

**Historical Architectural Review Board  
COA Final Review Sheet**

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**HDC-2023-00020**

**Address: 631 N. Park Street**

**District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District**

**Applicant: Francisco De La Cruz, contractor**

**Proposal: Replace metal porch posts and railings; legalize tile flooring, stucco, railings, and roofing**

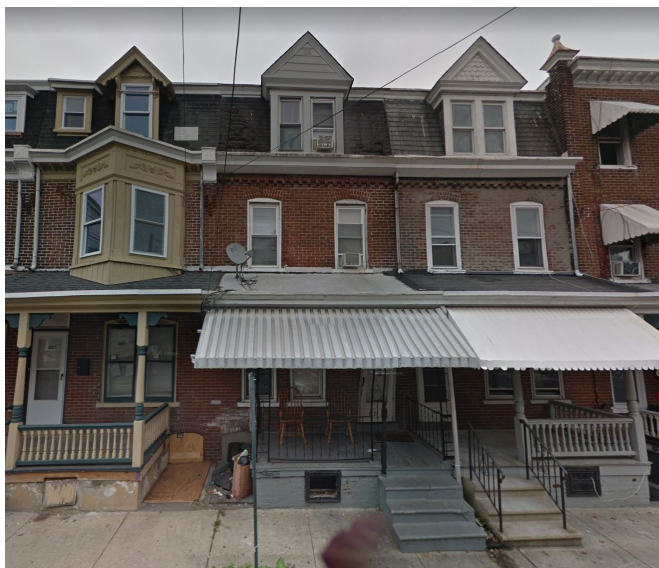
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**Building Description:**

This 3-story brick row house was constructed c. 1890. The mansard roof has asphalt shingles, a single dormer with two 1/1 sash windows. The first- and second-story windows are 1/1 double hung sash with flat wood and brick lintels. The main entry has a single door with a closed transom. There is a porch with metal posts and railings. There are bull-nosed concrete steps, and a basement window.

**Project Description:**

The applicant applied to staff to replace the existing metal porch railings and posts. After reviewing the application, staff learned that the work had already been completed and that the scope also included removing the awning, replacing the porch roof, installing railings at the steps, stuccoing the brick foundation wall, adding a new cover at the foundation opening, and tiling the wood porch and concrete steps.



**Front façade of 631 N. Park Street, 2018.  
(Google StreetView)**



**Detail of porch, 2018.  
(Google StreetView)**

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**Porch following replacement, 2023.  
(Applicant)**



**Detail of porch following replacement, 2023.  
(Applicant)**



**Porch detail following replacement, 2023.  
(Applicant)**



**Detail of new railing, 2023.  
(Applicant)**

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### Applicable Guidelines:

#### **Chapter 3.1 – Roofing**

**3.1.8** Replace non-historic roofing materials in-kind or with recommended alternates. If the original material is documented, restoration of the original material is also an appropriate option but is not required. Original roofs may have been replaced long ago, yet asphalt shingles and similar alterations are still considered impacts to the overall appearance. Replacement materials should match the existing in color, pattern, shape, and profile. Greater flexibility is possible with non-historic roofing and using high-quality replacements is recommended.

#### **Chapter 3.3 – Masonry**

**3.3.11** Repair and restore original foundations whenever possible. Avoid applying a coating over an exposed masonry foundation to create a uniform appearance or to hide the deteriorated masonry. Identify and address the source of deterioration as soon as possible.

#### **Chapter 3.7 – Porches & Steps**

**3.7.3** Repair and restore existing porches and steps whenever possible. Salvage, repair, and reuse existing components including deck floor boards, railings, balusters, posts, and decorative trim. Repair and restore basement level windows or metal grates that are part of the porch base.

**3.7.4** Replace individual deteriorated components in-kind with new materials matching the original in material composition, size, shape, profile, dimension, appearance, and finish. Custom fabrication is encouraged and may be necessary to provide an exact match. Where an exact match of the historic element cannot be found or fabricated, the new element should match the original as closely as possible.

**3.7.5** Retain and repair original handrails or railings. Replace in-kind if repair is not feasible. Replacement handrails should match the existing in material, size, and appearance as closely as possible. Installation of handrails where they did not previously exist is generally not recommended due to the visual and physical impact on historic fabric; however, installation of a simple, compatible design may be acceptable for the purpose of safety and ease of access.

**3.7.7** Consider restoration of previously altered porches with historically appropriate elements. Consult historic photographs to identify the original appearance. If the building is part of a pair or an attached row that was designed together, consult nearby buildings for examples.

**3.7.8** If in-kind replacement is not feasible, replace with appropriate alternate materials that respect the original appearance and are durable. Composite wood decking is an appropriate alternate for tongue-and-groove wood floors if boards are similar to the original dimensions. Ceramic, tile, carpet, or cementitious coatings over wood are not appropriate floor materials. Steel, iron, and aluminum railings are acceptable replacements. Vinyl railings and trim are not appropriate alternate materials for wood elements. Use of dimensional lumber for visible parts of a porch is not appropriate.

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### Observations & Comments:

The applicant contends that the metal porch posts and railings that were previously installed were in poor condition and needed replacement. The applicant installed wood porch posts with brackets, which staff considers appropriate. However, the porch railings are composed of PVC, an inappropriate material according to Guideline 3.7.8. Staff recommends replacing the railings with turned wood balusters that approximately match the historic balusters of the row, such as at 629 N. Park Street.

In addition to the posts and railings, the applicant covered or removed the wood tongue-and-groove decking and replaced it with tile. Guideline 3.7.8 notes that tile is inappropriate as a floor material and recommends wood or composite wood decking.

New vinyl railings were installed at the steps where railings did not previously exist. Guideline 3.7.5 advises against the installation of railings where they did not historically exist, though notes that a simple, compatible railing may be acceptable. Staff suggests a black metal picket railing in place of the vinyl railing.

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The applicant stuccoed the brick foundation wall and installed a new, incompatible cover over the opening where a metal grill once existed. While the metal grill was removed between 2011 and 2014, a more compatible cover and material should be used to seal the opening. Guideline 3.3.11 recommends against applying a coating over an exposed masonry foundation to create a uniform appearance or to hide deterioration. In this case, the brick foundation wall was previously painted. Staff suggests testing the feasibility of removing the stucco from an inconspicuous part of the foundation wall. If successful, the stucco should be removed and the brick wall should be appropriately repaired.

Finally, the applicant reroofed the porch roof with 3-tab tan shingles where the roof appeared to have had a flat rolled roof. The original porch roof contained slate shingles. Guideline 3.1.8 recommends replacing non-historic roofing materials in-kind or with recommended alternates. The 3-tab shingles installed are not considered an appropriate alternative, because the shingles do not match the historic in color, pattern, shape, or profile. Staff recommends a roof shingle that is slate gray in color and better matches the profile of historic slate. Staff also notes that roof tar appears to have been applied over the first two courses of brick above the porch roof and should be addressed.

*August 7, 2023 Application Status*

At its May 1, 2023 meeting, the HARB moved to table the application at the applicant's request so that the work could be reviewed and approved by staff. Following the meeting, staff emailed the applicant to explain that specs would need to be submitted for all materials prior to the applicant beginning the work. The applicant provided some materials before installation and received several approvals for the railings (with a request for additional information on the top rail), porch floor, and roofing. The applicant submitted a request to install dark gray 3-tab shingles at the roof, but then installed architectural shingles with a tapered shape that do not meet the design guidelines. Staff requested a photo to show a sample of the stucco removal from the foundation wall. A photo of the work in progress was sent with the stucco removed from the front of the foundation wall. Staff sent a recommendation for a mortar formula that included lime. In a photo of the finished work, the wall is shown as having been painted red, which was not approved. The applicant emailed a photo of concrete leveler, and staff requested more information on where and how the leveler would be used but no further information was provided. Staff requested a photo of the steps after removal of the tile and inquired whether the bullnose detail remained but received no response. Similarly, staff requested cut sheets of the basement window and received no response.



**Completed work to correct violation, 2023.  
(Applicant)**



**Architectural shingles at porch roof, 2023.  
(Applicant)**

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**Steps and metal railings not reviewed by staff, 2023.  
(Applicant)**



**Tongue and groove porch flooring, 2023.  
(Applicant)**

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff requests that the HARB review the completed work and consider whether it can be considered an overall improvement to the property from before the initial work began and whether it generally complies with the following sections of the design guidelines: Chapter 3, Section 3.1 Roofing, Chapter 3, Section 3.3 Masonry, and Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps. If the HARB finds that the work does not comply, staff recommends that the applicant work with the HARB, rather than staff, to receive all approvals.

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**HARB Discussion:**

The HARB discussed the work that was completed, noting that the railings and posts had been approved by staff. The HARB discussed the roofing and concluded that a misunderstanding over the difference between 3-tab and architectural shingles resulted in the wrong shingle being installed; however, the HARB found that the dark gray architectural shingle was an improvement over the previous roofing.

The HARB raised an issue with the steps being leveled and the bullnose detail being removed, but found that the detail could not easily be returned.

The contractor noted that the historic metal grille was reinstalled over the basement window, and he confirmed that he painted the brick foundation wall after removing the stucco. The HARB found that the paint was inappropriate and determined that the best solution would be to paint it a solid color.

**Action:**

Mr. Lichtenwalner moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 9/5/2023 for replacing metal porch posts and railings and legalizing porch flooring, stucco, railings, and roofing at 631 N. Park Street, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.3 Masonry and 3.7 Porches & Steps, with the condition that the brick foundation wall is painted a solid color. Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.