

Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2025-00033

Address: 806 Monroe Street

District: Old Allentown Historic District

Owner: Richard Rotondo

Applicant: Owner

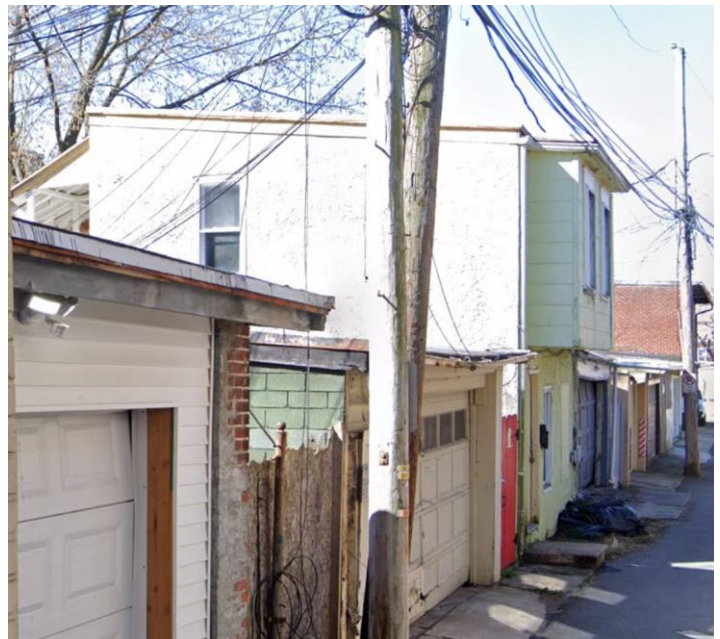
Proposal: Infill door opening and re-stucco first floor and side.

Building Description: 806 Monroe Street is a two-story stucco-faced dwelling with a shallow shed roof, built prior to 1932. A large portion of the second-floor projects from the face of the building and features two windows with flat lintels and trim.

Project Description: Retain door infill on first floor, which was infilled due to security concerns. Re-stucco first floor and side. Possible install shutters on windows facing Monroe Street which will comply with the historic design guidelines for shutters.



Monroe Street Elevation, April 2024 (Google Maps)



Side Elevation, April 2024 (Google Maps)

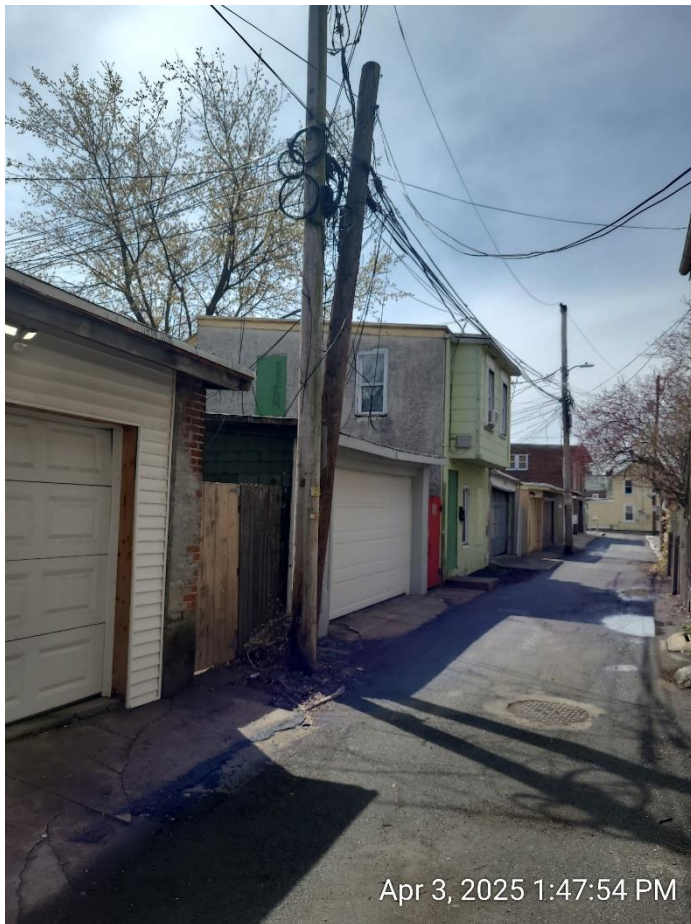


Monroe Street Elevation, April 2025 (City of Allentown)



Side Elevation, April 2025 (City of Allentown)

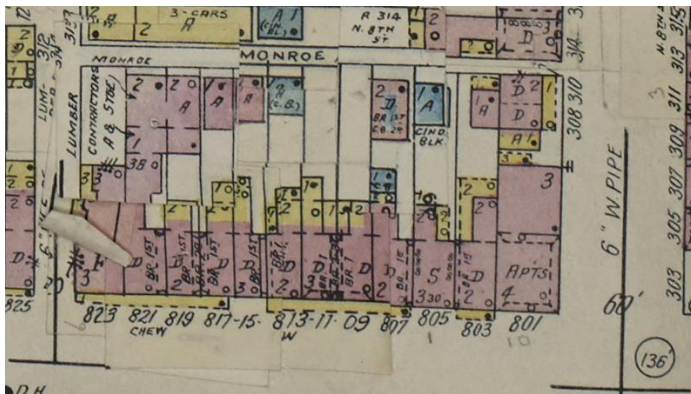
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View of Subject Property (City of Allentown)



Proposed Door Infill Area (City of Allentown)



1932 Sanborn Map (Library of Congress)

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Applicable Guidelines:

Section 3.5 – Windows

3.5.21 Install new shutters only if shutters existed previously at the building. Historic photographs or shutter hardware remaining at walls or windows can indicate if shutters once existed. New shutters may not be appropriate for every architectural style or type of building.

Section 3.6 – Doors

3.6.9 Replace with durable alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Composite wood doors and fiberglass doors are acceptable replacements if new doors match the original in size, style, configuration, detail, and appearance. However, these products are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. They have shorter lifespan and deteriorate when exposed to moisture, weathering, and temperature variation. For replacement doors, avoid metal doors (including metal doors that imitate paneled wood), as they do not have the same appearance and texture of historic wood. Avoid pre-hung doors (doors that are purchased already installed in a frame) when replacing a door, because these require the removal of historic fabric and can change the size of the opening.

3.6.10 Preserve the size of the existing door opening. New doors should be custom sized if necessary. Avoid enlarging or filling in original door openings to fit new stock sizes. This alteration will impact the historic character of the building. This action will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a façade.

5/5/25 Observations & Comments: Infilling a doorway on a primary façade is not appropriate, as entry doors contribute to the composition of the primary façade. Removing a point of building egress may require approval by the Bureau of Building Standards and Safety, separate from HARB review. More information would be helpful to understand why door infill is the proposed solution; have other options been explored to maintain a secure entry?

Maintaining the stucco on the exterior walls of the building is appropriate; based on available imagery, the stucco has been in place since before 2008.

The application states the possibility of installing shutters along the Monroe Street elevation. More information would be required to review this item, such as evidence that shutters historically existed on the building. Refer to Guideline 3.5.21.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend denying.

5/5/25 Discussion:

Mr. Giovanni represented the application and presented the various work items proposed for the property, including a recent installation of an egress window on the side of the house, infilling the existing door along Monroe Street, and uncovering a first-floor window on Monroe Street.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Encelewski indicated that more information needs to be formally presented in the application, beyond discussion, including material for door infill, window construction (materiality, profiles, configuration), treatment of new/existing light fixtures, and mailbox. If shutters are desired, as they are listed in the application, evidence that they existed historically should be submitted.

Mr. Huber is inclined to approve as submitted. Mr. Jordan stated that everything in the application needs to be presented formally.

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Action:

Mr. Encelewski moved to table the application presented on May 5, 2025, one month so that the applicant can formalize all aspects of the application. Mr. Hammond seconded the motion which carried with unanimous support and no abstentions.

6/2/25 Application Updates: The applicant provided the following clarifications on the scope of work:

1. Door (facing Monroe St): The door was within a 30” opening and was removed and framed using a double 2x4 header and 3-2x4 studs. The opening was insulated and covered with ¾” ZIP plywood panel, and will be finished with mesh wire and stucco mortar to match existing finish of rest of property.
2. Window: First floor window that was covered was opened. Applicant discovered that a vinyl window was left in place, and no further work is planned for that window. The second-floor rear window that was removed will be replaced with a vinyl window that fits the same size opening.
3. Light Fixtures/Mailbox – No light fixtures are being removed or added. New mailboxes will be attached to the front of the property in the same location as where the door was removed. These are basically the same that was there, but new. The applicant provided a proposed black mailbox.
4. Shutters – The applicant hopes to put shutters on the building but is not necessary if HARB doesn’t approve. Shutters would be placed on the 4 front windows only. The applicant does not have evidence that shutters existed previously and would be a new item to match typical homes in the area. The applicant provided a proposed vinyl product.

6/2/25 Staff Observation and Comments:

1. If removal of the front door is acceptable to the HARB, the proposed exterior finish to match the adjacent stucco is appropriate.
2. Maintaining the existing first floor window that was previously covered over is appropriate. All visible windows appear to be vinyl replacement windows. While new vinyl windows are not appropriate per the Guidelines, 3.5.12 states “If replacing a single window on a façade, replicate the existing windows of that façade.”
3. The proposed mailbox is a simple design and is appropriate.
4. Per the Guidelines, shutters should not be added where there is no evidence they existed historically. Vinyl shutters are not appropriate.

6/2/25 Staff Recommendations:

If removal of the front door is acceptable, staff recommend approval with the following conditions:

- Stucco over door infill is installed as presented.
- Mailboxes are installed as presented.
- Shutters are not installed.

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Presenters:

- Brandon Jones presented the application.
- Richard Rotondo represented the application.

Discussion:

The applicant clarified that the right side first floor window was covered by plywood by a previous owner. The current window existed behind the plywood. The door along Monroe Street has been removed and infilled, and the stoop is currently remaining. The applicant noted that he would prefer to remove the stoop, if appropriate. While the applicant would like to install shutters, the HARB discussed that shutters can only be installed where they existed historically.

Action:

Mr. Hammond moved to approve the application presented on 6/2/2025 for the exterior work at 806 Monroe Street with the following conditions agreed to by the applicant, following sections of the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Windows, Section 3.6 Doors, and found circumstances unique to the property:

- Stucco over door infill is installed as presented.
- Mailboxes are installed as presented.
- Shutters are not installed.
- Stoop Monroe Street is removed.

Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.