

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting  
May 4, 2020**

**MINUTES**

**HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 4, 2020  
VIRTUAL HARB MEETING DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** AJ Jordan  
Trina Gribble, Vice Chair  
Anne Montgomery, Assistant Codes Administrator  
Camille Bennett  
Jeremiah Chamberlin  
April Rucker

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Neil Heffelfinger

**STAFF PRESENT:** Frank Grumbine, Historic Preservation Specialist and Archivist  
Tiffanie Baldock, Senior Deputy City Solicitor  
Momin Bhatti, Communications Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** See attendance checklist sheet

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:02 PM**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mrs. Rucker moved, and Mr. Chamberlin seconded the motion to Approve the March 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes. The Board approved the motion to Approve minutes from the March meeting by unanimous vote (6-0).

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- 1 **109 Washington Street, filed by Michael Della Porta, to replace an aluminum handrail with a wooden handrail system on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony.**

There was no representative present for this case.

Mrs. Bennett moved to table, Mrs. Gribble seconded the motion to table the case. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (5-0).

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 2      **509 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, filed by Christina Griffiths, to install a new hanging sign from an existing bracket.**

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved for the following reasons:

1. The Secretary of Interior Standards and the Harrisburg Historic District Design Guidelines state that the use of aluminum or other metal is an appropriate material for new storefront signs within historic districts.
2. The Applicant is using an existing projecting bracket that is installed into mortar joints into the façade and thus a new anchoring point will not need to be created for this sign.

The case was represented by Christina Griffiths, 19 Milford Road Newport, PA 17074 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mr. Jordan asked the Applicant if she had anything she would like to add to the proposal. The Applicant stated that they moved into the building last fall and would like to install a new sign which is similar to the sign which was previously there.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that there usually is a provision that the new sign must adhere to zoning code requirements and assumes that the proposed sign is in conformance with the zoning code. Mr. Grumbine stated that he believes the proposed sign conforms to zoning code requirements for signage.

Mr. Jordan opened the discussion for public comment. There were no comments.

Mr. Chamberlin motioned; Mrs. Montgomery seconded the motion to Approve. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (6-0).

- 3      **263 Delaware Street, filed by Amber Lewis, to replace a wooden front door with a fiberglass door.**

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant will utilize a wood door rather than the proposed fiberglass door. If HARB approves the use of the fiberglass door, then the Applicant shall confirm from the manufacturer that the door can be painted.
2. The original transom shall be preserved. If transom must be removed then it must be replaced in-kind.

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The case was represented by Keith Brotemarkle, 2 Laurel Road New Cumberland, PA 17070 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mr. Jordan asked the Applicant if he had anything he would like to add to the proposal. The Applicant said that the proposed door is composed of fiberglass and has a wood grain on the exterior of the door and will be factory painted.

Mrs. Gribble said she has concerns about the fiberglass door but needs to consider the product further. Mr. Chamberlin asked the applicant about how the door will be installed and how the transom will be preserved. The Applicant stated that they will be removing the entire door structure including the transom including a complete reframe with like material. The Applicant stated that the transom would be removed and replaced with glass. Mrs. Rucker asked if there is a warranty regarding the paint on the fiberglass. The Applicant stated that the paint from the factory is warrantied for ten years. Mr. Jordan said there needs to be a distinction made between factory paint and paint applied later by the owner. The Applicant said he will look into that issue during the meeting.

Mrs. Bennett asked Mr. Grumbine what the history is regarding HARB’s approval of this type of replacement. Mr. Grumbine said that HARB has recently approved of the use of fiberglass doors in the past year including on Washington Street and Kelker Street but not the removal of the transom, jamb, and other door components. Mrs. Gribble asked whether these approvals were the front doors. Mr. Grumbine said that they were front door approvals.

Mrs. Gribble stated that she is concerned about the existing brick molding around the door surround. The Applicant stated that the new brickmold will be composed of PVC material and that they do not use wood at all. The Applicant continued to state that they do not use any wood at all for longevity and maintenance. The Applicant also stated that the factory paint is warrantied for ten years and after that the door can be painted, but if the door is painted during the first ten years then the warranty on the paint is voided but the warranty on the door would still be valid.

Mrs. Bennett asked why the transom is being replaced. The Applicant stated that he assumes the owner wanted the transom to be replaced and says that it does not need to be replaced.

Mrs. Gribble asked why the Applicant is planning on using PVC materials for the door if the door itself is not directly exposed to the weather due to the porch roof. The Applicant stated that the reason that they use PVC materials is why that they are able to provide lifetime warranties and states that wood does not last and requires maintenance.

Mr. Jordan said that the transom does not need to be replaced and stated that right now that the Board is faced with a couple of conditions. Mr. Jordan asked the Applicant if the condition to preserve the original transom could be met. The Applicant stated that he is working to find out if the transom can be preserved.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that usually when they approve the use of new materials for existing openings that they ask that the applicants maintain the original sightlines and proportions of the original materials and asked the Applicant if these could be met. Mrs. Bennett said that she is not

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in favor of removing the transom. Mrs. Gribble agreed and said that she is not in favor of the use of PVC as a brickmold.

Mr. Jordan read both conditions provided by the Planning Bureau and stated that it appears that is the direction the Board is moving. The Applicant stated that he just received confirmation that they can install the door without removing the transom. Mr. Jordan asked the Board if there needs to be any additional conditions regarding the door. Mrs. Gribble asked about the proportions of the door and how the transom will be altered with a different header on the top of the door. Mrs. Gribble said that there is likely one structural member between the door and the transom. Mrs. Bennett said that she does have a concern about that.

Mr. Jordan asked the Board if it would be better to remove the entire structure for conformity's sake. Mrs. Bennett stated that she wants to see the original transom remain. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he is divided on the issue because it is difficult to install the header for the door while maintaining the original transom but also does not want it destroyed.

Mr. Jordan asked if there is a need to add a condition regarding how the door will fit into the opening with the original transom. The Applicant stated that the sightline of the top of the door will remain the same and stated that they do not have to clad it in PVC and will just paint the existing materials.

Mr. Jordan suggested to add a condition. Mrs. Gribble said the new condition should include that there will not be any additional rail, header, or mullion between the original transom and the new door and that the Applicant will preserve original brick mold or replace it in-kind and be painted.

Mr. Jordan asked if they need to amend the first condition to state that the door shall be paintable without voiding the warranty. Mr. Grumbine stated that he will amend the first condition and add a third condition.

Mrs. Bennett motioned; Mr. Chamberlin seconded the motion to Approve, with Staff and additional Conditions. The motion was adopted with a majority vote (4-2).

**4 1206 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, filed by Chuck Smith, to install three mini-split heat pump units on the northern wall of the building.**

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following conditions:

1. The heat pump units shall be either pad mounted on the ground and obstructed with screening or mounted onto the 2nd floor rooftop out of public view. Any lines fixed to the building shall also be painted or obstructed.

The case was represented by Chuck Smith 1710 Penn Street, Harrisburg PA 17102 and Travis Teates 1246 Klinger Hollow Road Liverpool, PA 17045 (aka "the Applicants").

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Mr. Jordan asked the Applicants if they had anything they would like to add to the proposal. The Applicants asked about the lines being painted. Mr. Grumbine stated that the line casings are usually PVC white and painting the casings to hide them would be a fair compromise. Mr. Jordan asked if there are any photos that indicate the location of the units on the building. The Applicants stated that they can go outside to show the Board the locations of where the units will be mounted on the exterior wall.

The Applicants explained the approximate locations of where the units would be mounted. Mr. Jordan asked about how the lines would be installed along the exterior wall of the building. The Applicants stated that the lines would come out of the building around six feet and be ran along the exterior. The Applicants also said that the brick is deteriorating and crumbling and is not a good example of brickwork.

Mr. Chamberlin asked to understand the challenges of placing the units on the rooftop. The Applicants stated that mounting the units on the roof could be done and that the only issue would be covering the lines around the transitional corner. Mrs. Montgomery, Bennett, Gribble and Rucker all stated that they would prefer the units be mounted on the roof.

Mr. Jordan said that there is a consensus to mount the units on the roof and there is a part of the Planning Bureau's condition stating that the units could be mounted on the ground. The Applicants stated the ground mounting is always better but given the use of the parking lot they would prefer the units be on the roof due to safety. Mr. Jordan stated then that condition should likely be modified to reflect that the units will be mounted on the roof.

Mr. Jordan opened the discussion for public comment. Debra McClain at 1417 North Front Street Harrisburg, PA 17104 stated that she is in favor of the rooftop mounting of the units. Mrs. McClain also stated that if the exterior brick is already compromised then units should not be mounted onto the exterior.

Mr. Jordan said that the Board should modify the first condition to state that the units will be roof mounted and that the first sentence of the Condition will be removed. Mr. Jordan asked if the second Condition should be modified. Mrs. Bennett and Mr. Chamberlin stated that they feel that the Condition should remain. Mrs. Baldock stated that HARB does not regulate color but can suggest colors.

Mr. Jordan asked Mr. Grumbine if the modified conditions make sense. Mr. Grumbine stated that the first condition will be that the units will be mounted on the rooftop out of public view and that the second condition will be that any mechanical lines that are visible from public view shall be painted or obstructed.

Mrs. Rucker motioned; Mrs. Bennett seconded the motion to Approve, with modified Conditions. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (6-0).

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**5 615 South Front Street, filed by Brian Bolger, to infill an existing window opening, install a window in an existing doorway, and replace existing wooden and aluminum clad wooden windows with double hung Simonton vinyl windows.**

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Denied for the following reasons:

1. The proposed replacement windows feature materials (vinyl) that are not an historically contextual or compatible material, and do not feature *any* wooden material on the exterior of the window, as opposed to other products that HARB has reviewed and approved in the past (such as wood composite). HARB has consistently denied the use of such material in replacing historic elements such as windows.
2. The Applicant has other material options for replacing the existing windows such as wooden windows or aluminum clad wood windows, which would be an in-kind replacements, or the use of wood composite materials which HARB has approved in the past.
3. The infill or alteration of fenestrations on secondary elevations is sometimes appropriate as per the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, but is not appropriate when the alterations are composed of non-historically contextual materials.

The case was represented by Christopher and Erin Conner, 615 South Front Street Harrisburg, PA 17104 (aka "the Applicant").

Mr. Jordan asked the Applicants if they had anything they would like to add to the proposal. The Applicants stated that this is about the third renovation that they have done on this house and it is one of the few homes that is stand-alone in Shipoke. The Applicant stated that they are aware of the recommendations of replacing windows with wood. The Applicant stated that the windows being replaced are on the side of the house and are very difficult to see from a public right of way. The Applicants continued to state that the windows are not visible to the public and that their architect that received confirmation from an unnamed City representative that they're not visible to the public which are blocked by a railing and vegetation.

Mrs. Gribble agrees that the windows are obscured from view and stated that there is another issue that needs to be discussed including brick infill. Mrs. Montgomery asked about the replacement of a door with a window infill. Mr. Chamberlin raises the question of visibility of the windows and refers to a denial of vinyl window on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at Radish and Rye with a similar sight line. Mrs. Bennett asked that about the installation of a window in an existing doorway. The Applicants stated that the original doorway is being removed and a window is being installed and there will be brick infill under the new window. Mrs. Bennett asked if it visible and what type of window will be installed. The Applicants stated that it would be the Simonton vinyl window. Mrs. Bennett asked if the dimensions of the openings will be altered to fit the new windows. The Applicants stated that the openings will not be altered except for the doorway which has already been altered to install the new window.

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Mr. Jordan asked about the treatment of the new infill brick for the doorway. The Applicants stated that the brick on the house is painted and that the new infill would also be painted.

Mr. Jordan stated that the area is debatably obscured and is leaning towards approval. Mrs. Montgomery stated that she feels that is obscured enough. The Applicants stated that they did replace the existing windows with new wood windows as well.

Mr. Chamberlin states that the Board is not being consistent with their decisions regarding windows and visibility. Mrs. Gribble agreed. Mr. Jordan stated that the previous case at Radish and Rye had a more visible sightline. Mr. Chamberlin said that he wants to make sure that the Board is consistent with their decisions regarding visibility and that their justification for this particular case must be on record. Mrs. Baldock agreed and stated that the if Board is going to overrule the Planning Bureau's recommendation and make it clear that it is different from other cases that have also been marginal and that they must maintain consistency in their rulings. Mr. Jordan stated that he is only considering approval because of the debatable sightlines of the windows from a public right of way and that if the sightlines were clearer, he would flat out deny the proposal.

Mr. Jordan opened the discussion for public comment. There were no comments.

Mr. Jordan stated that they could approve for reasons of obstructive sightline or deny for reasons the Planning Bureau has developed. Mrs. Rucker stated that the Board needs to be consistent on their decisions. Mr. Jordan agreed and said he visited the site the other day and stated that he feels it is obstructed enough. Mrs. Rucker stated that other residents in the area may not feel the same. Mrs. Bennett asked if the vegetation is planning to be cut down. Mr. Chamberlin also referenced the idea that the Board grandfathered the sightlines of demolished buildings. Mrs. Baldock stated that the Board cannot speculate on future visibility.

The Applicant stated that there are two neighbors nearby that have vinyl windows installed in their façade and is wondering why their being put to the test for side windows and feels that it is inconsistent. Mr. Jordan said one of those houses were approved by the Board in a test case and they have not formally followed up on a review of the product but have received negative feedback from residents. Mr. Jordan stated that the debate is regarding the obstructed visibility of the windows.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that the Board could refrain from making a ruling. Mrs. Baldock stated that she would firmly advise that they should make a ruling given that there is photographic evidence showing that the elevation is visible from a public right of way. Mrs. Baldock continued to say that if the Board fails to rule on this case then that creates a different precedent moving forward.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Board is ruling on approval are there any conditions that need to be added. Mrs. Bennett said that if the windows are visible and unobstructed that that they would be denied and feels that conditions are not necessary. Mrs. Gribble agreed. Mr. Chamberlin said that they must make the distinction that the windows are not visible due to existing architectural elements and other obstructions which obscures the view of the windows. Mrs. Gribble agreed

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and said that the railing along with the position of the building makes the windows obscured. Mr. Jordan asked if the second window furthest to the back is not being replaced. The Applicant stated that the window furthest on the back is not being replaced and is not part of this proposal.

Mr. Jordan motioned; Mrs. Bennett seconded the motion to Approve. The motion was adopted with a majority vote (5-1).

**6 1417 North Front Street, filed by Linda Rutherford and Debra McClain, to replace their existing porch using a contemporary simulated wood PVC product.**

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Denied for the following reasons:

1. Although the limited replacement of missing historic features with composite materials is recommended, the wholesale replacement of an entire historic porch with vinyl or composite materials is not recommended.
2. The Secretary of Interior Standards state that “replacing an entire entrance or porch feature when repair of the feature and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing components are feasible” is not recommended. Many of the porch features are able to be repaired, retained, or replaced in-kind.

The case was represented by Linda Rutherford and Debra McClain 1417 North Front Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mr. Jordan asked the Applicants if they had anything they would like to add to the proposal. The Applicants explained the timeline regarding the issue that they had with the foundation of the house and stated that the existing porch has structural deficiencies due to its original construction. The Applicants also stated that the materials that they are proposing are all simulated wood products to replicate the historic elements and that all the products are paintable and warrantied. The Applicants also stated that their home has a large setback from the road and the materiality of the proposed porch would be difficult to discern from the public right of way and that they are working to maintain the historical integrity of the porch.

Mrs. Bennett asked whether the product being used is Azek. The Applicants stated that the product they are proposing is called “Aeratis” and is similar to Azek. Mrs. Rucker asked what the product is composed of. The Applicant stated that the product is composed of PVC. Mrs. Rucker stated that Azek has been previously approved by the Board and is a wood composite material. Mr. Chamberlin asked which line the Aeratis material they are using. The Applicants stated that it is the Heritage line of products. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the Applicants were planning on painting the floor. The Applicants stated that the product is paintable but is not required to be painted.

Mr. Jordan asked about the material for the proposed balusters. The Applicants stated that the material is called “Durabrac.” Mr. Jordan stated that Durabrac is purely vinyl but appears to be a quality product. Mr. Jordan expresses concern about the material of the posts, newels, and caps.



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The Applicant states that their intention is to replicate the existing style of the posts and newels and the proposed products are composed of vinyl.

Mrs. Gribble said she struggles with the material of the balusters and that there is much detail in the original railings that would be lost if removed. Mrs. Gribble also said she does not have an issue with the newel posts at the end of the stairs and that the posts are of the same nature as the original and her biggest concern is with the balusters. Mrs. Montgomery asked if the posts are going to be composed of the same type of material as the balusters. The Applicants stated that the posts will be from Superior Plastic Products and are composed of vinyl. Mrs. Montgomery said that she has an issue with the materiality of the posts.

Mr. Chamberlin said that the Applicants are trying to do this project correctly and that it appears that the Aeratis product seems like a good product and would likely not be able to tell the difference from the street. Mr. Chamberlin stated that there are also good and bad vinyl products and it is difficult to know which product they are proposing.

Mr. Jordan said that he struggles with approving the Aeratis product due to lack of information regarding the product in the application, and that they would certainly approve of Azek. Mr. Chamberlin stated that the product appears to be of high quality and potentially better than Azek. Mr. Jordan stated that he would love to approve of such a product but does not have enough information to decide. Mrs. Bennett agreed and stated that she would only approve of the Azek material. Mrs. Rucker stated that she would approve of the Azek.

Mr. Jordan said that it appears that the Board would like to offer some conditions of approval. Mrs. Rucker said that there may need to be a condition to install Azek. Mr. Jordan stated that there should be a condition regarding the materiality of the posts and the newels. The Applicants stated that they could use wood for the post, newels, caps, and other vertical members other than the balusters. Mrs. Bennett and Mr. Chamberlin agreed. Mrs. Gribble said that Azek is a plastic polymer with wood fibers which is why the product is more “wood-like.” Mrs. Gribble said that she agrees about keeping the posts and newels as wood as many vinyl products are of poor quality.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Applicants would like to move forward to replace these components with in-kind materials, otherwise they could submit another COA application for the Aeratis flooring. Mr. Jordan said if they approve with conditions then they could reapply for different materials. The Applicants stated that they would like to proceed to hear the Board’s conditions of approval. Mr. Jordan said conditions of approval should be that all vertical elements such as posts, newels, and caps should be composed of wood and that the flooring shall be composed of Azek or in-kind or previously approved material.

Mr. Jordan opened the discussion for public comment. There were no comments.

Mr. Jordan asked Mr. Grumbine if he has recorded the conditions of approval. Mr. Grumbine asked Mr. Jordan to repeat the proposed conditions. Mrs. Baldock asked if the Board is denying the material being proposed for the posts and newels. Mr. Jordan answered in the affirmative. The Applicants asked if the Durabrac balusters are being approved, Mr. Jordan said that they are

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being approved and that the vinyl posts and newels are being denied. Mr. Chamberlin said that Azek has administrative approval and there is no deadline for approval.

Mrs. Baldock stated that Mrs. Rucker left the virtual meeting and is no longer a voting member of the case. Mrs. Gribble asked if the Durabrac material is being approved for the balusters only. Mr. Jordan answered in the affirmative. Mrs. Montgomery asked about the material for the top and bottom rails. The Applicants asked if the rails can be approved for wood or wood composite. Mr. Jordan answered in the affirmative. The Applicants asked about the height of the railing and if the new railing can be the same height as the original. Mrs. Montgomery answered that the new railing can be the same height as the original.

Mrs. Bennett motioned; Mr. Chamberlin seconded the motion to Approve with Conditions. The motion was adopted with a majority vote (4-1).

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**1 Discussion on historic district guidelines.**

Mr. Jordan asked if there are any pressing issues regarding the historic district guidelines. There were no comments.

**ADJOURNMENT: 8:02 PM**

Mr. Chamberlin moved, and Mrs. Bennett seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote (5-0) and the meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.