

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION
1 Municipal Drive
July 10, 2025

Present: Tera Hayward-Olivas, Chairperson
Michael Westman
Lisa Doak

Absent: Cynthia Batty, Planning Commission Liaison
Kevin Wade

Also Present: Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Official

Ms. Hayward-Olivas convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas informed the assembly that the yellow notices can be removed when the meeting is over.

Minutes

June 12, 2025 – A motion to table the minutes of the June 12, 2025 meeting to the August HAC meeting was made by Mr. Westman. The motion was seconded by Ms. Doak and was unanimously carried.

Older/Tabled Applications

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that the Trustees had two applications before HAC, one tabled application and one new, and suggested that both applications be reviewed first.

Chestnut/The Strand – Trustees of New Castle Commons – Roadside barriers.

There was no representative for the Trust present.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that the application now has a site plan and a materials list; adding that the materials are all wood. Ms. Doak stated it was an attractive design.

A motion to approve the design, concept, and materials of a fence to be erected at the Ft. Casimir site for the Trustees of the New Castle Common was made by Ms. Doak. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman and was unanimously passed.

Battery Park – Trustees of New Castle Commons – Install concrete pads for picnic tables.

An application was submitted to install three (3) 8' x 8' x 4" concrete pads for new picnic tables in Battery Park.

Ms. Doak questioned if the application was for new picnic tables or picnic tables that have already been installed; noting that the locations identified in the packet did not seem to align with the picnic tables in the park.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that the application does not include sufficient information for the Commissioners to make a decision and recommended that the application be denied based on a lack of information and recommend that the Trustees consult with Ms. Hamroun; adding that the application should come back to HAC for final approval.

A motion to deny the application based on a lack of information was made by Ms. Doak. The Applicant is permitted to resubmit the application that includes more information, including specs and photos on the picnic tables. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman and was unanimously passed.

621 Delaware St. – Doug Salter - Replace front window.

An application was submitted to replace one front window, like-for-like. Mr. Salter and his contractor, Mr. Dan Burris, were present.

Mr. Burris explained that due to disrepair the existing window was removed and was replaced in-kind to the window that was replaced. Ms. Doak stated that the window that was replaced was not original to the building; noting her concern that although an exact in-kind replacement was made, the window that was replaced was not appropriate. Mr. Burris explained that the building was built in 1917, was totally demolished in 1954 during Hurricane Hazel, sat vacant for many years, and was renovated in the 1970's; and the 1970's window is what was replaced.

Ms. Doak explained that normally HAC would review on what would have been there when the building was built; and the new window is not the kind of window that would have been in the original window and does not conform to the Standards and Guidelines. She stated that the new window muntins are between the glass panes; but the original window would have had wooden or lead muntins on the exterior of the window.

During discussion it was noted that any building listed on the National Register of Historic Places, even if it is non-contributing within the boundaries of the Historic District, is under the purview of HAC. Ms. Doak clarified wording in the Guidelines; noting that the window being replaced was installed before the Guidelines were updated. Mr. Bergstrom stated that the window that was replaced was dangerous. Mr. Burris presented additional photographs of the original building.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas expressed her concern that the muntins are not exterior. Mr. Burris stated that he had not consulted with Ms. Hamroun because they were replacing like-for-like. Ms. Hayward-Olivas opined that the application could be approved in concept and have Ms. Hamroun review the muntins for possible Tier 1 approval. Mr. Bergstrom stated that the replacement window is a clad wood window. Ms. Hayward-Olivas reiterated that she would like Ms. Hamroun review the muntins. Mr. Bergstrom added that the original window was installed prior to the time the building would have been within the purview of HAC; and opined that the Commission is attempting to recreate something that is unknown. He added that he researched the building and was unable to find the original plans. Ms. Doak countered that it would be known what the windows of that time period in an armory would be like; and they would not have muntins in between two panes of glass.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas explained that there is an expedited process for emergency situations. Mr. Slater noted that when Mr. Burris researched the property it did not appear in the Historic District.

Ms. Doak stated that if something was not appropriate when it was installed in the 1970's, this is an opportunity to make it look more historically accurate for what would have been there; and since the window being replaced was not the original window, HAC is requesting that the application be reviewed by the Architectural advisor.

A motion to approve the concept and refer the application to Ms. Hamroun for review for Tier 1 appropriateness in terms of design was made by Ms. Doak. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman and was unanimously passed.

138 E 2nd St – Dan Brennan & Jennifer Leary – Repair/replace & extend brick patio.

There was no one present representing the Applicants. Mr. Bergstrom stated that he discussed the application with the City Solicitor as to whether it is appropriate for Tier 1 approval or not. It was approved in concept by Ms. Hamroun as Tier 1 as long as there was no structure above grade.

5 The Strand – Jennersville Investments – Repair front porch & new deck floor.

There was no one present representing the applicant. Ms. Doak noted that regardless of the fact that some of the work had already been done she did not see a problem with the project because it is clear there is nothing original that they are pulling up. She stated it was unclear from the pictures if they were using 2" x 6" boards instead of tongue-in-groove. Ms. Hayward-Olivas stated that all materials appear to be appropriate; but the application lacks pertinent data, including a better description of the work and a list of materials. Ms. Doak added that it appears the Applicant did a screen door and railing replacement as well.

Mr. Bergstrom opined that Ms. Hamroun did a site visit.

A motion to approve the application as presented in terms of concept and design and refer the application to Ms. Hamroun for possible Tier 1 approval upon confirmation that the materials conform to the Guidelines and Standards was made by Ms. Hayward-Olivas. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman and was unanimously passed.

New Applications

20 W 5th St – Chris Marchesani – Multiple exterior items.

An application was submitted to remove the existing shingle roof and flat roof down to the decking, install new GAF shingles and flat roofing; demolish one of two chimneys; replace rotted soffit on the front of the home with new wood soffit to match the existing soffit; repoint the second remaining chimney; and remove existing metal siding on the front and back dormer and install new white siding to match the existing siding.

In response to a question from Ms. Doak, Mr. Marchesani stated that the brackets would remain. Mr. Marchesani added that the rear chimney is not being used and the contractor stated that it would be easier to remove the chimney than to try and rebuild it. Ms. Hayward-Olivas confirmed that Ms. Hamrout stated that removal of the rear chimney and repair and repointing of the chimney on the front would be appropriate.

Ms. Doak stated that if the metal siding on the dormers is replaced, the replacement siding would have to be wood. Mr. Marchesani stated that he will eventually replace the metal siding on the addition, but that is not part of the application. Mr. Marchesani also stated that he had not chosen any specific asphalt roofing material. Ms. Doak suggested that he might consider a weathered wood or cedar shake replica; adding that HAC does not rule on color.

Ms. Hayward-Olivas noted that the dormer and the soffit would have to be wood. Mr. Marchesani concurred.

A motion to approve the application for removal of the existing shingle roof and flat roof with the installation of GAF flat roofing; to demolish the rear non-functioning chimney while repairing and repointing the front chimney; the in-kind replacement of the soffit on the front of the house with new wood to match the existing wood; and removal of the existing metal siding on the front and rear dormers and replace with wooden siding was made by Ms. Hayward-Olivas. The motion was seconded by Ms. Doak and was unanimously passed.

39 W 3'd St – Kenet Adamson – Install fence.

An application was submitted to build a 6' high privacy fence around two sides of the property with dog-eared, pressure treated wood with a gate leading onto Battery Park. Mr. Adamson explained the proposed project. Mr. Bergstrom confirmed that there is room for the fence between the two staircases.

A motion to approve the application as submitted in terms of design, dimension, layout, scale, and materials was made by Mr. Westman. The motion was seconded by Ms. Doak and was unanimously passed.

42 The Strand – Historical Society of Delaware – Multiple exterior items.

An application was submitted to lift and replace all dry laid clay brick paths to remove large expanded joints that have developed due to natural settling; regrade the pathways to improve accessibility throughout the main garden parcel; remove steps and add a wall to the side of the patio; construct a new walkway and gathering space at the double-gate entrance along Second Street to improve visibility and visitorship from that side of the property; and to add a fence along a portion of the parcel boundary for Parcel 21-015.40-038 that will continue from the existing wall and return to the existing structure to hide from view a storage area.

Mr. Andrew Hayes, Senior Engineer & Landscape Architect, and Ms. Donna Schumpert, Landscape Architect, of Foresite Associates were present representing the Applicant. Ms. Schumpert introduced Mr. Ivan Henderson, Executive Director of the Historical Society of

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Delaware, Ms. Laura Earls, Director of the Georg Read II House & Gardens, and Ms. Anna Wik, Professional Landscape Architect.

Ms. Schumpert gave an in-depth and detailed presentation of all the work being proposed for the George Read House Gardens as described in a letter dated June 12, 2025, from Foresite Associates directed to Ms. Marika Levine, City Building & Code Secretary, an opinion letter dated March 12, 2025, from Ms. Gwenyth Davis, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer of the Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs to Ms. Wik (*copies to all stakeholders*) with concerns and recommendations, and recommendations from the City Architect, Ms. Leila Hamroun.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Schumpert and Ms. Wik responded to questions from the Commissioners. During discussion, it was noted that the project has not yet gone out for bid, and the timing of construction is as yet unknown; but it was hoped that work would be complete in late 2025 or early 2026. Ms. Schumpert also identified the trees that are being proposed for removal.

The Commissioners were all in favor of the proposals for the Gardens; noting only one concern regarding the material of the proposed awning. Ms. Hayward-Olivas recommended that the material of the awning be referred to Ms. Hamroun for review and possible Tier 1 approval.

A motion to approve the application as presented in terms of design, scale, materials, patterns, and massing with the condition that the material for the awning is submitted for approval as an appropriate material was made by Ms. Hayward-Olivas. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman and was unanimously passed.

New Business

Planning Commission Update

There was no update from the Planning Commission Liaison.

Signage in the Historic Commercial District

Ms. Hayward-Olivas recommended that discussion of the signage in the Historic Commercial District be postponed until the August meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Hayward-Olivas called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Ms. Hayward-Olivas to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westman. The motion was unanimously passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer