

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

HDC-2023-00025

Address: 1033 ½ W. Court Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Applicants: Chris Dellapietro, contractor; Harding Castro, owner

Proposal: Demolish second-story rear porch; infill opening

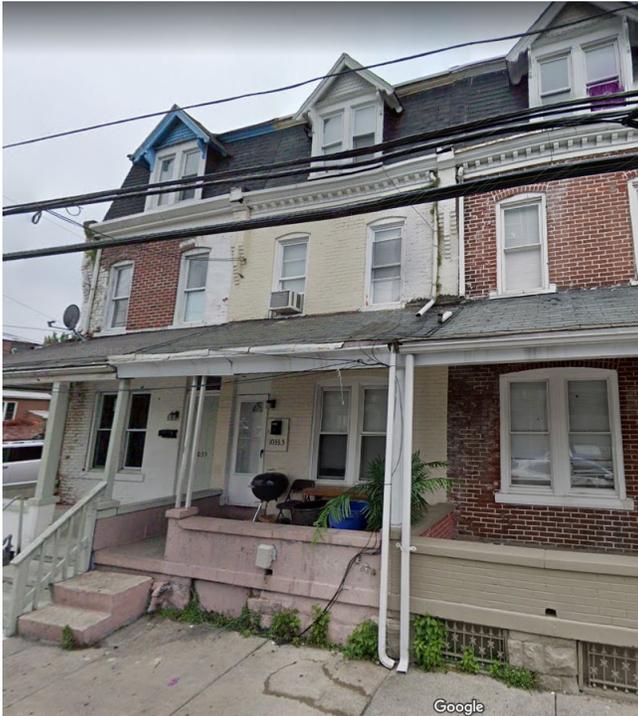
Building Description:

This 3-story painted brick row house, c. 1898, is a Queen Anne porch house. The mansard roof has asphalt shingles, a dormer with wood scalloped façade under the gable roof, a dentilated wood cornice, projecting eaves, a single chimney and corbelled or decorative panels between the houses on the 2nd floor.

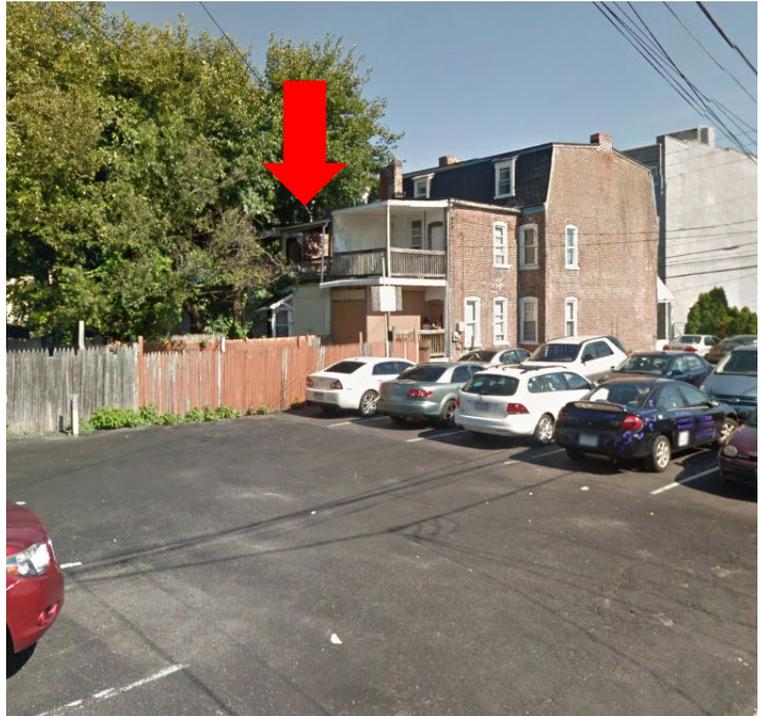
The windows are 1/1 sash with Eastlake lintels and brick arches. The front door has a transom. The porch has a concrete block wall surrounding it, concrete steps, a visible basement window grille and a wooden roof awning. There is a 2nd floor wood porch in the rear and a roof has been added – no details given.

Project Description:

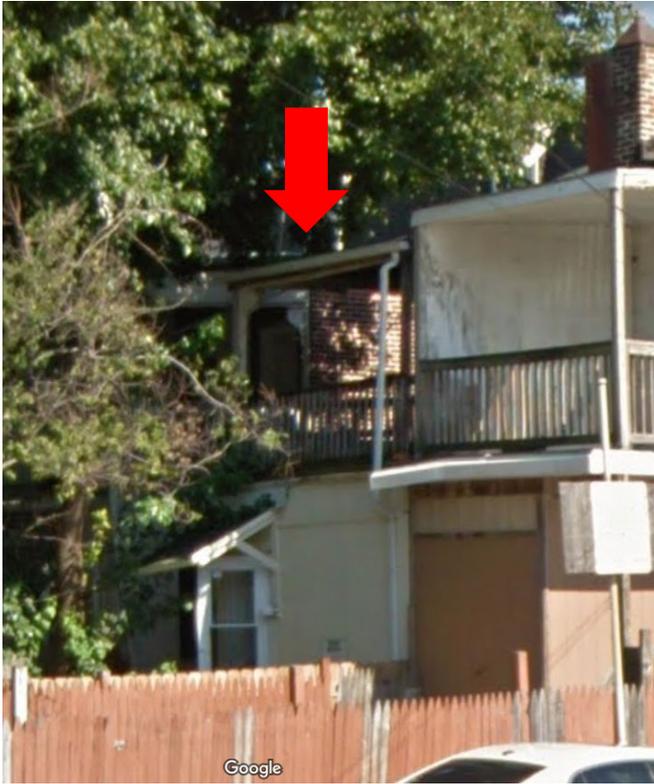
This application proposes to demolish the second-story porch, including the porch roof, columns, and railings, and to infill the existing door opening with painted T1-11 paneling to match the cladding of the rear ell.



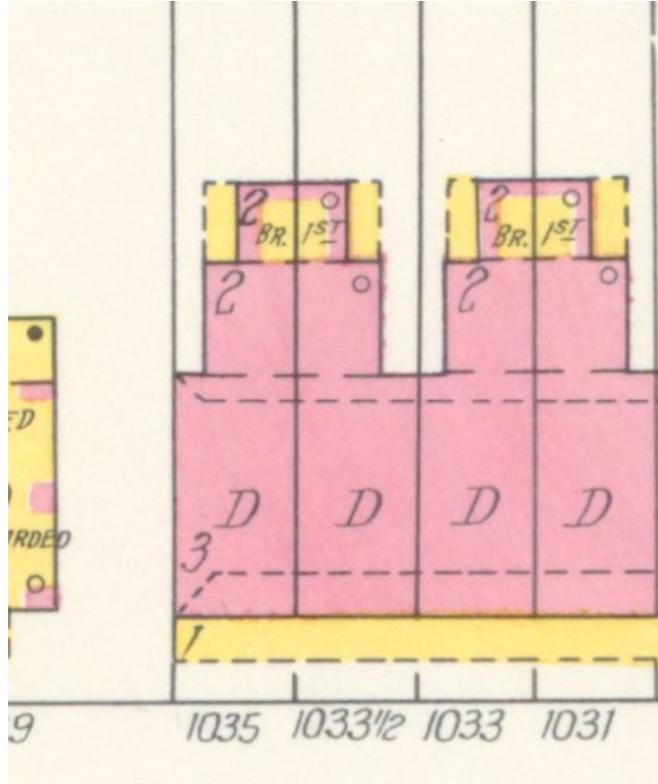
**Front façade of 1033 ½ W. Court Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)**



**Rear of 1033 ½ W. Court Street, 2016.
(Google StreetView)**



Rear of 1033 ½ W. Court Street, 2019.
(Google StreetView)



1932 Sanborn map showing the second-story frame porch.
(Pennsylvania State University Libraries)

Applicable Guidelines:

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.

3.7.7 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.

3.7.10 Avoid removing a historic porch roof or full porch. Removal will negatively impact the building’s historic character. Consult with Planning Staff and HARB about the reason for removal (i.e. cause of deterioration). A porch that was added after the original construction of the building may have gained significance in its own right. Porches can be appropriate for the building as a reflection of its development over time and as an expression of a later architectural style.

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Observations & Comments:

The design guidelines state that the guidelines apply to all types of front and rear porches, entry steps, rear yard balconies, or decks visible from the public right-of-way. The rear second-story porch of 1033 ½ W. Court Street is visible from Peach Street and should comply with the guidelines.

The property at 1033 ½ W. Court Street was constructed at the end of the nineteenth century as part of a row of six residential buildings that featured masonry rear ells with second-story frame porches. While there have been alterations to the rear porches, demolition would disrupt the form and rhythm of the buildings. Guideline 3.7.10 states that full removal of porches should be avoided, because it would negatively impact the building's historic character. Any features with severe deterioration should be replaced in kind or with an appropriate alternate material.

The application proposes to infill the door opening with painted T1-11 plywood. The existing rear door appears to be a standard six-panel door, though no clear photograph of the door has been provided. In general, staff recommends avoiding infilling openings and suggests that the existing door be permanently fixed, with the interior sealed, if access needs to be restricted.

Staff Recommendation:

Denial, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps.

HARB Discussion:

Mr. Carrasco provided images of the rear of the property and stated that the second-story rear porch of the adjacent property at 1035 W. Court Street has already been removed. He contended that the condition of the porch at 1033 ½ W. Court Street presents a life-safety issue and also needs to be removed. He noted that Building Standards and Safety has cited the owner and will not issue a certificate of occupancy until the porch is either removed or repaired.

The HARB discussed whether the rear porch contains any historic significance and whether the rear would be considered a contributing or non-contributing secondary façade. Several HARB members agreed that the posts and railings were likely recent installations, but that the porch as a whole maintained the historic form, scale, and massing of the buildings in the row and that the rear façade was contributing since it is visible from Peach Street. Mr. Lichtenwalner stated that because of its visibility, the porch should be repaired rather than demolished to maintain the rhythm of the forms.

Ms. Keller questioned whether staff could approve the reconstruction of the porch with some flexibility in materials and appearance, provided vinyl is not used. The HARB agreed.

Action:

Mr. Lichtenwalner moved to deny the application presented on 7/10/2023 for the demolition of the rear second-story porch and infilling of the door at 1033 ½ W. Court Street, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps. Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 4-1. Mr. Jordan dissented.