



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

30630

RESOLUTION

R78 – 2023

Introduced by the Administration on April 19, 2023

Certificate of Appropriateness for work in the Historic Districts:

- 519 W. Liberty St.

Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That

WHEREAS, Certificates of Appropriateness are required under the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania No. 167, June 13, 1961 (P.L. 282) and City of Allentown Ordinance No. 12314; and

WHEREAS, the following property whose respective owner applied for and was granted approval by the Allentown Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) to undertake specific exterior alterations on said property as indicated in the attached Final Review Report, which form part of this resolution:

- 519 W. Liberty St. (WL Acquisitions LLC, Owner) – Reconstruct front porch.

WHEREAS, on April 3, 2023, the Allentown HARB recommended approval of the above application, or offered modifications which were subsequently accepted by the property owner, to City Council; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing the attached final review reports, it is the opinion of City Council that the proposed work is appropriate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Allentown that Certificates of Appropriateness are hereby granted for the above referenced work.

	Yea	Nay
Candida Affa		
Ce-Ce Gerlach	X	
Cynthia Y. Mota	X	
Santo Napoli	X	
Natalie Santos	X	
Ed Zucal	X	
Daryl Hendricks, President	X	
TOTAL	6	0

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That the above copy of Resolution No. 30630 was adopted by the City Council of Allentown on the 19th day of April, 2023, and is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Michael J. Hurl

 City Clerk

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

HDC-2023-00014

Address: 519 W. Liberty Street

District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District

Applicant: John T. Overdorf, contractor

Proposal: Reconstruct front porch

Building Description:

This 3-story brick row house, ca 1892, is a porch house. The gable roof has asphalt shingles, a shared chimney, projecting eaves and a single dormer. The windows are 1/1 double hung sash with brick lintels and the dormer window has 10/2 with a Queen Anne stained glass upper sash with stained-glass inlays. The windows have ornamental frames and the basement windows have decorative metal grilles. The main entry is a single door with a closed transom and a grocer's alley door. The front porch is wood with a wooden balustrade railing.

Project Description:

This application proposes to rebuild the historic porch by removing the existing roof and decking. The posts and railings would be salvaged and reinstalled. The porch roof would be reconstructed and would be clad in architectural shingles. New tongue and groove decking would be installed to replace the existing warped floorboards. The application further proposes to wrap the fascia in aluminum and install a vented vinyl soffit ceiling.

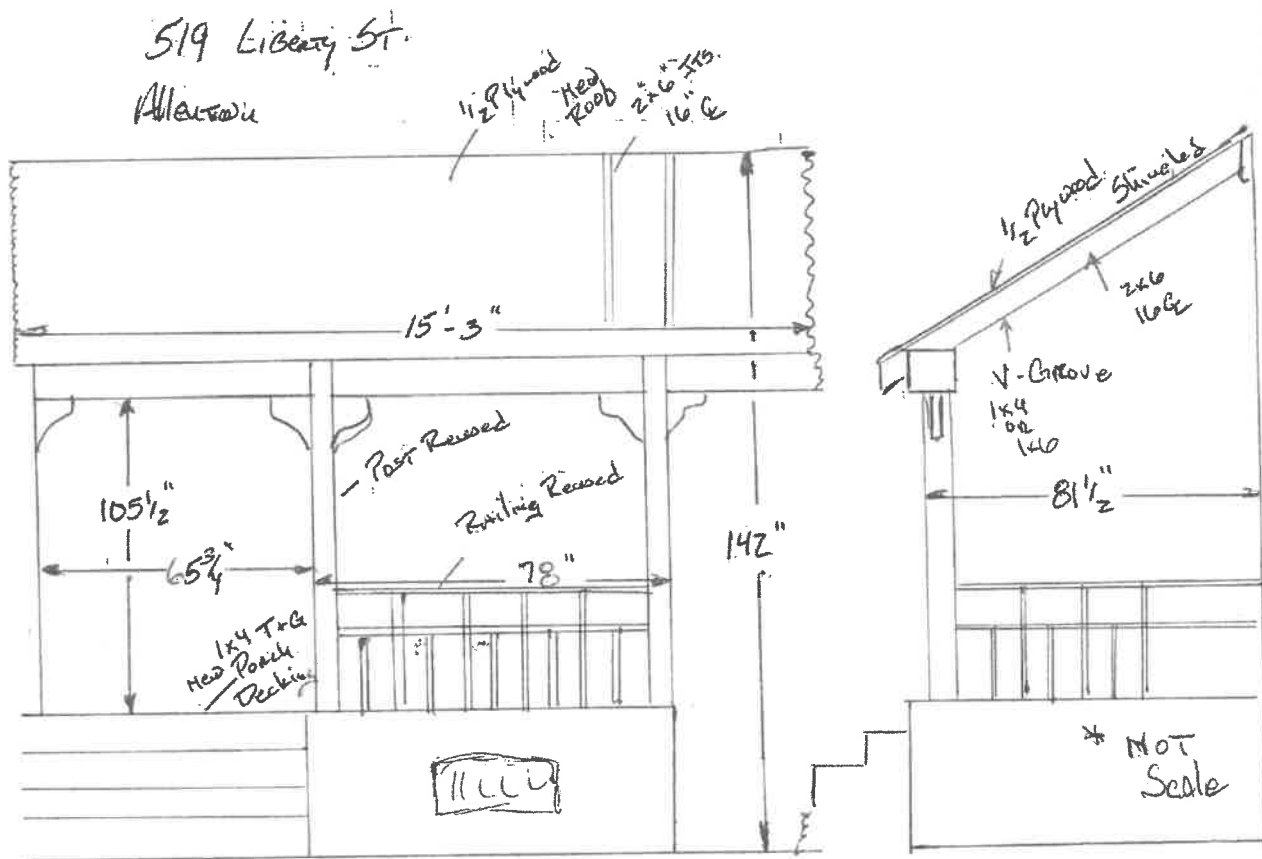


**Front façade of 519 Liberty Street, 2021.
(Google StreetView)**



**Detail of porch, 2021.
(Google StreetView)**

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**Drawing of porch reconstruction.
(Applicant)**

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.

3.7.5 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 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.

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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.

Observations & Comments:

The applicant contends that the porch roof is in poor condition and requires replacement, and the floorboards show visible signs of warping, displacement, and deterioration. The design guidelines recommend replacing features with new materials matching in composition, size, shape, profile, dimension, appearance, and finish. The application proposes to rebuild the roof to the same appearance and replace the decking with new tongue and groove floorboards. Because the applicant also proposes to salvage and reinstall the historic posts, brackets, and railings, the application complies with most guidelines in Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps. In order to better comply with the guidelines, staff recommends using a roofing shingle that more closely replicates the dimension, size, shape, and color of the historic slate roofs of the row; however, staff notes that no porch roof retains the original slate, so some flexibility should be granted. Staff also recommends avoiding wrapping the header fascia with aluminum, which would not comply with the guidelines. While the proposed vinyl vented ceiling does not comply with the material recommendations of the guidelines, staff contends that if the material is installed behind the porch header, it will have minimal visibility from the street and may be considered, since it will have low overall impact on the façade.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps, with the staff to review details, provided the following:

- the asphalt shingles on the new porch roof match the general dimension, size, shape, and color of the historic slate roofs of the row;
 - the proposed vinyl ceiling is limited to the area behind the porch header and is minimally visible from the street; and
 - the fascia is not wrapped in aluminum.
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HARB Discussion:

Mr. Overdorf explained that the porch structure is entirely rotted and needs to be removed and rebuilt. He clarified that he could use beadboard at the ceiling of the roof where he initially proposed the vinyl soffit, though he noted the owner requested vinyl for maintenance reasons. The existing porch posts and railings, he continued, would be scraped and painted, and he would install tongue-and-groove wood flooring. He noted the flooring would be a close, but not exact, match.

Mr. Huber asked whether the applicant would install beaded tongue-and-groove wood at the ceiling. Mr. Overdorf affirmed he would use the wood tongue-and-groove beadboard, which would be installed over the rafters. The HARB and applicant discussed the finishing of the rafter tails and the dimension of the overhang, which would be replicated.

Mr. Jordan asked about the roof shingles. Mr. Overdorf responded that he could use 3-tab shingles rather than architectural shingles to better replicate the shape and dimension of slate. He added that the gutters would be replaced. Mr. Huber requested half-round gutters, and Mr. Overdorf agreed.

Action:

Mr. Jordan moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 4/3/2023 for the reconstruction of the porch at 519 W. Liberty Street, as agreed to by the applicant and with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps, provided the following:

- the fascia is wood;

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- the ceiling is wood beadboard rather than vinyl;
- half-round gutters are installed; and
- the asphalt shingles on the new porch roof match the general dimension, size, shape, and color of the historic slate roofs of the row.

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