

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

MINUTES

**HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
August 3, 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM PLATFORM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trina Gribble, Chair
Jeremiah Chamberlin, Vice Chair
Anne Montgomery, Assistant Codes Administrator

MEMBERS ABSENT: April Rucker
Camille Bennett

STAFF PRESENT: Frank Grumbine, Historic Preservation Specialist and Archivist
Tiffanie Baldock, Senior Deputy City Solicitor

OTHERS PRESENT:

CALL TO ORDER: 6:04 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Chamberlin moved, and Mrs. Montgomery seconded the motion to Approve the July 6th minutes. The Board approved the motion to Approve minutes from the July meeting by unanimous vote (3-0).

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. 1310 Green Street, filed by Bachman’s Roofing, to remove wooden shutters, siding, door, transom, and window trim to install vinyl siding, aluminum capping, and door.**

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

1. The Secretary of Interior’s Standards state that “Replacing a deteriorated wood feature or wood siding on a primary or other highly-visible elevation with a composite substitute material” is not recommended. The Standards further state that “Removing a major portion of the historic wood

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

from a façade instead of repairing or replacing only the deteriorated wood, then reconstructing the façade with new material to achieve a uniform or “improved” appearance is not recommended.

2. The Harrisburg Historic District Design Guidelines state that “Altering an exterior through the removal or encapsulation of the historic siding material and the installation of a modern replacement, such as vinyl siding, is not recommended.”

3. The removal of character defining features such as wooden siding, window trim, transom, and shutters to install vinyl siding destroys the historic integrity of the building. Vinyl siding is not a historically contextual material and is rarely appropriate for use in historic districts.

The case was represented by Andrew Johnson, 1310 Green Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mrs. Gribble asked if the Applicant had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicant stated that he purchased the property with the knowledge that it needed work. The Applicant further explained that the exterior is falling apart and that it is structurally unsound. The Applicant stated that vinyl is the only financial option for the property and other options are too expensive.

Mr. Gribble asked for comments from the Board. Mr. Chamberlin asked Mrs. Baldock if there are any prior precedents regarding the use of vinyl siding in historic districts. Mrs. Baldock stated that she cannot recall any cases allowing the use of vinyl siding. Mrs. Baldock asked Mr. Grumbine whether he was aware of HARB approving the use of vinyl siding anywhere in the City’s municipal historic districts. Mr. Grumbine stated that he is not aware of any such approvals. Mr. Chamberlin stated that HARB has never approved of the use of vinyl siding and stated that he is aware that there is some vinyl siding in the neighborhoods and it is likely that the existing vinyl siding in the district was likely installed prior to the formation of the historic district. Mr. Chamberlin stated that the HARB has to set precedent for future cases on the use of vinyl siding in the historic districts. Mrs. Gribble agreed with Mr. Chamberlin in that the HARB has to set the precedent that vinyl is not appropriate for historic districts.

Mr. Chamberlin asked the Applicant to expand upon the portion of the project that includes windows and doors. The Applicant stated that it is concerning that the decision of denial is being made due to the abundance of vinyl on the street. The Applicant further claims that there are no City documents that state vinyl is not allowed. Mrs. Gribble states that the historic district guidelines say that vinyl is not recommended. The Applicant states that he assumed that vinyl was permissible given the amount of vinyl on the street. The Applicant stated that the documents from the Planning Bureau are from 2009 and 2014 and that they are ancient. The Applicant said that there is nothing in the Planning documents that state vinyl is not allowed.

Mrs. Gribble said that the purpose of the HARB is to preserve the properties that do not have vinyl siding and to preserve the historic streetscapes. The Applicant asked where in the documents it states that vinyl siding is not allowed. Mrs. Gribble stated that it is directly in the Harrisburg Historic District Design Guidelines. The Applicant asked if there is a listing of when all the vinyl siding on his street was approved and asked why vinyl is not acceptable. Mr. Chamberlin stated that Mr. Grumbine read the specific guidelines which answer the question. Mr. Chamberlin

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

continued to refer to the Secretary of Interior Standards which is the standard for reviewing the appropriateness of alterations on historic properties. The Applicant asked if any other property has had vinyl siding approved in the historic district. Mr. Chamberlin answered HARB has not approved of the use of vinyl siding elsewhere. The Applicant asked that HARB did not approve of the use of vinyl siding on the 1400 block of Green Street. Mr. Chamberlin said that case did not come before HARB. The Applicant asked if the City approved it. Mr. Baldock stated that it is possible for some project to fall through the cracks but if there is work then the Planning Bureau should conduct a site visit. Mr. Grumbine stated that he may be aware of that project and stated that the work being conducted is not visible from a public right of way. The Applicant stated that he is confused. Mrs. Baldock stated that HARB only has purview over portions that are visible from a public right of way in municipal historic districts. The Applicant stated that it doesn't make sense to him that some vinyl siding is allowed but for others it is not. Mrs. Montgomery stated that work that is not visible from a public right of way does not diminish the integrity of the streetscape.

The Applicant asked for his options. Mrs. Baldock stated that the HARB has not made a motion but are able to do so and that they can recommend more appropriate materials. Mr. Chamberlin asked if they are able to review other parts of the project. The Applicant stated that the exterior architectural elements cannot be remade, and he wants to remove them and that cementitious fiberboard is too expensive. Mrs. Baldock stated that HARB is an advisory Board and that he can request City Council to review his application. The Applicant stated that he is trying to do things the right way and that other people are performing jobs without approval and that he is looking for help.

Mrs. Gribble asked for a motion.

Mr. Chamberlin moved; Mrs. Montgomery seconded the motion to Deny the request. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (3-0).

The Applicant stated that all his neighbors have watched the property deteriorate and that drugs were being dealt from the property and that HARB is being very shortsighted. The Applicant thanked the members for their volunteer role. The Applicant stated that the City Codes has him in the crosshairs again and asked if they need to discuss the newly installed fence. Mrs. Gribble stated that the fence is another issue and that should be brought to the Board separately.

2. 559 South Front Street, filed by David Witwer, to replace wooden shutters with Aeratis shutters on the primary façade.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be approved with the following condition(s):

1. The new shutters must match the existing shutters in style, be proportionate to the window size, and be operational.

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

The case was represented by David Witwer and Catherine Rios, 559 South Front Street Harrisburg, PA 17104 (aka “the Applicants”).

Mrs. Gribble asked if the Applicant had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicants stated that they could meet the conditions read from the Planning Bureau. The Applicants asked what HARB’s priority is operable shutters or proportional shutters. Mrs. Gribble stated that the shutters should be proportional to the window. The Applicants stated that they can accommodate how to prioritize the aspects of the shutters if it would become an issue during installation. Mr. Chamberlin asked about the different style of shutters on the façade of the property and would like the new shutters to be proportional to the size of the windows. The Applicants stated that the first-floor shutters are paneled, and the 2nd floor shutters are louvered. Mr. Grumbine stated that historically the first-floor shutters were paneled for security reasons and the second-floor shutters were louvered to allow both airflow and protection from sunlight at the same time.

Mrs. Gribble asked if there the Board wants to discuss the proposed material of the new shutters. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he agrees with the reasons stated by the Planning Bureau. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the new shutters are a single molded piece or if they are stick built like authentic wooden shutters. The Applicant stated that the shutters they are planning on using are stick built and that their decision to pursue this type of material is driven by durability and the fact that it can be painted. The Applicants stated that they were planning on ordering shutters pre-primed and that they were planning on painting them.

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

Mr. Chamberlin stated that he would like to make a motion but with an additional condition that the Applicants shall utilize stick-built shutters rather than molded shutters.

Mr. Chamberlin moved; Mrs. Montgomery seconded the motion to Approve with conditions. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (3-0).

3. 234 Peffer Street, filed by Jason Priest, to infill window opening with brick and to install frosted window glazing on another window.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be approved with the following condition(s):

1. The new infill shall match the existing brick style, pattern, and will utilize lime-based mortar.

The case was represented by Jason Priest, 234 Peffer Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mrs. Gribble asked if the Applicant had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicant had nothing to add to the proposal.

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

Mr. Chamberlin asked if the Applicant is familiar with the Planning Bureau's condition to utilize lime-based mortar. Mr. Chamberlin explained lime mortar to the applicant and that there is plenty of information available online about it. Mrs. Gribble stated that lime mortar is not as hard as Portland mortars and that it is necessary, so it does not cause damage to the brick.

Mrs. Montgomery asked if the Applicant if he could meet the condition. The Applicant responded that he could meet it. Mrs. Gribble asked if anyone has an issue with blocking in the window. Mr. Chamberlin said he agrees with the Planning Bureau that the window is not character defining. Discussion ensued about whether the window opening would be toothed in with brick rather than simply filled in. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he feels it is not necessary to make an additional condition.

Mrs. Gribble opened the discussion for public comment. There were no comments.

Mrs. Montgomery moved; Mr. Chamberlin seconded the motion to Approve with conditions. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (3-0).

4. 618 North 2nd Street, filed by Moon Chan, to install a mini-split HVAC system on façade of building.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be approved with the following condition(s):

1. The heat pump unit shall be relocated in a discreet location minimally visible from a public right of way. Any lines fixed to the building shall also be painted or obstructed.
2. If necessary, all anchor points for mounting bracket must be made into mortar joints.

The case was represented by Moon Chan, 475 Pebble Beach Road Mount Wolf, PA 17347, and Richard Boyer, 618 North 2nd Street Harrisburg, PA 17101 (aka "the Applicant").

Mrs. Gribble asked if the Applicant had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicant stated that down the block there are ten similar units on the wall. The Applicant stated that they are restricted to where the unit can be placed. Mrs. Montgomery asked if the unit can be placed on the roof. The Applicant stated that this is not possible. The Applicant stated that the unit can be placed by the fire escape near the back of the building. Mr. Chamberlin said that he does not believe that the proposed location is much different than the existing location. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he is aware of the other existing units on the block that the Applicant is referring to and that they are not in an equivalent location. The Applicant stated that if they were to mount the unit on the rear of the building then it would hang over existing parking spaces and is concerned about servicing the unit. Mr. Chamberlin asked what space the unit is servicing. The Applicant stated that the unit serves the restaurant space on the first floor.

Mr. Chamberlin asked if there is room in the fire escape stairwell to mount the unit. The Applicant stated that it is possible. Mrs. Montgomery raised concern about space in the stairwell if an

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

emergency occurs. Mrs. Gribble stated that she is concerned about precedents for HARB and that mechanical units on primary facades are not recommended. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the unit could be mounted on the ground. The Applicant stated that ground mounting is possible, and that the sidewalk is very wide there. Mrs. Baldock stated that mounting the unit on the ground may require an easement from the City. Mrs. Gribble asked about where the conduit lines would run. The Applicant stated that the conduit can run where it currently is.

Mr. Chamberlin recalled the case at the William Penn Association and that the HARB made a condition to conceal the conduit lines in some way. Mrs. Gribble said that they are tasked with trying to find a solution to preserve the integrity of the streetscape. The Applicant stated that they can install the unit out of the walkway to the back of the building by where the existing trash receptacles are stored and then run the conduit capped with covering. Mrs. Gribble asked Mr. Grumbine if he had any ideas for concealment for the unit if it were to be mounted on the wall. Mr. Grumbine did not have any suggestions other than to paint the unit. Mrs. Gribble said it sounds like the Board either wants the unit mounted on the rear of the building on the ground or on the rooftop. Mrs. Baldock said that HARB cannot mandate paint color but can recommend it.

Mr. Chamberlin stated the Planning Bureau's recommended conditions. Mr. Chamberlin also stated that if the applicant is willing to agree with mounting the unit in the fire escape area or on the ground near the rear of the building then the conditions do not need modification.

Mr. Chamberlin moved; Mrs. Montgomery seconded the motion to Approve with conditions. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (3-0).

5. 223 State Street, filed by Derek Dilks, to install two aluminum framed windows and a glass door to replace an existing steel door on the rear elevation.

Mr. Grumbine gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be approved with the following condition(s):

1. Brick or stone must be repointed with a lime-based mortar.
2. All character defining features on the primary façade must be preserved, repaired, or replaced in-kind.

The case was represented by Derek Dilks, 1701 North Front Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 and Chris Dawson 300 North 2nd Street Suite 701 Harrisburg PA 17102 (aka "the Applicants").

Mrs. Gribble asked if the Applicants had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicants had nothing to add.

Mrs. Gribble stated that Mr. Grumbine's assessment appears to be accurate in that the primary façade will not be altered. The Applicants stated that they may come back to HARB for the front doors in the future. Mrs. Gribble asked if the existing windows on the rear of the building are composed of aluminum. The Applicants stated that they are and that they want the new windows to be consistent in style and appearance and plan on maintaining the same style of window. Mr.

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

Chamberlin stated that he feels that the proposal is appropriate. Mrs. Montgomery stated that she agrees.

Mrs. Montgomery moved; Mr. Chamberlin seconded the motion to Approve with conditions. The motion was adopted with a unanimous vote (3-0).

6. 1915 Susquehanna Street, filed by Scott Doughman, to install Fibrex windows on the primary façade and vinyl windows on the rear façade.

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 is 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 original wooden windows are the few remaining architectural elements that gives this structure historic integrity. Efforts to repair and rehabilitation of original wood windows should be performed before replacing them with other materials.
3. The Applicant has other material options for replacing the existing windows such as wooden windows, which would be in-kind replacements, or the use of wood composite materials which HARB has approved in the past.

The case was represented by Danielle James, 1915 Susquehanna Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka “the Applicant”)

Mrs. Gribble asked if the Applicant had anything to add to the proposal. The Applicant stated that she was unaware that she lived in a municipal historic district and spoke with Mr. Grumbine prior to the meeting to discuss her options for window replacement. The Applicant stated that she is replacing the windows on only the 2nd and 3rd floor of her home.

Mr. Chamberlin asked how long ago the building beside her home was demolished. The Applicant stated about five years. Mr. Grumbine stated that the demolition was approved by HARB and was demolished about five years ago.

Mr. Chamberlin asked the Applicant whether she is willing to use Fibrex windows for the rear of the property. The Applicant responded that she is willing to do so. Mr. Chamberlin stated that if the Applicant is willing to use Fibrex, then HARB does not have to rule on the case as the product is administratively approved. Mrs. Gribble stated that vinyl windows are typically inferior to other available products and are not historically appropriate. Mrs. Gribble asked what the specific product that she was proposing to use. The Applicant stated that she said she was not sure of the window product but believed it to be Simonton windows. Mr. Chamberlin stated that anytime HARB approves of a product there needs to be extensive literature prior to approval. Mr. Chamberlin stated that if the Applicant wants to use the product then more information is

**MINUTES – HARB Regular Meeting
August 3, 2020**

necessary, but if she just wants to use Fibrex for all the windows then it is administratively approved.

The Applicant asked about someone referring to only three of the four windows on the rear would have to be Fibrex. Mr. Grumbine stated that only three of the four windows on the rear are visible from a public right of way, therefore only these windows are subject to HARB review. The Applicant asked how many windows must be Fibrex. Mr. Grumbine stated that there are four windows on the primary façade and that there are three windows on the rear façade that are visible from a public right of way that are under review for replacement and that the other windows being replaced are not visible.

Mrs. Montgomery asked how the HARB should view windows that were not once visible due to the demolition. Mrs. Baldock stated that HARB has been somewhat lenient on windows that were recently not visible to the public.

Mrs. Gribble asked if anyone wants to vote on the vinyl windows. Mrs. Baldock stated that the applicant can ask to table the case to get more information on the windows or agree to use the Fibrex and get administrative approval. The Applicant stated she is willing to upgrade the three rear windows visible to a public right of way to Fibrex.

Mrs. Baldock stated that if the Applicant is agreeing to use Fibrex, then no action is necessary from HARB and that she is effectively withdrawing the application.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1 Discussion on historic district guidelines.

Mrs. Gribble said that she wants to meet with Mr. Grumbine to discuss the guidelines, but at the moment there was not much more to discuss. Mr. Grumbine and Mrs. Gribble agreed on a date to discuss the guidelines.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:03 PM

Mr. Chamberlin moved, and Mrs. Montgomery seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote (3-0) and the meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.