

FINAL REVIEW
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
HARB
July 12, 2019

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: July 1, 2019

Property Owner: Dream Big Investments LLC

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

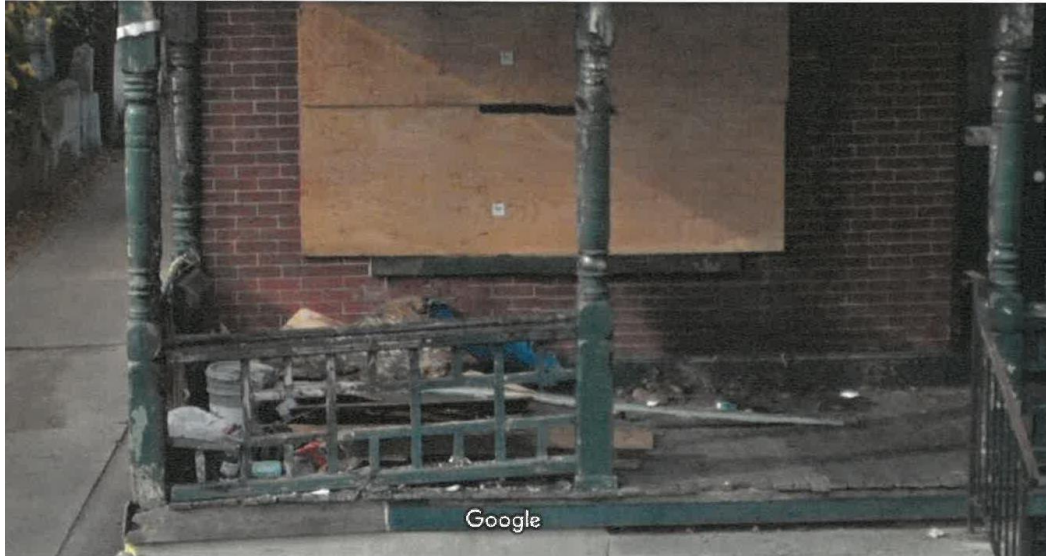
Applicant: same

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 brick gable 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 exactly 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 should be sought. It is also recommended to keep posts that are not damaged or have minimal damage and replace only the corner posts if possible. In that case having 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.

From 6/3/2019 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.*
4. *The proposal to DENY a COA was unanimously approved. (6-0; motion carried; Brobst, Fillman, Huber, Jackson, Roberts, Sell)*

Discussion: The applicant said that the proposed posts were to be wood and not PVC. He said they were the same posts as used at 531-533 W. Liberty St. which were approved by the HARB. A photo of the installed posts was viewed by the HARB. The applicant told the HARB that all of the posts were in poor condition due to the fire. He proposed to add a post next to the existing center post and replace the other three plus the half post at the wall. The HARB responded that adding a post at the center was not historically appropriate, and Mr. Huber spent some time explaining how the applicant could do the work without adding a center post. It was agreed that new posts would be located only where they historically existed.

The applicant said he changed the roofing spec to align with the HARB's recommendation. He showed a sample board of GAF Slateline shingles, and agreed to use the color recommended by the HARB. He also said he would be replicating the historic railing on the porch, on the front and on the side even though the side had been altered with an inappropriate railing. Other details of the porch roof were reviewed. The applicant agreed to use beaded board on the gable side of the shed roof, on the underside of the roof, and also on the lower section of the triangular "bay" window/tower. He also agreed to match soffit and fascia details used at 531-533 W. Liberty St. in wood for his property and to install half round gutter and round downspout. The last item addressed was the skirt board along the front and side edge of the porch floor deck.

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

1. The proposal to rehabilitate and reconstruct the front porch including flooring, posts, and roof at 537 W Liberty Street was represented by Joel Pena.

2. New wood posts matching those used at 531-533 W. Liberty St will be installed in the existing post locations. There will be no additional post added at the center between his and the neighboring homes
3. A new wood railing matching the existing historic railing will be installed at the front and side of the repaired porch. The railing will match in all dimensions, material, and design.
4. New tongue and groove fir porch flooring will be installed as proposed
5. A flat wood skirt board will be installed on the front and side edges of the porch floor structure
6. Tongue and groove beaded board will be installed on the underside of the porch roof, on the gable side of the porch (to match existing), and on the lower section of triangular bay window on the second floor
7. The soffit and fascia of the porch roof will be reconstructed in wood and match the original design and appearance or be similar to the design, dimension, and detailing of the soffit and fascia reconstruction at 531-533 W. Liberty St.
8. New GAF Slateline shingles in Antique Slate will be installed on the reconstructed roof.
9. Half round gutters and round downspouts will be installed. The color of the gutter and downspout should blend with the paint color scheme chosen for the building. The color can be a factory finish or painted.
10. All new wood will be painted.

The proposal to recommend a COA was unanimously approved. (4-0; motion carried; Fillman, Huber, Roberts, Sell)