

**CITY OF ALLENTOWN
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
FINAL REVIEW SHEET
January 10, 2018**

Case #HDC-2018-00042– Proposal to continue installation of the vinyl composite porch flooring

Property located at: 1501 W Linden Street

Agenda #3

Historic District: West Park

Case # HDC-2018-00042

Meeting date: January 7, 2019

Property Owner: Henri Desrosiers

Owners Address: 1501 W Linden St,
Allentown, PA 18102

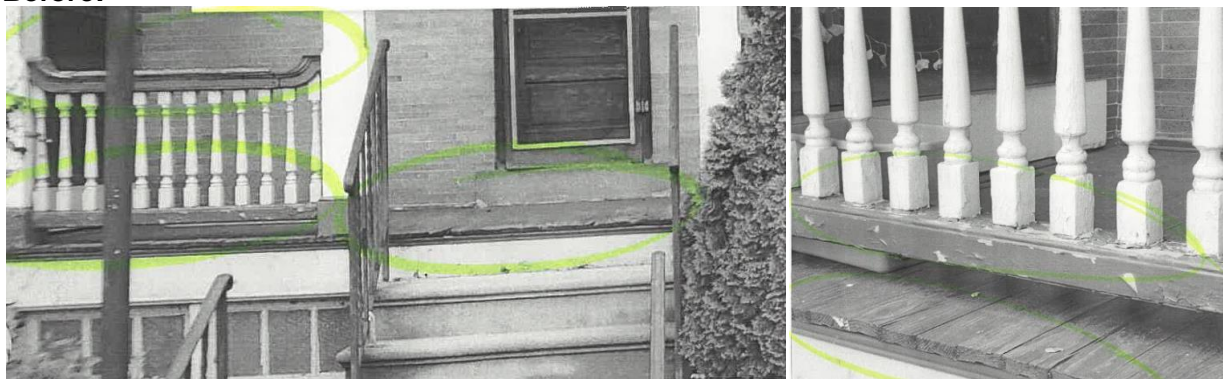
Applicant: same

Address: same

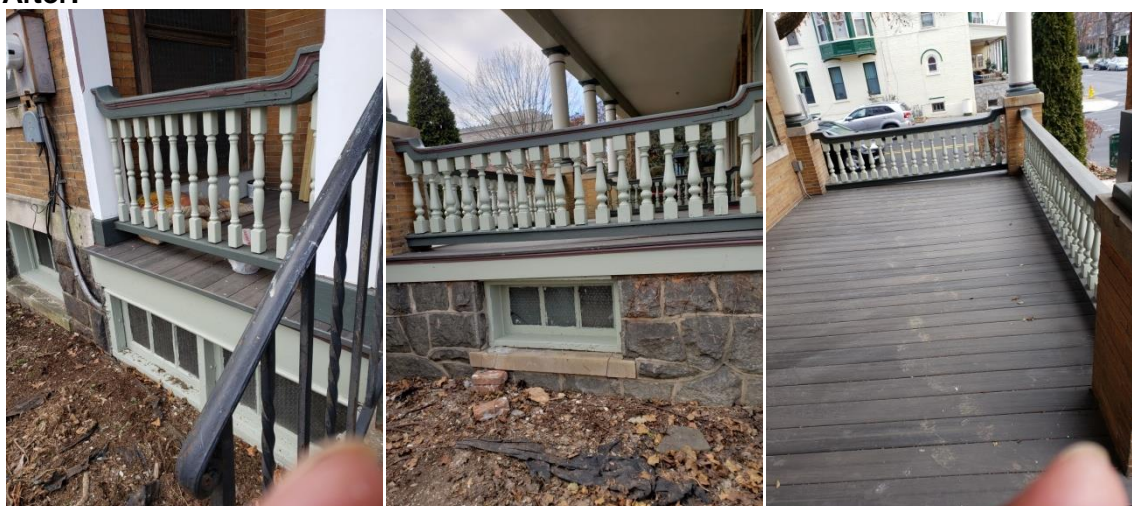
Building description, period, style, defining features: This twin house, c.1897-1911 is constructed of yellow brick and is Eastlake in style. The shared cross-gable roof has asphalt shingles, dormers and a single chimney. The front facing gables are covered with scalloped wood shingles. The windows are a combination of 1/1 sash, arched windows with brick lintels, casement, bay, stained glass transoms and ornamental frames with flat lintels. Windows in the bay contain unique curved glass. The main entry is a single glazed door with transom and stone lintel. The porch roof is supported by ionic posts; the floor is wood and there are turned balusters.



Before:



After:



Proposed alterations: It is proposed to continue the installation of the vinyl composite porch flooring.

Staff Approvals: 6/7/2005 – replace slate shingles with asphalt shingles.

5/30/2006 – replace porch flooring on side porch.

Violations: 10/25/2018 – Removed porch railing. Removed porch floor boards and replaced with vinyl composite material. Porch railings were repaired and replaced, violation for railings resolved.

Background: n/a

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, 1. Repairs, Replacement and Alternate Materials, 7. Porches and Stoops

Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations: The installed flooring isn't technically appropriate according to guidelines, which stress the replacement of historic materials be in-kind. A tongue and groove wood floor should have been installed, and properly stained and sealed, which should hold up to weather over time if maintained. Understanding that maintenance tends to be neglected, the Trex product reduces maintenance requirements, and in this case, appears to closely resemble a stained wood floor. Samples should have been

provided, and in the future, this alternative material could be considered on a case by case basis. The other mitigating factor in this case is the elevated level of the porch which makes the porch floor surface hard to see from street level. The edge is the most visible and resembles the historic appearance.

The repair and painting of the railing and balusters is appropriately as completed. It is not clear if the soffit work was completed. In-kind replacement or repair of soffit elements is recommended.

Discussion: There was a thorough discussion of the porch floor. The applicant explained the problem he had with the deteriorated wood decking and the amount of windblown rain that impacts the porch because it is on a corner. He also said the porch floor was leaking and water was getting into the basement. A sample of the installed product was circulated. Mr. Huber said he had a problem with the dimensions of the product, the curved surface, and the edge detail. The applicant said he had put a cut board along the ends of the decking. Mr. Huber explained that the cut ends of boards are historically visible.

Ms. Jackson said she did not support allowing the decking installed to remain because it would be setting a poor precedent for a front façade. The other instances that the HARB approved a similar Trex-type product were all on rear facades and not highly visible. Other members of HARB agreed. Ms. Jackson went on to suggest a composite product that she could support. She said it was historically dimensioned and tongue and groove style. The manufacturer she was familiar with was "Aeratis". Details of the product were discussed and the HARB agreed it would be historically appropriate.

Details of using wood were also reviewed. Mr. Huber recommended fir tongue and groove decking approximately 3" in dimension. He explained that fir would be the longer lasting option in wood.

The applicant agreed he would replace the existing porch decking and a date was set for it to be done by. The applicant also asked about deteriorated concrete side steps to the porch. It was suggested that repair might be the best option since he said only one step was deteriorated. Forming the bullnose edge was discussed in some detail, and it was explained that that the bullnose detail was character defining and would need to be replicated.

In response to the Historic Consultant's question, the applicant said he had repaired the porch soffit and fascia in-kind.

Motion: The HARB upon motion by Mr. Huber and seconded by Ms. Jackson recommended that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein:

1. The proposal to continue the installation of the vinyl composite porch flooring at 1501 W Linden Street was presented by Henri Desrosiers.
2. The vinyl composite (Trex) porch flooring installed without HARB review and approval must be removed. The material does not have appropriate dimensions or edge treatment and is installed on the very visible primary/front façade of the building.
3. The porch flooring will be replaced with historically appropriate fir, tongue and groove 2 ½" – 3" wood decking or solid PVC composite (Aeratis or equal) tongue and groove 3" decking with factory finish or painted.
4. The porch floor replacement must be completed by May 15, 2019.
5. The existing concrete side steps will be retained and repaired in-kind. The concrete steps must keep the bullnose feature to match the original.

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