

Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2025-00032

Address: 945 Turner Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Owner: -Dale Fritchman

Applicant: John Sekella, Blue Mountain Chimney Sweep

Proposal: Legalize stucco on damaged chimney

Building Description: This is a 2 story brick Italianate rowhome with a central dormer, projecting eaves, and dentilated cornice. The elevated front entry features an arched transom and surrounding trim. 2/2 sash windows have Italiante lintels and are flanked with wood shutters.

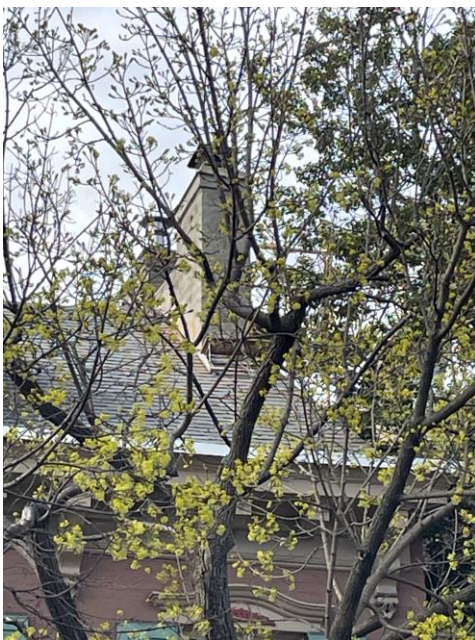
Project Description: Legalize stucco on damaged chimney due to improper gas venting system on entire chimney from roof upwards.



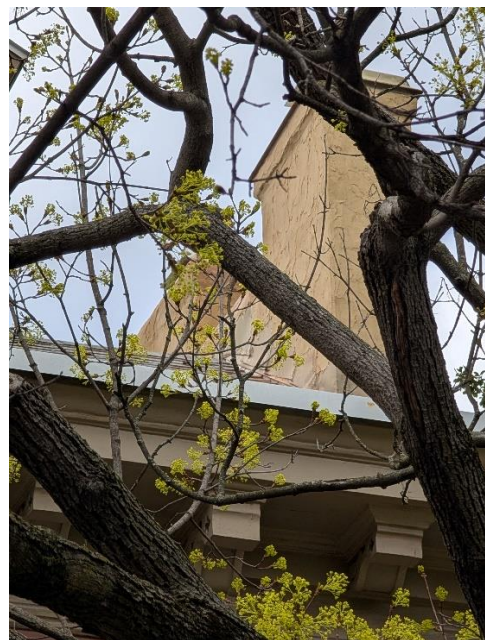
Front Elevation, Feb 2025 (Staff)



Chimney prior to work (Applicant)



New stucco (Applicant)



Current condition (Applicant)

Historical Architectural Review Board

COA Preliminary Review Sheet

Applicable Guidelines:

Section 3.1 – Roofs, Roof Features: Chimneys

3.1.22 Repair and restore historic chimneys. Repoint mortar joints with a compatible and historically appropriate mortar that matches the original in composition, strength, hardness, and color.

3.1.23 Rebuild chimneys if necessary to address structural concerns. Disassemble the masonry, carefully salvage and store the masonry units, and rebuild to the original profile and dimensions.

3.1.27 Avoid adding new stucco or cementitious coatings to historically exposed brick masonry.

Observations & Comments: It is understood from the applicant's notes that a blockage in natural gas venting triggered the need to address and repair the venting and chimney at 945 Turner Street. The applicant notes that the chimney (which was previously painted) could no longer be re-painted, as the underlying brickwork and mortar were too severely damaged.

Per Guideline 3.1.27, adding new stucco to historically exposed brick masonry is not appropriate. A more appropriate solution to repair the chimney above the roofline would be to rebuild it, with either salvaged brick from the chimney, or new brick to match the existing in color, size, and profile, and built with mortar to match the existing in color, composition, and tooling. It is appropriate for brick masonry to be unpainted, so while the rest of the building was previously painted, a rebuilt chimney should remain unpainted and uncoated, in keeping with the Guidelines.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend denying.

Discussion:

The applicant, Mr. Sekella, is the contractor who was called in to conduct a home inspection as it was in the process of being sold. The applicant noted that a vent was installed only at the bottom and top of the chimney run, and was exhausting gas within the house. During the emergency repair, the applicant scarified the surface of the brick to apply stucco and selected a color to complement the house.

Mr. Hammond asked if there was an option to keep the chimney as is. Mr. Sekella said that the condition of the chimney was not safe. The applicant stated that he was unaware of the historic district guidelines or that the building was in a historic district and performed the stucco installation. Rebuilding the brick chimney was not discussed with the owner.

Mr. Jordan asked if the applicant received a permit for the work; the applicant did not.

Mr. Hammond noted that he would prefer to approve the chimney work, as a reasonable solution for creating a safer building, and Ms. Schreier agreed. Mr. Hart is concerned that approving this repair will set a precedent. Mr. Encelewski noted that the repair is not in keeping with the Guidelines, as adding stucco where it did not exist historically is not appropriate. Mr. Jordan noted that the Guidelines indicate a chimney could be rebuilt in brick, and that the interior work to solve the safety issue is outside of the Guidelines and not under HARB review.

Actions:

Mr. Jordan moved to deny the applicant presented on 5/5/2025 for the legalization of chimney work at 935 W. Turner Street as presented, finding noncompliance with Guidelines of Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.1 Roofs, and found no circumstances unique to the property.

Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried with no abstentions and one opposition (Mr. Hammond).