

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
August 31, 2020**

**FINAL REVIEW**

**Address:** 428-440 N 6th Street

**Case #HDC-2019-00007**– amend COA for 428 E 6th St.

**Historic District:** Old Fairgrounds

**Property Owner:** Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown

**Owners Address:** 245 N 6th St, Allentown, PA 18102

**Applicant:** Kelly McEllroy

**Address:** same

**From March 4, 2019 –**

*Discussion: The discussion of the proposed demolition started with a report on the current condition of the building. Ms. McEllroy, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown (RACA) informed the HARB that the mold conditions in the building were extreme, so bad that salvage of materials was no longer possible. Only a few materials were not affected by the mold such as the historic tile. The applicant reviewed other problems with the property – a recent fire and the high number of police responses to the building. She also reviewed the number of RFPs that have been issued and responses. The responses were few and the cost of renovation very high. The potential income did not support the cost to renovate. Mr. Lightner, the Director of Community and Economic Development, reinforced Ms. McEllroy's explanation of the need to demolish the building. He said all efforts to find a developer for the building had failed. Going forward RACA would be putting roofs on all buildings they control. He explained that RACA was in disarray for the last 5 years and that, rather than put all its resources into renovating this building, the plan was to put that money to better use to save other buildings, some of which are in the historic districts.*

*Mr. Renaut was concerned about the precedent that would be set if the HARB approved this demolition. He said the HARB should apply guidelines equally to all applicants. He was not sure there was enough information on which to make a decision. Mr. Kimmerly read through the requirements in the Allentown Design Guidelines for demolition. It was realized that RACA had done most of the required actions. Ms. Jackson said she accepted the condition of the building was very poor and she and Mr. Brobst were very concerned about the mold levels. Ms. Jackson and Mr. Huber asked the applicants to describe their intent with the lot after demolition. The applicants said the historic stone retaining wall would be retained, the lot graded, seeded and fenced. RACA would issue an RFP for development of the lot and would maintain the lot until development was underway. The proposed development would need to meet income restrictions and fully comply with HARB guidelines for new construction and be reviewed.*

*Ms. Solomon from the State Historic Preservation Office reviewed the 106 process that had been initiated on the building. She said there was still some submission that were needed to move the process along, and that the HARB could still be involved in the process, in particular, with possible mitigation requirements.*

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

*The proposal to demolish the house and garage at 428-440 N 6th Street was presented by Kelly McEllroy and Leonard Lightner.*

- 1. The house and garage will be demolished.*
- 2. The historic stone retaining wall must be retained.*
- 3. After demolition the lot will be graded, seeded, and maintained.*

4. *A fence and lighting will be installed to create a safer condition on the site. The fence will be an aluminum, vertical picket style fence and not a chain link fence.*

**HARB Action:** *The proposal to recommend a COA was approved. (7-0; motion carried; Brobst, Fillman, Huber, Jackson, Renaut, Roberts, Sell)*

**Discussion of August 31, 2020:** Ms. McElroy explained the latest developments on the demolition of the property. They received approval from the SHPO for the demolition and they had received the COA from HARB previously. There were several conditions in the COA that she requested reconsideration of. Those items were the installation of lighting on the site since there would be no electric service after demolition and the installation of aluminum picket fence around the property due to cost and length of time they thought a fence would be needed. She wanted to use chain link fence instead. She said the Redevelopment Authority would be releasing an RFP for redevelopment of the site very soon and they hoped to have a developer on board soon with construction of a new building occurring soon after design approvals could be gotten. Ms. McElroy also explained that they worked hard to save the front stone retaining wall and were happy to say that this could and would be retained as HARB had required in the earlier COA.

HARB members were hesitant to alter the approval for a chain link fence. Several members expressed concern about the length of time things would take even with a quick RFP release. A suggestion to use the aluminum picket fence along the front edge of the property at the stone wall and chain link on the other sides gained traction. The height of the fence was discussed and 4' was agreed to for the picket fence. Most of the HARB members thought the elimination of the lighting would be acceptable.

As an aside Mr. Fillman brought up problems at the property in the 300 block of 10th St. and Ms. McElroy said she would follow up on the fence issue and get it reinstalled.

**Motion:** The HARB upon motion by Mr. Brobst and seconded by Mr. Fillman adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify the proposed work as described herein:

The proposal to amend the previous COA at 428-440 N 6th Street was presented by Kelly McElroy.

1. The house and garage will be demolished.
2. The historic stone retaining wall will be retained.
3. After demolition the lot will be graded, seeded, and maintained.
4. A 4' high aluminum, vertical picket style fence will be installed along the front side of the lot and a chain link fence may be installed on the other sides.
5. The requirement for lighting the property is eliminated due to the lack of an electric service at this time.
6. The Redevelopment Authority will distribute an RFP for redevelopment of the site as soon as possible to reduce the time the property is vacant. Any proposed development of the site will be reviewed by HARB.

**HARB ACTION:** The proposal to issue a COA was unanimously approved. (5-0; motion carried: Brobst, Fillman, Huber, Jackson, Roberts)