

Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2023-00093

Address: 327 N. Nagle Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Paresh Patel, owner

Proposal: Legalize reconstruction of rear addition (violation correction)

Building Description:

This 2-story brick end-of-row house, c. 1910, is a ½ Street Vernacular house, has a flat roof with a single chimney. The windows are 1/1 sash with segmental arches in brickwork. The main entry is a single 6-panel solid door with an aluminum awning over it. There is a long concrete stoop in front of the house.

Project Description:

This application is the second seeking to legalize the reconstruction of a rear addition without permits. On May 25, 2023, the property owner submitted an application for a certificate of appropriateness to restucco the rear addition of the building at 327 N. Nagle Street. Staff approved the application since the work would have been an in-kind replacement. Staff was later notified by Building Standards and Safety that the work exceeded the approved scope and that Building Standards had issued a stop work order and tagged the building as unsafe. According to the inspector, the removal of the stucco showed that the addition was in extremely poor condition and in danger of collapse. Because the owner worked outside the approved scope, staff issued a notice of violation and revoked the original certificate of appropriateness. The owner proceeded to work to address the unsafe violation prior to permits being issued and rebuilt the addition. The addition has been reframed, enclosed, and stuccoed. At least one door was relocated to a new façade. This application includes plans stamped by an engineer and requests legalization of the addition.



Front and side façades of 327 N. Nagle Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)



Photo showing the wall condition following stucco removal.
(City of Allentown)

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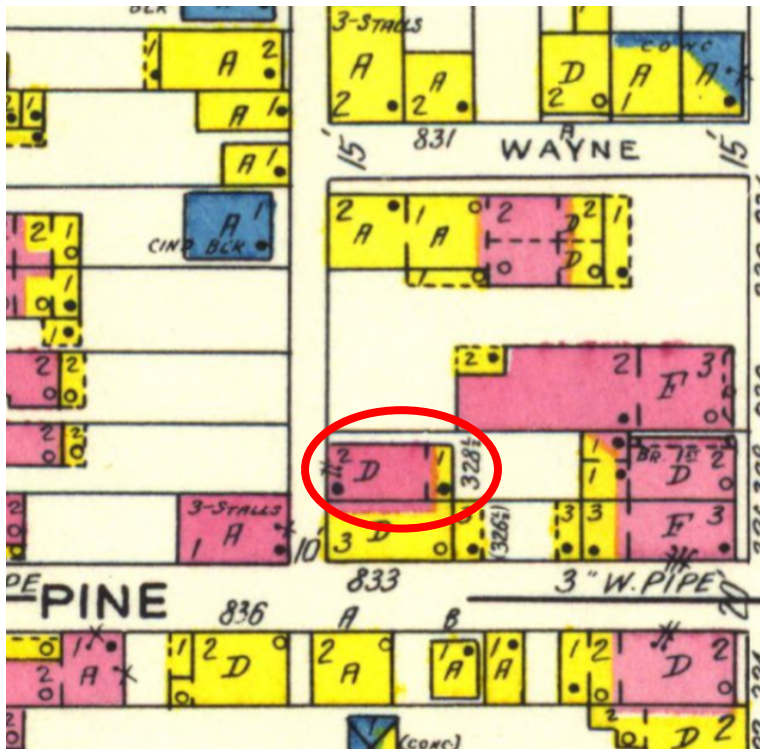
Side façade with walls removed and reframed.
(City of Allentown)



Rear of the rebuilt addition visible from Pine Street.
(City of Allentown)



Photo showing rebuilt wall with door moved.
(City of Allentown)



1932 Sanborn map showing that a small one-story frame addition
existed.
(Pennsylvania State University Libraries)

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Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.15 – Demolition

3.15.2 Evaluate the significance of the building and its contribution to the historic district. Determine if the building has individual architectural, cultural, or social significance or is associated with significant people or events. It is recommended to reference the National Register of Historic Places' criteria for significance. Determine its contribution to the historic district. Buildings that are eligible or listed in the National Register and/or are significant features of the historic district should be preserved.

3.15.3 Determine if the building retains historic integrity. Evaluate the cumulative impact of past alterations. Buildings that have been altered to such an extent that they no longer convey their significance or contribute to the historic district may have more flexibility in review.

3.15.4 Provide documentation that the feasibility of rehabilitation has been sufficiently investigated and alternatives to demolition have been explored. Documentation may include feasibility studies, professional conditions assessments, structural report by a licensed engineer, cost estimates, or similar due diligence. Documentation can be provided in written descriptions, photographs, drawings, and financial data.

3.15.8 If demolition is proposed because the City's Building Inspector has declared a clear and present danger, provide official documentation with the application. The Building Inspector may determine that a building is in a state of collapse or has deteriorated to such a point that it is a public safety concern. This finding should be supported by documentation from a licensed structural engineer.

3.15.9 Avoid demolition by neglect through regular maintenance, repair, and restoration. Severe deterioration and poor condition that is the result of neglect can be considered a self-created hardship and is not an appropriate justification for demolition.

3.15.10 Consider the factor of compatibility within the historic district. Buildings were constructed after the district's period of significance or are intrusive to historic patterns of material, design, scale, proportion, and massing may be reviewed with greater flexibility.

Observations & Comments:

Staff finds that the addition held no architectural or historical significance and was constructed after 1932, though the exact date was not determined. The addition consisted of frame construction and contained no architecturally significant details or features. The north elevation included one second-story window and one entry door at the east end. The rear elevation had one window at each story, and the south elevation contained no openings and was partially visible from Pine Street.

At the HARB's September 2023 review, the board found that the application was incomplete and recommended denial, with the comment that the application would need to include plans stamped by an engineer to satisfy both the HARB and Building Standards. The current application includes stamped plans with a note that the existing EIFS will need to be removed and a new stucco or EIFS system properly installed with proper flashing and sealant. Previously, the applicant had stated that the windows and doors in the addition were reused from the previous openings.

Staff finds that if the applicant satisfies the requirements to properly restucco the addition, the work will comply with the design guidelines since no historic material was lost and the reconstruction will largely be completed in-kind.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.15 Demolition.

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Discussion: The discussion focused on the past history and details of the project, the type and color of exterior finish, and the changes from the original rear addition. The provided photos made it difficult to understand the changes from the original rear addition to the new addition. The main change was the location of a door that was on the north elevation to the east elevation. Otherwise the addition matched the original addition. The original addition had been covered with an EIFS stucco. The new addition will have a similar EIFS stucco. Mr. Huber thought the original might have been painted. The applicant said it was not painted.

Mr. Jordan questioned whether the project needed a COA if it was reconstructed in kind. Mr. Huber pointed out the change in door location and it was decided a COA was needed.

Actions:

Mr. AJ Jordan moved to approve, with conditions, the application presented on January 8th, 2024, for legalizing the reconstruction of the rear addition of 327 N Nagle, pursuant to Chapter 3, section 3.15 demolition, and found that there were circumstances unique to the property, and that this application was largely a replacement in kind, except for the changed door location. The following conditions were agreed to by the applicant:

- The addition must be approved through code

Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.