Drafted by	City Clerk/City Solicitor
Sponsored by/Referred by	City Clerk/City Solicitor
Introduced on	N/A
Advertised on	N/A

RESOLUTION NO. 23 2016

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF READING HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Approving the appeal of the Certificate of Appropriateness, as attached in the findings of fact, for the installation of an elevator covered with cement block construction with an EIFS finish in the color "Brite White", requiring the planting of additional hemlocks to provide screening, and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home of the property on the west side of the property at 1604 Bern Street, owned by Patricia and Michael Gordon.

Adopted by Council Sept 26, 2016

President of Council

I, LINDA A. KELLEHER, City Clerk of the City of Reading, Pa., do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution passed by the Council of the City of Reading, on the 26 day of Sept A. D. 2016. Witness my hand and seal of the said City this 27 day of Sept A. D. 2016

CITY CLERK

Attest:

Linda A. Kelleher, City Clerk

Appeal of Historic Architectural Review Board Certificate of Appropriateness

IN THE MATTER OF	§	**BEFORE THE**
	§	
BERKS COUNTY	§	**CITY OF READING**
	§	
PATRICIA & MICHAEL	§	
GORDON	§	**CITY COUNCIL**
	§	
1604 BERN ST, READING PA	§	

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, ORDER, AND AGREED RESOLUTION

On Wednesday, September 14, 2016 the City of Reading City Council (Council) met to hear testimony on the appeal of the decision made by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) on the Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of an elevator with cement block construction with an EIFS finish in the color "Brite White" and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home of the property at the west side of the home owned by Patricia and Michael Gordon (Respondent), at 1604 Bern Street (Subject Property), located within the Heights Conservation District.

At their August 16, 2016 meeting, HARB unanimously denied the application and approved an alternative:

READING HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

Motion: The Historical Architectural Review Board, upon motion by Ms. Weller and seconded by Mr. Sands, adopted the proposal to DENY a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein and specified the following:

1. The proposal for the construction of a two story elevator tower at the western façade to consist of cement block construction with an EIFS finish in the color "Brite White" and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural

shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home of the property at 1604 Bern Street, was presented by Richard B. Keffer.

2. The construction of a two story elevator tower as proposed, presented, and shown on the submitted architectural plans dated June 28, 2016 was DENIED based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, Standard #9. ("New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.") and Standard #10. ("New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.").

3. The Board APPROVES the construction of a two story elevator tower at the western façade of the dwelling, to be centered on the gable and centrally located between the two first story windows, covering the second story window.

4. The exterior of the elevator tower shall be finished in board-and-batten siding, painted white to match the existing color of the house, and is to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home.

The motion to DENY the original proposal and APPROVE an amended proposal as stated above was approved unanimously.

Findings of Fact

1. The Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) is part of the City of Reading City Code Chapter 295 Part 1 – Historic and Conservation Districts. The HARB is a board of nine (9) duly qualified members.

2. At the August HARB hearing, the Respondent testified that she applied to install an elevator with cement block construction with cement board siding identically matching in appearance the asbestos siding currently installed on the house, and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home of the property located at the window on the west side of the property near the front corner, as an accommodation for a resident of the property who is wheelchair bound. HARB denied the application but approved an alternative location that would place the elevator between the windows on the western side of the home,

centered on the existing gable and cover the cement block structure with board-and-batten siding painted white to match the house and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home.

3. The Respondent testified that the elevator is needed to make an accommodation for her brother who is wheelchair bound, who requires access to the three (3) floors of the home. She stated that they consulted with three (3) architects who all, after inspecting the interior of the property, recommended that the elevator should be installed at the proposed location allowing it to work with the interior floor plan of the home.

4. The Respondent stated that moving the elevator to the location approved by HARB places the elevator too close to the fireplace located in the living room and inside one of the bedrooms located on the 2nd floor of the home. She stated that the interior to too small to have the elevator installed in the interior of the property.

5. The Respondent stated that extensive research allowed them to find siding that exactly matches the siding on the home without asbestos

6. Mr. Keffer, an architect retained by the Respondent for the project, displayed drawings of the exterior front and west side of the home and photographs of the interior of the home. He noted the existing hemlocks will provide screening of the elevator installation when approaching the home from the eastern lane of Bern Street. He noted that an additional hemlock could be added at the front of the property to better screen the elevator. He stated that the recommended location presented to HARB best accommodates the mechanical requirements for the elevator. He explained that this location works best for the interior of the home and for those using the elevator. He also explained that relocating the elevator as approved by HARB would require the relocation of the HVAC condenser, which would be costly.

7. In response to a question, the Respondent stated that a chairlift was considered but as her brother requires the use of a wheelchair, a chairlift would not provide the accommodation they need. She added that the elevator will provide access to the main living areas of the home (1st and 2nd floors) along with the laundry area in the basement. She noted that she and her husband would also use the elevator as they are having health problems that come with the aging process.

8. In response to a question, Mr. Keffer stated that the elevator could be removed in the future and that the weight limit is 750 lbs. He noted that this is not a commercial elevator.

9. The Historic Preservation Specialist explained that HARB approved the installation of the elevator at the middle of the property on the side as it will improve the symmetry with the roof line and that the board believes that this location is more historically appropriate. She stated that the HARB decision is based on the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines SIS 9 and SIS 10, which refer to new installations.

10. The HARB Chair agreed that the location approved by HARB was viewed as more historically appropriate and more in line with the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines, which must be followed by the HARB and the owners of properties within historical districts. He noted that HARB did not have interior photos available when they considered the application so they were unable to determine if the HARB approved relocation was appropriate for the interior. He agreed that the HARB approved relocation to the middle of the side of the house eliminates the conflict with the roofline.

11. In response to a question, Mr. Keffer explained that the gable, made to complement the existing roof line in the applicants proposed location, will house the mechanical features required for an elevator.

Conclusions of Law

City Council, after considering all testimony and reviewing all Exhibits, approves the appeal of the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the installation of an elevator in the location originally presented to HARB with cement block construction with an EIFS finish in the color "Brite White", to require the planting of additional hemlocks to provide screening, and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home of the property located at the window on the west side of the property near the front corner

Order and Agreed Resolution

The City of Reading City Council hereby approves the appeal of the COA for the installation of an elevator in the location originally presented to HARB with cement block construction with an EIFS finish in the color "Brite White", to require the planting of additional hemlocks to provide screening, and to include the installation of gray asphalt architectural shingles at the tower's roof to match the existing shingles on the main roof of the home of the property located at the window on the west side of the property near the front corner

Right to Appeal

If you disagree with the decision of City Council you may file an appeal with the Court of Common Pleas of Berks County within 30 days after notice of the decision has been made. Your failure to file the appeal within such 30 days shall preclude an appeal from such decision.