

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

Property located at: 1116 Linden St.

Agenda Item: #3.a.

Historic District: Old Allentown

Case: HDC-2021-00028

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

Property Owner/Applicant: Tim Driscoll

Building description, period, style defining features (1116&1118):

This 3-story Eastlake style twin home was built ca 1885. The roof is mansards style with scalloped slate shingles and double dormers. The cornice is corbeled with elaborate detailing. The windows are 1/1 sash with Queen Anne-stained glass in the top sashes. The windows have incised floral designs in the window and door trim and have their original shutters, paneled on the 1st floor, louvered on the 2nd floor. The main entry is double ¾-glazed doors with glass transoms. There are grilles on the basement windows. The porches is concrete with a missing railing (previously metal pipe)



Proposed alterations:

1. Installation of new front stoop handrail.

Staff Approvals: None

Violations:

1996: Failure to maintain woodwork from deterioration

Prior COA(s):

1985: Installation of new exterior doors and windows, removal/relocation of fire escape, removal of chimney, addition of new fence, new lighting, brickote repair, change of door to window on second floor, new gutters and downspouts.

2003: Replacement of grocer's alley doors

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 7: Porches, Stoops and Steps

The character defining features, materials, configurations, details and dimensions of porches and stoops should be preserved and repaired. "Allentown" porch roofs, such as the one shown above, should be preserved and repaired. The removal of an "Allentown" porch roof in some circumstances may be acceptable and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If features of porches and stoops require replacement, the component used for replacement should replicate the historic material, configuration, dimension, detail and design. Deteriorated tongue and groove or bead board decking should be replaced in-kind. New construction of porches and stoops should be of an appropriate style and configuration consistent with the building's character and designated historic district.

- Use of vinyl railing systems and unpainted pressure treated lumber is typically not appropriate. Covering wood porch floor decking with ceramic tile is not historically appropriate.
- Covering wood porch floor decking with carpet is not historically appropriate and will lead to further damage and rotting of wood.
- Installing ceiling fans on porch ceilings is inappropriate and not recommended

Evaluation of Proposed Project:

The applicant provided some of the additional information requested at the previous meeting; the applicant provided a written description and two annotated photographs of the stoop confirming that the railing will be installed on the top of the wall. Although the intent of the application is generally clear, the submitted information still conflicts with the project description about the railing's height. The submitted railing elevation drawing shows a railing height of 23-1/4" and overall height of 38-1/4"; the project description states the railing height will be 42". The drawing indicates a flat "porch floor" behind the wall, not the existing stairs.

The proposed railing is appropriate in its wrought iron material, simple square pickets, and painted black finish, and in appearance will match the existing handrail attached to the facade. The stoop has already been altered with a rough textured stucco. Overall, at the submitted lower height, the proposed railing does not appear to negatively impact the historic building.

Historic District Impact:

Based on the design of the proposed railing and interpretation of the railing's height, the proposed project does not appear to negatively impact the surrounding historic district. The proposed railing (at 23-1/4" in height) appears to be close to the railing height of the attached twin building to the east. The attached twin building has a pipe railing. For the attached building to the west, the proposed railing will be similar in appearance to this building's railing, although taller because of the existing height of the stoop wall. There is a variety of stoop and railing appearances on the block.

Recommendation(s):

The proposed railing appears appropriate in its materials and design. If the application is therefore recommended for approval despite the conflicting information, it is recommended that the motion specify that

the railing height is approved at a maximum of 23-1/4" above the top of the wall as shown in the submitted drawing.

HARB Discussion

Railing height: AJ questioned HARB review of the railing height, stating it is a zoning matter and not one for HARB. SO brought the railing height discrepancy from the drawing and the written proposal to the attention of HARB.

Action

A motion to approve the application as presented was made by HARB Member Alex Encelewski; motion was seconded by HARB chair David Huber Motion carried with one nay by HARB member AJ Jordan who cited the ambiguity of the railing height not specified in the application.