

Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2026-00012

Address: 334 N. 9th Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Owner: Justin Cohen

Applicant: Neil Melcher

Proposal: Repair deteriorating brick facade

Building Description: This 3-story brick row house is a Queen Anne porch house with Eastlake influences. The mansard roof has been covered with aluminum siding. It displays a large dormer with a gable roof. The dormer is also covered with siding. There is a shared chimney to the left side of the roof. The aluminum covered cornice also shows stepped brick. Corbelled brick panels edge the dormer and extend below the detilated cornice. There are corbelled brick panels between the houses.

The 2nd floor windows are 1/1 sash set into arched frames. The window openings are topped by large segmental brick arch lintels. There is a row of brick tiles set into the arches. Small corbelled brick panels show at the outer edges of the lintels. The 1st floor window is three vertical panes with transoms set into an arched frame with a segmental arch lintel. This frame has projecting moldings.

The main entry is a glazed double period door with a transom. There is a wooden porch with wooden railings and balustrades, turned wooden columns with fan brackets. A spindled frieze is just under the porch roofline. The concrete steps have a wrought iron railing. There is a basement window grille and a basement level grocer's alley door.

Project Description:

Repair deteriorating brick by demolition of damaged units and replace with original materials and original building methods with modern wall ties.



Front Elevation (Google Maps, April 2024)

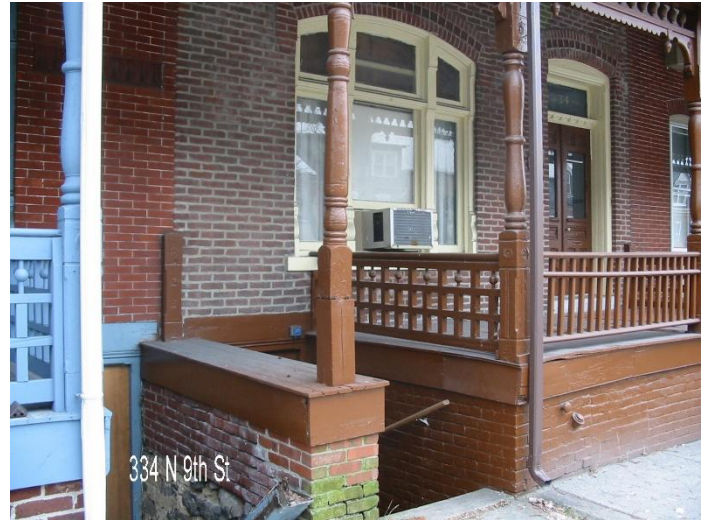


Existing Upper Floor Condition (Applicant)

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Existing Upper Floor Condition (Applicant)



Existing First Floor Condition (Applicant)



Existing First Floor Condition (Applicant)



Existing Condition (Applicant)

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334 North 9th Street

Jan 1, 2026

Melcher Brothers Masonry
61 Andreas, Rd, Andreas PA, 18211
(484) 350-9548

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Project Summary

Historical Restoration

Overview

334 North 9th Street Allentown PA, contractor upon sight visit noticed the following. Severe water and structural damage on the right side of the building above the window arch. Upon further assessment it was noted that water damage and wrong use of mortar was the main cause of damage. Damage is way too far

gone to do any patch work, the project will need to be fully restored to historical masonry guidelines due to being in the historical district of Allentown.

Key Repairs:

Due to severe structural damage, shoring will need to be installed before any of the construction process begins. Once permits are pulled and in place the first thing to be done is the installation of the helibeam system. This system is a shoring method in masonry restoration to prevent further structural damage by installing stainless steel heli beam bars all through the masonry structure to distribute the load bearing weight. Once these bars are installed they require 24-48 hours of cure time before any demo will take place. While these bars are being installed the roof underneath will be shored up to withstand the weight of bricks materials, workers, and demo process. The protection of the building's roof is also a concern and 3/4 plywood will be installed as a "protection board" during the construction process. After all shoring and safety measures are taken the main repairs will take place, demo of failed brick, relay to historical guidelines, install proper flashing and wall ties. After these repairs take place a permanent solution to the water damage will be resolved.

The contractor will also recommend that the building should be fully repointed with lime based mortar in the future to truly prevent brick facade damage. Type S mortar is present on the building's facade as of right now and will be a problem in the future.

Benefits

The benefits of this repair will include the following. Building value increases, due to being in the historical district, your building requires a historical restoration expert to do any repairs and after this construction your building will be "restored" to age appropriate appeal. A more permanent solution to the structural/water damage will take place, with no further concern of damage after repair takes place.

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PROBLEM

- Water erosion and damage
- Damaged bricks

SOLUTION

- Install proper flashing and window to prevent leakage
- Demo and relay with proper mortar and wall ties installed

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Cost Break down

Project costs and breakdowns

Materials, these pricings include all charges for delivery fees and product ordering, due to certain products and materials needing to be a special order.

Helibeam System	Total \$1200			
Mortar and Bricks	30 bags of Lime based mortar	\$1250	300 53DD bricks	\$600
Shoring Materials	Wood for shoring	\$525.82		
Misc(Hard ware, drill bits, blades, ect)	\$200			
Total Material cost	\$4,094.14			

Skilled Labor Cost

Labor	\$8,405.86
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Notes: All work will be done with the guidelines provided by Allentown Historical Society and modern building codes. The contract will have all warranties of work included and fine details of the project included.

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Applicable Guidelines:

3.3.1 Maintain and preserve original exterior masonry walls and details. Clean using the gentlest methods possible to remove dirt, staining, and biological growth that might be obscuring other conditions. Avoid excessive use of water and saturation of masonry walls. Clean masonry only as necessary to inspect conditions or prepare for repair/restoration work. Sandblasting and high-pressure abrasive methods are never appropriate methods.

3.3.2 Repair and restore brick masonry whenever possible. Attempt to repair deteriorated or damaged areas prior to replacement. Appropriate repairs include repointing (repairing mortar joints), crack repair, brick stitching, and select area replacement. Avoid removing excess material or a larger area than is required to complete the repair. New bricks should match the existing in color, profile, dimension, surface texture, and composition and physical properties.

3.3.3 Repair and restore existing stone masonry. Attempt to repair deteriorated or damaged areas prior to replacement. Appropriate repairs include repointing, crack repair, Dutchman repairs (in-kind localized patching), and patching with compatible compounds. New masonry unit should match the existing in type of stone, color, profile, dimension, and surface texture.

3.3.4 Repoint brick and stone masonry with a compatible and historically appropriated mortar that matches the original in composition, strength, hardness, and texture. Match new mortar joints to surrounding areas in width, tooling profile, and color. Cut back and repoint mortar joints using hand tools only; mechanical grinders and similar power tools are not recommended as they can lead to excessive damage.

3.3.5 Replace or rebuild exterior masonry walls or features with in-kind materials if repair is not feasible. Replacement masonry units should match the existing in color, profile, dimension, surface texture, and composition and physical properties. Replicate the existing brick bond (how the bricks are laid).

3.3.6 Preserve and restore decorative masonry elements that are important character-defining features, such as brick corbels and patterned brick courses. Avoid altering, concealing or covering, or removing decorative masonry.

3.3.7 Avoid painting, sealing, or coating historically unpainted brick masonry. Adding exterior coatings can trap moisture and cause deterioration of masonry walls. It also detracts from a building's architectural character.

3.3.8 For existing painted or coated exterior walls, maintain and repair the painted surface rather than attempt removal. Removal is not recommended due to the likelihood of damaging the masonry substrate. Avoid removing paint or coatings that are firmly adhered to the masonry. Consider removal of non-historic coatings only if they are demonstrated to be causing or exacerbating other types of deterioration.

Observations & Comments: The proposed work is for the repair of the primary façade facing N. 9th street due to extensive water and structural damage related to improper mortar material. Stainless steel heli beam bars are proposed to be installed to provide structural support for the wall. Replacement brick units will match the existing in color and dimension and will be repointed with lime based mortar, which are appropriate treatments per the Guidelines. The existing front porch wall is currently painted brick; it is unclear if this area is included in the scope of work, and if the paint is intended to remain or be removed.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend approval with the following conditions:

- Brick bond matches existing configuration
- Product information for the helibeam system is submitted to staff for record, with notes about spacing/quantity of bars throughout wall.

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Discussion: The applicant clarified that the work area is on the 9th Street elevation above the porch roof; the first floor area under the roof and the brick porch foundation walls are not part of the scope of work. The applicant also noted that a previous repair had resulted in an area of stack bond, which was not the original bonding in that area, and that replacement brick would reestablish the original pattern. The HARB commended the applicant's approach to the work.

Action: Mr. Knee moved to approve the application presented on 4/6/2026 for exterior brick repair at 334 N. 9th Street, and found compliance with Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.3 – Masonry and found no circumstances unique to the property, with the following conditions agreed to by the applicant: that the brick bond matches the original configuration, and that product information for the helibeam system is submitted to staff for record, with notes about spacing and quantity of bars throughout the wall. Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support and no abstentions.