



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

30601

RESOLUTION

R50 – 2023

Introduced by the Administration on March 1, 2023

Certificate of Appropriateness for work in the Historic Districts:

- 1550-52 W. Chew St.
- 1118 W. Turner St.
- 735 Oak St.
- 937 North St.

Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That

WHEREAS, Certificates of Appropriateness are required under the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania No. 167, June 13, 1961 (P.L. 282) and City of Allentown Ordinance No. 12314; and

WHEREAS, the following properties whose respective owners applied for and were granted approval by the Allentown Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) to undertake specific exterior alterations on said properties as indicated in the attached Final Review Reports, which form part of this resolution:

- 1550-52 W. Chew St. (Timothy and Amy Driscoll, Owners) – Legalize turret roof replacement.
- 1118 W. Turner St. (Ramie Batihk, Owner) – Legalize PVC pipes at Poplar Street façade.
- 735 Oak St. (Rafaela Estrella, Owner) – Install solar panels.
- 937 North St. (Margarita Benitez, Owner) – Install solar panels.

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2022, the Allentown HARB recommended approval of the above applications, or offered modifications which were subsequently accepted by the property owners, to City Council; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing the attached final review reports, it is the opinion of City Council that the proposed work is appropriate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Allentown that Certificates of Appropriateness are hereby granted for the above referenced work.

	Yea	Nay
Candida Affa	X	
Ce-Ce Gerlach	X	
Cynthia Y. Mota		
Santo Napoli	X	
Natalie Santos	X	
Ed Zucal	X	
Daryl Hendricks, President	X	
TOTAL	6	0

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That the above copy of Resolution No. 30601 was adopted by the City Council of Allentown on the 1st day of March, 2023, and is on file in the City Clerk's Office.


City Clerk

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

HDC-2023-00004

Address: 735 Oak Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Christine Steighner, Suntuity Solar

Proposal: Install solar panels

Building Description:

This two-story brick twin house, ca 1891, is Eastlake in style. The gable roof has asphalt shingles, a dentilated cornice, and a single chimney with drip ledges. The side yard has an iron fence. [Staff notes that the fence has been replaced prior to 2019, presumably without a COA.] The windows are 1/1 sash with Eastlake frames. The main entry is a single door with Eastlake transom. The building features a concrete stoop with a decorative basement window grille. A semi-enclosed porch exists at the rear.

Project Description:

This application proposes to install solar panels on the roof of the property at 735 Oak Street. The two-and-a-half-story twin building has a gable roof and is separated from the property to the east by a private driveway. The rear of the property is not visible from a public right-of-way. A six-panel solar array is proposed at the front slope of the roof, with a four-panel array proposed at the rear. The disconnect would be located at the front with the utility meter.

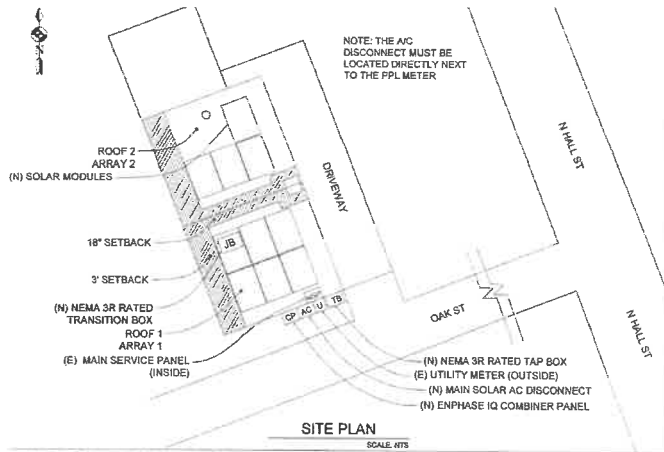


**Front façade of 735 Oak Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)**

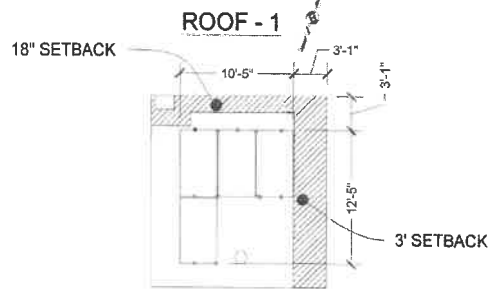
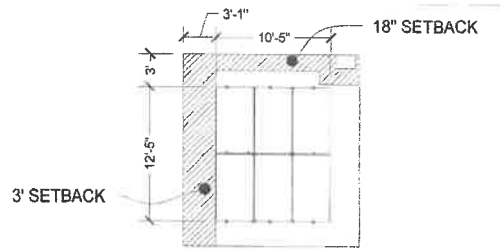


**Front and side of 735 Oak Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)**

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



**Site plan.
(Applicant)**



ARRAY LAYOUT
SCALE: NTS

**Array layout.
(Applicant)**

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.10 – Solar Energy and Energy Improvements

3.10.3 Minimize visibility of solar panels, mounting equipment, and necessary mechanical equipment from the public right-of-way. For pitched roofs, locate solar collectors on rear roof slopes whenever possible. For pitched roofs where all slopes are visible, locate collectors as far back from the street as possible. For flat roofs, locate collectors as far back from the top of street-facing facades as possible.

3.10.4 Attach solar collectors or other equipment in the least invasive method feasible so that the alteration is reversible in the future.

3.10.5 Install solar collectors or equipment as flat as possible to the surface where they are installed. Placement parallel to the roof surface is encouraged. If a horizontal or vertical tilt is required for functionality, adjust the pitch to use the smallest angle possible.

3.10.6 Choose energy systems, mounting equipment, and necessary mechanical equipment in a color compatible with existing roof materials whenever possible and with non-reflective finishes.

Observations & Comments:

The 6-panel solar array at the front slope would have a 5'-9" setback from the front façade with a 3' setback from the side façade where the private driveway is located. The solar panels would project 6" off the roof and would likely be visible from Oak Street. Staff recommends installing a mock-up of the proposed array at this location to determine visibility. The solar panels should be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way to comply with the guidelines. Staff also suggests that the disconnect and associated utilities be moved off the front façade to a less conspicuous location, if possible.

Staff finds that the solar array proposed at the rear would not be visible from a right-of-way and complies with the guidelines.

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, provided a mockup shows that the array on the front roof slope is inconspicuous from Oak Street, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.10 Solar Energy and Energy Improvements.

HARB Discussion:

Mr. Jordan agreed with the staff recommendation, adding that there is no guidance in the guidelines about installing solar arrays on historic slate roofs, though he noted that that is not a consideration in this application. He then commented that staff suggested moving the utilities to a secondary façade, though it was not in the actual recommendation. He asked whether the HARB would be interested in pursuing that option. Mr. Huber affirmed that the utilities should be moved but contended that the HARB cannot require that existing utilities be moved. Ms. Keller stated that the disconnect for the solar panels needs to be installed with the existing utility meter, adding that utility companies can move meters off building facades and that she could write a letter to make the request. She then clarified that the HARB cannot explicitly regulate utility meters, so if the utility company is unwilling or unable to relocate the meters, the disconnect associated with the solar panels would need to be installed on the front façade. The HARB agreed.

The HARB discussed having the applicant install a mockup for staff to review for visibility of the panel proposed for the front roof slope.

Action:

Mr. Hart moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 2/6/2023 for the installation of solar panels at 735 Oak Street, as agreed to by the applicant and with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.10 Solar Energy and Energy Improvements, provided the utility meters are moved to a secondary façade and a mockup shows that the solar panels proposed at the front slope are inconspicuous from the right-of-way. Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

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

HDC-2023-00005

Address: 937 North Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Christine Steighner, Suntuity Solar

Proposal: Install solar panels

Building Description:

This two-and-a-half-story rowhouse, ca. 1892, is side-street vernacular in style. The roof is gable with slate shingles. There dormer front is bracketed with shakes, and the dormer cheek walls are covered with beveled slate. The windows are 1/1 sash with Eastlake frames, and the basement window has a decorative metal grille. The cornice retains four carved wood brackets. The main entry is a single, glazed door. There is a shared grocer's alley door and a concrete stoop with an asphalt-covered awning.

Project Description:

This application proposes to install solar panels on the roof of the property at 937 North Street. The two-and-a-half-story building is located mid-block and has a gable roof over the main block with a flat roof at the rear ell. Three solar panel arrays are proposed, including one at the front slope, one at the rear slope, and a larger array over the rear flat roof. The disconnect would be installed with the utility meter at the rear of the property.

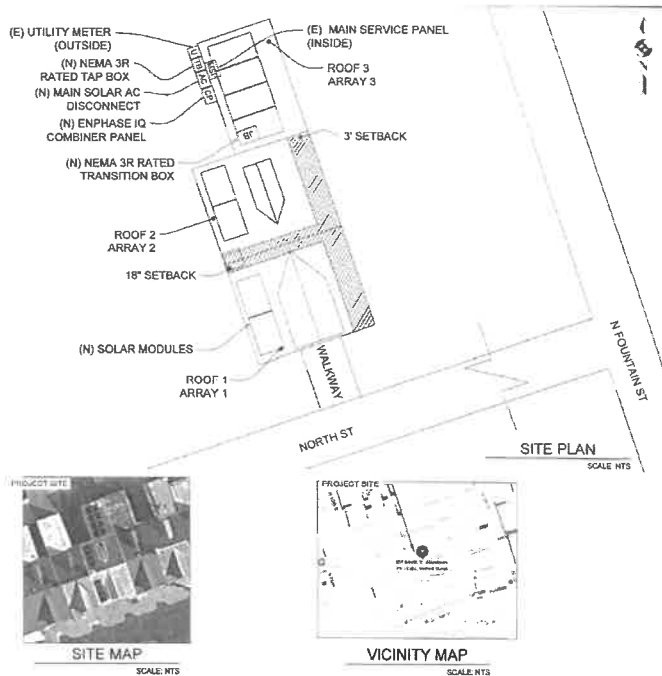


**Front façade of 937 North Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)**

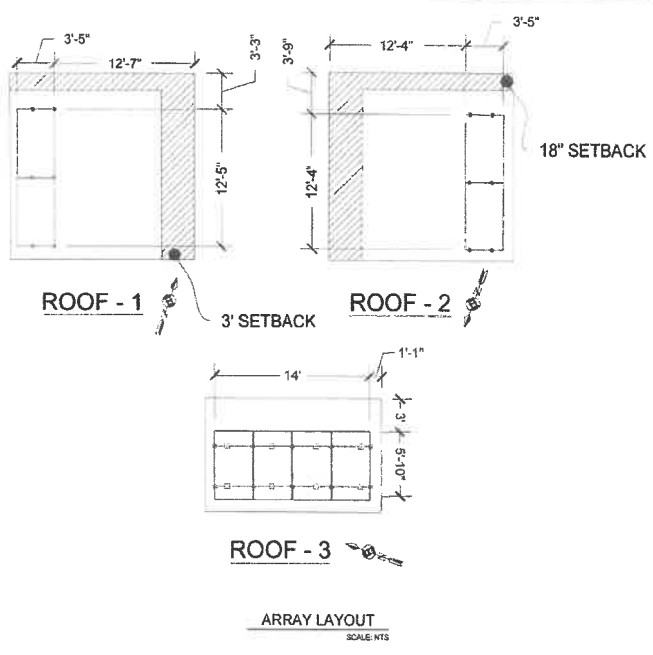


**Rear of 937 North Street, 2023.
(Applicant)**

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



**Site plan.
(Applicant)**



**Array layout.
(Applicant)**

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.10 – Solar Energy and Energy Improvements

3.10.3 Minimize visibility of solar panels, mounting equipment, and necessary mechanical equipment from the public right-of-way. For pitched roofs, locate solar collectors on rear roof slopes whenever possible. For pitched roofs where all slopes are visible, locate collectors as far back from the street as possible. For flat roofs, locate collectors as far back from the top of street-facing facades as possible.

3.10.4 Attach solar collectors or other equipment in the least invasive method feasible so that the alteration is reversible in the future.

3.10.5 Install solar collectors or equipment as flat as possible to the surface where they are installed. Placement parallel to the roof surface is encouraged. If a horizontal or vertical tilt is required for functionality, adjust the pitch to use the smallest angle possible.

3.10.6 Choose energy systems, mounting equipment, and necessary mechanical equipment in a color compatible with existing roof materials whenever possible and with non-reflective finishes.

Observations & Comments:

A solar panel array is proposed to be located on the west side of the dormer at the front slope and would have a 3-foot setback from the front façade. The solar panels would project 6-inches off the roof and would likely be visible from North Street. Staff recommends installing a mock-up of the proposed array at this location to determine visibility. The solar panels should be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way to comply with the guidelines.

At the rear, the property abuts Broome Street, which is a service alley that dead ends behind the building. While the solar array on the rear slope of the gable roof would be visible from the alley, this portion of the building is considered a non-contributing secondary façade and the visibility of the solar panels does not have an adverse impact on the district.

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, provided a mockup shows that the array on the front roof slope is inconspicuous from North Street, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.10 Solar Energy and Energy Improvements.

HARB Discussion:

Although no property owner was present, Ms. Keller suggested that the HARB review the application, since it is nearly identical to the previous application.

The HARB discussed whether staff can generally approve solar panels located on primary facades of properties rather than referring applications to the board. Ms. Keller noted that the design guidelines state that locating solar panels on the roof facing the street or main façade should be avoided, adding that the HARB could consider allowing staff to approve inconspicuous panels located on those facades. Mr. Jordan read a section of the guidelines that recommend minimizing visibility on pitched roofs. He noted that not all roof slopes are visible and that the HARB would remain within the guidelines to approve panels not visible from the right-of-way. He contended that the HARB seems to agree that the current application could be approved but that there may need to be further discussion on the threshold for future staff approvals.

Action:

Mr. Hart moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 2/6/2023 for the installation of solar panels at 937 North Street, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.10 Solar Energy and Energy Improvements, provided a mockup shows that the solar panels proposed at the front slope are inconspicuous from the right-of-way. Mr. Encelewski seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

HDV-2022-00003

Address: 1118 W. Turner Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Ramie Batihk

Proposal: Legalize PVC pipes at Poplar Street façade (Violation Correction)

Building Description:

This three-story brick row house, ca. 1910, is Edwardian in style. The mansard roof has slate shingles, projecting eaves which have been covered with aluminum, a turret and tent roof. The first floor has a picture window with stained glass transom. There is an aluminum covered oriel window and 1/1 sash windows on the second and third floors. A concrete stoop which has been covered with stonecote leads to a single-glazed main door.

Project Description:

This application proposes to legalize the installation of PVC pipes on the Poplar Street façade of 1118 W. Turner Street. The pipes were installed to ventilate a basement heating system. While the contractor obtained a building permit to install the heating system, the permit application failed to note that any exterior alteration would be required. The contractor did not apply for the required Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alteration. Staff contacted the owner on May 6, 2022 via email to inform him that such an alteration is inappropriate and requires a COA. After no action was taken, staff sent a Notice of Violation on November 15, 2022.



Poplar Street elevation of 1118 W. Turner Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)



PVC pipes installed at 1118 W. Turner Street, November 2022.
(Staff)

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.8 – Mechanical & Utility Equipment

3.8.7 Limit the number of new penetrations when designing a new or updated system. Penetrations, whether located on a roof or exterior wall, increase the risk of water infiltration and damage to the building envelope. Properly flash and waterproof all new penetrations.

3.8.8 Minimize the visibility of vents and penetrations at primary facades and from the public right-of-way. Locate rooftop vents and penetrations on rear roofs, rear or non-visible roof slopes, or conceal behind chimneys. Minimize the visibility of vents in eave soffits or wall penetrations through sensitive placement, material and color selection, and painting. Place ground-level pipes and vents in rear yards and along non-visible facades.

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

3.8.9 Consider reusing existing lines and vents when designing or upgrading the system, if there is sufficient capacity. Using existing vents reduces the disturbance of historic materials and avoids unnecessary penetrations in the building envelope.

Observations & Comments:

The PVC pipes were installed in a highly visible location on a contributing secondary façade. Staff recommends considering alternative venting solutions, such as venting through the roof or at the rear of the property. If the pipes cannot be relocated, staff recommends considering a flush vent painted to match the masonry. The current venting configuration does not comply with the venting design guidelines in Chapter 3.8 of the historic district design guidelines, which state that “gooseneck exhaust pipes or similar should not be located on visible facades and roof slopes” (page 70).

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.8 Mechanical & Utility Equipment, with the recommendation that more appropriate venting options be explored.

HARB Discussion:

Mr. Jordan stated that at the last meeting, the HARB considered various venting options and found that most were infeasible. He noted that the most likely possibility would be a flush vent option, adding that there was debate over whether it would meet code.

Ms. Ibrahim responded that the contractor evaluated the chimney and determined it was not healthy and could not be used to vent the heating system. She commented that the contractor submitted a photo of a low exterior vent that could be installed in place of the PVC pipes, but that it may not meet code and could lead to ice on the sidewalk. She contended that the most feasible option would be to run pipes at the interior of the building and install a vent through the wall where the existing PVC pipes vent.

Mr. Jordan commented that a low vent could be installed where the pipes are currently punched through the building, adding that it may or may not meet code, or the pipes could be vented higher as Ms. Ibrahim mentioned. He advocated for the HARB to approve two options based on what code allows: one being a low flush-mount vent just above the building's base, and the second being a flush-mount vent located further up the wall. Mr. Huber agreed with the two options.

Ms. Keller remarked that if the HARB approves the two options and the applicant must remove the PVC pipes and install a flush-mount vent above the current penetration that the applicant patch the existing hole with masonry to match the brick rather than cementing or patching the hole with an inappropriate material.

Action:

Mr. Jordan moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 2/6/2023 for the legalization of the PVC pipes at 1118 W. Turner Street, as agreed to by the applicant and with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.8 Mechanical & Utility Equipment, provided the following:

- A flush-mount vent in a color to match the surrounding masonry is installed at the current penetration;
- Or that the pipes are installed at the building's interior and a flush-mount vent in a color to match the surrounding masonry is installed at the appropriate venting height, with the current penetration to be infilled with appropriately matched brick and a compatible mortar.

Mr. Jordan noted that there are unique circumstances owing to the unique sidewalk conditions on Poplar Street. Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

BST-2022-00024

Address: 1550-52 W. Chew Street

District: West Park Historic District

Applicant: Tim F. Driscoll, Owner

Proposal: Legalize turret roof replacement (Violation Correction)

Building Description:

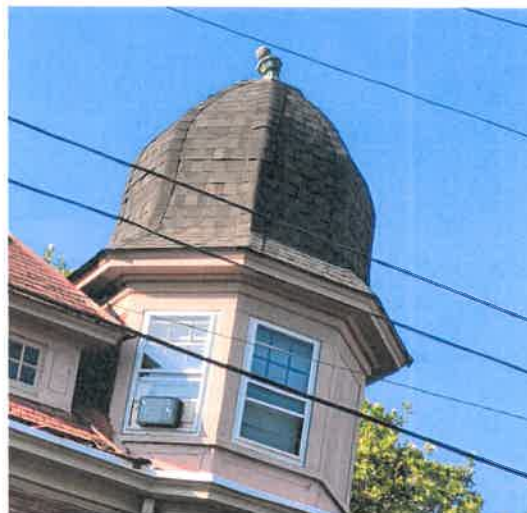
This 3-story brick house, c. 1927 is Queen Anne in style. The gambrel roof has a double dormer with 6/1 sash windows, two dormers with hipped roofs and 8 pane windows, projecting cornice, single chimney, asphalt shingles and a corner turret with a dome roof. The 2nd floor turret has 9/1 sash windows with wood panels above them and on either side. The 1st floor has a picture window with stained glass transom and 1/1 sash windows on either side of the walk around porch. The main entry is a single $\frac{3}{4}$ glazed door with brick lintel on door and windows. The brick porch has square brick pillars, classic wood columns and ornate wooden railing. There is a steel fire escape on the N 16th Street side.

Project Description:

On July 1, 2022, a Stop Work Order was issued by a building inspector from Building Standards and Safety at the request of the Staff for the removal of the historic red slate and decorative copper ridge caps at the turret roof. The work was undertaken without a COA or building permit. This application proposes to legalize the installation of Tamko Heritage Series asphalt shingles at the turret roof.



1550-52 W. Chew Street turret roof in 2019.
(Google StreetView)



1550-52 W. Chew Street turret roof after work was completed. (Staff)

Historical Architectural Review Board COA Final Review Sheet

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.1 – Roofs

3.1.3 Repair and restore original and historic roofing materials whenever possible. Evaluate the condition and cost of repair of original materials before removing and replacing them. Targeted areas of repair or localized in-kind replacement may be the most effective and low-cost solution.

3.1.5 Preserve architectural features that give the roof its unique and building-specific character—such as dormers, turrets, chimneys, cornices, rolled ridge flashing, cresting, and finials. Repair and restore features; replace in-kind only when necessary.

3.1.6 Replace historic roofing materials in-kind whenever possible if severe deterioration makes a full replacement necessary. Replacement material should match the original in material, dimension, shape, profile, color, pattern, exposure, and overall appearance.

3.1.7 If in-kind replacement is not feasible, replace historic roofing materials with alternate materials that resemble the original as closely as possible. Roof replacement should be sensitive to the original appearance. Replacement materials should match roof slopes or shape.

Observations & Comments:

While the historic roofing material was in disrepair with displaced and missing shingles and missing sections of the decorative ridge caps, the roof should have been surveyed by a professional for the potential to repair rather than replace the entire turret roof. If complete replacement was truly necessary, the design guidelines stipulate that appropriate materials be used. In this case, a slate alternative such as a synthetic slate or an architectural shingle that replicates the dimensions, shape, profile, color, and exposure would have been more appropriate. The decorative ridge caps were a character-defining feature of the roof and should have been salvaged and reinstalled where possible, with missing sections replicated. The replacement roofing does not replicate the original roofing in material, dimension, shape, profile, color, exposure, or overall appearance. The work does not comply with the design guidelines and should not be legalized.

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.1 Roofs. The staff recommends that a more appropriate roofing material be installed to replicate the historic roof in its dimension, shape, profile, color, exposure, and overall appearance and that the decorative ridge caps be replicated as closely as possible in material, dimension, shape, and profile.

HARB Discussion:

Mr. Hillegas argued that returning the turret roof to slate would be cost prohibitive. Mr. Huber countered that a slate alternative, such as EcoStar, could be used instead of real slate and noted that such a material is less expensive.

Mr. Hart questioned whether the HARB is still considering the previously proposed slate alternative material. Mr. Hart noted that at the last meeting where the property owner was present, the owner proposed to install Boral Inspire Classic Slate Shingles in Brick Red. Mr. Hillegas affirmed that the material could still be considered for approval. He then asked whether the ridge caps offered by the company could be installed. Mr. Huber replied that copper ridge caps that replicate the original in dimension and profile should be installed rather than the Boral ridge caps since the Boral product would not be a comparable material.

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

Action:

Mr. Encelewski moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 2/6/2023 for the legalization of the turret roof at 1550-52 W. Chew Street, as agreed to by the applicant and with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.1 Roofs, provided Boral Inspire Classic Slate Shingles in Brick Red are used and that ridge caps matching the historic in material, dimension, and profile are installed. Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.