

**CITY OF ALLENTOWN  
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
FINAL REVIEW SHEET  
March 5, 2018**

**Case # HDC-2017-00008** – Proposal to demolish the carriage house.

**Property located at:** 348 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street

**Agenda #2**

**Historic District:** Old Allentown

**Case #** HDC-2018-00008

**Meeting date:** March 5, 2018

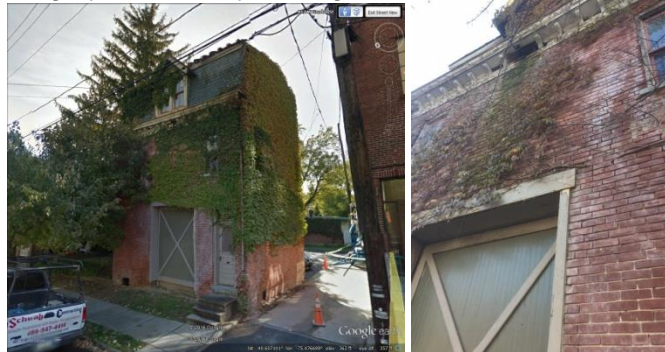
**Property Owner:** Joseph & Sharon  
Yurkanin

**Address:** 348 N 8<sup>th</sup> St, Allentown, PA  
18102

**Applicant:** same

**Applicant's Address:** same

**Building description, period, style, defining features:** This structure is a 3-story brick carriage house belonging to a 3-story, brick, detached corner home, ca. 1890 that is a Second Empire style. The carriage house, located along Gordon St. at the rear of the property, has a mansard roof that is covered with octagonal slate shingles, a gable dormer with paired 2 over 2 double hung windows. Walls of the carriage house are brick, except for the rear wall which has been reconstructed with concrete block. Windows are 2 over 2 double hung, the carriage door is a single leaf with cross brace, and the entry door is wood, upper half glass with 3 small panels and 2 horizontal panels on the lower half. The carriage house is in poor condition, however it retains a high level of integrity with nearly all original elements and material still present.



**Proposed alterations:** It is proposed to demolish the carriage house.

**Staff Approvals:** 11/3/2015 - Repoint and repair corner of carriage house matching original. Extend downspout to ground level to prevent water damage at corner of carriage house.

**Background:** 984-35 6/20/1984 – Owner proposes to replace deteriorated wood wall at back of carriage house with cement block. APPROVED by Council resolution.

1984-45 7/18/1984 – Owner proposes to replace ½ glass door at rear of house leading from kitchen to back porch with metal ¾ glass door. APPROVED by Council resolution.

1986-26 7/16/1986 – Owner proposes to convert carriage house in rear of property to a residence. HARB amended plan to require inclusion of a statement certifying the structural integrity of the building. City is concerned about safety of the building. APPROVED as amended by Council resolution.

**Violations:** 8/20/2015 – Inappropriate brick repointing on corner of carriage house.

12/8/2016 – Carriage house at rear of property posted raze or repair due to neglect.

2/5/2018 – Carriage house at rear of property posted raze or repair due to danger to public.

**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:** Demolition of the carriage house is not historically appropriate, and does not meet the guidelines. The building is salvageable. The carriage house is a contributing building not only to the property itself, but to the historic neighborhood. It is one of few remaining structures of its kind and all efforts should be made to save it. The building could be made into a rental property to provide income to offset expenses. (See a comparable rental property in Easton below).

It is suggested to do repairs in phases with the first phase being the reconstruction and repair of the front wall and the installation of a new roof with repair of the built in gutter. The masonry proposal from Preservation Works indicates a historically appropriate approach to reconstructing the deteriorated front façade. The other proposal from Dan Brudnak does not define the masonry work. The brick reconstruction should use a soft lime based mortar per Preservation Brief #2, and any new brick should match the historic as closely as possible. The roof proposal should be modified to use CertainTeed Carriage House shingles in the Black Pearl or Colonial Slate color on the mansard roof sections.

The primary concerns should be to rebuild the brick wall and stop water from infiltrating the brick.

**Discussion:** There was a lengthy discussion of how to save the carriage house from demolition. The City received a complaint about the condition of the carriage house on February 2, 2018. A structural engineer from Pennoni Associates inspected the conditions of the front façade of the building and recommended bracing which would stabilize the façade for 30 days. Bracing was promptly installed by a contractor. Because of trouble making contact with the owner for over a year, the City thought it had no choice but to demolish the building and lien the property. The chief building inspector, Mr. William Harvey, recommended demolition.

The history of work on the carriage house was briefly reviewed. There was an attempt to renovate the building in the mid 1980s and create apartments based on plans prepared by architect, Ben Walbert. The work was not completed, but a structural frame system was installed in the building. In 2015 there were small repairs done, in particular on the northwest brick corner. Mr. Lightner, Allentown's Director of Community and Economic Development, said he had been willing to provide money to the property in the form of a "self-forgiving" loan, but the owner had not interested last year.

Mr. Chris Brown interrupted the conversation to inform the HARB that the owner, Mr. Yurkanin, was in attendance. Mr. Brown spoke for the owner on several aspects of the case. He said there was an internal structure in place and it was bearing the structural loads. The brick façade was not structural now.

It was noted that there was already a substantial mortgage on the property which included the main house fronting 8<sup>th</sup> St. A HARB member asked if the property could be subdivided and sold. It was pointed out that under the Zoning code the resultant lot would not be conforming in size. A variance would need to be sought and received. The bank holding the mortgage on the property might also object since the subdivision might decrease the value of the property securing the loan. (Some thought the bank might actually be pleased to not have the liability). A façade easement maintained by Old Allentown Preservation Association was also suggested. It was important in this case that OAPA agree to maintain the façade.

The quotes from 2 contractors to stabilize/rebuild the façade and repair the box gutter were reviewed. The quote from Preservation Works Ltd. with gutter repairs added was \$64,400. This was for masonry restoration of the entire building and the repair of the gutter. A second price to rebuild the front façade where bulging and repair the box gutter was received for \$37,400. The

cost to demolish the building was \$30,000. Ms. Jackson pointed out the added money needed to do the renovation over demolition was not that high.

Mr. Brobst shared a major concern about the condition of the property and the danger that a person or child could get seriously hurt or killed. He argued strongly for making a decision tonight on the steps to make the building safe or to permit demolition. After further discussion an action plan was created as defined in the motion made by Mr. Brobst.

The owner agreed to meet with the City and discuss possible City financial assistance for the renovation of the building. Mr. Lightner pointed out that the self-forgiving loan was through CDBG and had to be income qualified.

**Motion:** The HARB upon motion by Mr. Brobst and seconded by Mr. Huber adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein:

1. The proposal to demolish the carriage house at 348 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street was presented by William Harvey and Leonard Lightner.
2. Partial demolition of the about-to-collapse portions of the brick façade will be taken down within the week. If possible, the historic brick will be salvaged.
3. A structural analysis of the building will be undertaken immediately thereafter to be certain building is safe and salvageable.
4. Install plywood over the interior structure to enclose the building, if needed.
5. Repair the box gutter in-kind as soon as possible.
6. If the structure is determined to not be salvageable by the structural engineer, a permit may be issued for the building to be demolished.
7. A plan to repair the building must be submitted within 6 months if the building deemed salvageable.

The proposal to recommend a COA was unanimously approved. (6-0; motion carried; Brobst, Huber, Jackson, Olson, Roberts, Sell)