

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

**October 4, 2021  
FINAL REVIEW**

**Property Location:** 805 W. Chew

**Agenda Item:** 2.d.

**Case:** HDC-2021-00021

**Meeting Date:** October 4, 2021

**Property Owner/Applicant:** Rafael A. Recio & Gesenia Rodriguez

**Building description, period, style defining features:**

This 3-story brick row house, ca 1865 is Italianate in style and is a combination of commercial and residential usage. The roof is flat and cannot be seen, there may be a shared chimney. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is a business with a large window; the main entry is a single glazed door with an Allentown Porch Roof over the door. There are concrete steps and a stoop with wrought iron railings leading up to the door. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has a single 2/2 sash window with an Edwardian three window bay with a cornice. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor has three 2/2 sash windows, all the single windows have curved projecting Italianate lintels. The brick has been painted white with gray paint below the 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows. There are two basement windows that look to be boarded closed. The Allentown Roof that is in place over the doorway is a cyma-curve profile hood with closed ends and decorative wood brackets, the rafters are hidden and roof is asphalt shingles. This hood is one of six Allentown Porch Roofs in the neighborhood.



**Proposed alterations:**

1. Replacement of existing window sign with new window sign.

**Evaluation of Proposed Project:**

The proposed sign replacement does not contribute to the historic character of the building; however, the existing window sign also negatively impacts the building. The proposed sign appears to cover approximately the same amount of window area as the existing sign. The proposed lettering colors use darker blue than the existing sign, which appears to help the sign blend better into the background when the window is uncovered. This potential reduced visibility is encouraged; however, the lettering will likely be just as visible when the window is covered from the interior. The proposed design is symmetrical and more evenly divided across the two-light storefront window than the existing sign.

**Historic District Impact:**

The existing and proposed window signs do not contribute to the character of the surrounding historic district. The proposed sign does not appear to have more of an impact on the district than the existing sign. In the symmetrical design and darker lettering, it may be considered a slight improvement.

**HARB Discussion**

KP explained the history of the signage approval and the zoning approval process. The previous sign was approved in 2008.

AJ asked about HARBs purview over signage

KP referenced the preliminary review document with the Design Guidelines Section 11 paraphrased

AJ finds it appropriate

GL Noted the guidelines literally read “window lettering” and historically appropriate lettering would be preferred

DH stated the graphics are not in violation of the guidelines

AJ and GL do not feel it is HARBs purview to design the logo and that HARB should approve it as is

**Recommendation(s):**

To reduce the visual impact of the signage on the historic building and the surrounding district, it is recommended to use smaller, simpler window lettering and designs, and to reduce the overall amount of window area that is covered. The proposed sign is close to a like-for-like replacement of the existing sign in appearance and size, and it is recommended to consider any relative advantages of lettering color and symmetrical design. The proposed sign must comply with City zoning requirements for signage.

**Action**

Motion to accept the application with the recommendation to change the phone number to white numbers and remove the infill pattern on the graphic representation of scissors was made by HARB member Glenn Lichtenwalner, motion was seconded by HARB Chair Dave Huber. Motion carried with unanimous support.