

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
June 3, 2019
FINAL REVIEW - DENIAL**

Item #1 - Case # HDC-2019-00010 – Proposal to rehabilitate and reconstruct front porch including flooring, posts, and roof

Property located at: 537 W Liberty Street

Agenda #1

Historic District: Old Fairground

Case # HDC-2019-000010

Meeting date: June 3, 2019

Property Owner: Dream Big Investments LLC

Owners Address: 36 N 10th St, Allentown, PA 18101

Applicant: same

Applicant's Address: same

Building description, period, style, defining features: This 3-story brick row house, ca 1893 is Queen Anne in style. There is a unique triangular projecting tower that extends from the 2nd to 3rd floor with paneled exterior and a character defining roof shape. The house has a mansard roof with asphalt shingles, a single dormer to the right of the tower and brickote on the side. The windows are 1/1 sash with segmentally arched brick headers. The main entry is a single door with transom on a wooden porch with turned posts and character defining geometric wood railing.



Allentown, Pennsylvania
Google
Street View - Oct 2018

Image capture: Oct 2018 © 2019 Google

Proposed alterations: It is proposed to rehabilitate and reconstruct front porch including flooring, posts, and roof. From photos that were submitted, it appears that new 6x6 PVC “Colonial” style posts are proposed that are close but not matching the historic posts that were damaged in a porch fire; new 1x6 T&G beaded board proposed for the ceiling; 1x4 T&G fir flooring proposed for the porch floor; and charcoal gray “architectural” style shingles proposed for the roof.

Staff Approvals: n/a

Background: HARB Case 00-OF-2 – Proposal to install a wood handrail along the front steps leading to the front porch. HARB recommended and Council approved the installation of a simple wrought iron railing. Approved by resolution 27581, April 19, 2000.

HARB Case 98-OF-2 – Proposal to wrap windows with aluminum, cover exposed wood on turret with vinyl siding and install vinyl J channel around turret and corner posts on turret. HARB recommended denial of the proposed work. Upheld by City Council by Resolution 27389, January 21, 1998.

HARB Case 84-1-OF – Proposal to remove enclosed porch and fiberglass overhang at the rear of the property. Also remove cyclone fence along the perimeter of the back of the property. HARB recommended approval of the proposal. City Council approved the proposal by Resolution 25297 February 15, 1984.

Violations: First NOV September 25, 2018 – Boarded up windows, satellite dish, wood trim on porch roof missing or deteriorated. Second NOV January 25, 2019. In process of being resolved.

Guideline Citation: SIS 6 Deteriorated features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.

Allentown Guidelines for Historic Districts: 5. Guidelines for Existing Buildings and Structures, 1. Repairs, Replacement and Alternative Materials, 7. Porches and stoops

Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations: The proposed repair of the deteriorated porch is historically appropriate in approach but not in all details. The beaded board ceiling and fir porch flooring are historically appropriate and should be painted. The proposed turned posts and shingles should be modified if possible. The PVC posts are too narrow at the turned section – a better selection and material should be sought. It is also recommended to keep posts that are not damaged or have minimal damage and replace only the corner post if possible. In that case creating a replica of the original post made might be cost effective and would be more historically appropriate. The roof should be a flat 3 tab shingle or GAF Slateline (or equivalent) shingle in charcoal gray not the architectural shingle as proposed. Repairs to the roof fascia/soffit and porch structure should be done in wood and match the existing in dimension and detail. The railing/guards should replicate the existing historic wood railing guards. The height of the railing/guards should be able to be maintained under the IEBC since the building is a certified historic building.

Discussion: The project to repair the existing porch was discussed in the absence of the applicant due to timing constraints on the application. Although several proposed materials were historically appropriate, the porch post and roofing specification were not. In addition, there was insufficient information on the porch railing/guard replacement and repair of the soffit and eaves. The submission was not complete or clear. The HARB discussed the difficulty of making a resolution on any of the proposed work. Tabling the case was not an option due to the timing on the application. The conclusion was that it would be necessary to deny the work due to the inappropriate selections of posts and roofing and the lack of information on the reconstruction details including the railing, soffit, eaves, etc.

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

1. The proposal to rehabilitate and reconstruct front porch including flooring, posts, and roof at 537 W Liberty Street was NOT represented.
2. The architectural type roof shingles and PVC porch posts proposed are not historically appropriate for the house or historic district and do not meet the Design Guidelines.
3. In addition the application was incomplete, missing information on the proposed railing/guard rehabilitation, repair of the eaves and soffits, and reconstruction details of porch deck and roof.

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