

# Historical Architectural Review Board COA Preliminary Review Sheet

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**HDC-2024-001114**

**Address: 523 Allen Street**

**District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District**

**Owner: Raymond and Linda Armstrong**

**Applicant: Tyron Robinson**

**Proposal: Installation of second floor balcony railing and supports.**

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**Building Description:** This 2½-story brick row house, ca 1894 is a porch house. The gable roof has a double dormer and slate shingles and a double chimney. The windows are 2/2 sash. The main entry is a double door on a wooden porch with wood balustrade. There is a two car garage at the rear of the property, ca 1919. Window boxes and all detail original and there is a porch on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rear.

## **Project Description:**

The proposed work is to install a wood railing and support posts at the rear second floor balcony.



Front Elevation April 2024 (Google Maps Imagery)

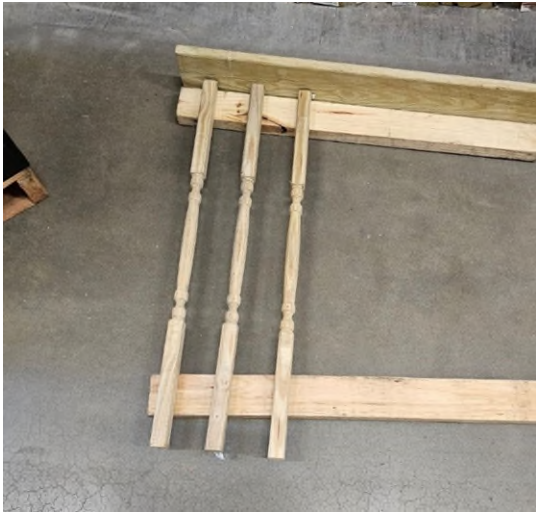
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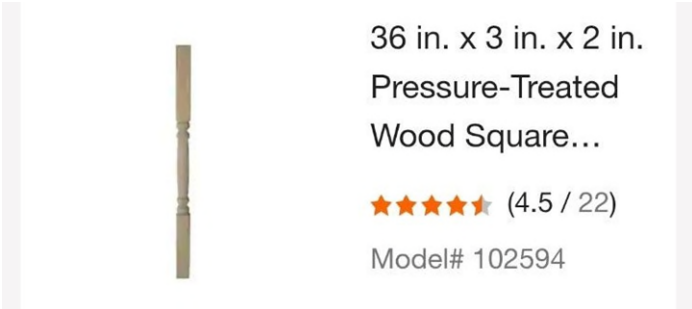
Rear Condition c.2019 (Google Maps)



Current Condition at Rear (Applicant)



Proposed Railing (Applicant)



Proposed Spindle (Applicant)

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### Applicable Guidelines:

#### **Section 3.7 – Porches & Steps**

**3.7.3** Repair and restore existing porches and steps whenever possible. Salvage, repair, and reuse existing components including deck floor boards, railings, balusters, posts, and decorative trim. Repair and restore basement level windows or metal grates that are part of the porch base.

**3.7.4** Replace individual deteriorated components in-kind with new materials matching the original in material, composition, size, shape, profile, dimension, appearance, and finish. Custom fabrication is encouraged and may be necessary to provide an exact match. Where an exact match of the historic element cannot be found or fabricated, the new element should match the original as closely as possible.

**3.7.5** Retain and repair original handrails or railings. Replace in-kind if repair is not feasible. Replacement handrails should match the existing in material, size, and appearance as closely as possible. Installation of handrails where they did not previously exist is generally not recommended due to the visual and physical impact on historic fabric; however, installation of a simple, compatible design may be acceptable for the purpose of safety and ease of access.

**3.7.6** Consider restoration of previously altered porches with historically appropriate elements. Consult historic photographs to identify the original appearance. If the building is part of a pair or an attached row that was designed together, consult nearby buildings for examples.

**3.7.7** Replace porches only if repair and select replacement is not feasible. A full demolition and rebuild is rarely necessary except in cases of severe deterioration and life safety concerns. Replicate the original design as closely as possible, allowing for structural and code requirements. Install flashing and waterproofing at all connections between the porch and main building.

**3.7.8** If in-kind replacement is not feasible, replace with appropriate alternate materials that respect the original appearance and are durable. Composite wood decking is an appropriate alternate for tongue-and-groove wood floors if boards are similar to the original dimensions. Ceramic tile, carpet, or cementitious coatings over wood are not appropriate floor materials. Steel, iron, and aluminum railings are acceptable replacements. Vinyl railings and trim are not appropriate alternate materials for wood elements. Use of dimensional lumber for visible parts of a porch is not appropriate.

**3.7.9** Avoid enclosing historically open porches on primary and highly visible facades. Enclosure with glass or screens at rear or non-visible features may be acceptable. Enclosure with walls or opaque materials is not recommended. Avoid removing, altering, or covering historic details.

**3.7.10** Avoid removing a historic porch roof or full porch. Removal will negatively impact the building's historic character. Consult with Planning Staff and HARB about the reason for removal (i.e. cause of deterioration). A porch that was added after the original construction of a building may have gained significance in its own right. Porches can be appropriate for the building as a reflection of its development over time and as an expression of a later architectural style.

**Observations & Comments:** The proposed spindles for the railing are an appropriate replacement to the current condition. More information would be helpful to understand the configuration of the proposed railing system, including the orientation of the 2x4 framing shown in the photo "Proposed Railing." It would be appropriate if the construction of the railing maintains similar proportions to the original railing at the front porch, particularly that the framing is oriented horizontally at the top and bottom of the proposed spindles.

The current condition photo indicates additional posts supporting the balcony in addition to two original corner/intermediate posts. More information would be helpful to understand the intent of the proposed work; an appropriate approach would be to repair/replace posts in the original locations and remove intermediate posts that were later added as supplemental support.

All wood elements, including posts, railings, and spindles, are to be painted.

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**Staff Recommendation:** More information is required to understand the intent of the proposed work. With the presented information, staff recommend approval with the following conditions:

- Railing assembly maintains similar proportions to the original railing at the front porch, and that the railings are constructed in a similar matter (2x framing is oriented horizontally at the top and bottom of the proposed spindles).
- Wood posts are repaired/replaced at the original post locations, and supplemental posts that were previously installed are removed.
- All wood elements are painted.

**Action:** Mr. Hammond made a motion to approve the application to replace the railing on the rear second story balcony with the conditions agreed to by the applicant following sections of the Guidelines of Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.7 -Porches and steps and finding no circumstances unique to the property:

- Railing assembly maintains similar proportions to the original railing at the front porch, and that the railings are constructed in a similar matter (2x framing is oriented horizontally at the top and bottom of the proposed spindles).
- Wood posts are repaired/replaced at the original post locations, and supplemental posts that were previously installed are removed.
- All wood elements are painted.

Ms. Schreirer seconded the motion, and none opposed.