

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
February 13, 2019  
FINAL REVIEW**

**Case # HDC-2020-000001** - Proposal to continue the installation of vinyl windows on the front and side of house visible from the public right of way.

**Property located at:** 214 N Fountain Street

**Agenda #1**

**Historic District:** Old Allentown

**Case #** HDC-2020-000001

**Meeting date:** February 3, 2020

**Property Owner:** Thomas Cleary

**Address:** 214 N Fountain St, Allentown,  
PA 18102

**Applicant:** same

**Applicant's Address:** same

**Building description, period, style defining features:** This structure is a 2 ½ story masonry dwelling above a garage with stucco walls, projecting box bay on the second floor front with aluminum siding, front-facing gable roof, a side entry with porch above on the second floor, and vinyl window replacements. The building dates from c.1920-1930 and is utilitarian in style. The vinyl windows were installed without HARB review.

**Proposed alterations:** It is proposed to continue the installation of vinyl windows on the front and side of house visible from the public right of way. The vinyl windows have grills between the glass on the upper sashes except for the narrow window on the side of the box bay. Existing storm window frames remain but the storm window sashes appear to have been removed.



**Staff Approvals:** N/A  
**Violations:** N/A

**Background:**

**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, 5. Windows

**Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations:** It is not easy to see what type of windows were previously in the building from older Street Views (back to 2008). Wood windows should have been retained and repaired. Vinyl windows do not meet the design guidelines are not historically appropriate, but in this case they were at least installed to fit the size of the existing window openings. It should be determined what the previous windows were. The existing context is an alley of about 25% garages and the rest narrow row houses, some restored. There appears to be a predominance of vinyl windows in block. If the HARB decides the windows are acceptable in this mixed use building in this context, it is recommended that the triple track storm window frames be removed to improve the historic appearance of the building.

**Discussion:** The discussion focused on the lack of architectural integrity of the residence, the context, and a second violation that was discovered. The applicants said they had owned the building for 3 years. They said a majority of the windows on Russel St and on Fountain St were vinyl and gave numbers of homes. (12 out of 13 on Russel St. and 17 out of 23 on Fountain St.) It was verified that the windows installed were beige in color (almond) and that the grids were located between the panes of glass. The HARB discussed the integrity of the building. The residential level was above a garage and they thought it may have been an alteration. It was noted that the building was greatly altered. When looking at Google Street views it was realized that there was other work that had been done without HARB review. That work was the construction of an enclosing wall under the side porch. The wall was clad in vinyl shingle and included a salvaged historic door. The applicants explained the wall was constructed for security purposes and did not enclose space. The HARB thought the wall was mostly an improvement to the façade although there was a concern about the white color of the shingles. HARB members expressed support for allowing the vinyl windows and “security” wall to remain because of the altered nature of the building and the lack of clarity on the material of the windows replaced. The HARB agreed the building was not a contributing resource in the historic district. Mr. Brobst requested the white vinyl shingles be painted to match the color of the rest of the house walls. The HARB also agreed with the Historic Consultant that the old storm windows frames should be removed.

**Motion:** The HARB upon motion by Mr. Brobst 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 continue the installation of vinyl windows on the front and side of house visible from the public right of way at 214 N Fountain Street was represented by Thomas Cleary.

2. The installation of almond color vinyl windows with grills between the glass are permitted on the front and side of house due to the building being highly altered and not a contributing resource in the district. It was also not clear what the material of the previous windows were.
  3. The storm window frames must be removed.
  4. The vinyl scalloped shingle siding on the "security" wall must be painted to match the other wall color of the house using proper primer and paint for vinyl.
  5. The remedial work must be completed by April 30, 2020.
- The proposal to issue a COA was unanimously approved. (6-0; motion carried; Brobst, Fillman, Huber, Olson, Roberts, Sell)