

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**Borough of West Chester, Pennsylvania**

**Minutes**

**July 31, 2025**

**7:00 pm – Room 232 - Borough Hall**

**PRESENT:** Carol Quigley-Chair, Joseph Martino-Vice Chair, Matthew Hazley,  
Marissa McCarthy, Daniel Ritchie, Michael Wallacavage, Philip Yocum  
Paul Edwards-Building Code Officer

**ABSENT:** Thomas Dougherty, Thomas Clark

**A. Applications:**

**1. 2025-22: 18 W. Market Street / Shannon K. McDonald  
- Law offices of Shannon K. McDonald**

*Proposed work:* Sign

**Findings;** The applicant, Shannon McDonald, was present to describe the proposed building sign revisions as follows:

- Modify the existing hanging wood sign by adding a new 22”Wx 10”H sign panel below the existing 22”Wx 14.5”H sign. The existing sign will be unchanged but may be repainted.
- The existing sign message is: “**Wade Law Offices,**” with 3 names listed below. The message on the new sign is: “**Law Offices of Shannon K. McDonald – est. 2011.**”
- The new sign panel and text design is stylistically similar and compatible with the original sign. It will hang from the bottom of the existing sign.
- The applicant plans to retain the existing metal sign bracket in its existing location.
- The sign ordinance requires 8-foot clearance to the sidewalk below. The existing sign clearance is 6-feet, the new sign clearance will be about 5-feet.

The HARB reviewed the application in detail. The design of the new sign was deemed to be appropriate. The discussion focused on the non-compliant height of the existing sign, a condition that will be worse with the new sign. An existing pent roof overhanging the first floor prevents raising even the existing sign to meet the 8-foot clearance. It was noted there are a number of similar small office signs in the borough that are also low. An existing raised brick step at the office entrance door restricts pedestrian cross-traffic below the sign. Additionally, a large, movable, potted plant currently sits below the existing sign to prevent pedestrians from walking into the sign. The installation of a permanent handrail at the existing brick step was suggested by Mr. Yocum as a way to restrict pedestrians. Ms. McDonald stated she is open that solution. Mr. Edwards noted the sidewalk is approximately 8-foot wide, so the sign and brick step do not encroach on the required 48-inch pedestrian pathway width.

Options for obtaining zoning approval for this condition were discussed. The HARB was generally supportive of the proposed sign, but zoning enforcement issues are beyond the HARB’s purview.

**Motion;** Brought by Carol Quigley to recommend Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application 2025-22 as submitted, with the following clarification:

1. It is understood that, due to existing site conditions, the proposed sign will not be in compliance the 8-foot sidewalk clearance height requirement. However, the HARB is supportive of the new sign due to its location below the existing pent roof, the existing step in front of the adjacent door restricting pedestrian cross-traffic, and the fact that the new sign will not encroach on the required 48-inch pedestrian sidewalk traffic pathway.

**Seconded;** Matthew Hazley

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously)

**2. 2025-23: 133 W. Market Street / Krista McKillop**

*Proposed work:* Exterior Renovation and Signs

**Findings;** The applicant’s representative, Wayne McKillop, was in attendance to present the project. The applicant is relocating her existing store from 16 S. Church Street to 133 W. Market Street. The proposed project was described as follows:

- Remove the existing retractable fabric awning.
- Remove the existing wall mounted sign and bracket above the pent roof.
- Install a new round 18”-Diameter projecting wall-mounted sign west of the storefront window.
- The message of the sign is “**Time by Khristy – Meaningful Jewelry**”
- Repaint the existing painted brick exterior wall area surrounding the first-floor storefront below the existing pent roof. Existing color is teal, new color is to be “Dover White.”
- No lighting for the sign is proposed or included in the application.

The HARB reviewed the application in detail and made the following comments:

- The HARB found the proposed work to be generally appropriate.
- The proposed sign is appropriate. Some members admired the existing sign and bracket being removed and expressed hoped it would find a new home locally.
- Brick wall painting is typically discouraged but this brick is already painted. Paint removal was seen as ideal, but HARB is not empowered to require paint removal.
- Some members expressed reservations about the proposed white color and preferred red. Other members felt white was appropriate. Paint color is reversable, and color selection is typically not specified by the HARB.

**Motion;** Brought by Matthew Hazley to recommend Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application 2025-23 as submitted.

**Seconded;** Philip Yocum

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously)

**3. 2025-24: 301 W. Market Street / Joe Tyrrell**

*Proposed work:* Signs

**Findings;** The applicant’s representative, Connor Smith of Elmark Signs, was present to describe the proposed building sign design. Mr. Smith described the project as follows:

- Replace an existing building mounted sign beside the south main entrance door with a new 14”Wx30”H acrylic, single-sided building mounted sign.
- Install a new 22”W x 18”H acrylic, double-sided hanging sign on an existing metal bracket above the new wall mounted sign beside the south main entrance door.

- Install a new 30”W x 25”H acrylic, double-sided hanging sign on an existing metal bracket at the corner of the building facing the Market Street and New Street intersection. This sign will also have a new scrolled metal hanging bracket installed upside-down at the bottom of the sign to prevent excessive swinging.
- All signs will be 6mm thick ACM sign panel with printed gloss laminated vinyl graphics.
- All three signs have the same upper and lower message panels – displayed on 5 total faces:
  - Upper panel message: **“TS Executive Abstract-Title Insurance-Greg Tyrrell-610-565-4340.**
  - Upper panel message: **“Pennsylvania Probate Law Firm-Michael Daiello Esq-610-565-4340.**

The HARB reviewed the application in detail with the following comments:

- The signage graphics are very plain, with an appearance similar to temporary real estate signs.
- The new signs are simple rectangles completely filled with dense text, giving an unattractive overall appearance.
- Three signs with five total face panels at one street corner (1 single-sided and 2 double-sided) were viewed as excessive and redundant.
- The existing wall mounted sign being replaced exhibits some sense of style with scrolled top and bottom edges. The new signs exhibit none of this design sensitivity.
- The smaller two-sided hanging sign located directly above the wall mounted sign (3 panels with identical messages) is seen as redundant.

**Motion;** Brought Carol Quigley to recommend Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application 2025-24 as submitted, with the following clarifications:

1. Delete the 18”Hx22”W hanging sign above the south facing entrance door.
2. Remove the existing south wall metal bracket and patch holes to match historic wall materials.
3. Approve the 14”Wx30”H wall mounted sign.
4. Approve the 25”Wx30”H hanging corner sign.
5. Fabricate the new upside-down bottom bracket for the large corner hanging sign to match the existing upper bracket in materials, dimensions, and design details. Wall anchors shall be mounted in the mortar joints, not the face brick.

**Seconded;** Daniel Ritchie

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously)

**4. 2025-25: 20 W. Market Street / Chris Mandeen**

*Proposed work:* Door & Window Replacement

**Findings;** The applicant’s representative, Shannon McDonald, was present to describe the project’s scope. Ms. McDonald described the project as follows:

- The overall project is to remove an existing rear exterior wood door/ transom; replace it with a new double hung wood window; and infill the lower section of the door opening with brick to match the historic exterior wall. This will create an office with two matching windows. Details as described below.
- Remove the existing historic exterior wood door and transom. The door is not used and is permanently closed. The lower door section is covered in drywall at the interior.

- Fabricate a new wood window to replicate the appearance of the building's existing historic double hung windows. New wood sill and trim will match the existing adjacent materials.
- Use available salvaged brick to infill the lower section of the door opening. New brick to be keyed into the adjacent wall.

The HARB reviewed the application in detail. This type of permanent alteration of historic fabric is typically discouraged and some members expressed reservations. Ms. Quigly pointed out this alteration is not very visible from the rear alley. Mr. Yocum expressed support for this proposal because the applicant has committed to very closely matching the building's adjacent historic windows. That means replicating the exact profiles, dimensions, and delicate details of the existing wood windows. The new storm window should also match the existing units. Functionally, the new window makes the building more useful.

**Motion;** Brought by Philip Yocum to recommend Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application 2025-25 as submitted with the following clarifications:

1. Only the single rear door and transom unit above shall be removed.
2. The new window shall be wood (not clad) and will replicate the exact exterior profiles, dimensions, and delicate details of the existing adjacent wood window south of the door. Windows may be single pane true-divided-lite or simulated-divided-lite with insulated glass.
3. New wood sills and trim shall be installed to match the existing adjacent window materials.
4. The lower section of the door opening shall be infilled with brick to match the existing adjacent exterior brick in dimension, color, texture, and finish. The new brickwork shall be toothed into the existing masonry wall. Mortar color, joint size and tooling style shall match the existing wall construction.

**Seconded;** Matthew Hazley

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously)

#### **5. 2025-20-Rev 1: 233 W. Gay Street / Brandywine Valley HVAC**

*Proposed work:* Exterior HVAC Equipment – Choir Mezzanine

**Findings;** Note: This project, proposing the installation of a new exterior HVAC condensing unit at the St. Agnes Church, was previously reviewed by the HARB on June 26, 2024, under the Application Number 2025-20. At that time, the HARB recommended approval of a COA with specified clarifications. Since that time, the applicant has revised the design to move the exterior condensing unit closer toward the front of the building and rout the piping and wiring connections through an opening in the exterior stone wall. The current Application Number 2025-20-Rev1 applies to the revised HVAC design presented at the July 31, 2025, HARB meeting. Three (3) revised design sketches with annotated photos were submitted at the meeting.

The project proposes the installation of a new exterior HVAC condensing unit to serve the choir mezzanine. Carol Quigley appeared on behalf of the applicant, Brandywine Heating and Air Conditioning, to present the revised project. Ms. Quigley described the final project as follows:

- Install one new exterior condensing unit on the west side of the St. Agnes Church Building. The revised design locates the unit closer to the south front of the building, fully concealed in vegetative screening.
- The condensing unit will be mounted at grade on a concrete pad.

- The revised design now specifies that the condensing unit's mechanical piping and electrical wiring will be routed from the building to the unit through a hole cored in the church's stone wall just above grade, directly behind the condensing unit. The pipes and wiring will also be concealed by the vegetative screening.
- A new evergreen shrubbery vegetative screen will be installed to fully conceal the condensing unit from public view.

The HARB reviewed the application in detail. The revised design clarified all previous questions. The HARB commented that the shrubbery must be tall and dense enough when first planted to completely conceal the HVAC unit and accessories. The HARB deemed the revised HVAC design for St. Agnes Church to be appropriate.

**Motion;** Brought Matthew Hazley to recommend Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application 2025-20-Rev 1 as submitted, with the following clarifications:

1. The approval is based on the three (3) revised design sketches with annotated photos that were submitted at the meeting.
2. The condensate and wiring connections shall be run through a small hole cored through the exterior stone wall immediately above grade.
3. The electrical disconnect switch shall be located within the condensing unit.
4. The shrubbery comprising the vegetative screen will be tall and dense enough when first planted to completely conceal the new HVAC unit and accessories.

**Seconded;** Michael Wallacavage

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously – Ms. Quigley recused herself from voting)

**B. Report from Planning Commission;** The Planning Commission liaison provided the following project updates:

1. No Report for July

**C. Approval of the Historic Courthouse/Chester County Visitors Center Sign;**

Carol Quigley reported that she as informed the during HARB's previous review of the new Chester County Visitors Center sign at the Historic Chester County Courthouse, the HARB approved the sign design which included solid stone vertical end posts. Ms. Quigley also reported that the Borough Zoning Officer denied the sign approval because the Borough Sign Ordinance prohibits the use of stone for signage. The granite end posts for the new sign were recommended by the HARB during the review process. Paul Edwards indicated a zoning variance may be required, with potential associated fees to be paid by the applicant, Chester County.

The HARB discussed the situation at the July meeting. The HARB members were not aware that the use of stone in signage projects was prohibited. There was puzzlement as to why the restriction of stone exists. Regardless, the HARB agreed unanimously that the solid stone end posts approved by the HARB for the new County Visitors Center sign, located at the borough's most iconic historic structure, is appropriate. The HARB unanimously requested that Carol Quigley, as the HARB Chair, write a memo to the Borough Office of Building Housing and Code Enforcement to endorse the HARB approved sign design and request any additional approval fees be waived for the county.

**D. Approval of the June 2025 meeting minutes**

**Motion;** Brought by Daniel Ritchie to recommend approval of the June 2025 meeting minutes.

**Seconded;** Carol Quigley

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously)

**E. Other Business;**

1. No other business.

**Motion to adjourn;** by Carol Quigley

**Seconded;** by Daniel Ritchie

**Passed;** Yes (Unanimously)

July 2025 HARB minutes submitted by: Philip Yocum