

Allentown Historical Architectural Review Board
FINAL Review Sheet

HDC-2024-00023

Address: 534 N. 6th Street

District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District

Owner: Jose Rosario

Applicant: Barry A Cohen, PE

Proposal: Replace windows, exterior wall material, and roofing related to fire damage

Building Description: This 3-story brick row house, ca 1880 is a porch house. The mansard roof on left front has asphalt shingles, the side gable roof has slate shingles, the 3rd floor dormer has a balcony with gabled intricate wood detail and a single chimney. There is a wooden fence in front on the right side. The windows are 1/1 sash with wood lintels with 9/1 sash windows in rear. The basement side window has a grille. The main entry is a double glazed door with transom. The wood porch has fan brackets on the turned columns.

Project Description:

This application proposes to make various repairs due to fire damage, including: replacing windows with aluminum clad wood windows, repointing and cleaning/painting brick masonry, replacing damaged roof shingles with Owens Corning Berkshire shingle in the Canterbury Black color, paint all wood around windows with a color to match existing, repair the front porch, paint the metal handrail to match existing, replace all downspouts, and repairing box gutters to match existing.



Previous Photograph Prior to Fire Damage (Applicant)

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Front Deck (Applicant)



Typical Window (Applicant)



Front Stair Railing (Applicant)



Damaged Wall Paint (Applicant)

Applicable Guidelines:

Section 3.1 – Roofs

3.1.3 Repair and restore original and historic roofing materials whenever possible. Evaluate the condition and cost of repair of original materials before removing and replacing them. Targeted areas of repair or localized in-kind replacement may be the most effective and low-cost solution.

3.1.4 Repair and replace deteriorated flashing or fasteners with materials that are compatible with the roofing material. Roof problems are often caused by failure of these components rather than the historic roofing material.

3.1.5 Preserve architectural features that give the roof its unique and building-specific character—such as dormers, turrets, chimneys, cornices, rolled ridge flashing, cresting, and finials. Repair and restore features; replace in-kind only when necessary.

3.1.6 Replace historic roofing materials in-kind whenever possible if severe deterioration makes a full replacement necessary. Replacement material should match the original in material, dimension, shape, profile, color, pattern, exposure, and overall appearance.

3.1.7 If in-kind replacement is not feasible, replace historic roofing materials with alternate materials that resemble the original as closely as possible. Roof replacement should be sensitive to the original appearance. Replacement materials should match roof slopes or shape.

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 durable high-quality replacements is recommended.

3.1.9 Consider roof ventilation alternatives carefully. Ventilation options are approved on a case by case basis and can include ridge vents, louvered vents, or soffit vents. Proper ventilation may extend the life of a roofing system, but in some cases it can lead to condensation problems with long-term effects on the roofing materials and structural components. Refer to Chapter 3.8 Mechanical and Utility Equipment for related guidelines about roof vents.

3.1.36 Repair and restore gutters whenever possible. Types of repairs include repainting wood or metal surface, installing new fasteners, sealing or soldering cracks and open seams, and relining built-in box gutters with new copper sheet metal.

3.1.37 Replace existing gutters in-kind when replacement is necessary due to severe deterioration. Replicate the original construction method of a historic gutter if feasible.

3.1.38 Replace existing downspouts, scuppers, collection boxes, and other drainage elements in-kind. Appropriate alternates to in-kind replacement are round or rectangular downspouts. Smooth surfaces are encouraged over corrugated metal. In the case of decorative scuppers, replicate the profile and details as closely as possible.

3.1.39 Consider alternate materials for gutters in locations that are difficult to access for maintenance or where original materials have demonstrated a pattern of deterioration over time. A fiberglass gutter is an acceptable replacement material for a wood built-in box gutter if it matches the original in profile, size, appearance, and finish.

3.1.40 Avoid vinyl gutters due to poor durability and non-historic appearance.

3.1.41 Install new downspouts in locations that are sensitive to the architecture and will be minimally visible. Run downspouts at secondary facades and along building or porch corners when possible.

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3.1.42 Paint gutters and downspouts to blend in with the building exterior. Matching the existing building trim is usually the most appropriate color selection. Copper and terne-coated stainless steel systems should be left unpainted because they weather naturally and develop a protective patina.

Section 3.2 – Wood Siding & Trim

3.2.4 Repair and restore wood siding, cladding, and trim whenever possible. Preserve wood features such as cornices, brackets, window and door moldings, and bay windows. Trim work is an essential part of a building's architectural character. Unique features of a building should be preserved. Repair historic wood features by patching, piecing-in or Dutchman repairs, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods. Repair may also include limited replacement in-kind of extensively deteriorated or missing parts of wood features.

3.2.5 Replace deteriorated materials in-kind if repair is infeasible. New materials should replicate the original as closely as possible in material composition, size, profile, shape, pattern, and appearance. If historic wood siding or trim was an identifiable or visually distinctive species, it is recommended that the same species be used for the replacement.

3.2.6 Avoid installation of aluminum, vinyl, or synthetic materials that were unavailable when a building was constructed. Aluminum, vinyl, fiber-cement, or other synthetic cladding are not appropriate for historic properties because of their visual impact and because their installation can cause other deterioration problems. It is not appropriate to cap or cover existing wood with these types of materials. It is not appropriate to remove original wood cladding or trim features and replace them with aluminum, vinyl, fiber-cement, or synthetic materials.

3.2.7 Consider removal of existing aluminum, vinyl, or synthetic cladding over building features. Historic materials sometimes remain intact below this type of cladding and can be restored. In-kind replacement of existing non-historic siding that was in place before the historic district was designated may be allowed in some cases. Consult with Staff and HARB during early project planning stages. Provide photographs or documentation of existing conditions and wall materials below non-historic siding to help determine the appropriate treatment.

3.2.8 Inspect painted wood thoroughly to determine whether repainting is necessary or if cleaning is all that is required.

3.2.9 Remove peeling, flaking, or failing paint to the next sound layer of paint using the gentlest methods possible to protect the integrity of the historic wood surface. Acceptable methods for paint removal include hand-scraping and hand-sanding, and when necessary, mild chemical strippers or gentle micro-abrasion methods. Sand blasting, high pressure power washing, and mechanical grinders should not be used to remove paint from any surface. Evaluate the condition of the wood surface (also referred to as the substrate) and address any moisture infiltration and deterioration issues before priming and repainting.

3.2.10 Paint once the surface is clean and dry. Use a paint type that will adhere properly to the wood surface, such as oil-based paint. Marine grade paints are also recommended because they perform well over longer periods of time in wet climates.

3.2.11 Recommendation Only: Repaint with the existing colors, appropriate to the building's period of significance, and compatible with the historic character of the district. Paint color is not reviewed by HARB but it is recommended to select colors sensitive to the historic surroundings.

Section 3.3 – Masonry

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

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compatible compounds. New masonry unit should match the existing in type of stone, color, profile, dimensions, and surface texture.

3.3.4 Repoint brick and stone masonry with a compatible and historically appropriate 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.

Section 3.5 – Windows

3.5.1 Retain and preserve historic windows and all associated components whenever possible, including window sash, frame, hardware, lintel, sill, trim, hood, shutters, and glazing (glass). Retain original windows in type, shape, size, operation, and material. Preserve existing glazing including stained glass as a distinctive feature of the window.

3.5.2 Keep historic wood windows in good condition by maintaining sound layers of paint at exterior and interior surfaces. Where wood has been exposed by paint failure, clean with the gentle methods possible and using lead-safe practices prior to repainting. Scrape peeling or flaking paint using hand tools down to the next sound layer of paint and ensure that the surface is clear of dirt and debris before priming and repainting.

3.5.3 Maintain operable windows, which have inherent energy-efficient advantages for air circulation. Remove paint that has sealed a window closed from the exterior and/or interior.

3.5.4 Inspect and test hardware. Ensure sash locks bring sashes together tightly to keep windows watertight.

3.5.5 Consider weatherization improvements that have minimal impact to historic fabric including sealing or recaulking around exterior and interior trim, installing weatherstripping, and installing storm windows (either exterior or interior) to improve energy efficiency.

3.5.6 Install storm windows customized to fit each window frame properly. Wood and aluminum materials are appropriate. The horizontal rails should align with window sashes. Window finishes should match the window trim or blend with the color scheme of the building. Interior storm windows may be recommended for windows with distinctive lites, artistic glazing, or irregular shapes to preserve the exterior appearance.

3.5.7 Repair, restore, and reuse original windows prior to replacing them. Where one component of a window is deteriorated or broken, repair or replace the individual piece rather than replace the entire window unit. Repair or selectively replace in-kind existing hardware to ensure window operability, including sash cords, weights, and pulleys. Repaired windows have been shown to achieve energy performance levels comparable to replacement windows.

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3.5.8 Replace windows in-kind if original windows are deteriorated beyond feasible repair. Wood is the preferred material for most replacement windows. Replacement windows should match the original as closely as possible in material, size, type, operation, profile, and appearance. Replicate the existing dimensions of glazing, configuration of muntins, or unique decorative lites. Match sash and frame thickness and window depths. For existing nonoriginal windows, it is preferred to replace with wood windows rather than new alternate materials.

3.5.9 Replace windows with alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Replacement windows must match the original as closely as possible in type, size, operation, profile, appearance, and configuration of lites and muntins. Aluminum-clad wood windows are an appropriate alternate because they can replicate the original appearance and material. Composite wood or fiberglass windows with paintable exterior surfaces can be appropriate alternates if they match the original appearance, but are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. Vinyl windows are not appropriate due to short lifespan, poor performance, and inability to match historic profiles.

3.5.10 Preserve the ratio of window openings to solid wall surfaces. Increasing or reducing openings can impact the proportions of a facade and can look out of place within the larger streetscape. Changing the size of openings will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a facade.

3.5.11 Retain the historic pattern of window openings (fenestration pattern), especially on primary facades. Avoid inserting new windows into a facade or infilling existing windows. The position, number, and arrangement of windows defines the rhythm of a facade and can be a character-defining feature of an architectural style or a type of building use. If creating new openings or infilling existing ones is necessary for a project such as an adaptive reuse, locate openings on side or rear facades.

3.5.12 If replacing a single window on a facade, replicate the existing windows of that facade.

3.5.13 Replace single-pane glazing in-kind whenever possible. Install double-glazed windows with simulated divided lights only upon consultation with Staff/HARB. Replicate the dimensions, details, and appearance of the original window. Simulated divided light muntins should be attached to the window exterior, not sandwiched between the panes of glass.

3.5.14 Avoid reflective glazing in restored or new windows. Reflective glazing makes a window's lites and muntins difficult to see and alters the visual impact from the street. This change makes alterations in the historic district more conspicuous. Clear (non-tinted) and non-reflective glazing and low-e coatings are appropriate.

3.5.15 Replace deteriorated window trim or decorative elements only as necessary to match the size, profile, and material of the original elements. For window lintels or hoods that project from the facade plane and are vulnerable to water collection, consider installing of metal drip edges to shed water away from windows. Copper is recommended and should be left to weather naturally; aluminum is acceptable and should be painted to match surrounding materials. Avoid encasing wood sills with metal or vinyl, as this will trap moisture and may cause more damage.

Section 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.

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3.7.6 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.

3.7.7 Replace porches only if repair and select replacement is not feasible. A full demolition and rebuild is rarely necessary except in cases of severe deterioration and life safety concerns. Replicate the original design as closely as possible, allowing for structural and code requirements. Install flashing and waterproofing at all connections between the porch and main building.

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.

3.7.9 Avoid enclosing historically open porches on primary and highly visible facades. Enclosure with glass or screens at rear or non-visible features may be acceptable. Enclosure with walls or opaque materials is not recommended. Avoid removing, altering, or covering historic details.

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 a 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.

Observations & Comments: The window replacement with aluminum clad wood windows is historically appropriate if they match the existing 1 over 1 double hung configuration.

The proposed replacement roofing is a beveled asphalt shingle, but it is not clear from the provided images if this matches any existing slate roofing or is present on similar/adjacent buildings. Clarification may be required for this item. From the photographs and Google Street View, all that can be discerned is 3-tab shingles at the front roof and metal on the porch roof.

More information is needed on the replacement of the downspouts – will they be of the same material, size, and location as the existing?

Work related to repainting wood trim and repairing the box gutters is historically appropriate.

Work related to repointing the brick is appropriate – as long as the mortar used is compatible and matches the original in composition, strength, hardness, color, and texture and is tooled with the same profile as the original. Since the brick is already painted, touching up of the paint at the masonry is also appropriate.

The proposed work at the front porch and railings is also consistent with the design guidelines.

Staff Recommendation: It is recommended to approve, with conditions – mostly relating to the windows, roof, and downspouts.

Presenters:

- Jessica Stuck presented the application.
- Barry Cohen represented the application.

Discussion: It was noted that photographs of the current condition of the property were not provided due to the fact that the property is boarded up as a result of fire damage. Mr. Huber asked for clarification about the replacement of materials; if they only plan to replace those items damaged by the fire or all materials. The applicant clarified that only items damaged by fire will be replaced.

Action: Mr. Jordan moved to approve, with conditions, the application presented on April 1, 2024 for the window replacement roof and downspout replacement, box gutter repairs, porch repairs, masonry repairs, and wood trim painting

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at 534 N. 6th Street pursuant to the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Roofs, Section 3.2 – Wood Siding & Trim, Section 3.3 – Masonry, Section 3.5 – Windows, and Section 3.7 – Porches & Steps and find that there are not circumstances unique to the property. The following conditions were agreed to by the applicant:

- Replacement aluminum clad wood windows will match the existing 1/1 configuration.
- Replacement shingles will match the existing slate in style, color, and shape.
- Replacement downspouts will be replaced in-kind.
- Mortar will match the original in composition, strength, hardness, color, and texture and is tooled with the same profile as the original.

Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.