

**CITY OF ALLENTOWN  
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
FINAL REVIEW SHEET  
October 3, 2016**

**Case #HDC-2016-0018** – Proposal to demolish the building.

**Property located at:** 726 W Gordon Street  
**Historic District:** Old Allentown  
**Case #HDA-2016-00063**  
**Meeting date:** October 3, 2016

**Property Owner:** Lakeview Loan and Servicing LLC  
**Address:** 4425 Ponce DeLeon Blvd, Mailstop M55/251, Coral Gables, FL 33146  
**Applicant:** City of Allentown  
**Applicant's Address:** 435 Hamilton St, Allentown, PA 18101

**Building description, period, style, defining features:** This 2½-story painted brick end-of-row house, ca 1870 is Federal in style. The gable roof has asphalt shingles, dentilated cornice and a single chimney. The windows are 1/1 sash with brick lintels and louvered shutters. The main entry is a single glazed door with a boarded up transom. The concrete stoop has a railing and there is a basement window grille visible.



**Proposed alterations:** It is proposed to demolish the building. The brick east wall is in poor condition and has a bulge. Interior inspection revealed floor joists coming out of packets due to the outward movement of the wall. The building is owned by a mortgage servicing company and appears to have been a foreclosure in 2015. The building is currently vacant.

**Staff Approvals:** n/a

**Background:** Per HARB Case No. 1983-35, a Certificate of Appropriateness application was withdrawn August 6, 1983.

Per HARB Case No. 2011-47, a Certificate of Appropriateness was approved for:

1. Remove lead paint from exterior of building, clean brick and repoint where necessary.
2. Replace existing downspouts with round galvanized downspout.
3. Remove loose paint, power wash, spot point and apply lead block with 2 coats of masonry paint to seal.
4. Move the paneled shutters from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor façade, put one paneled shutter on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor window, install the other two paneled shutters on 728 W Gordon Street façade and louvered shutters can be installed on both houses.

**Violations:** August 20, 2007: Side porch door replaced with inappropriate interior door.

**Guideline Citation:** **SIS 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. **Allentown Guidelines for Historic Districts:** 5. Guidelines for Existing Buildings and Structures, 3. Demolition



**Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations:** A structural engineering report from Pennoni indicates that repair of the east brick wall would be possible. Although this building is not a high style building it is an important part of the fabric of the historic district. The integrity of the historic district depends to a great degree on complete blocks of row houses and twins. This house is part of a continuous streetscape and is important for that reason. It is recommended to not demolish the building, but to repair as quickly as possible as outlined in the report.

**Discussion:** There was a lengthy discussion of the proposed demolition. The owner's representative explained the difficulties presented in repairing or rebuilding the façade (lead paint, power lines, powdering brick, interior support issues). He stated that the cost of demolition will be approximately \$120,000. The costs for repairing the facade were discussed and the HARB thought that a lot of repair work could be done for approximately the same cost. All HARB members expressed the opinion that the building should be saved and repaired. City Councilman McGuire and Councilwoman Candida Affa suggested alternate uses for the empty lot if the house was demolished: a City park, parking, or giving it to the neighboring property owner. The biggest concern was the lack of maintenance that the empty lot would see. The property would become an eyesore even if demolished. Interested property owners made some comments and expressed concerns about the wall collapsing and killing someone. People still walk down the street even though it is closed. The most vocal neighbor said he thought the building should be demolished.

**Motion:** The HARB upon motion by Mr. Berner and seconded by Mr. Huber adopted the proposal that City Council DENY a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as follows:

1. The proposal to demolish the building at 726 W. Gordon St was presented by Joe Capulish, contractor pricing work for the owner.
2. Demolition of this house is not historically appropriate and based on the structural report written for the City, the east wall of the building could be repaired.
3. In the effort to help make the repair more cost effective, the HARB will permit the east wall to be rebuilt in CMU with a smooth stucco finish.
4. Windows which are currently vinyl may be replaced with new vinyl windows but the windows much match the existing in size, type, and number
5. A wood rake board similar to the existing should be installed at the roof edge.
6. If another controlling authority (City Council) were to approve the demolition, the HARB recommended the following mitigation efforts:
  - a. Repair and finish the revealed party wall with smooth stucco
  - b. The foundation must be filled with compacted gravel
  - c. The site must be fenced with a 5' high black, traditionally styled metal fence with double top rail and verticals spaced approximately 4" apart.
  - d. The fence at the south and west property edges may be fenced with a stained wood, shadow-box style fence 5' high.
7. The owner will immediately shore up, brace and make the property secure to protect the public. The Certificate of Appropriateness will expire on November 30, 2016, after which the case will be treated as a violation.
8. The proposal to deny the demolition was unanimously approved