



# CITY COUNCIL

## *HARB Appeal Hearing*

***HARB APPEAL HEARING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS***

***TUESDAY, DEC 22, 2009***

### **Opening Matters**

#### **Call to Order**

#### **Purpose**

To approve or deny the appeal of the application for a certificate of appropriateness submitted by Delfina Velasco, owner of 916 Madison Avenue, who is appealing the decision of HARB to deny a certificate of appropriateness for the installation (already completed) of a replacement window on the first floor façade of the property.

The applicant has appealed the decision to Reading City Council.

The hearing will have three components 1) Presentation by the property owner or his representative, 2) Presentation by the Historic Preservation Specialist, 3) Public Comment 4) Council questions. City Council will adopt a resolution either approving or denying the appeal at their January 11<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> regular business meeting.

#### **Oath to all parties providing testimony on record**

"Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony, both oral and documentary, which you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"

#### **Findings of Fact:**

- Testimony from Property Owner/Applicant
- Findings of Fact from Historic Preservation Specialist
- Public Comment
- Cross Examination by Council

**Expected Date of Decision**

Regular Meeting of Council on January 11 or 25, 2010

**Adjournment of Hearing**

**THE READING BOARD OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
MEETING, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chairperson Peter Sutliff, who noted the presence of a quorum.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Peter Sutliff, Chairperson  
Allen Webster, Vice-Chairperson  
Cynthia LaSota, Secretary  
Tadd Casner  
Frank Gilyard  
Susanne Gresh  
Laura James  
O. Christopher Miller  
Aaron Booth

**STAFF PRESENT**

Amy W. Johnson

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Victor Vera, 916 Madison Ave.  
Delfina Velasco, 916 Madison Ave.  
David Boyer, 916 Madison Ave.  
Colin Grey, 456 Douglass St.  
David Burdine, 735 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Mark Conrath, 735 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Domenic Lavigna, 11 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Joseph Lavigna, 11 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Mynor Meyen, 521 Chestnut St.  
Yoni Oziri, 234 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Corri Oziri, 234 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Eduardo Josephs, 502 Penn St.  
Lisa Mendoza, 608 Bingaman St.  
Andres Acuna, 1152 Perkiomen Ave.

**WELCOME OF NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Mr. Sutliff welcomed Aaron Booth who was approved by City Council on September 28, 2009

**ITEM #3      916 Madison Avenue  
Delfina Velasco, Owner**

**FACTS CONCERNING HISTORICAL AND  
*ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE***

This three story row home built in the Queen Anne style, received a site quality rating of 74 and is a significant contributing site in the Centre Park Historic District. The structure has been compromised with the replacement of the original wood first floor front porch balustrade with a wrought iron railing but retains a significant amount of original details including scalloped slate roof shingles, dentils at the first, second and third floor cornices, and wood columns at the first floor front porch.

**PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK**

The owner proposes the installation of 12 vinyl replacement windows at the front and rear facades. Work has been completed.

## **REASONS OF APPLICANT FOR PURSUING PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK**

*The existing windows were deteriorated in condition and in need of replacement.*

## **FINDINGS OF THE BOARD**

Ms. Johnson explained to the Board that this property is coming before the Board as a violation for the installed replacement windows. Ms. Johnson noted that of concern is the first floor front window which was originally a double hung window that was one over one in configuration. Ms. Johnson presented the Board with photographs of the adjacent properties in the block that have retained the original first floor front window as one over one in configuration. Ms. Johnson stated that the other replacement windows were installed appropriately as per the HARB Window Policy. Ms. Johnson stated that she also found a photograph of the property in the 1978 picture file showing the home in its original condition and noted that it has retained much of its historical integrity.

Mr. Sutliff inquired as to how long the owner has owned the property. Ms. Velasco replied, through her interpreter, Mr. Vera, that she has owned the property for six years. Mr. Webster inquired as to whether the owner had recently installed the windows. Ms. Velasco replied that she installed the windows a year ago. Ms. Johnson explained that the Zoning Inspector, on a Centre Park walk-around, found the new replacement windows and saw the stickers on the windows which made them look like they were recently installed.

Mr. Webster stated that all of the windows were appropriately installed except for the first floor front window. Mr. Sutliff explained to the owner that the reason the first floor window was not installed properly is that the window should have a horizontal mullion, not a vertical mullion. Mr. Sutliff further noted that the replacement window cannot be smaller than the original window opening as the window that was installed is.

Mr. Webster inquired as to whether the first floor front porch railing was replaced. Ms. Velasco replied that the railing was not replaced. Ms. Johnson presented the photograph from the 1978 picture file showing that the railing consisted of a wrought iron railing in the photo. Mr. Webster inquired as to whether the owner would be willing to restore the window to its original configuration. Ms. Velasco replied that she will soon be out of work and does not have the money to change it. Mr. Webster inquired as to whether she would be able to change the window within sixty days. Ms. Velasco replied that if she must change it she will. The Board recommended that perhaps the owner could change the window through the City's Façade Improvement Grant Program. Ms. Johnson briefly explained the program and stated that the owner could make an appointment to meet with her and she could explain the program in full.

## **RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD**

That a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued to Delfina Velasco, owner of 916 Madison Avenue, for the installation of eleven vinyl replacement windows, one over one in configuration, at the front and rear facades as installed.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** The Board does **NOT** issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installed replacement window at the first floor front façade due to the fact that the style of the replacement window is not appropriate to the building and does not meet the HARB Window Policy. The installed replacement window is to be removed and is to be replaced with a white vinyl replacement window, one over one in configuration and in the same dimensions as the

original window opening, to be approved at Staff level. A motion was made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Gilyard. The vote was taken with all in favor (9-0).

**RESOLUTION NO. 145-09**

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Reading Historical Architectural Review Board:

“That a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued to Delfina Velasco, owner of 916 Madison Avenue, for the installation of eleven vinyl replacement windows, one over one in configuration, at the front and rear facades as installed.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** The Board does **NOT** issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installed replacement window at the first floor front façade due to the fact that the style of the replacement window is not appropriate to the building and does not meet the HARB Window Policy. The installed replacement window is to be removed and is to be replaced with a white vinyl replacement window, one over one in configuration and in the same dimensions as the original window opening, to be approved at Staff level.”

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the Reading Historical Architectural Review Board at the meeting held on October 20, 2009.

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AMY WOLDT JOHNSON  
Historic Preservation Specialist