



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

29855

**RESOLUTION**

**R71 – 2019**

*Introduced by the Administration on September 18, 2019*

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**Certificates of Appropriateness for work in the Historic Districts:  
130 N 15<sup>th</sup> St., 621 Gordon St.**

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***Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That***

**WHEREAS**, Certificates of Appropriateness are required under the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania No. 167, June 13, 1961 (P.L. 282) and City of Allentown Ordinance No. 12314; and

**WHEREAS**, the following owners and/or applicants propose exterior alterations of the listed properties as indicated on the attached Case Reports:

David Treatman, Owner/Applicant  
130 N 15<sup>th</sup> Street

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown, Owner/Applicant  
621 Gordon Street.

**WHEREAS**, on September 5, 2019, the Allentown Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) recommended approval of the above applications, or offered modifications which were subsequently accepted by the property owners, to City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, after reviewing the above-mentioned HARB case report, it is the opinion of City Council that the proposed work is appropriate.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Allentown that Certificates of Appropriateness are hereby granted for the above referenced work.

	Yea	Nay
Candida Affa		
Julio A. Guridy	X	
Daryl Hendricks	X	
Cynthia Mota	X	
Courtney Robinson	X	
Ed Zucal	X	
Roger MacLean, Pres.	X	
TOTAL	6	0

***THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That the above copy of Resolution No. 29855 was adopted by the City Council of Allentown on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2019, and is on file in the City Clerk's Office.***

  
 City Clerk

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
September 5, 2019  
FINAL REVIEW**

**Item #2 - Case # HDC-2019-00055** – Proposal to renovate the building.

**Property located at:** 621 Gordon Street  
**Agenda #2**  
**Historic District:** Old Fairgrounds  
**Case #** HDC-2019-000055  
**Meeting date:** September 5, 2019

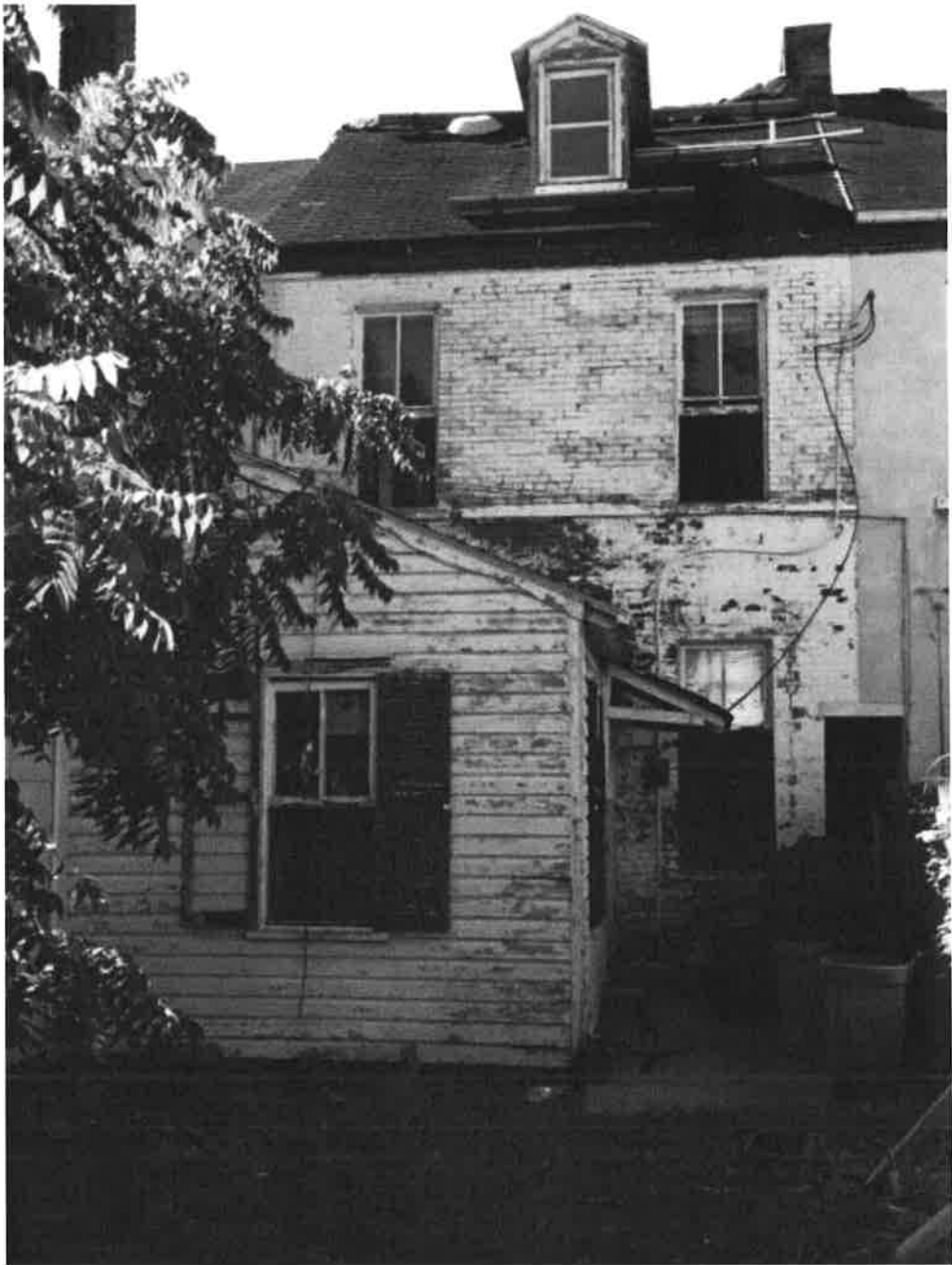
**Property Owner:** RACA  
**Owners Address:** 245 N 6<sup>th</sup> St., Allentown,  
PA 18102  
**Applicant:** Kelly McElroy  
**Applicant's Address:** Same

**Building description, period, style defining features:** This structure is a 3 bay, 2 ½ story, attached red brick dwelling with gable roof, roof dormer, 2 over 2 double hung windows with arched headers, front entry with decorative corbels and transom, concrete front porch, and rear frame addition with historic German siding. The house dates from c. 1870 and is Italianate in style.

621 Gordon Street







**Proposed alterations:** It is proposed to renovate the building. The exterior work includes the following:

1. Install vinyl & aluminum clad wood windows with simulated or true divided lights; paint all wood casings and trim
2. Install front exterior pre-hung (solid Core) Mahogany wooden door with 3 lite, 6 lite or ¼, ½ glass
3. Install rear pre-hung white steel raised panel door with glass (or wood door with glass?)
4. Install Hampton Bay antique or black finished wall mounted light fixture, mailbox, 4" address numbers
5. Remove existing fence and install a 6' high wood stockade fence. Install a 42" wide, 72" high gate.
6. Repair/replace porch and steps in kind
7. Repair/replace/reconstruct front brick façade
8. Reconstruct the rear addition walls
9. Power wash and repoint rear brick

**Staff Approvals:** HDA-2018-00103 – Remove existing 3-tab shingles and replace with 3-tab shingles to match existing or, replace with 4- or 5-tab asphalt slate-like shingles.

**Background:** 86-1-OF Proposal: Applicant proposes to remove cement porch with galvanized pipe railing is seriously dilapidated condition to replace with wooden porch stoop and bannister. Applicant amendments: would like to get by without bannister. HARB amendment: gave applicant option of having a simple iron post bannister with no intermediate posts or balustrades, or no bannister at all if acceptable to Inspections. Rationale: The stoop size will be 50 x 28" with a sidewalk to entrance height of 56". Applicant was reminded to put sand in his final paint to reduce the chances of creating a slippery surface. Appearance will be of a flat landing and two steps down to sidewalk. Approved February 3, 1986; City Council approval February 19, 1986 by resolution 25590.

HDC-2017-00012 – Proposal to demolish the garage at the back of the property. Because the garage was in a deteriorated condition and not a contributing resource to the historic district, HARB did not object to the demolition. CMU walls and roof to be demolished. Existing short foundation to remain. Concrete slab to be retained and be repaired, if possible, if not then the slab to be replaced in-kind. Recommended for approval by HARB on November 6, 2017. Approved by Council Resolution 29577, November 15, 2017.

**Violations:** n/a

**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.

**SIS 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and 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 Alternative Materials, 3. Roofing, 4. Walls, Siding and Trim, 5. Windows, 6. Doors, 7. Porches and Stoops, 12. Lighting

**Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations:** (First, a request to the applicant to make a concise list of work affecting the exterior of the building that needs HARB review on any future submissions. The materials provided were not clear nor organized in an appropriate way to facilitate review and comments. There were several cases of conflicting specs.)

The approach should be, wherever possible, to retain original materials and repair. In particular I am concerned about removing and replacing the brick façade. To approve this the structural need must be documented. The repair and reinforcement of the facade with tie backs into the

existing floor system should be investigated if the brick is not stable. Otherwise, the brick appears in reasonable condition and only requires repointing with soft, lime-based mortar. All brick repair and repointing must follow Preservation Brief #2.

Other recommendations:

- Windows – if the existing wood windows are beyond repair, the windows must be replaced with aluminum clad wood windows with 2 over 2 SDL configuration. Windows at the rear of the property could be replaced with vinyl windows per the Design Guidelines
- Front door - The front door cannot be a pre-hung door. If the original door is gone or beyond repair a salvaged or new wood door should be hung in the historic frame. The new door should match the historic door seen in older photographs which was a ½ light door with lower panels.
- Rear door – there was conflicting information on proposed door. A smooth fiberglass door with half glass and lower panels would be historically appropriate at the rear of the building.
- Repair or replace front porch steps – Repair of the concrete steps is recommended if possible. In either case the steps should have bullnose treads.
- Power washing and repointing of rear façade – The removal of the paint on the rear façade should be considered optional. Power washing pressure must be limited to a maximum of 400 psi and brick repointing must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Preservation Brief #2 on the historic masonry. Both removing the paint and repainting the rear façade would be historically appropriate.
- Reconstruction of the rear 1 story addition walls – The walls and siding of the historic addition should be retained if possible. Investigate keeping existing stone foundation and cistern. Cistern could be infilled and capped, and new floor framed over it.
- Light fixture, mailbox and house numbers – These items should be reviewed at the staff level once cut sheets provided. The existing light fixture is historically appropriate and should be kept if possible. House numbers are located on the door frame and could be retained. A door slot for mail should be considered instead of a mailbox.

**Discussion:** The discussion focused on the rear addition and several details of the renovation of the front façade. The applicants explained that the rear addition to the building did not have proper foundations and was collapsing. In addition there was no fire wall separation between it and the neighboring building. On the Consultant's suggestion, the HARB asked that the roof slope for a newly constructed addition remain pitched in the same direction as the existing addition and not turned as proposed to slope to the rear of the property. The slope of the roof could then retain a historically appropriate slope and not be changed to a more modern low slope. The finishes of the addition were reviewed. It was agreed that the windows would be aluminum clad wood or fiberglass with 2 over 2 SDL muntin configuration with trim and sill details matching the historic and that the siding would be smooth fiber cement with a 4" exposure and corner boards and rake matching existing. Mr. Huber also pointed out that the soffit should not be perforated and should match the existing as closely as possible.

On the front façade the applicants clarified that they would not remove and rebuild the entire brick façade but repair brick and repoint in kind. In answer to a question about the missing arched window lintels, the applicants said they would construct new arched window lintels to match the original. They also agreed to install a new or salvaged wood half glass with panels front door. It was explained that the intent was to repair the concrete steps with bull-nose detail and other details would be as recommended by the Historic Consultant. The final item addressed was the fence. The applicants said they could install a dog-eared wood fence instead of the proposed stockade fence.

**Motion:** By means of an electronic vote the HARB adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein:

1. The proposal to renovate the building at 621 Gordon Street was represented by Scotty Smith and Kevin Park.
2. The deteriorated vacant building will be renovated with the following materials and details below:
  - a. New front windows will be 2/2 double hung aluminum clad wood with simulated divided lights. The windows will fit the existing openings exactly
  - b. The lintels over the windows that remain will be repaired. For windows where the lintels are missing, new lintels will be made that match the existing. (Contact information for a contractor who can replicate the lintels was provided to the applicants).
  - c. New rear windows (including windows in the rear addition) will be fiberglass 2/2 double hung windows with simulated divided lights. The windows will fit the existing openings exactly or match historic size (addition)
  - d. All wood trim and casings will be painted
  - e. A new or salvaged front door will be installed in the existing door frame. The door will be wood with half light and panels below
  - f. A new smooth flush glazed fiberglass or wood door with half glass and panels will be installed in the newly reconstructed rear addition.
  - g. The rear addition will be reconstructed to match the existing in size, form, roof slope, and trim detail. Drawings of the rear addition must be submitted for staff review.
  - h. The new siding on the rear addition will be smooth fiber-cement lap siding with a 4" reveal, cornerboards, and trim. Composite material shutters may be installed on the addition, but specification must be approved by staff.
  - i. The front brick façade will be repaired and repointed following Preservation Brief #2 guidelines.
  - j. The rear painted brick will be power washed with low pressure (400 psi max), repointed following Preservation Brief #2 guidelines, and repainted. Removing paint from the rear brick is optional and must follow Preservation Brief guidelines.
  - k. The front concrete steps will be repaired in kind with bull-nosed treads
  - l. The existing fence will be replaced with a new 6' high dog eared board fence with 42" wide x 72" high gate.
  - m. The existing front light fixture will be reused if possible.
  - n. Existing reused or new address numbers will be installed on the front door frame
  - o. A mail slot will be installed in the new front door instead of installing and wall mounted mailbox.

Vote: Yes: Huber, Fillman, Roberts, Jackson, Brobst, Sell, Olson



**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
September 5, 2019  
FINAL REVIEW**

**Item #1 - Case # HDC-2019-00034** – Proposal to install solar panels

**Property located at:** 130 N 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
**Agenda #1**  
**Historic District:** Old Allentown  
**Case #** HDC-2019-000034  
**Meeting date:** September 5, 2019

**Property Owner:** David Treatman  
**Owners Address:** 130 N 15th St.,  
Allentown, PA 18102  
**Applicant:** Same  
**Applicant's Address:** Same

**Building description, period, style defining features:** This structure is a 2 story detached tan and brown brick dwelling with a gable roof, large front facing gabled "dormer" with broad overhanging eaves with support brackets, 6 over 1 double hung windows, half round attic windows, brown asphalt shingled roof, and a full-front porch with square brick posts. The house is Arts and Crafts in style and dates from c.1920. The building has a high level of historic integrity.







**Proposed alterations:** It is proposed to install solar panels. 26 solar panels will be installed on various locations on the roof mostly on the higher lower sloped dormer roofs

**Staff Approvals:** 3/12/2014 – Replace concrete steps and like for like replacement of porch floor.

12/9/2008 – Like for like replacement of rotted gable ends.

5/27/2015, HAD-2015-00027, Replace existing 4 foot wood picket fence with wood shadow box fence, 6 feet high at rear of property.

**Background:** n/a

**Violations:** n/a

**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.

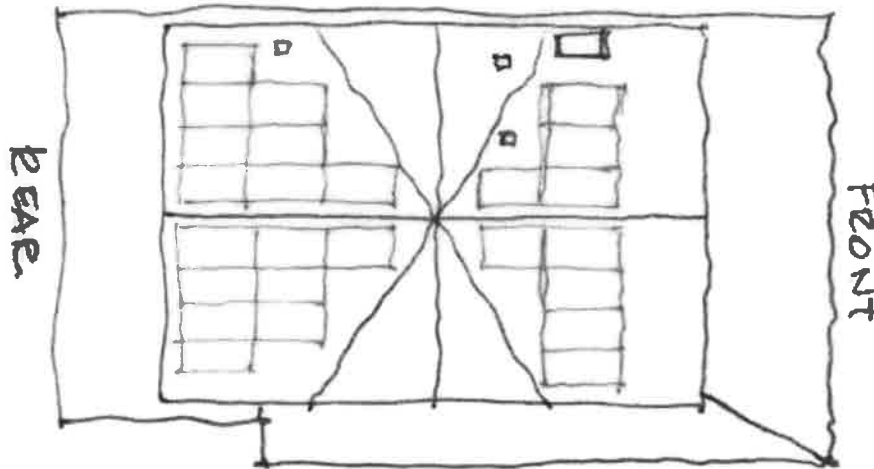
**SIS 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment **Allentown Guidelines for Historic**

**Districts:** 5. Guidelines for Existing Buildings and Structures, 1. Repairs, Replacement and Alternative Materials, 14. Solar Installations and Energy Efficiency

**Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations:** The solar panels are not historically appropriate as proposed (locations), but if repositioned, some or all of the units may be possible. From the guidelines: *"Sloped roof - On sloped roof structures, solar devices should be mounted on rear roofs that are part of secondary facades. The solar panels should be flush mounted on sloped roofs if possible".*

The upper roofs have a low slope and are not highly visible at the rear and only partially visible from the front. The Tesla solar panels are shown flush with the roof in image below. If flush to the roof and moved to the back gable and away from the front edge of the front roof, the installation would be close to meeting the design guidelines. (See sketch) The other modification that would reduce the visibility of the installation would be to replace the roof shingles with new shingles a dark gray color that blended with the color of the panels. below is an image of Tesla solar panels: Powerwall (interior installation assumed):





**Discussion from 8/5/19 meeting:** The discussion focused on alternate locations for solar panels proposed for the front upper section of the roof. Since the applicant revealed he also owns the garage behind the house, placing them on the garage was suggested as better than the front of the house. The roof of the rear porch was also studied as an option. There was some concern about visibility from West Park, but otherwise placing the solar panels on rear roofs of secondary facades met the design guidelines. Mr. Kimmerly pointed out that West Park was not technically a public right-of-way even though the public had access to the city owned property. The applicant informed the HARB that a Tesla installer would be on site on Thursday 8/8/19 and it was decided that Mr. Kimmerly would meet with the applicant and installer that day to discuss relocation of the front solar panels to the rear garage roof and rear porch roof.

**Discussion:** The applicant and representative from Tesla presented a revised proposal for placement of solar panels on the roof. The new proposal was similar to the layout suggested by the Historic Consultant last meeting. The applicants explained that the garage roofs and the rear porch roof would not be good locations for solar panels due to shadowing of adjacent buildings and landscape. Seven panels originally located along the front edge of the front gable roof are proposed to be relocated to rear roofs. There were still concerns expressed by the HARB. The Historic Consultant enumerated several of the unique conditions in the case that might support approval:

- The main mass of the house was set back from homes on either side
- The upper roof had a shallow pitch reducing its visibility
- The gable slopes faced the sides of the house and not the front which is more typical in historic Allentown neighborhoods
- The solar panels were low profile, close to the roof surface, and finished/closed around the perimeter.

Mr. Huber was most worried about setting precedent. He voted yes with the stipulation that this is a TEST case until more detailed, updated guidelines can be adopted, AND, they are located at least 10' behind front wall of house, AND all trim be painted to match the shingle color. Mr. Brobst explained the reason he would vote for the installation. He pointed out that there are many telephone poles, wires, satellite dishes, and other mechanical and electrical infrastructure that distract from historic homes. He pointed out that at the 130 N 15th Street residence one sees power lines, a power pole with 2 signs and a chimney with a TV antenna. It was his opinion that 90% of individuals going by the house would never notice the solar panels.

Regarding future requests, he thought the HARB needed further discussion, but at a minimum the proposals would have to maintain historic details and proportions.

**Motion:** By means of an electronic vote HARB adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein:

1. The proposal to install solar panels at 130 N 15th Street was represented by David Treatman and Joshua Buck of Tesla.
2. Solar panels will be installed on various locations on the low sloped upper roofs of the front and rear facing gabled "dormers". There will be a total of 26 panels
3. Seven panels will be moved from the front edge of the front "dormer" roof to the back roofs.
4. The solar panel installation is being approved on front roofs because of the following unique conditions:
  - a. The rear porch and garage roofs are not viable for locations for solar panels due to tree and neighboring building shadowing and resultant reduced efficiency.
  - b. The main building mass is set back from the neighboring buildings
  - c. The upper roofs are very low sloped (approximately 20 degrees) and sloped parallel to the street instead of towards the street resulting in very low visibility from the street
  - d. The solar panels are flat to the roof and are finished on the edges to blend into the roof surface
5. It is recommended that the edges of the solar panels be painted a brown color to match the roofing color.
6. The solar panels will start 10' back from the front of the house.

Vote: Yes: Huber, Fillman, Roberts, Jackson, Brobst, Sell, Olson