

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
April 5, 2021**

FINAL REVIEW

Case # HDC-2021-00009

Property Address: 728 W Gordon

Proposal: Rear Yard Garage Demolition

Historic District: Old Allentown

Property Owner/Applicant: M&S Capital, LLC

Owner Address: 326 N. Hall Street, Allentown, PA 18102

Building description, period, style defining features:

This 2½-story brick row house, ca 1870 is Federal/Victorian style. The gable roof has a single dormer, denticulated brick cornice and asphalt shingles and a single chimney with drip ledges. The windows are 1/1 sash with flat brick lintels. The main entry is a single glazed door with transom and aluminum storm door with a concrete stoop which has wrought iron railing. There are two basement window grilles visible and a wooden grocer's alley door.



Proposed Alterations: Demolition of rear yard garage.

Staff Approvals: None

Violations: None

Prior COA(s):

1. 2011: Removal of brickote, wood repaired, installation of shutters on second floor, installation of porch light, removal of storm door, restoration of grocer's alley door.

Design Guidelines: Demolition must meet five criteria (meant to be applied to historic resources):

1. Clear and Present Danger
2. Feasibility of Rehabilitation
3. Architecture significance
4. Compatibility and Relevance
5. Proposed Future Development

Evaluation of Proposed Project:

The existing garage is not architecturally significant and does not contribute to or enhance the row house's historic character. Review of Sanborn maps confirms that the garage is not an original structure. A two-story wood-frame stable was originally located in this rear yard, adjacent to stables for the neighboring properties. Depiction of a two-story "iron" building appears c.1932; it is unconfirmed but possible that the current structure dates to this time.

The garage does not rise to a level of architectural significance to merit consideration as a character-defining feature of the subject property. The garage does not meet Rehabilitation Standard 4: "Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved." The garage has not acquired significance over time through its design, materials, or construction

Historic District Impact:

The proposed garage demolition would not have a negative impact on the historic district.

The Design Guidelines criteria 5 states that "Structures intrusive to the historic patterns of materials, scale and compatibility in a historic district will be reviewed accordingly. A structure's location in relation to a primary street, secondary street, or alleyway will carry weight in its review. The hierarchy and relationship of primary structures to accessory structures will be considered." The garage is visible from the cross street, N. Hall Street, and from the Wayne Street alley behind the subject property. N. Hall Street is the eastern boundary of the district. The garage does not contribute to the historic character of the surrounding district and can be considered "intrusive to the historic patterns" of the district. The corrugated metal cladding is not a historic material for the district. The non-original garage structure is clearly subordinate to the historic row house. It does not recall the original stable buildings along this alley and does not meaningfully contribute to a sense of the neighborhood's original development.

HARB Discussion

Board unanimously agreed that the demolition would be appropriate and that there would be no detrimental impact to the historic district as a result of the demolition. They inquired about the future use to which the applicant indicated that it would be a parking area for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation(s):

The proposed non-historic garage demolition is appropriate and is recommended for approval. The garage should be documented in photographs showing all exterior and interior facades prior to demolition.

Action

Motion to approve the application as presented with the proposed recommendation to document the structure prior to demolition. Motion passed unanimously.