Allentown Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2024-00021
Address: 240 N. 11th Street
District: Old Allentown Historic District
Owner: Michael Cavanaugh, Gabriel Clemmer, Michael Johnson
Applicant: Michael Cavanaugh, Gabriel Clemmer, Michael Johnson
Proposal: Replace windows

Building Description: This 3-story brick row house, ca 1893, is a Eastlake style. The mansard roof has asphalt shingles, a double dormer and shared chimney. All the windows are 1/1 sash with flat lintels in the Eastlake style. There is a basement window grille visible, a single main door with a transom. A concrete stoop leading to the door. The exterior wall has gray brickote on it and some of the details are covered.

Project Description:
This application proposes to replace all of the failing or broken windows with vinyl clad with wood interior, painted to replicate the original.

Front Elevation (Applicant)

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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.

Observations & Comments: It is unclear the extent of number of windows and which windows are being replaced. Replacement with the proposed vinyl clad product is not appropriate. A more appropriate replacement window would be aluminum clad, composite wood, or fiberglass 1 over 1 double hung windows to match the existing. Further information is required to determine if repair is feasible; because if so, retaining and repairing the windows is recommended before replacement.

Staff Recommendation: It is recommended to retain the windows if at all possible. If replacement is necessary, it is recommended to approve, with conditions, suggesting a more historically appropriate replacement window product.

Presenters:

- Ms. Baade presented the application to HARB
- Applicant was not present.

Discussion: The applicant was not present, but Mr. Jones noted that this application has been tabled multiple times. Additional information is required to fully review this application and multiple opportunities have been provided to the applicant to attend the meeting and provide further clarifications.

Actions: Mr. Jordan made a motion to deny the application presented on August 5, 2024 for the window replacement at 240 N. 11th Street because it was not complete enough for the board to make a recommendation.

Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.