Y. Mota	X	
Santo Napoli	X	
Natalie Santos	X	
Ed Zucal	X	
Daryl Hendricks, President	X	
TOTAL	7	0

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That the above copy of Resolution No. 30744 was adopted by the City Council of Allentown on the 15th day of November 15, 2023, and is on file in the City Clerk's Office.



City Clerk

**Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Final Review Sheet**

HDC-2023-00058

Address: 932 W. Gordon Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Shaadi Elias, owner

Proposal: Legalize vinyl siding

Building Description:

This two-story end-of-row frame house, c. 1890 is a federal house. The gable roof has asphalt shingles, a dormer, and projecting eaves. The windows are 1/1 sash with no lintels, and the main entry is a single-glazed door with transom. There is a shared grocer's alley. The concrete porch is enclosed with wood & glass, the concrete steps have a railing, the front has asbestos shingles and the back has additions with a variety of brick, asbestos siding and brick-like shingles.

Project Description:

On August 18, 2023, staff received a complaint about work underway to install vinyl siding at the property at 932 W. Gordon Street, made a site visit, and asked the workers to stop work. No formal notice of violation was issued, but the owner complied with the request to stop work. At the time of staff's request, work was almost completed. This application proposes to legalize the vinyl siding installed on the building.



**Front façade of 932 W. Gordon Street, 2019
(Google StreetView)**



**Front façade of 932 W. Gordon Street after work, 2023.
(Applicant)**

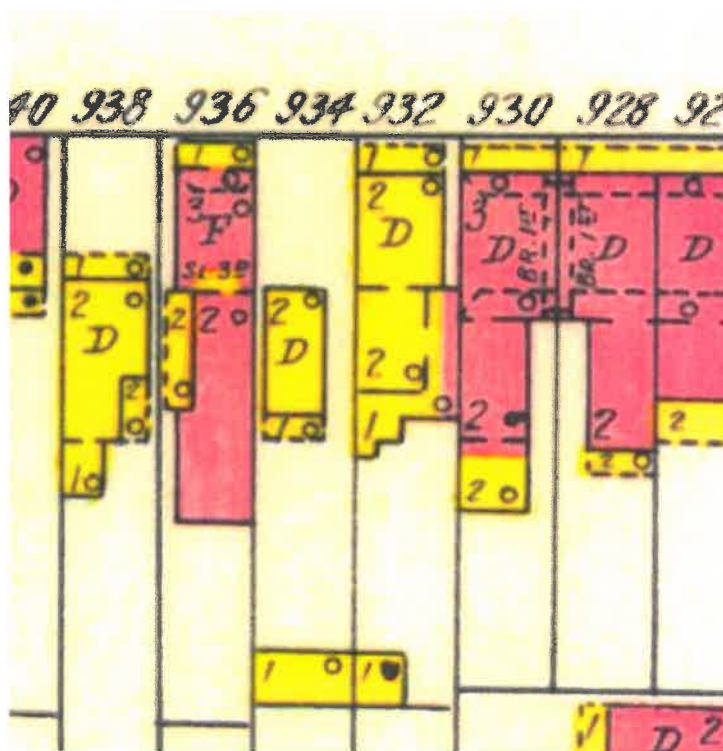
**Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Final Review Sheet**



**Front façade showing vinyl siding being applied, 2023.
(HARB files)**



**Side façade after siding was installed, 2023.
(applicant)**



**1932 Sanborn map.
(Pennsylvania State University Libraries)**

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.2 – Wood Siding & Trim

3.2.5 Replace deteriorated materials in-kind if repair is infeasible. New materials should replicate the original as closely as possible in material composition, size, profile, shape, pattern, and appearance. If historic wood siding or trim was an identifiable or visually distinctive species, it is recommended that the same species be used for the replacement.

3.2.6 Avoid installation of aluminum, vinyl, or synthetic materials that were unavailable when a building was constructed. Aluminum, vinyl, fiber-cement, or other synthetic cladding are not appropriate for historic properties because of their visual impact and because their installation can cause other deterioration problems. It is not appropriate to cap or cover existing wood with these types of materials. It is not appropriate to remove original wood cladding or trim features and replace them with aluminum, vinyl, fiber-cement, or synthetic materials.

3.2.7 Consider removal of existing aluminum, vinyl, or synthetic cladding over building features. Historic materials sometimes remain intact below this type of cladding and can be restored. In-kind replacement of existing non-historic siding that was in place before the historic district was designated may be allowed in some cases. Consult with Staff and HARB during early project planning stages. Provide photographs or documentation of existing conditions and wall materials below non-historic siding to help determine the appropriate treatment.

Observations & Comments:

The building was clad in asbestos siding prior to the work being undertaken and prior to the designation of the Old Allentown Historic District. Guideline 3.2.7 allows for some flexibility with in-kind replacement of non-historic materials. However, in this case, the asbestos siding was replaced with vinyl, which is a change in both material and appearance. Staff contends that, because asbestos siding may no longer be used, the HARB may consider allowing the use of a more appropriate alternate material, such as fiber cement clapboard siding. Fiber cement clapboard siding is closer in appearance to wood and is more appropriate than vinyl.

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.2 Wood Siding & Trim.

HARB Discussion:

Attorney Ron Corkery explained that a city housing inspector provided an initial inspection report, and the property failed nearly every inspection at the time owner Shaadi Elias purchased the property. He contended that the inspector gave Mr. Elias permission to install the vinyl siding. Mr. Elias elaborated that he worked with the inspector to correct the issues with the property, and the siding was already about 93% installed when the project was stopped by HARB staff. He stated that he spent \$4,200 to \$4,600 on materials and approximately \$15,000 on labor to install the siding.

Mr. Jordan stated that the HARB would not be able to recommend legalizing the vinyl siding since it does not comply with the guidelines. He added that the only possible path toward an approval would be to propose a new material. Mr. Corkery questioned whether the owner could leave the vinyl siding on the three sides of the building, arguing that they are not visible from a right-of-way and only replace the small section of siding at the second story of the front façade.

Several HARB members noted that the adjacent building is set back significantly, and the west elevation is highly visible from Gordon Street. Mr. Elias stated that he would be interested in working with the city to modify the front. The HARB contended that the board could not approve the existing siding at the front or west façade, since both are highly visible and the siding would need to be replaced in both locations.

Action:

Mr. Hart moved to deny the application presented on 10/2/2023 to legalize the vinyl siding installed at 932 W. Gordon Street, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.2 Wood Siding & Trim. Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous support.