

**MINUTES OF THE
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

Monday, January 8, 2024

1. Call to Order

The monthly meeting of the HARB was held on Monday, January 8, 2024, in a hybrid format combining an in-person meeting with a Microsoft Teams virtual meeting. The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Mr. AJ Jordon, Chair. Note: The virtual meeting recording was started at 6:04 p.m.

HARB Members present: Alex Encelewski, Old Fairgrounds Resident
Phillip Hart, West Park Resident
David Huber, Vice Chair, Allentown Resident
AJ Jordan, Chair, Old Allentown Resident
Joseph Franzone, Building and Construction Supervisor, City of Allentown

HARB Members absent: Vacant, Real Estate Broker

Staff present: Jean Brossman, CED Office Manager, City of Allentown
Brandon Jones, Planner, City of Allentown
Jesus Sadiua, Chief Planner, City of Allentown

Visitors present: Tanya Allison, COA Hazard Program
Francis Matos, Owner 1146 W. Turner Street
Paresh Patel, Owner 327 N. Nagel Street
Tom Joseph, Endicon, 503 Allen Street
Frank and wife, Owners 503 Allen Street

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Huber moved to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2023, meeting. Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 5-0.

3. Old Business

4. NEW BUSINESS

HDC-2024-00002

Address: 515 N. Park Street

District: Old Fairgrounds Historic

District Applicant: Tanya Allyson, City of Allentown

Proposal: Remove slate shingles; install asphalt shingles

Building Description:

This 2½-story brick row house, c. 1891, has been clad with stonecote. The gable roof has slate shingles, a large dormer with projecting eaves, and a single chimney. The windows are 1/1 double hung sash. The second floor has two windows. The first floor has a single window with an unadorned main entry door. There are concrete bull-nosed steps leading to the front door, a single basement window with an iron grille, and a shared grocer's alley door.

Project Description:

This application proposes to replace the historic roofing at the property at 515 N. Park Street. The property retains slate at the gable roof and dormer cheek walls. The applicant proposes to install GAF Slateline asphalt shingles.

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.

3.1.6 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:

The applicant contends that the existing slate roof is failing and in poor condition. The current roof contains typical rectangular slate singles in a gray color. The application proposes to install GAF Slateline shingles, which are an appropriate alternate that generally match the existing rectangular slate in dimension, shape, profile, color, exposure, and overall appearance. Staff finds that the proposed shingle complies with the guidelines in Section 3.1 Roofs.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.1 Roofs.

Presenters:

- Mr. Jones presented the staff review to the HARB
- Ms. Allyson was present to answer questions

Discussion: The Discussion of the proposed work focused on the scope of work, the condition of the existing slate roof, and the color of the proposed GAF Slateline singles. The applicant asked to amend the application to include the cheek walls and roof of the dormer. Mr. Huber asked about the condition of the slate and the applicant said several roofers inspected the roof and said it was not repairable. She said the roofs adjacent to the attached home had been replaced. It was also pointed out that staff had determined the roof replacement with GAF Slateline shingles appropriate. The applicant was asked what color shingle she proposed. She was not sure which color but intended it match the color of the slate roof.

Action:

Mr. AJ Jordan moved to approve the amended application presented on 1/8/2023 for the removal of slate shingles, including the cheek walls and roof of the dormer, and installation of GAF Slateline shingles at 515 N. Park Street pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.1 Roofs, with the following conditions:

- the replacement GF slate line shingles will match the existing slate in dimension, shape, profile, color exposure, and overall appearance.

Mr. Alex Encelewski seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

HDC-2023-00093

Address: 327 N. Nagle Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Paresh Patel, owner

Proposal: Legalize reconstruction of rear addition (violation correction)

Building Description:

This 2-story brick end-of-row house, c. 1910, is a ½ Street Vernacular house, has a flat roof with a single chimney. The windows are 1/1 sash with segmental arches in brick. The main entry is a single 6-panel solid door with an aluminum awning over it. There is a long concrete stoop in front of the house.

Project Description:

This application is the second seeking to legalize the reconstruction of a rear addition without permits. On May 25, 2023, the property owner submitted an application for a certificate of appropriateness to re-stucco the rear addition of the building at 327 N. Nagle Street. Staff approved the application since the work would have been an in-kind replacement. Staff was later notified by Building Standards and Safety that the work exceeded the approved scope and that Building Standards had issued a stop work order and tagged the building as unsafe. According to the inspector, the removal of the stucco showed that the addition was in extremely poor condition and in danger of collapse. Because the owner worked outside the approved scope, staff issued a notice of violation and revoked the original certificate of appropriateness. The owner proceeded to work to address the unsafe violation prior to permits being issued and rebuilt the addition. The addition has been reframed, enclosed, and stuccoed. At least one door was relocated to a new façade. This application includes plans stamped by an engineer and requests legalization of the addition.

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.15 – Demolition

3.15.2 Evaluate the significance of the building and its contribution to the historic district. Determine if the building has individual architectural, cultural, or social significance or is associated with significant people or events. It is recommended to reference the National Register of Historic Places' criteria for significance. Determine its contribution to the historic district. Buildings that are eligible or listed in the National Register and/or are significant features of the historic district should be preserved.

3.15.3 Determine if the building retains historic integrity. Evaluate the cumulative impact of past alterations. Buildings that have been altered to such an extent that they no longer convey their significance or contribute to the historic district may have more flexibility in review.

3.15.4 Provide documentation that the feasibility of rehabilitation has been sufficiently investigated and alternatives to demolition have been explored. Documentation may include feasibility studies, professional conditions assessments, structural report by a licensed engineer, cost estimates, or similar due diligence. Documentation can be provided in written descriptions, photographs, drawings, and financial data.

3.15.8 If demolition is proposed because the City's Building Inspector has declared a clear and present danger, provide official documentation with the application. The Building Inspector may determine that a building is in a state of collapse or has deteriorated to such a point that it is a public safety concern. This finding should be supported by documentation from a licensed structural engineer.

3.15.9 Avoid demolition by neglect through regular maintenance, repair, and restoration. Severe deterioration and poor condition that is the result of neglect can be considered a self-created hardship and is not an appropriate justification for demolition.

3.15.10 Consider the factor of compatibility within the historic district. Buildings were constructed after the district's period of significance or are intrusive to historic patterns of material, design, scale, proportion, and massing may be reviewed with greater flexibility.

Observations & Comments:

Staff finds that the addition held no architectural or historical significance and was constructed after 1932, though the exact date was not determined. The addition consisted of frame construction and contained no architecturally significant details or features. The north elevation included one second-story window and one entry door at the east end. The rear elevation had one window at each story, and the south elevation contained no openings and was partially visible from Pine Street.

At the HARB's September 2023 review, the board found that the application was incomplete and recommended denial, with the comment that the application would need to include plans stamped by an engineer to satisfy both the HARB and Building Standards. The current application includes stamped plans with a note that the existing EIFS will need to be removed and a new stucco or EIFS system properly installed with proper flashing and sealant. Previously, the applicant had stated that the windows and doors in the addition were reused from the previous openings.

Staff finds that if the applicant satisfies the requirements to properly re-stucco the addition, the work will comply with the design guidelines since no historic material was lost and the reconstruction will largely be completed in-kind.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.15 Demolition.

Presenters:

- Mr. Jones presented the staff preliminary review to the HARB.
- The owner, Parish Patel, was present to answer questions.

Discussion: The discussion focused on the past history and details of the project, the type and color of exterior finish, and the changes from the original rear addition. The provided photos made it difficult to understand the changes from the original rear addition to the new addition. The main change was the location of a door that was on the north elevation to the east elevation. Otherwise the addition matched the original addition. The original addition had been covered with an EFIS stucco. The new addition will have a similar EIFS stucco. Mr. Huber thought the original might have been painted. The applicant said it was not painted.

Mr. Jordan questioned whether the project needed a COA if it was reconstructed in kind. Mr. Huber pointed out the change in door location and it was decided a COA was needed.

Actions:

Mr. AJ Jordan moved to approve, with conditions, the application presented on January 8th, 2024, for legalizing the reconstruction of the rear addition of 327 N Nagle, pursuant to Chapter 3, section 3.15 demolition, and found that there were circumstances unique to the property, and that this application was largely a replacement in kind, except for the changed door location. The following conditions were agreed to by the applicant:

- The addition must be approved through code

Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

HDC-2023-00091

Address: 425 N. 10th Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Necido Paulino, owner

Proposal: Legalize the installation of ceramic tile on front porch and steps. (violation correction)

Building Description:

This structure is a 2 bay, 2 ½ story end of row house with gable roof, single roof dormer, bracketed cornice, painted brick façade, 1 over 1 double hung windows and a full front porch with turned posts, brick foundation walls, and wood railing/guards. The house dates from c. 1880 and is Federal Revival in style with Queen Anne Eastlake details.

Project Description:

This application is looking to legalize the installation of ceramic tile on the front porch and steps at 425 N. 10th Street. The porch and steps historically had a concrete finish but were resurfaced with tile between 2019 and 2023.

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.7 – Porches & Steps

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.

3.7.6 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.

Observations & Comments:

Guideline 3.7.8 notes that alternate porch materials, such as composite wood decking, may be appropriate if similar to the appearance of the original floorboards. The guideline specifically notes that ceramic tile, carpet, or cementitious coatings over wood are not appropriate floor materials. Staff contends that the tile is not an appropriate porch material whether installed over wood or concrete and recommends removing the tiles and repairing the existing concrete slab to better comply with the design guidelines.

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps.

Presenters:

- Mr. Jones presented the staff review to the HARB

Discussion: There was no one at the meeting to represent the proposal to legalize the tile installation on the porch. Mr. Huber thought this was clearly a violation of the design guidelines. Mr. Jones asked if it was known what the previously existing material of the porch was, whether it was wood or concrete. He thought the case should be tabled. Mr. Huber wasn't sure that would make a difference regarding the violation. Mr. Jones thought the applicants should be given an opportunity to comment on the work and possibly remediate the violation. The HARB members concurred.

Actions:

Mr. Jordan made a motion to table the application for 425 N 10th St, for one month to the February meeting to give the owner an opportunity to discuss the alteration. Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

HDC-2023-00096

Address: 503 W. Allen Street

District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District

Applicant: Anna Thomas, Endicon, Inc., owner

Proposal: Replace second-story windows and framing

Building Description:

This 3-story brick twin house, ca 1895 is a porch house and has a combination of roof lines with slate shingles and a single chimney. There is an iron fence at the side and rear. The windows are 2/2 sash with Italianate lintels. The main entry is a single door on a concrete porch with iron railing.

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.5 – Windows

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 non-original windows, it is preferred to replace with wood windows rather than new alternate windows.

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.

3.5.15 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 façade plane and are vulnerable to water collection, consider installing 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 they will trap moisture and may cause more damage.

Observations & Comments:

Staff notes that the building description from the time the district was designated describes the front façade windows as two-over-two double-hung sash windows with Italianate lintels. Staff suggests that the description is incorrect and contends that the building has Queen Anne features and that the windows were likely one-over-one double-hung sash windows.

At the time the applicant submitted the application, the second-story windows and framing had been removed without permits or a certificate of appropriateness. The drawing included in the application shows the interior framing and proposed window replacement. Staff initially rejected the drawing and requested an exterior drawing showing the framing and masonry opening; however, the applicant again provided the same drawing of the interior framing. Staff finds that the HARB cannot properly review the proposed scope of work without a drawing that shows the exterior framing, noting that the decorative trim below the lintel and the center mullion have been removed and should be recreated to their original dimensions and appearance to comply with Guideline 3.5.15.

If all exterior framing and trim is replicated to match the historic, staff finds the proposed aluminum-clad wood sash windows to be appropriate, provided they are the same dimensions as the historic windows.

Staff further notes that the façade has paint and roofing tar on the brick that should be removed to bring the property into compliance.

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, owing to incompleteness, with the comment that a scaled elevation drawing of the exterior framing, trim, and masonry opening be submitted for HARB review.

Presenters:

- Mr. Jones presented the staff review to the HARB
- Anna Thomas and an unidentified representative were present to answer questions and provide further information

Discussion: The applicants presented a new drawing to the HARB which was from the exterior. The drawing was hand drawn and not precise. It did not match the proportions or details of the previously existing conditions. It was agreed that the proposed aluminum clad wood windows would be historically appropriate, but the surrounding trim and woodwork was not replicating the existing conditions. Mr. Huber spent some time trying to convey to the applicants the details they would need to revise. He pointed out the carved details in the arched header that would need to be replicated.

Actions:

Mr. Jordan made a motion to table the application presented on January 8th, 2024, for replacement of second-story windows and framing at 503 W Allen Street to the February 2024 meeting to give the homeowner opportunity to submit drafted and scaled drawings for the exterior framing and finishing plans, matching previously existing dimensions accurately. Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.

HDC-2023-00092

Address: 1146 W. Turner Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicant: Francis Matos

Proposal: Legalize the current main door & storm door on front porch

Building Description:

This 3-story brick row house, ca 1890 is Eastlake in style. The mansard roof has fish scaled slate shingles, a dentilated cornice, and a wall dormer with wood fish scaling shingles and small stained glass windows flanking central dormer window. The window lintels are Eastlake with a patterned brick over lintels and two basement window grilles are visible. The main entry is a single glazed door with transom. There is a concrete porch with an Allentown Porch roof. The roof profile is concave, decorative beaded balusters in the roof ends, wood brackets, rafters have scroll-sawn ends and asphalt shingles.

Project Description:

This application is seeking to legalize the front storm door and main entry door at 1146 W. Turner Street.

Applicable Guidelines:**Chapter 3.6 – Doors**

3.6.2 Maintain historic doors by keeping hardware in good operation. Damaged or deteriorated hardware can cause doors to become out of plumb with the opening and not operate properly. Individual repairs or in-kind replacement helps maintain historic doors.

3.6.3 Consider weatherization improvements that have minimal impact to historic fabric before considering door replacement. Improvements include installing weatherstripping and installing storm doors. Weatherization and repairs should be attempted first, and their performance monitored.

3.6.4 Install exterior storm door with a full-light (full view) appearance to keep the visibility of the original historic door. Storm doors should be finished or painted to blend in with the door trim. DESIGN GUIDELINES

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.

(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 facade.

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.

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.6 Doors

Presenters:

- Mr. Jones presented the staff review to the HARB
- Mr. Matos, owner, was present with a translator

Discussion: It was clarified that both the storm door and the main door to the house were being reviewed. The applicant said the similar doors were already there when he purchased the home and he replaced them to match them. While the discussion ensued, Google Streetview was consulted and it was found that a similar storm door had been on the building since before 2008. Sympathetically, Mr. Huber pointed out the problem the home owners faced when illegal changes were done before they bought a home. Mr. Jordan confirmed this was a very recent “in-kind” change. Technically the owner should have come to the HARB for review of a new set of doors. The applicant said he didn’t understand why he had to come to the HARB every time he did any changes to the exterior of the house. Mr Huber said it was part of owning a home in an historic district.

The HARB struggled with how to handle the violation. Mr. Jordan thought there were extenuating circumstances with this case and that it could be considered an in-kind replacement.

The home owner asked about other changes he might want to do to his home such as windows. There was a discussion of what was meant by in-kind replacement. Mr. Huber pointed out the windows would need to be in deteriorated condition before replacement could be considered. Replacing windows for thermal reasons was not historically appropriate. Historic wood windows can be repaired and weather stripped to be thermally efficient. There was also a brief discussion of painting. The HARB explained that he could paint anything that has already been painted and that color was not regulated.

Action: It was decided this was a replacement in-kind. Mr. Alex Encelewski moved to accept the change pursuant to sections of the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.6 Doors, and found that there were circumstances unique to the property: The unique circumstances were the door and storm door were already changed to non-conforming before the current owner purchased the home.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Jordan and passed unanimously

5. Staff Approvals

- a. 226 N. 10th Street- Replace railing
- b. 1635 W. Linden Street - Roofing; replace porch beam in kind
- c. 304 N. 15th Street – Signage

- 6. Violations (see spreadsheet)** – There was no information to discuss on the violation spreadsheet due to Ms Keller’s resignation in December. However, there was a lengthy discussion of the problem the City of Allentown and the HARB faced with violations. It was agreed that there was insufficient City staff to follow through on violations in a timely manner despite a strong interest in preserving the city’s historic buildings and districts. Some thoughts on how to turn the issue around were suggested. Mr Franzone was concerned that the violations would lead to such a loss of historic character that there would be no reason to have historic districts in time.
- 7. Staff Reports & Other Business** - Due to Ms Keller’s unplanned for resignation the need for a consultant will be temporarily filled by Christine Ussler who was a consultant to the Allentown HARB for many years. Mr Jordan explained this would be temporary while the city searched for a new staff member to handle the HARB or for a new consultant.
- 8. Adjournment** – Mr Encelewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Huber seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30

NEXT MEETING: Monday, February 5, 2024

Please Note:

Minutes of the Allentown Historical Architectural Review Board are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The recording, application materials, and staff reviews are available at the Bureau of Planning & Zoning office, 4th floor of City Hall, or by contacting historic@allentownpa.gov.