

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
CITY OF ALLENTOWN  
December 15, 2021  
FINAL REVIEW**

**Property located at:** 31 N 12<sup>th</sup> St.

**Agenda Item:** #3.c.

**Historic District:** Old Allentown

**Case:** HDC-2021-00026

**Meeting date:** November 1, 2021/ **December 6, 2021**

**Property Owner/Applicant:** Maria M. Batista

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

This 3-story brick row house, ca 1916. The flat roof has two chimneys and a wide projecting eave and extensive dentilated brick cornice. The 1/1 sash windows are set into curved stenciled frames and topped by segmental arch brick lintels. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor has a large, fixed pane window topped by an elliptical arch transom with fan light tracery. This window has a full arch brick lintel. The main entry is a glazed double door. There is a concrete porch with a wrought iron railing covered with a canvas awning. A basement window grille is visible.



**Proposed alterations:**

1. Installation of a new window sign.

**Staff Approvals:** None

**Violations:**

2008: Satellite dish

**Prior COA(s):**

2008: Satellite dish (denied)

## **Secretary of Interior Standards:**

**Rehabilitation Standard 2:** The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

## **Design Guidelines-Section 11: 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 a sign should be compatible with the building's 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 storefronts with long horizontally proportioned signs above are appropriate.
- ✓ Residential structures should use smaller signs placed beside entry doors.
- ✓ 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.
- Internally illuminated LED or neon "OPEN" signs are appropriate if there are no illuminated borders (straight or arched), they do not blink or flash and they have a black or clear background. "OPEN" signs require staff approval.
- 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 installation of one window sign will not negatively impact the historic building. No new information has been submitted. Prior to the November meeting, Staff corresponded with the applicant and confirmed that the applicant revised the submitted COA applicant from two signs to one sign. The proposed window sign will be split between the two window sashes and appears to have a high amount of transparency. The location of the window sign was not specified. Based on photographs of the property, it is presumed at the proposed location is the basement level window at the commercial space that is partially below the sidewalk level. This location will have little visual impact to the historic character of the building. Applied window signs are considered a reversible change and will not damage historic materials.

## **Historic District Impact:**

The proposed sign will not have a negative impact the surrounding historic district. The overall transparency of the proposed sign will lessen the visual impact of the sign. The proposed location at the basement level will not impact the overall historic character of the street.

## **HARB Discussion**

No description if vinyl or painted, color is undetermined, not enough information presented  
KP pointed out the guidelines state signage must be appropriate to the building, arguably the guidelines are vague in nature.

## **Recommendation(s)**

The proposed sign appears to be appropriate. It is recommended that the applicant confirm the location of the proposed window sign for the record prior to approval or that the motion specify which window location is approved.

**Action**

A motion to approve the application as presented with the condition the window sign is vinyl and no wall sign is permitted was made by HARB Member AJ Jordan; motion was seconded by HARB member Glenn Lichtenwalner. Motion carried with unanimous support.