

**REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**23 JANUARY 2007
CITY HALL ROOM 578
9:30 A.M.**

PRESENT

Vincent Rivera, AIA, Chair
Rudy D'Alessandro
Daniel McCoubrey, AIA
Suzanne Pentz
Robert Thomas, AIA
Daniela Voith, AIA

Jonathan Farnham, Acting Historic Preservation Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Specialist
Erin Cote, Historic Preservation Planner
Rebecca Sell, Historic Preservation Planner
Karen Gonski, Administrative Technician

ALSO PRESENT

Richard Thom, R.W. Thom, AIA
Tuong Huynh, Partridge Architects
Marc Scott, Tabu Salon
Mitchell Harding
Anthony Frantianne
Lydia Evans, Stuart Rosenberg Architects
Michael Bufalino, Stuart Rosenberg Architects

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rivera called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Pentz and Voith and Messrs. Levy, McCoubrey, and Thomas joined him on the Committee.

601 WALNUT STREET, CURTIS BUILDING

Owner: Joe Grasso
Applicant: Tuong Huynh
History: 1910-14, Edgar Seeler, architect
designated 3/7/1974 and significant in Society Hill Historic District, 3/10/1999
Project: Cut down window, install doors and steps at sidewalk level (In Concept)

OVERVIEW: This application in concept proposes to add an entranceway with steps to the 7th Street elevation of the Curtis Building. The location of the proposed entrance is three bays north of the main entrance along that facade. The applicant proposes to remove the existing double-hung windows and to cut the marble sill down to the granite base of the building. The doors would be bronze and would follow the pane pattern of the windows around them. The application proposes to construct stairs leading up to the

new opening. The stairs would match the granite base of the building. The alteration would significantly detract from the symmetry of this grand façade.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron introduced the proposal to the Committee. Architect Tuong Huynh represented the application.

Mr. Baron suggested that the new entrance be located on the secondary façade on Sansom Street, not the primary façade on 7th Street. Mr. Huynh stated that there is already a service entrance at that location.

Ms. Voith asked why the restaurant cannot be accessed through the main 7th Street entrance, which is directly adjacent to and leads to the restaurant space. Mr. Huynh explained that the much of the building including the 7th Street entrance is closed on the weekends. Ms. Voith suggested that a solution should be sought with the landlord. The main entrance should be used; the façade should not be significantly altered simply because an entrance is locked at some times. Mr. Huynh replied that the proposed entrance would also give the restaurant more of an identity on the street. Mr. Thomas suggested that the restaurant's advertising and identity goals could be achieved in other ways, for example with signs in the windows.

Mr. Thomas noted that the proposed entrance would not meet ADA requirements. He asked how disabled patrons would enter the restaurant. Mr. Huynh explained that there is an accessible entrance that is open at all times. Mr. Thomas asked why it could not be used as the entrance when the main 7th Street entrance is closed. He added that any new main entrance should be accessible; he suggested that the proposed entrance could not be rendered accessible easily. Ms. Voith noted other problems with the proposal in addition to the loss and inappropriate alteration of historic fabric; it would encroach on the sidewalk and may need to be covered to meet the building code.

Mr. Thomas stated that he cannot support the proposal. It does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and is not accessible. Mr. McCoubrey agreed.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

209 CUTHBERT STREET, A.K.A. 56 – 60 N. 2ND STREET

Owner: 806 Capital Group, Leo Addamondo, principal

Applicant: Richard Thom AIA

History: 56–60 N. 2nd Street, 1836

new façade and addition for Tuttleman Brothers & Faggen, 1900-01, Thomas Stephen, architect

individually designated; also contributing in Old City Historic District 12/12/2003

Project: Exterior masonry repairs, alterations to basement windows and fire-escape, new grading and installation of roof deck

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to rehabilitate the many facades of this building. All masonry facades would be repaired with spot pointing and selective brick replacement; also the fascia and drip edge around the entire building would be repaired

or replaced. Several changes are proposed to the façade labeled “E” along 2nd Street. The applicant proposes to modify the fire escape openings to create balconies. The opening size would not be modified; but an existing pipe railing would be removed and a new picket railing would be installed behind the existing historic sill. The wells at the basement windows would be modified. They currently sit at grade level and the applicant proposes to install a 6” concrete curb face. This installation would require cutting down the metal grates in front of the basement windows to accommodate the new curb face. The main entrance along this elevation would be replaced in kind and the transom above it re-glazed. At the rear of the property, facing Little Boys Way, the applicant proposes to replace a non-historic storefront system in kind. This area would also be completely repaved to create four parking spaces. The parking area work would involve enlarging a retaining wall and demolishing the remnant of a brick wall along the north property line. The plan shows an existing concrete apron encroaching onto Little Boy’s Way. The applicant proposes to remove cobblestones from the existing parking area and repave the area in concrete. Finally, a roof deck is proposed for the main roof of the building. The roof deck would be accessed from an existing penthouse stair house and it would be set back from all major elevations. However, it may have some visibility.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the windows curbs are installed inside the grates without altering them; the flashing is brown, not white; all historic paving is retained and reused; brick from the wall remnant is salvaged and reused during repairs; and a mock-up verifies that the deck will not be visible from the public right-of-way; with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the proposal to the Committee. Architect Richard Thom represented the application.

Mr. Thom explained that this building was very poorly and cheaply rehabilitated with federal tax credits in the 1980s. He stated that he has already received approvals for replacing the windows, restoring the masonry, and repairing the cast iron. He explained that outdoor space is desirable for the marketing of condominiums. Therefore, he is proposing a roof deck. He observed that the proposed deck probably would not be visible, but he offered to erect a mock-up and revise the design if it proved visible from the public right-of-way. He noted that the specification of white aluminum flashing on the plans was a clerical error; he would revise it to an appropriate material. Mr. Thom stated that he plans to demolish a remnant of a brick wall at the rear of the complex. It is deteriorating and unsafe.

Mr. Thom addressed the paving work at the rear, which faces Little Boys Way. He stated that during the rehabilitation 20 years ago, historic-looking paving was added to mimic the nearby historic paving on Little Boys Way. He offered to work with the staff to differentiate the historic from non-historic and install his new paving appropriately. He would like to create four parking pads and replace the worn walkway. He will also clean up the rear area, removing the rotting railroad ties and rebuilding the retaining wall of the rear areaway. Ms. Voith asked if four parking places were enough for the forty condominium units. Mr. Thom assured her that he would comply with the parking requirements. Mr. Baron stated that the staff must work very closely with Mr. Thom to determine which sections of paving are historic and which are not. He proposed that some of the cobblestones used in the landscaping at the complex may have been salvaged from Little Boys Way. If they are historic or a good match for the historic cobblestone, they should be reused to repave that portion of the street that has been

paved in concrete. Ms. Voith asked if the use of Little Boys Way to access parking was acceptable. Mr. Thom replied that several property owners along N. 2nd Street already have parking areas off Little Boys Way.

Mr. Baron commented that the replacement of the non-historic aluminum and glass system in kind would appear to meet the Standards because the opening is non-historic.

Mr. Thomas asked about the curbs proposed for the basement windows. Mr. Thom explained that water runs off the street into the wells and into the basement, which houses mechanical equipment and a storage area. He explained that the basement windows are rotting because of the wet conditions. Mr. Baron suggested modifying Mr. Thom's design for the curbs, either setting the curbs back into the window opening behind the grates or constructing them of brick. Ms. Voith and Mr. Thomas agreed with Mr. Thom that Mr. Baron's suggestions would not be satisfactory. They agreed that Mr. Thom's solution was the best, provided the concrete was not white, but was darker in color.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, provided the flashing is brown, not white; all historic paving is retained and reused; brick from the wall remnant is salvaged and reused during repairs; and a mock-up verifies that the deck will not be visible from the public right-of-way; with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

Ms. Voith excused herself from the meeting.

313 ARCH STREET

Owner: Normandy/806 S.A.R.

Applicant: Richard W. Thom

History: c. 1895, designated 4/12/1979 and significant in the district 12/12/2003

Project: Remove double-hung windows, install doors, alter balcony, relocate mechanical equipment

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove five existing windows on the second floor of the rear of the building, and install casements and transoms with simulated-divided lights. This application also proposes to alter the fire escape landing to create a balcony. This application also proposes to relocate the existing condensers below the fire escape landing supported by a steel support frame and steel plate deck. No information was provided on the attachment to the wall.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the alterations to the fire escape including the relocation of the mechanical equipment, but denial of the proposed doors and windows, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal. Architect Richard Thom represented the application.

Mr. Thom stated that he sought to create some outdoor balcony space for this building, which is being converted to condominiums. He reported that all proposed changes would

take place at the back of this building, which is barely visible from Cherry Street down a long alley.

Mr. Baron stated that the historic windows would have been 9-over-9 windows; the new doors should look like the historic windows. Mr. Thom stated that the proposed doors are too large to be single-leaf units and that they would take up too much space swinging inside the room; they want them to be double-leaf. Mr. Thomas asked if a tripartite window that opened upward to allow passage in and out would suffice. Mr. Thom stated that he had considered that option, but thought that people would hit their heads. Mr. Rivera stated that he deemed the proposed doors acceptable. Mr. Thomas agreed. Mr. McCoubrey clarified that they were recommending approval of single-light, double-leaf doors with six-light transoms.

Mr. McCoubrey asked if the mechanical equipment could be relocated to the roof or some other less visible location. Mr. Thom stated that the balcony was the best location.

Ms. Pentz asked about the structural support for the mechanical equipment. Mr. Thom explained that the brackets would attach to the brick wall. Mr. Rivera suggested suspending the mechanical units from the balcony to avoid attaching brackets to the wall. Mr. Thom agreed to consider this option. Ms. Pentz deemed it an appropriate solution.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal with single-light double-leaf doors and six-light transoms, provided the mechanical equipment is suspended from the balcony, not attached to the wall, with the staff to review details.

2041 APPLETREE STREET

Owner/Applicant: Mitchell Harding

History: c. 1850s, designated 4/28/1970

Project: Construct roof deck on main roof

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a roof deck on the main roof of the building. The roof deck would be accessed by stairs from a third-story rear window, which appears to be a door in the plans. However, no details are provided for this proposed rear window or door. The stairs would be supported by a structure constructed on the one-story rear ell and the second-story bay.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal to the Committee. Owner Mitchell Harding represented the application.

Mr. Harding stated that he is seeking to add outdoor space to his residence; he has none now. He asserted that neither the deck nor the stairs would be visible from any public right-of-way. He explained that a door would be added between the two rear windows at the third floor to access the stair to the deck. He noted that one of his neighbors has a very similar deck with stair that was approved by the Commission in 2000.

Mr. Thomas inquired about the rear stair structure, which he categorized as very large. Mr. Harding replied that the structure is large because, although it runs from the third floor to the roof, it must extend down to the first-floor roof of the rear addition, which houses the kitchen. The second-floor addition, which houses a walk-in closet, is not able to carry the weight of the stair. He noted that the stair is very similar to the one approved for his neighbor. The Committee examined the approved plans for the deck at 2033 Appletree Street, which is very similar to the deck now proposed. However, the Committee noted that the stair is much less bulky and complicated at 2033. Mr. Thomas alerted the owner that his proposal may not meet fire code and zoning requirements. He asked if the stair could be placed inside. Mr. Harding stated that he could not sacrifice the floor space that the stair would occupy inside.

Mr. Farnham explained the staff's recommendation. He stated that the staff had recommended denial because the Commission has an unwritten policy against decks on the main blocks of rowhouses. He stated that the Commission may not enforce that policy in this case because there is no rear ell on which to place a deck. He asserted that this deck does, in fact, meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which allows for "inconspicuous" deck additions. He contended that this deck and stair would not be visible from any public right-of-way. Mr. Thomas agreed that the deck satisfies the Standards, owing to its lack of visibility. However, he objected to the stair, which he deemed too obtrusive. He suggested a less bulky circular stair. Messrs. Rivera McCoubrey agreed.

Mr. Harding stated that he would withdraw this application and submit an updated application with a revised stair at a later date.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial.

37-39 S. 3RD STREET

Owner: Brandywine Management

Applicant: Marc Scott

History: 1855, significant in the Old City Historic District

Project: Legalization of exterior sign installation.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to legalize the installation of four projecting non-illuminated brushed aluminum signs mounted to the exterior first-story façade. The 9.44 square-foot signs are bolted with eight screws to the granite storefront piers between the arched wood transoms. The building had preexisting anchor holes on the piers and two arches at the time of designation, but these were not utilized. Attached to the cornice are five lighting fixtures to illuminate the signage. The application does not address the light fixtures and wiring, but they are part of the signage project. The signs and lighting were installed without Commission approval or permits.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9

DISCUSSION: Ms. Sell presented the proposal to the Committee. Marc Scott represented the application.

Mr. Scott reported that the signs were installed approximately two years ago. He explained that the sign installer claimed at that time that he had obtained all requisite approvals. Mr. Scott stated that he could not have utilized the existing holes in the masonry. Ms. Pentz noted that, if the signs are removed, the holes will be revealed and require patching. The owner said that the signage was necessary for his business which people complained they could not find. He chose brushed aluminum to blend into the granite. Mr. Scott stated that he spent a large amount of money on the signs.

Mr. Levy stated that four signs were too many; they overwhelm the important historic architecture. Mr. Scott explained that two of the doors are sealed. Even with large planters outside those doors, clients still attempt to open them. The signs direct clients to the appropriate doors.

Mr. Baron suggested that the Committee recommend the legalization of two signs and the removal of the other two. Mr. Rivera opined that one well-placed sign may suffice. He noted that the blandness of the color of the signs limited their visibility. Mr. Scott stated that the color was selected to blend with the granite material. He also stated that, as small business owners, the loss of the signs would force them to abandon their lease.

Messrs. McCoubrey and Levy suggested that one sign at the operable door would be sufficient to alert customers and indicate the entrance. Mr. Scott noted that the lighting provides security on a very dark portion of the street.

Mr. Baron stated that the patching of the holes will be important. Mr. Scott remarked that his architect could devise an appropriate patching plan. Mr. Scott reported that he alerted the building owner of the extant holes in the masonry. The owner informed him that it would not patch the holes. He explained to the Committee that his business could not bear the expense of the patching.

Mr. Scott informed the Committee that both he and his partner will be out of the country at the time of Commission meeting. Mr. Baron suggested that the applicant could request a continuance in writing.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the legalization as submitted, but approval of the legalization of the one sign at the entrance door and the lighting, provided all holes in the masonry storefront are patched, with the staff to review the patching details.

1646 WAVERLY PLACE, AKA 417 S. 17TH STREET

Owner: Stuart G. Rosenberg

Applicant: Andrew Eisenstein

History: c. 1840, remodeled c. 1970, contributing in the Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District

Project: Install a garage door, roof replacement, and bollard removal. Legalize open parking bay and curb cut.

OVERVIEW: In November 2004, a previous applicant submitted a similar proposal to legalize an open parking bay and curb cut and to install garage doors at this location. At the Architectural Committee Meeting, the applicant was unable to provide all of the necessary information regarding the size, structure, and plan of the garage. The

Committee unanimously recommended denial owing to incompleteness. The applicant withdrew the application.

A violation was issued for the illegal garage in December 2004. The violation has not been resolved.

The property is now under new ownership and the current applicant proposes to legalize the garage and curb cut, install a wood garage door, and replace the garage roof.

A photograph documents that this location was used as an open parking bay in the middle of the twentieth century. The opening was infilled prior to designation in 1995. The house at 417 S. 17th Street was built in the mid nineteenth century, but was dramatically remodeled in the 1970s with stuccoing and several major changes to window and door openings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Sell presented the proposal to the Committee. Michael Bufalino and Lydia Evans represented the application.

Mr. Bufalino requested the legalization of the work performed by the previous owners. He described the proposed garage doors as wood with true-divided-light windows.

Mr. Baron displayed a photograph documenting that this space was used as an open parking bay in the middle of the twentieth century. It was later closed in. The former owner of the building removed the wood infill and began parking in the former parking spot. Although the Commission did not approve this parking, it has been used as a parking place for approximately five years.

Anthony Frantianne, the owner of the adjacent property at 1644 Waverly, voiced his approval of the project.

Mr. Levy asked about the roof replacement. Mr. Bufalino explained that the existing joists have rotted and need replacement.

Mr. Rivera pointed out the absence of drainage from the roof. He suggested that the neighbor reroute his downspout, which currently empties onto the roof of this garage. Mr. Rivera also questioned the six-foot crack in the sidewalk, stating that it appeared dangerous and may pose a tripping hazard.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADJOURNMENT: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES

Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinct materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.