

ADDRESS: 3627 SPRING GARDEN ST

Proposal: Legalize alterations

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Catherine Gao

Applicant: Catherine Gao

History: 1894; H. E. Flower

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Gardiner Poth Historic District, Contributing, 8/13/2021

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, theodore.maust@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to legalize façade alterations made to the building at 3627 Spring Garden Street between April 2020 and December 2021 without permits or the Historical Commission’s approval. These alterations include significant changes to the mansard roof and front shed dormer, replacement of windows and the front door, and removal of decorative details. The Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a violation for the unpermitted and unapproved alterations at the Historical Commission’s request in September 2023.

Photographs from April 2020 show the property with its distinctive front roof elements intact, as well as the windows and doors that were present at time of the notice of proposed designation. Photographs from November of that year, however, show the front roof elements rebuilt in a different shape and the top floor windows along with molding running beneath them removed. Later images, from December 2021, show the windows and front door replaced. Although other work on the property was properly permitted and reviewed by the Historical Commission’s staff in February and March of 2020, none of these alterations to the front façade was permitted.

The property owner has indicated the willingness to correct the work to the roof but requests leniency to use more inexpensive materials. Ms. Gao has also agreed to replace the front door with something more like the previously existing door and has submitted a photo of the neighboring door at 3625 Spring Garden Street as a model.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Legalize exterior façade alterations completed without (or exceeding) permits including the rebuilding and resurfacing of front roof segments and replacement of doors and windows.
- Rebuild roof to emulate previous shape as possible while using more affordable materials such as shingles rather than tiles.
- Replace the front door with a more appropriate door.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - The rebuilding of the front roof with a different shape and different materials neither preserves the material nor the style of the historic structure.
 - The removal of molding below the replaced windows removes a distinctive feature of the façade.
- *Standard 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.

- o The new windows and door do not match the old in appearance or materials.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 6.



Figure 1: The subject property (seen here third from the left within the red box) is part of the Gardiner-Poth Historic District and has been under PHC jurisdiction since January 2020. Image from the Historic District nomination.

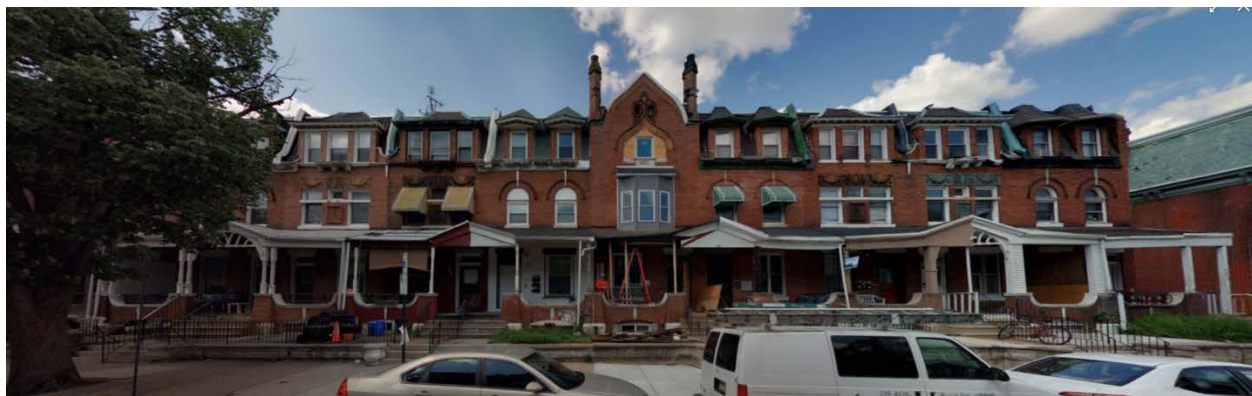


Figure 2: Gardiner-Poth Historic District. The subject property can be seen just to the right of the tree. Image from historic district nomination.



Figure 3: 3627 Spring Garden St in April 2020, via Cyclomedia.



Figure 4: 3627 Spring Garden St in December 2021, via Cyclomedia.

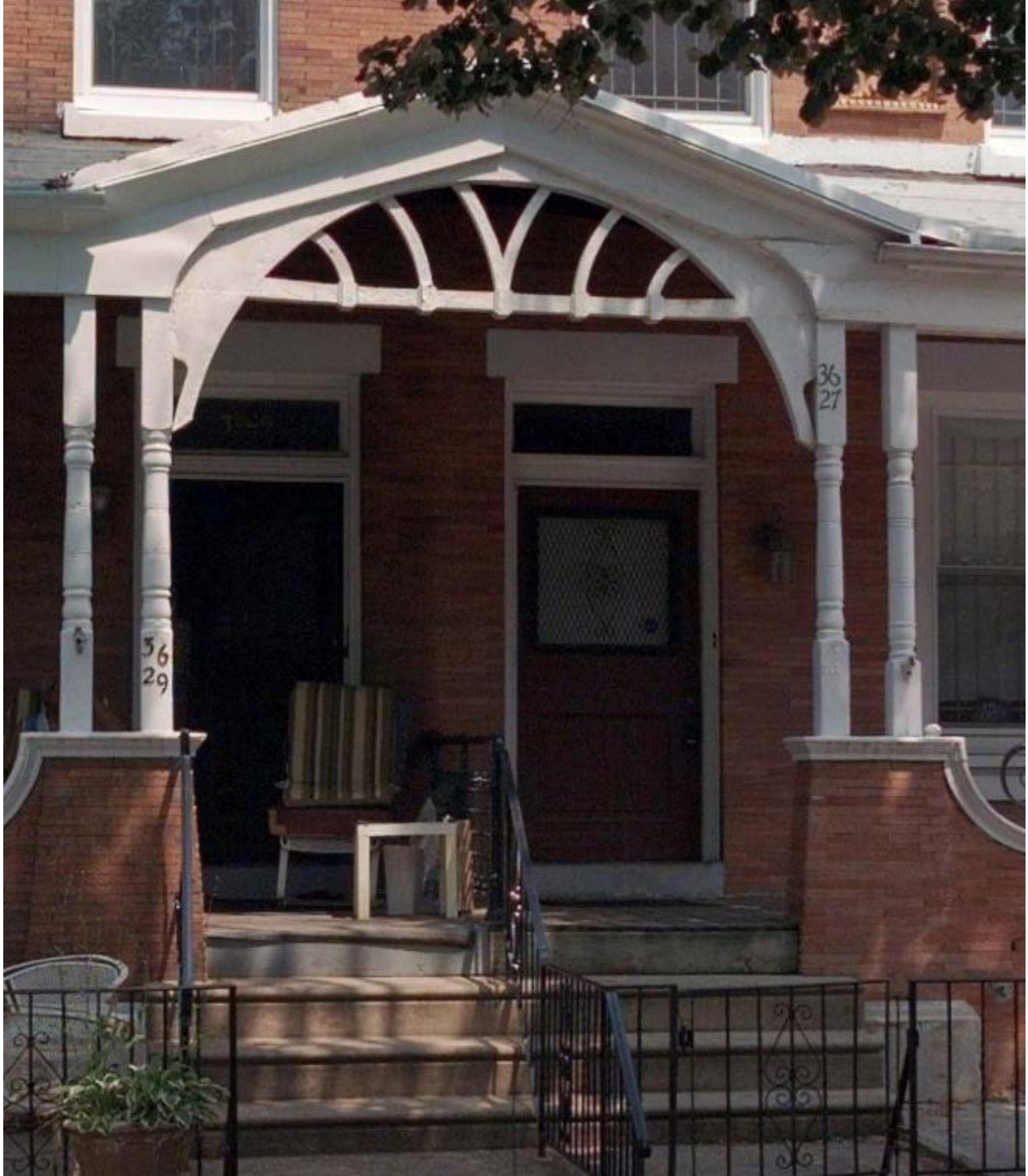


Figure 5: Door of 3627 Spring Garden (right) before unpermitted work.



Figure 6: Door of 3625 Spring Garden, proposed as a replacement front door.

Submission for the October meeting of the Architectural Committee (subsequently withdrawn)

Theodore Maust

From: Catherine Gao <catherinemgao@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 3:52 PM
To: Theodore Maust
Cc: Catherine Gao
Subject: Application to Legalize Work Done Pursuant to the Violation Notice

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Hi Ted,

I'm submitting the statement below to apply to legalize the work done on my property. I would like to join the next public meeting on October 16, 2023.

Address: 3627 Spring Garden St Philadelphia PA
Owner: Catherine Gao
Email: catherinemgao@yahoo.com
Phone: 929-299-8997

When the house was purchased, the seller disclosed the roof was new in 2018. However, when we started performing the whole house demolition in January 2020, we found that the roof and windows had sustained severe water and structural damage that had to be remediated immediately.

The crew removed top floor ceiling and discovered a piece of broken joist caused by water leak from the facade area. When the crew traced water leaks, they also found planks holding the facade were rotten and many clay tiles were misplaced or broken. The structure collapsed when crew tried to perform a repair. A rebuild was carried out right away to avoid further water damage from upcoming rainstorm. A rebuilt facade had shingles best matched to original clay tiles. All front windows were replaced about 20 years ago with white vinyl double pin windows. All front windows were replaced with same color and style white aluminum windows.

The front door sagged and was damaged when project started in early 2020. The crew tried to fix the damage and sagging but the door was irreparable that we had to replace it with a new steel frame exterior door. Many of our neighbors had replaced their front door with similar look/material. Examples attached for your review.

I thought the contractor had handled everything according to code, as I didn't hear anything from the Commission until now. I had fired the original contractor early this year, and hired a new one. We would like to request to legalize the work that had been done. We are in the final phase of completing the renovation project. This violation will hold up my ability to apply for final inspection. We will do everything we can to work with the Commission's requirements.

I will provide photos in a separate email.

Supplement for the November meeting of the Architectural Committee

Theodore Maust

From: Catherine Gao <catherinemgao@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 3:20 PM
To: Theodore Maust
Subject: Re: 3627 Spring Garden St - Advice
Attachments: IMG_0131.png; IMG_0119.jpeg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Hi Ted,

I'm so sorry for my confusion. I tried calling but got your voicemail instead. Can you please include the following and the photos with my application? Can you please edit where you think maybe more detail is needed for the commissions approval?

I will work with the commission to restore the look of the roof as much as possible. Due to financial difficulties, I would appreciate the commission consider a more affordable option, and provide pointers as to where to source the material acceptable to the commission. Russell Roofing mentioned there are shingles or other composite material that are more affordable that could be used. I'm attaching a photo of my neighbor's roof facade for your consideration. My old contractor has agreed to help me with the work if the commission gives me the go ahead. If this look is not acceptable to the commission, will the commission please provide specs for look and material that will be acceptable?

I will also change the door so it fills the door frame and roughly matches the old door look with a single panel on the bottom and a window on the top. A photo of my neighbor's door that more or less fits the profile is also attached for commission's consideration. If it's not acceptable, will the commission please provide the acceptable specs and where to source the door? I will do my best to implement.



Neighboring Roof at
3625 Spring Garden
Proposed as Model
for Roof Rebuild



Neighboring Door at
3625 Spring Garden St
Proposed as Model for
New Door

**Previous
Conditions at 3627
Spring Garden St
(Submitted by Applicant)**



bright MLS

2 OF 32

AA

redfin.com



**Current Conditions
at 3627 Spring
Garden St
(Submitted by Applicant)**



36
27

Current Conditions



Current Conditions

**Conditions at Nearby
Properties
(Submitted by Applicant)**



Per email from applicant, 3621 Spring Garden has had a front door replacement.

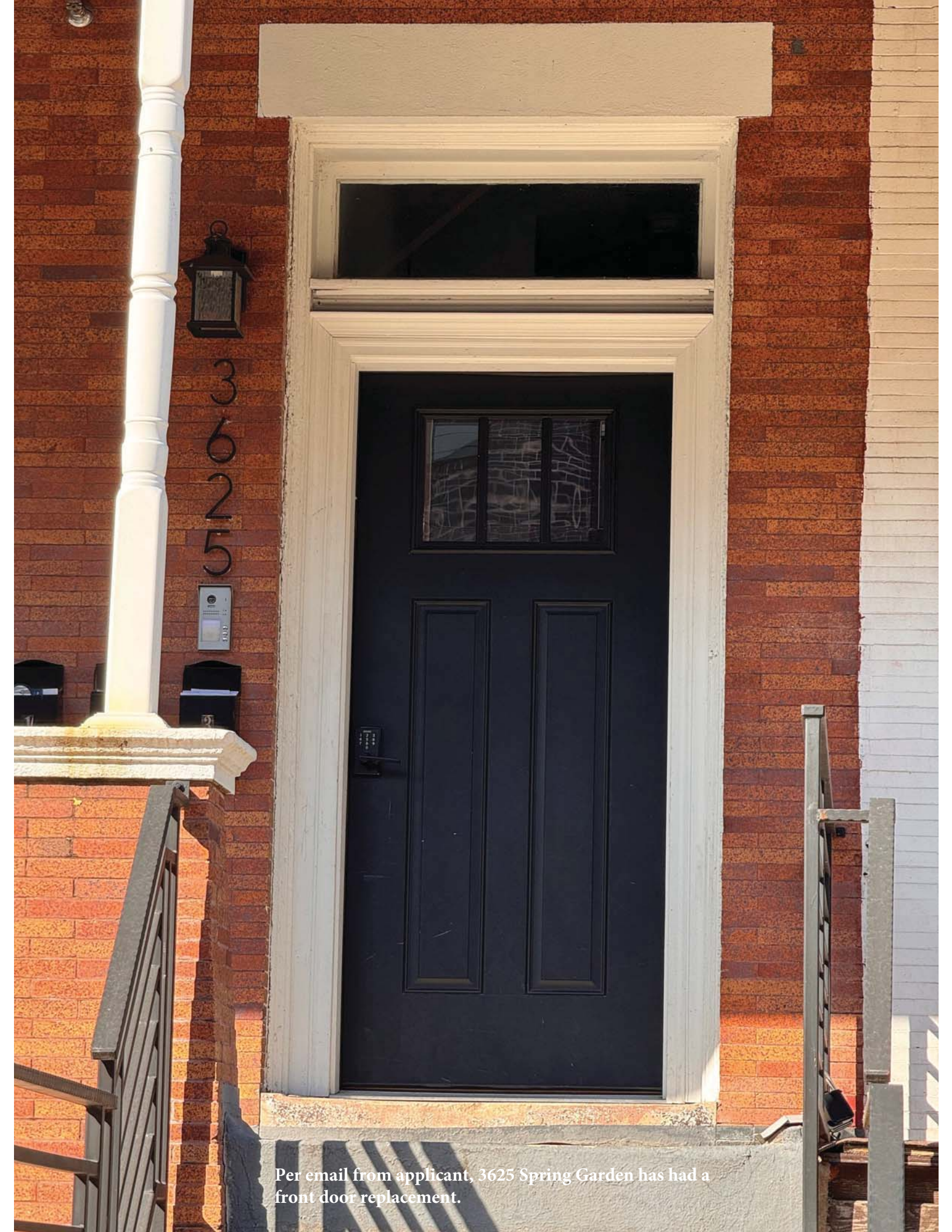


Per email from applicant, 3621 Spring Garden has had a window bay replacement and door replacement (next page).

A photograph of a dark red door set in a brick wall. The door has a decorative window with a diamond pattern. The address number '3621' is mounted above the door. A white pillar is on the left, and a red bicycle is on the right.

3621

Per email from applicant, 3621 Spring Garden has had a window bay replacement and door replacement (previous page).



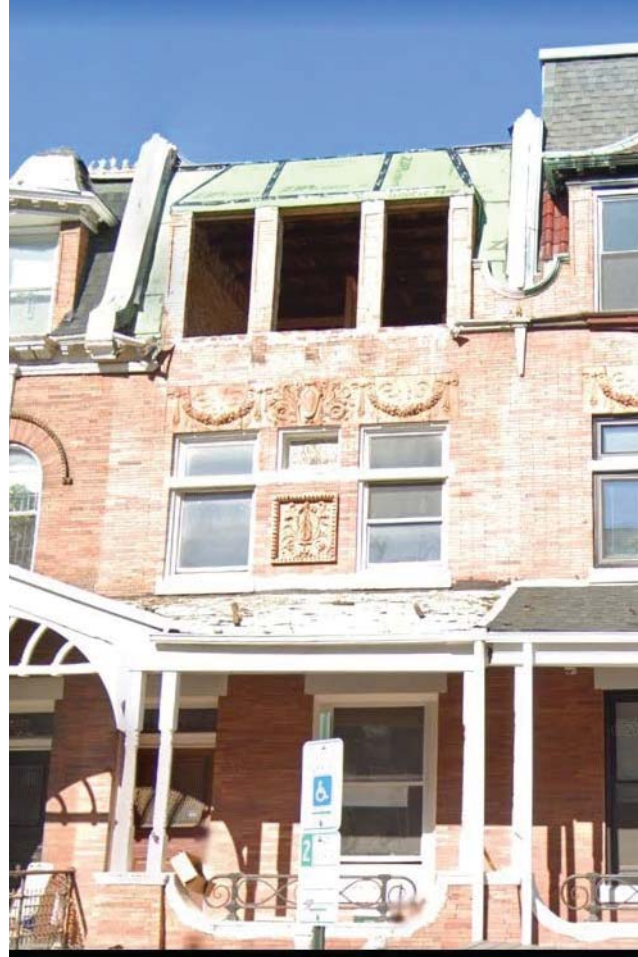
Per email from applicant, 3625 Spring Garden has had a front door replacement.

Timeline of Work

(Compiled by PHC Staff)



April 2020
Cyclomedia



November 2020
Google Maps



December 2021
Cyclomedia