

**CITY OF BETHLEHEM**

**HARB CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**DATE: 7 May 2025**

**APPLICANT MUST ATTEND MEETING FOR CASE TO BE HEARD**

**Deadline for submittals is by noon, three weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting.**

**Applications for demolition and new construction must be submitted four weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting.**

Submit original plus 10 copies.

**HARB MEETING MINUTES AND SUBMISSION**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Connie Postupack  
Diana Hodgson  
Michael Simonson  
Joe McGavin  
Nik Nikolov

VISITORS PRESENT

Alan Lowcher, 438 High Street  
Alex D'Angelo, 438 Center Street  
Gina Passerman, La Macaron, 521 Main Street  
Cheryl Green, Fast Signs Allentown, 521 Main Street

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rodman Young

STAFF PRESENT

H. Joseph Phillips, Historic Officer  
E-Mail: [jphillips@phillipsdonovanarchitects.com](mailto:jphillips@phillipsdonovanarchitects.com)

The 2 April 2025 meeting of HARB was called to order by Chairperson, Connie Postupack at 5:00 PM.

### **MINUTES**

There were no comments on the 2 April 2025 Minutes and upon a Motion by Diana Hodgson and a Second by Joe McGavin, the Minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

**Item #1:** The applicant/owner of the property located at 438 High Street proposes to install a 4'-0" high by 14'-0" long wood picket privacy fence between their property and the adjacent neighbor at 442 High Street.

**Property Location:** 438 High Street

**Property Owner:** Patricia & Alan Lowcher

**Applicant:** Patricia & Alan Lowcher

**Proposed work:** The applicant/owner of the property located at 438 High Street proposes to install a 4'-0" high by 14'-0" long wood picket privacy fence between their property and the adjacent neighbor at 442 High Street. The fence will be painted white and will run parallel to the existing retaining wall. The proposed fence will match the existing fence and gate at the Wall Street entrance to the courtyard.

**Character Defining Features:** This structure is a two- and one-half story painted, smooth brick dwelling with a cross gabled roof punctuated by an asymmetrically located shed roofed dormer. Defining features include 6-over-6 double-hung windows on the second floor and a combination of 6 over 6 and 2 over 2 windows on the first floor. The single/individual windows are fitted with black painted shutters that are paneled on the first floor and louvered on the second floor. The window openings have simple, plain heavy heads and sills. The entrance door is located centrally on the building façade under the entry porch. The detail on this home has been reserved for the entry porch that consists of simple square posts with chamfered edges, simple base and top trims, and other applied ornament. The low sloped porch roof sits atop a dentiled and bracketed cornice that is supported by a flat-arched plinth.

**Discussion:** The Historic Officer, Joe Phillips, gave an overview of the project based on the Application package. The Applicant advised that he is installing the proposed fence for safety reasons, so that someone doesn't accidentally fall over the existing retaining wall. Dian Hodgson asked if the new fence would be installed directly against the existing retaining wall and the Applicant responded in the affirmative. Michael Simonson asked if there would be a gate in the fence and the Applicant advised that there will not be a gate. Diana Hodgson inquired as to how the fence would be installed and the Applicant advised that it would be secured to new wood posts in a similar fashion to the existing fence.

**The HARB agreed to recommend that the Bethlehem City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness installation of a 4'-0" high by 14'-0" long wood picket privacy fence between the Applicant's property and the adjacent neighbor at 442 High Street.**

**Motion:** Michael Simonson made a motion to approve the installation of a 4'-0" high by 14'-0" long wood picket privacy fence between the Applicant's property and the adjacent neighbor at 442 High Street, in accordance with the discussion outlined above, the Guideline Citation outlined below, and with the following conditions.

**Second:** Diana Hodgson

**Result of vote:** The vote was unanimous to approve the installation of a 4'-0" high by 14'-0" long wood picket privacy fence between the Applicant's property and the adjacent neighbor at 442 High Street, as per the motion. (This Application was heard last on the Agenda because the Applicant arrived late to the meeting. HARB Member Nik Nikolov had to leave the meeting prior to this Application being heard and therefore, did not vote on this Application.)

**Guideline Citation:**

Secretary of Interior Standards No.(s)

#9 New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the historic property and its environment.

#10 New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines

Page 13: Site Elements

Site elements frame the architecture along a streetscape. In some areas, **established features such as, sidewalks, street trees, walls, fences, gates, walkways, patios, and driveways** provide a consistent setting that is unique to a neighborhood. It is encouraged that property owners develop an understanding of the environmental characteristics of their immediate surroundings and allow that understanding to direct their design. This will allow a more compatible relationship between a property and its neighborhood.

**Modern landscape features, equipment and small structures include** pergolas, arbors, gazebos, fountains, sculptures, pools, play equipment, air conditioner condensers, generators, ground mounted solar collectors, electric and gas meters, cable hook-ups, satellite dishes, trash collection bins, garages, tool, and garden sheds, play houses, dog houses, and wall mounted awnings.

The HARB encourages,

- Keeping views of historic buildings open to the street, rather than obscuring views with new structures

- Front yard development with traditional, simple arrangements, similar to neighboring properties
- Screening landscape features, play equipment, small structures, and ground mounted equipment that might be visible from the public way with either dense planting, a wall or solid fencing
- Retaining, repairing, and maintaining historic paving materials such as, brick and slate sidewalks and walkways
- Minimizing the amount of paving on a site, including installing narrow parking strips instead of full-width driveways
- Installing brick or stone patios instead of raised decks
- Designing small structures, including garages and sheds, that are visible from the public right-of-way to be compatible with the design and historic materials (walls and roof) of the existing main building
- Maintaining historic fences, walls, and gates, including regular repainting of wood and metal elements
- Installing fences and gates with a painted finish that compliments the property, with posts facing towards the interior of a property
- Installing natural stone walls or piers with either a stone or cast stone cap that compliments the property

The HARB discourages,

- Pre-manufactured sheds, particularly those with metal or vinyl wall cladding
- Placing parking areas in the front yards of residences
- Installing asphalt at walkways
- Installing colored or stamped concrete
- Installing cast stone pavers or walls
- Blocking views to principal elevations of historic buildings and settings with tall, solid fences; solid walls; or dense plantings and foliage
- Installing non-traditional fencing materials such as vinyl

**Evaluation, Effect on Historic District, Recommendations:** The proposed work conforms with the intent of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines and will have no negative impact to the historic district.

**Item #2:** The applicant/owner of the property located at 438 Center Street proposes to remove aged vinyl siding from the back wall (East Façade) and restore the original brick masonry currently underneath the vinyl siding. Restoration to include repair to any brick face and repointing as needed using period appropriate materials and color.

**Property Location:** 438 Center Street

**Property Owner:** Alex & Kathleen D’Angelo

**Applicant:** Alex & Kathleen D’Angelo

**Proposed work:** The applicant/owner of the property located at 438 Center Street proposes to remove aged vinyl siding from the back wall (East Façade) and restore the

original brick masonry currently underneath the vinyl siding. Restoration to include repair to any brick face and repointing as needed using period appropriate materials and color.

**Character Defining Features:** This two-story home with smooth brick walls is topped with a cross gabled roof fronting Center Street and an intersecting gable roof that tops the rear portion of the home fronting Wall Street. There is a small, one story shed roofed addition on the very rear of the building. The three bay Center Street facing façade is punctuated with two over two lite double hung windows on the first and second floors. The first-floor windows are fitted with 3 panel, solid shutters. The second-floor windows are fitted with two panel louvered shutters. The main entrance door and transom window are slightly recessed on the first floor of the left most bay. The recess is bordered by a pilaster surround and detailed wood brackets supporting a shallow projecting hood.

The façade in the area of work is a simple one- and one-half story gable form above a shed roof that is over the one story rear most portion of the home.

**Discussion:** The Historic Officer, Joe Phillips, gave an overview of the project. The Applicant explained that he would like to remove vinyl siding and restore the brick on the rear of the home. Connie Postupack asked if any work was proposed for the windows. The Applicant advised that the aluminum cladding would be removed from the existing wood windows and the existing wood windows would be repaired as necessary and repainted. Diana Hodgson asked what the Applicant's plan is, if the existing brick is not in good condition after it is exposed? The Applicant advised that he has a large stock of replacement brick in the basement of the home that he can use to replace any brick that need replacement. The Applicant stated that he will repoint the brick façade using mortar, joint profile, and color that matches the existing home. Bricks that simply need surface repair will be repaired using proper material from Lime Works, in a color to match the existing brick. Nik Nikolov asked the Applicant to match the window details and trim profiles to the windows in the existing, main portion of the brick home. Mr. Nikolov advised the Applicant that the existing shed roof would also likely need to be properly flashed into the newly exposed brick wall and asked if any new window shutters were proposed for this wall. The Applicant agreed to proper flashing and advised that there are not any new window shutters proposed at this time. The Applicant stated that any new paint would match the color(s) of the existing paint. Mr. Nikolov asked what would be done if an existing window opening is found once the vinyl siding is removed. The Applicant advised that, if any window openings are found, they will be infilled with brick from the existing brick stock in the basement of the home. The Applicant agreed to consult with Mr. Simonson if additional work is found to be needed as a result of the removal of the vinyl siding and aluminum window cladding. Mr. Simonson will consult with Mr. Phillips and Ms. Postupack to handle any additional work related to the current Application by way of an administrative review.

**The HARB agreed to recommend that the Bethlehem City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to** remove aged vinyl siding from the back wall (East Façade), restoration of the original brick masonry currently underneath the vinyl siding, restoration,

and repair to any brick face, and repointing as needed using period appropriate materials and color.

**Motion:** Nik Nikolov made a motion to approve the removal of aged vinyl siding from the back wall (East Façade), restoration of the original brick masonry currently underneath the vinyl siding, restoration, and repair to any brick face, and repointing as needed using period appropriate materials and color, in accordance with the discussion outlined above and the Guideline Citations outlined below.

**Second:** Diana Hodgson

**Result of vote:** The vote was unanimous to approve the removal of aged vinyl siding from the back wall (East Façade), restoration of the original brick masonry currently underneath the vinyl siding, restoration, and repair to any brick face, and repointing as needed using period appropriate materials and color, as per the motion, and with the following conditions.

1. The Applicant must submit for and secure a Building Permit from the City of Bethlehem.
2. All flashing should be of a real copper material.
3. Any new painting work shall match existing paint colors.
4. New mortar shall be appropriate for this application and match the color and joint profile found on the existing home.
5. Any new scope of work that is found to be needed, will be submitted to Mr. Simonson, Chief Building Code Official, for review and consideration, prior to completion of the work.

**Guideline Citation:** Secretary of Interior Standards No.(s)

#2 The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

#5 Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

#6 Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

#9 New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with historic materials, features,

size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the historic property and its environment.

#10 New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines

### Page 8: Exterior Woodwork & Siding

The HARB encourages,

- Regularly maintaining and repainting exterior woodwork including repainting, and addressing potential areas of moisture including clogged gutters and downspouts, groundwater, leaky pipes, and interior condensation
- Retaining decorative woodwork since it is a character defining element that can be difficult to replace
- Repairing smaller areas of deterioration by reinforcing or patching – small cracks and checks can be repaired with an exterior wood filler, glue, or epoxy – Loose elements can be refastened with nailing or drilling and screwing
- Selectively replacing deteriorated wood elements that are beyond repair with wood pieces that match the size, profile, exposure and pattern, and character of the historic wood element – Wood filler in the joints between the new and old wood will help provide a smooth finish
- Large scale or significant replacement of exterior wood siding with paintable material that match the size, profile, exposure, pattern, and character of the historic wood

The HARB discourages,

- Removing or encapsulating with vinyl or aluminum siding, trim, decorative features, and trim elements such as brackets, spindles, cornices, columns, posts, etc.
- Vinyl or aluminum siding over wood, brick, stone, or stucco
- Wood grained, wavy edged, vertical, and textured plywood simulated siding
- Installing non-wood trim

### Page 8: Paint

The HARB encourages,

- Hand washing with mild detergent and bristle brush, hand scraping, and hand sanding

The HARB discourages,

- Rotary tools – disks can leave circular marks and wires can tear into the surface
- Heat guns and heat plate – can ignite paint or underlying surface if left in one location too long
- Chemical paint removers – can raise grains, be expensive, and potentially volatile; runoff can be hazardous
- Flame tools, blow torches to soften paint – smoldering sparks can potentially start a fire; lead components in paint can vaporize and create highly toxic fumes

- Sandblasting – can be abrasive to surface, wear away protective exterior coating and raise the wood grain
- High-pressure water wash – forces water into open joints affecting interior finishes and structural framing; can be abrasive to exterior surface and raise the grain

### Page 9: Masonry & Stucco

Exterior masonry, including stone, brick, terra cotta, and stucco, provides a strong, durable, and attractive appearance with relatively low maintenance. Historic masonry walls tend to protect a building's interior from weather and act as the principal load bearing system. Aesthetically it acts as an important design feature, helping to define a building's style and add visual interest to the streetscape.

**Mortar:** Mortar, which bonds masonry units, was generally composed of a few ingredients: sand, lime, and water, and possibly additives such as animal hair or oyster shells. Starting in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a small amount of Portland cement was added into the mix to improve the workability and hasten the setting time. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Portland cement in mortar was increased, corresponding with the manufacture of harder bricks.

The HARB encourages,

- Regular maintenance, repair and selectively repointing deteriorated areas with compatible mortar in material, hardness, composition, color, joint style. Incompatible mortar is often too hard and can lead to spalling or chipping of the bricks or stones, it can also be visually mismatched.
- Installing fasteners for signs and other devices into mortar joints rather than brick or stone faces
- Installing local stone and pointing with ribbon joints

The HARB discourages,

- Using Portland cement-based mortar for repointing – it is typically too hard for most historic masonry and can result in damage, including spalling

**Stucco:** Stucco is a relatively inexpensive material that can provide a more finished appearance to brick, stone, or wood framed buildings. In some cases, the surface was scored to look like stone. It acts as a weather repellent coating, protecting the building from the elements including rain, sunlight, and wind, and can moderately increase its fire resistance. Stucco can also provide an insulating layer to a wall, reducing the passage of air to the interior.

The HARB encourages,

- Matching the color and texture of historic stucco when repairing or applying stucco to new construction

The HARB discourages,

- Installing stucco over brick, stone, or terra cotta walls
- Installing artificial stucco (EIFS Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems) which can trap moisture within the thickness of a wall and cause long-term damage

**Masonry & Stucco Cleaning:** Appropriate masonry and stucco cleaning can enhance the character and overall appearance of a building. However, improper cleaning of historic

masonry can cause damage to the historic surfaces and cause more harm than good both physically and aesthetically.

The HARB encourages,

- Cleaning masonry and stucco with the gentlest means possible, typically low-pressure water, with the possible use of a gentle detergent and brushing

The HARB discourages,

- Masonry cleaning unless a building is heavily soiled
- Masonry and stucco cleaning with harsh chemicals, sand blasting, power washing over 400 psi, grinders, or metal brushes

**Masonry Coatings & Paint:** Water repellent and waterproof coatings, which include paint, are generally applied to prevent water from entering a masonry and stucco wall, but tend to be unnecessary on weather-tight historic buildings. Water tends to enter masonry buildings through open mortar joints, surface cracks and areas of poor or deferred maintenance. In instances where the surface of the masonry has been severely compromised, such as at sandblasted brick, the use of water repellent coatings might be appropriate.

The HARB discourages,

- Applying water repellent or waterproof coatings
- Painting of previously unpainted masonry or stucco

#### Page 10: Windows

The HARB encourages,

- Regular window maintenance, repair, and repainting
- Installing interior or exterior storm windows
- If the applicant can demonstrate evidence of window deterioration requiring replacement, installing true divided lite replacement windows with an exterior painted finish that match the material, historic size, shape, operation, muntin pattern, profiles, and detailing to the greatest extent possible

The HARB discourages,

- Decreasing, increasing, or altering window size, shape, or operation to allow for installation of stock window sizes or picture windows
- Encasing or capping window surrounds with aluminum or vinyl
- New window openings at publicly visible elevations
- Installing tinted or colored glazing
- Installing vinyl or aluminum-clad replacement windows at window openings that are visible from a public right-of-way

**Evaluation, Effect on Historic District, Recommendations:** The proposed work conforms with the intent of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines and will have no negative impact to the historic district.

**Item #3:** The applicant/owner of the property located at 521 Main Street proposes to install a new blade sign and window decals.

**Property Location:** 521 Main Street  
**Property Owner:** Juan Carlos Paredes  
**Applicant:** Fast Signs Allentown

**Proposed work:** The applicant/owner of the property located at 521 Main Street proposes to install a new 36" x 21" (5.25 S.F.) blade sign. The sign will be double sided and contain the name of the new business, "le macaron french pastries." New window decals, totaling 4.3 S.F. will also be installed.

**Character Defining Features:** The first floor/street level storefront façade is characterized by flanking, angled bay windows with a frame and glass entrance door in the center. A cornice tops the storefront and runs the full length of the building façade from left to right. Panels with an arched composition are located above each store front and are separated horizontally by an ornamented pilaster. A heavy cornice is located above the panels and separates the building's base from its brick and cut stone body above. This was the City's tallest building from 1893 to 1922.

**Discussion:** The Historic Officer, Joe Phillips, gave an overview of the project. Upon questioning by Connie Postupack, the Applicant explained that the vinyl window decals will be located on each of the 4 storefront windows and that the text is the brand standard for this business. Ms. Postupack asked if the blade sign will be located centered over the entrance. The Applicant advised that it will be located slightly to the left of center because of an existing ceiling mounted camera that is centrally located. Nik Nikolov questioned the height from the top of the step to the bottom of the proposed sign. The Applicant advised that this dimension is 100 inches. Connie Postupack asked if this is higher than the adjacent "Nurse Wellness" sign. The Applicant stated that this would be just slightly lower and that it would be 123 inches from the surface of the sidewalk to the underside of the proposed sign. Diana Hodgson asked why they did not incorporate a scroll bracket into the support of the sign. The Applicant advised that this is because the landlord will not allow a sign to be mounted above the cornice that is located just above the storefront windows and the existing window frame will not structurally support a mounting bracket and sign. A general discussion ensued about other options and locations to mount the proposed sign. Nik Nikolov asked the Applicant if they would consider adding a decorative scroll to the top of the proposed aluminum tube sign arm. Mr. Phillips did a rough sketch of this on the graphics provided in the Application and the Applicant agreed to add a decorative scroll to the top of the aluminum tube sign arm. Mr. Phillips stated that the highest part of the scroll that is adjacent to the building should not exceed the height of the existing cornice located above the storefront windows. The Applicant agreed. Connie Postupack asked what the actual sign material will be and the Applicant responded that it will be a 2-inch-thick aluminum sign. Ms. Postupack questioned if the colors proposed for the sign are the standard colors of the business and the Applicant responded in the affirmative. The Applicant stated that they also prepared an oval shaped design for the proposed sign and provided HARB with a drawing showing this. Discussion ensued and HARB stated that they

prefer the oval sign design to the more rectangular design included in the original Application. Mr. Phillips advised the Applicant that, if approved, the oval sign design would require the sign to be hung from the mounting bracket. The Applicant agreed and stated that this could be accomplished, maintaining a minimum of 96 inches from the bottom of the sign to the walking surface below. After further discussion, the Applicant stated that they would need to confirm that the oval sign could be manufactured as shown. If it can be, they will install the oval sign. If it can't be, they will install the more rectilinear sign as shown in the original Application. Michael Simonson questioned the color of the vinyl window text and whether the color was a business standard. The Applicant advised that the color of the vinyl window text would be Basic White and that it was the business standard color.

**The HARB agreed to recommend that the Bethlehem City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a new blade sign and window decals.**

**Motion:**

Connie Postupack made a motion to approve the installation of a new blade sign and window decals, in accordance with the discussion outlined above, the Guideline Citations outlined below, and with the following conditions.

1. The HARB prefers the oval sign design, but either the oval or the more rectilinear design shown in the original Application are appropriate and acceptable.
2. No matter the design, oval or rectilinear, the sign shall be hung from (free swinging), not fixed mounted to the aluminum tube sign arm.
3. The mounting bracket shall be as shown in the original Application with the addition of a decorative scroll attached to the top of the aluminum tube sign arm. The highest part of the scroll that is adjacent to the building should not exceed the height of the existing cornice located above the storefront windows.
4. There will be no lighting included with the installation of this sign.
5. The sign background, sign arm, decorative scroll, and all other mounting hardware shall be black in color.
6. Other sign colors include white, Pantone 233 C, Pantone Cool Grey 7 C, and Pantone 3568 C as shown on the drawing included in the Application.
7. The color of the vinyl window text shall be Basic White.
8. The distance from the bottom of the sign to any surface below it shall be a minimum of 96".

**Second:**

Michael Simonson

**Result of vote:**

The vote was unanimous to approve the installation of a new blade sign and window decals, as per the motion.

**Guideline Citation:** Secretary of Interior Standards No.(s)

#9 New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the historic property and its environment.

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Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines

Page 15: Signage: The HARB encourages signage that does not obscure or damage architectural features, identifies the business, complements the style of the building, and is appropriately scaled for its location.

**Evaluation, Effect on Historic District, Recommendations:** The proposed work conforms with the intent of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines and will have no negative impact to the historic district.

There being no further business, upon a Motion by Michael Simonson, a Second by Diana Hodgson, and a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



H. Joseph Phillips, AIA  
Historic Officer