Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2025-00010
Address: 419 N 9th Street
District: Old Allentown Historic District
Owner: Archana Gujjari and Kiran Kumar Nalla
Applicant: Owner
Proposal: Window replacement at front and rear

Building Description: This is a three-story row house, ca. 1889, in the Italianate style. The third story is divided with a dormer on the right side and a flat turret on the left side. The moldings between the second and third floor are dentilated. The window are 1/1 sash with segmental arched lintels and eyebrow trim, in the Eastlake design, directly above them. The basement has a wrought iron window grille. The main entry is a single glazed door with transom. The front porch has a wrought iron railing. The exterior walls are covered with stonecote, and there is a single chimney.

Project Description: Replace four windows facing 9th Street, and one rear window only visible from the side. Decrease the size of the first floor 9-lite window in the rear. The existing windows show significant signs of wear, including drafts, rotting wood, and difficulty in operation. Replacing them will improve energy efficiency, structural integrity, and overall safety while preserving the historical aesthetics of the property.

Front Elevation (Applicant)

Front windows proposed for replacement (Applicant)

Current first floor, left-side window (Applicant)

First floor, right side window (Applicant)

First floor, right side window (Applicant)

Second floor, right side window (Applicant)

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View from Right of Way to rear window, c.2014 (Google Maps)

Rear first floor window

Rear Elevation (Applicant)

Applicable Guidelines:

Section 3.5 – Windows

3.5.1 Retain and preserve historic windows and all associated components whenever possible, including window sash, frame, hardware, lintel, sill, trim, hood, shutters, and glazing (glass). Retain original windows in type, shape, size, operation, and material. Preserve existing glazing including stained glass as a distinctive feature of the window.

3.5.2 Keep historic wood windows in good condition by maintaining sound layers of paint at exterior and interior surfaces. Where wood has been exposed by paint failure, clean with the gentle methods possible and using lead-safe practices prior to repainting. Scrape peeling or flaking paint using hand tools down to the next sound layer of paint and ensure that the surface is clear of dirt and debris before priming and repainting.

3.5.3 Maintain operable windows, which have inherent energy-efficient advantages for air circulation. Remove paint that has sealed a window closed from the exterior and/or interior.

3.5.4 Inspect and test hardware. Ensure sash locks bring sashes together tightly to keep windows watertight.

3.5.5 Consider weatherization improvements that have minimal impact to historic fabric including sealing or recaulking around exterior and interior trim, installing weatherstripping, and installing storm windows (either exterior or interior) to improve energy efficiency.

3.5.6 Install storm windows customized to fit each window frame properly. Wood and aluminum materials are appropriate. The horizontal rails should align with window sashes. Window finishes should match the window trim or blend with the color scheme of the building. Interior storm windows may be recommended for windows with distinctive lites, artistic glazing, or irregular shapes to preserve the exterior appearance.

3.5.7 Repair, restore, and reuse original windows prior to replacing them. Where one component of a window is deteriorated or broken, repair or replace the individual piece rather than replace the entire window unit. Repair or selectively replace in-kind existing hardware to ensure window operability, including sash cords, weights, and pulleys. Repaired windows have been shown to achieve energy performance levels comparable to replacement windows.

3.5.8 Replace windows in-kind if original windows are deteriorated beyond feasible repair. Wood is the preferred material for most replacement windows. Replacement windows should match the original as closely as possible in material, size, type, operation, profile, and appearance. Replicate the existing dimensions of glazing, configuration of muntins, or unique decorative lites. Match sash and frame thickness and window depths. For existing nonoriginal windows, it is preferred to replace with wood windows rather than new alternate materials.

3.5.9 Replace windows with alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Replacement windows must match the original as closely as possible in type, size, operation, profile, appearance, and configuration of lites and muntins. Aluminum-clad wood windows are an appropriate alternate because they can replicate the original appearance and material. Composite wood or fiberglass windows with paintable exterior surfaces can be appropriate alternates if they match the original appearance, but are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. Vinyl windows are not appropriate due to short lifespan, poor performance, and inability to match historic profiles.

3.5.10 Preserve the ratio of window openings to solid wall surfaces. Increasing or reducing openings can impact the proportions of a facade and can look out of place within the larger streetscape. Changing the size of openings will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a facade.

3.5.11 Retain the historic pattern of window openings (fenestration pattern), especially on primary facades. Avoid inserting new windows into a facade or infilling existing windows. The position, number, and arrangement of windows defines the rhythm of a facade and can be a character-defining feature of an architectural style or a type of building use. If creating new openings or infilling existing ones is necessary for a project such as an adaptive reuse, locate openings on side or rear facades.

3.5.12 If replacing a single window on a facade, replicate the existing windows of that facade.

3.5.13 Replace single-pane glazing in-kind whenever possible. Install double-glazed windows with simulated divided lights only upon consultation with Staff/HARB. Replicate the dimensions, details, and appearance of the original window. Simulated divided light muntins should be attached to the window exterior, not sandwiched between the panes of glass.

3.5.14 Avoid reflective glazing in restored or new windows. Reflective glazing makes a window's lites and muntins difficult to see and alters the visual impact from the street. This change makes alterations in the historic district more conspicuous. Clear (non-tinted) and non-reflective glazing and low-e coatings are appropriate.

3.5.15 Replace deteriorated window trim or decorative elements only as necessary to match the size, profile, and material of the original elements. For window lintels or hoods that project from the facade plane and are vulnerable to water collection, consider installing of metal drip edges to shed water away from windows. Copper is recommended and should be left to weather naturally; aluminum is acceptable and should be painted to match surrounding materials. Avoid encasing wood sills with metal or vinyl, as this will trap moisture and may cause more damage.

Section 3.6 – Doors

3.6.5 Repair and restore historic doors whenever possible rather than replace them. Historic doors include front doors, rear doors, and grocer's alley doors. Original materials should not be discarded. If repair and reuse is not possible, salvage may be an option and the existing feature used as a template for replication.

3.6.6 Repair, restore, and reuse existing door frames, jambs, threshold, fixed transoms, and similar components. Existing components are usually historic wood. Replace in-kind if existing materials are severely deteriorated. Replicate the profile and width of door frames, jambs, and transoms in order to preserve the solid-to-void ratio of the entrance.

3.6.7 Repair, restore, and reuse hardware whenever possible. Replace hardware in-kind if necessary. New hardware should match the original hardware as closely as possible if the original hardware remains. If not, hardware that is compatible with the era of construction and style of the building is recommended. Avoid replacing historic hardware with digital locks, combination locks, keypads, or similar technology.

3.6.8 Replace doors in-kind if repair is not feasible. Replacement doors should duplicate the original in material, design, size, profile, and operation. Original doors may be used as a template for replication. Wood is the most appropriate material for residential doors. Paneled wood doors should have the same number, size, and profile of panels as the historic door. If the original design is unknown, the building's style and date of construction should inform the appropriate replacement.

3.6.9 Replace with durable alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Composite wood doors and fiberglass doors are acceptable replacements if new doors match the original in size, style, configuration, detail, and appearance. However, these products are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. They have shorter lifespan and deteriorate when exposed to moisture, weathering, and temperature variation. For replacement doors, avoid metal doors (including metal doors that imitate paneled wood), as they do not have the same appearance and texture of historic wood. Avoid pre-hung doors (doors that are purchased already installed in a frame) when replacing a door, because these require the removal of historic fabric and can change the size of the opening.

3.6.10 Preserve the size of the existing door opening. New doors should be custom sized if necessary. Avoid enlarging or filling in original door openings to fit new stock sizes. This alteration will impact the historic character of the building. This action will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a façade.

3.6.11 Consider replacement of a previously altered door with a historically appropriate wood door.

3.6.12 Avoid replacing of a historic door solely for the purpose of improving thermal performance. This intervention is not appropriate for historic material. Install weatherproofing or a storm door prior to replacement.

3.6.13 Avoid creating new door openings on the primary façade. New side or rear doors should be minimally visible from the street. The size and location of new openings should be compatible with the rest of the façade. This type of work will also require a Building Permit.

Observations & Comments: The front windows facing 9th Street are previous replacement windows. The proposed 1/1 fiberglass windows appear to be an in-kind replacement of the existing windows. The decorative carved lintels should be protected and maintained.

At the rear of the property, there are proposed alterations to windows on the original rear of the house as well as a later addition built in CMU block. Windows at the rear of the original building do not appear to be visible from the rear right-of-way (N. Nagle Street), as the CMU block addition blocks the view of those windows. While repairing and maintaining this original material is recommended, staff interpret this window as not being under HARB purview, as they are not visible.

The existing window openings on the rear CMU addition are visible from the public right-of-way, including all 6-lite and 9-lite windows. This rear addition was constructed after 1950, past the district's period of significance. Staff consider this addition to be comprised of non-contributing secondary facades, as the addition's features, materials, construction, and fenestration pattern are not consistent with the style of the original building or the historic district. Photos indicate deterioration of the windows, and the proposed replacement windows appear to create proportion and rhythm more compatible with the design of other buildings in the district.

The applicant provided sketches that indicate proposed window sizes within the original openings. More information would be helpful to understand the alignments of the new windows relative to each other – will the new windows align vertically and horizontally? Overall building elevations would be helpful to clarify this. Product data for the proposed exterior material of the window infill around the proposed window would be needed for review. Per the Guidelines, vinyl materials and plastics are not appropriate.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend approval with the following conditions:

- Front window lintels are protected and maintained.
- Applicant clarifies placement of windows in rear later addition, showing vertical and horizontal alignment. Final placement approved by Staff.
- Applicant submits window infill material, to be approved by Staff.

Discussion:

Mr. Panczer, the contractor representing the project, proposed fiber cement siding infilling around the reduced window opening size at the rear addition. Mr. Kumar clarified that there are two apartments at the rear of the building, one per floor. Mr. Jordan suggested that the replacement windows at the rear addition do not need to match the front of the building but has not issue with them matching.

The HARB were in consensus that the first floor rear windows within the original brick wall are not visible from a right-of-way and are not under HARB purview. The applicant clarified the placement of windows, indicated vertical and horizontal alignment.

Actions:

Mr. Hart moved to approve with conditions the application presented on May 5, 2025, for window work at 419 N. 9th Street with the following conditions agreed to by the applicant, following sections of the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.5 – Windows, and found no circumstances unique to the property:

- Front window lintels are protected and maintained
- Applicant submits window infill material, to be approved by Staff.
- Rear window in brick wall is not under HARB purview.

Ms. Schrier seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support and no abstentions.