

# Historical Architectural Review Board COA Preliminary Review Sheet

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**HDC-2026-00002**

**Address:** 943-951 W Chew Street

**District:** Old Allentown Historic District

**Owner:** MPC Allentown LLC

**Applicant:** Cara Bonshak

**Proposal:** Replace windows, modify door openings

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**Building Description:** The c.1900 structure with later additions is a two-story brick, vernacular commercial building. It has four entrances on the primary facade; one double, two single doors, and a loading dock. The front façade has metal framed windows.

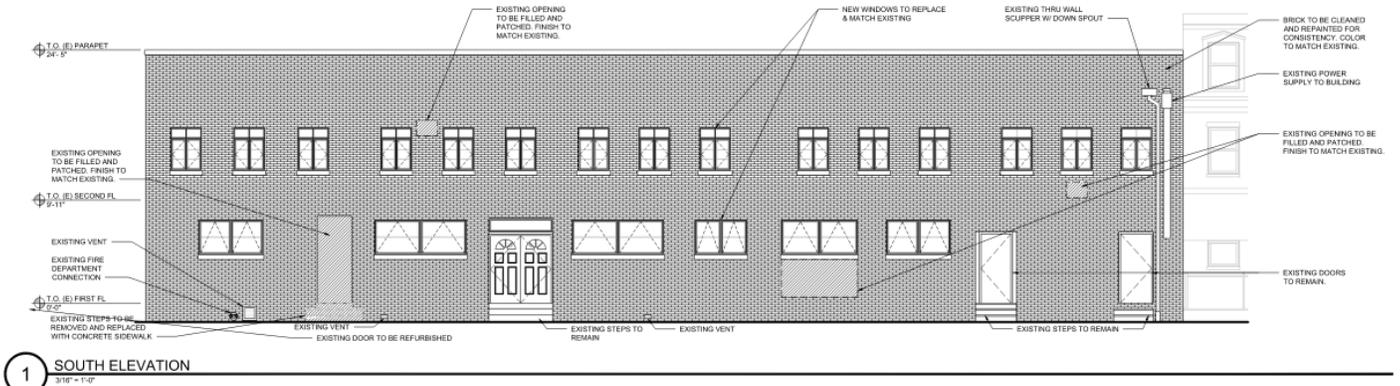
**Project Description (From Application):**

Residential conversion of an existing building to result in an increased number of dwelling units, 18 total dwelling units at time of completion.

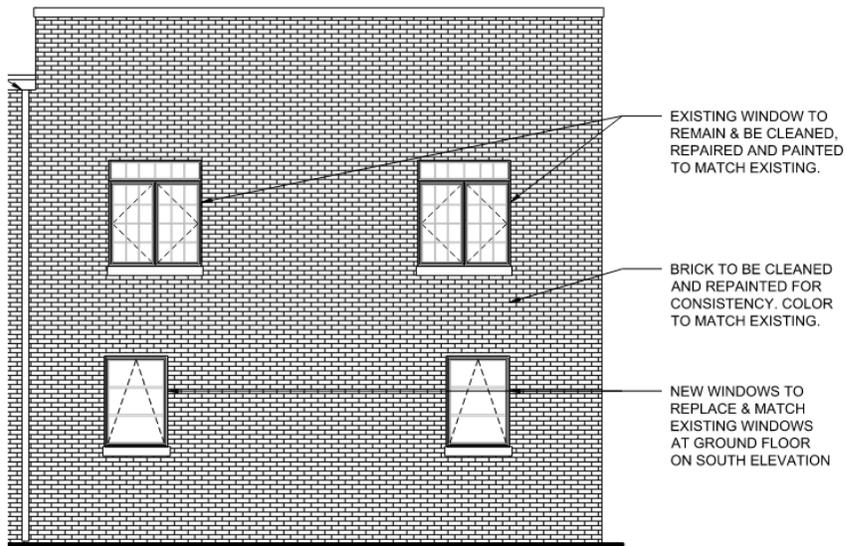


Existing Elevation (Google Maps, 2024)

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## Proposed Chew St Elevation (Applicant)



## 2 PARTIAL WEST ELEVATION

3/16" = 1'-0"

## Proposed Hazel St Elevation (Applicant)



Existing First Floor Window along Chew St



Existing Second Floor Windows along Chew St

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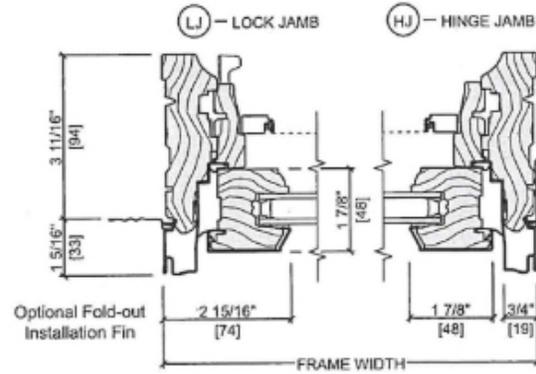
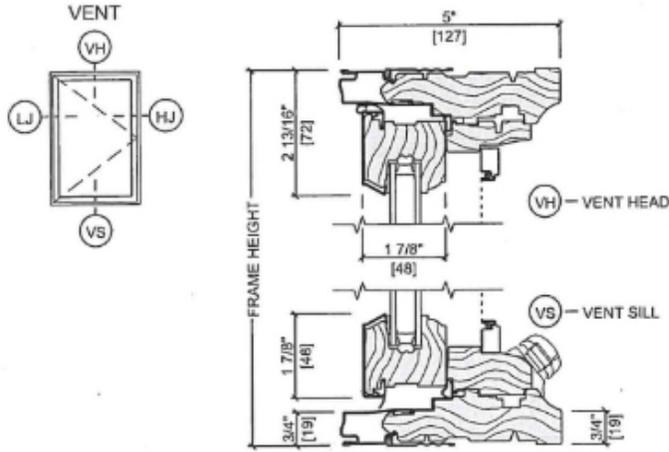


**Windows along Hazel St (Applicant)**

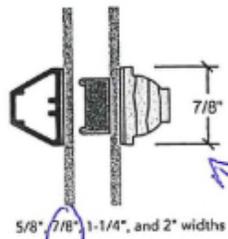


**First Floor Window along Hazel St (Applicant)**

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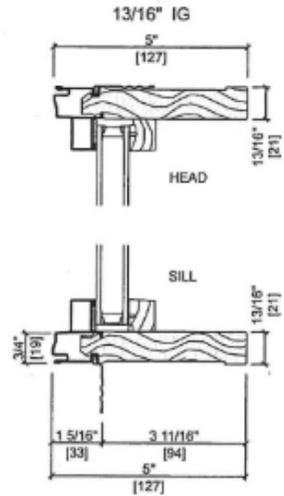
Grille Profile



exterior profile

interior profile

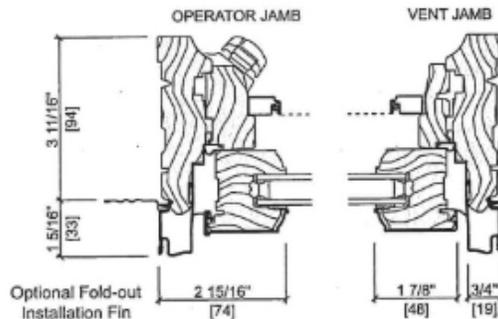
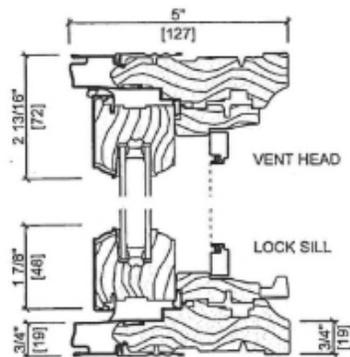
Pella® Reserve™ Traditional  
Fixed Frame Direct Set



TRANSOM

Pella® Reserve™ Traditional

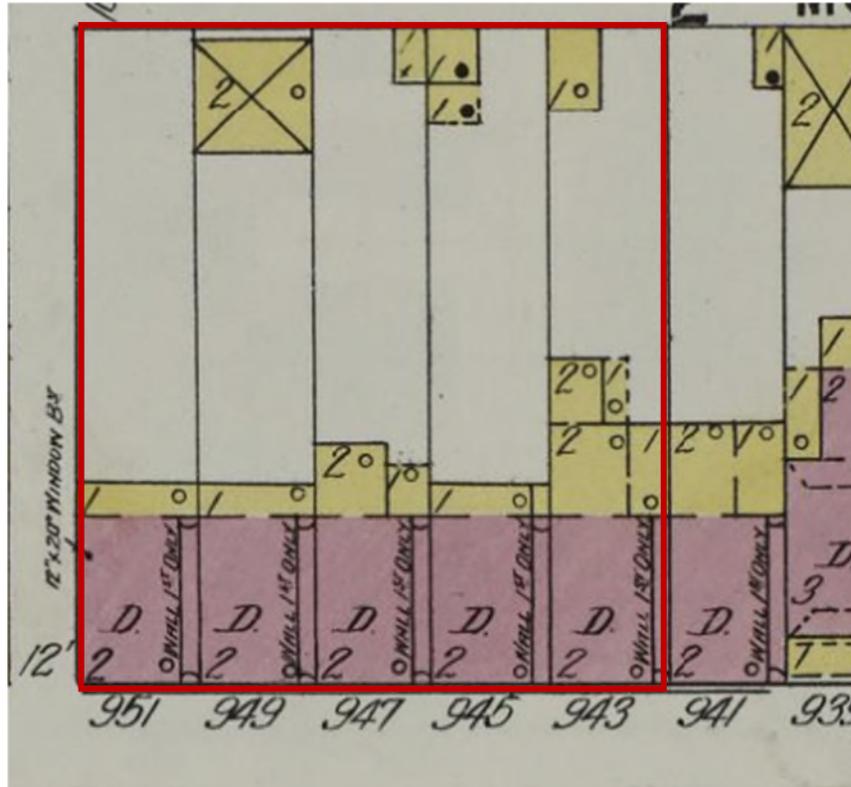
Awning



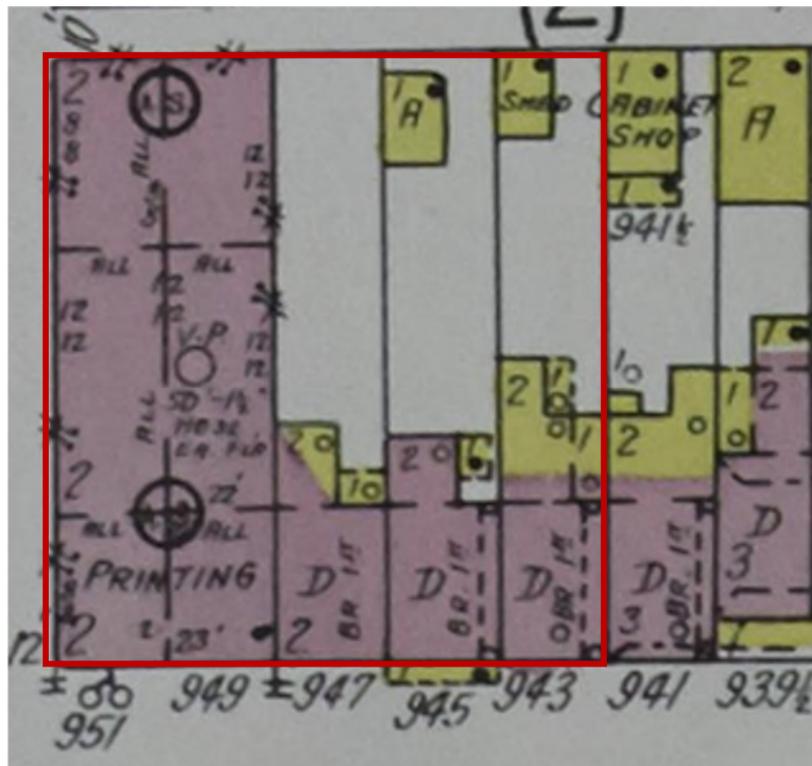
Other frame types are available. Not to scale. All dimensions are approximate. Large Awning operator is located on sill instead of jamb.

Proposed Window Details (Applicant)

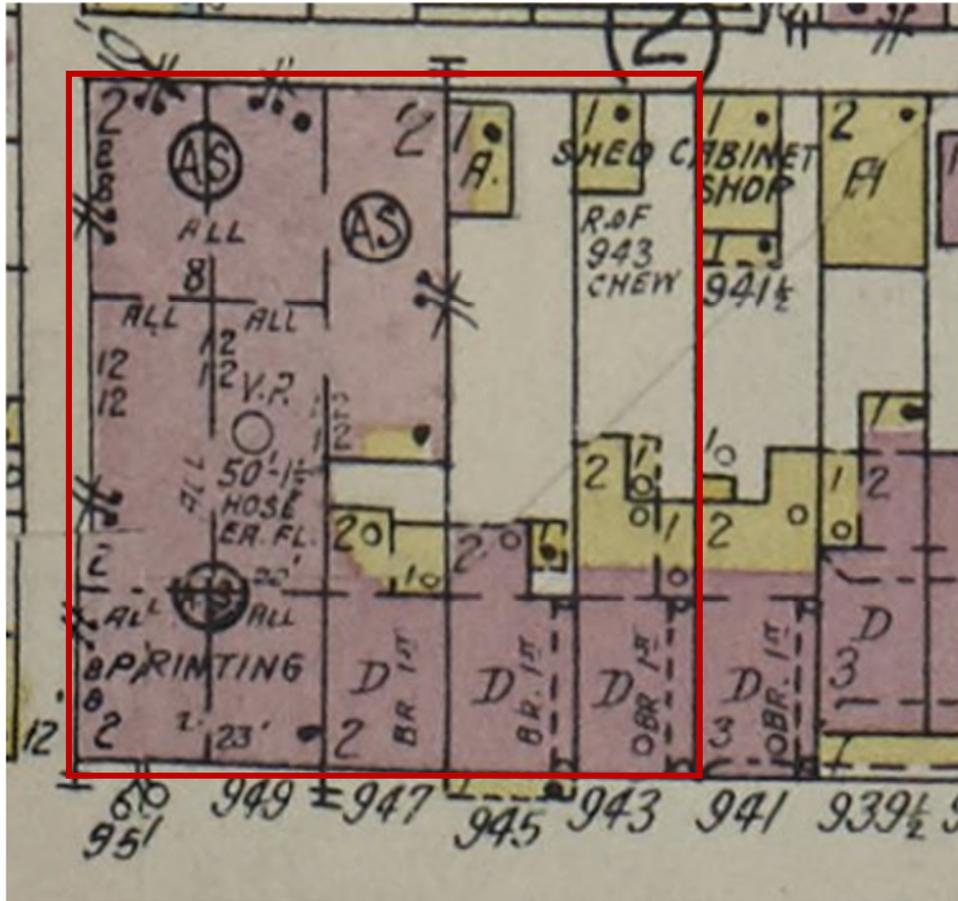
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Sanborn Map, 1911 (Library of Congress)



Sanborn Map, 1932 (Library of Congress)



Sanborn Map, 1950 (Library of Congress)

**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.

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**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**

**3.6.10** 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.

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**Observations & Comments:** The parcels at 943-953 West Chew Street have been greatly altered since the period of initial construction. The 1911 Sanborn Map indicates that the structures were a series of attached rowhomes of the same setback from the street. The 1932 Sanborn Map indicates that at the western end of the row, two dwellings (949 and 951) were converted into a print shop, with additions at the rear that filled the full parcel. The 1950 Sanborn Map shows an addition to the print shop at the rear of 947 W. Chew. After this period, it appears that the print shop continued to expand to the current building footprint, converting the remaining dwellings into industrial/commercial use, and architecturally is a vernacular commercial structure in style.

The proposed windows are aluminum-clad wood windows with muntin patterns that resemble the current configuration of the existing metal framed windows. Given the industrial style of the structure, metal framed windows would be more appropriate in materiality, frame dimension, and sightlines.

The proposed drawings indicate modifications to doorways along W. Chew Street. The single door at the west end is proposed to be removed and infilled with brick, and the front stoop removed. The single door appears to be an original opening with an original transom and replacement door. Given the unique configuration of the first floor openings, including an irregular array of window and door sizes, removal of this door would not create a negative impact on the façade. Since the doorway appears original, slightly recessing the brick infill of the doorway so that the original doorway size can still be perceived would be an appropriate treatment of the opening.

The loading dock door is proposed to be removed and replaced with brick and a pair of windows similar to adjacent pairs of windows. The door itself is concealed, and it is unknown if the original door exists. The dock bumper does not appear on the proposed drawings. The loading dock is a unique feature on the façade that was directly related to the former commercial use. A more appropriate treatment of this opening would be to retain the loading dock bumper and maintain the overall dimension of the door opening by replacing with fixed doors, or by utilizing a different infill material, such as a fiber cement.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommend approval with the following conditions:

- Replacement windows are metal windows with muntin configuration and operation as proposed
- Single door brick infill is recessed by ½” to 1” from the wall surface so that the original door opening size is preserved.
- The loading dock bumper and opening size is retained. If the opening is infilled, a differing material such as fiber cement is used.

### **Presenters:**

- Amy Ahn Baade presented the application
- Jason Colfer & Paul Zeoli represented the application

### **Discussion:**

Mr. Hart asked if an architect had prepared the submitted drawings; the applicant confirmed that an architect is involved on the project and produced the drawings. Mr. Hart asked about the building's current use; the applicant stated that more recently, there were five residential units on the second floor, and the first floor was storage. The building is currently empty. Mr. Hart noted that the loading dock door is a character-defining feature and could be a great opportunity for preservation. Mr. Encelewski and Mr. Knee agreed that retaining the loading dock bumper would be important. Mr. Knee noted that a window at the loading dock opening could be an opportunity to have a unique window/design that highlights the loading dock feature.

Mr. Knee asked the Board about the appropriateness of the window materiality. Mr. Encelewski, Mr. Hart, and Mr. Huber opined that metal framed windows would be more appropriate than aluminum-clad wood for the industrial building.

The applicant asked if the loading dock door opening should be slightly recessed from the exterior face of the wall, and if the window could be the size of the full opening. Mr. Knee confirmed that the infill should be recessed, and that the

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window could be as large as the opening; there is flexibility in the design of the infill/window treatment, as long as it stands apart from the rest of the façade.

Mr. Knee asked the Board for comment on the single door infill at the west end of the building, confirming that the door, transom, light, and stoop are removed. The Board discussed these items and supported the staff recommendation that all elements can be removed and the brick infill be recessed 1/2" – 1" from the face of the building.

The applicant confirmed that the whole building will be repainted. Mr. Encelewski noted that any paint/coating should be a breathable product appropriate for masonry.

### **Action:**

Mr. Knee moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 2/2/2026 for window replacement and opening modification at 943-951 W. Chew Street with the following conditions agreed to by the applicant, finding compliance with the following sections of the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.5 – Windows and Section 3.6 – Doors and found that there are circumstances unique to the property in that the property is an historic commercial structure that is being converted to a residential structure:

- Replacement windows are metal windows with muntin configuration and operation as proposed
- Western single door brick infill is recessed by 1/2" to 1" from the wall surface so that the original door opening size is preserved and vertical elements continue to sidewalk.
- The loading dock bumper and opening size is retained. If the opening is infilled, a differing material and/or differing window material can be used, retain a 1/2" to 1" recession.
- Any painted masonry surfaces should utilize a breathable coating

Mr. Hammond seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with no abstention.