

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

**TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2017
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029
DAN MCCOUBREY, CHAIR**

PRESENT

Dan McCoubrey, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, Chair
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP
Rudy D'Alessandro
Nan Gutterman, FAIA
Suzanne Pentz
Amy Stein

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner I

ALSO PRESENT

Elisabeth Springer, Dames Design
Alex Sciacca, Dames Design
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Ian Cope, Cope-Linder Architects
Allan Rubin, Spring Garden
Susan Reel- Panish, Pella
Chris Tantillo, Tantillo Architecture
Billy Wang
Joe Ianoale
John Moore
Joseph Beller, Esq.
Marek Maj, MMB Contractors, Inc.
Paulina Madajewska, MMB Contractors, Inc.
John Moore III

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McCoubrey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mses. Gutterman, Stein and Pentz, and Messrs. Cluver and D'Alessandro joined him.

ADDRESS: 109 ELFRETHS ALY

Proposal: Demolish non-historic addition, construct addition, add front dormer, replace front door

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: John Moore III

Applicant: Alvin Holm, Alvin Holm AIA Architects

History: 1798, John Pechin House

Individual Designation: 6/26/1956

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Significant, 12/12/2003

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This in-concept application proposes to demolish a non-historic addition and construct a new addition at this house at the east end of Elfreth's Alley. The property is located at the northeast corner of N. Front Street and Elfreth's Alley. Front Street was relocated when I-95 was constructed. The side and rear of the property are highly visible from N. Front Street. The Historical Commission approved a small, one-story addition to the side of the piazza or rear ell in 1988. The Historical Commission approved the larger rear addition in 2005 and it was constructed in 2008. The house was abandoned at about the time of the completion of the larger addition and sat empty for many years, suffering from water infiltration, mold, and deterioration.

The proposed addition would replace the non-historic additions, would be three stories in height, and would be located to the side and rear of the piazza. The application proposes adding a third story to the historic two-story piazza that would extend onto the roof of the historic main block. The application claims that the piazza, the short rear ell, was historically three stories in height but was reduced to two stories at some point. The application provides an insurance survey as evidence that the piazza was three stories in height, but the survey is, in fact, for 115 Elfreth's Alley, not 109 Elfreth's Alley. It appears that the application misconstrues the survey because 115 Elfreth's Alley was known as No. 9 Elfreth's Alley before the street numbering system was updated after the 1854 consolidation of the city and county. The application wrongly assumes that No. 9 in the older system translates to 109 in the new street numbering system. It does not. Several facts in the survey confirm the mistake. The survey cited in the application was conducted for owner Ephraim Haines, who, in fact, owned 113 and 115, but never 109. The property at 109 was purchased by carpenter John Pechin in 1798 and the Pechin family retained ownership of it until 1891. The survey for No. 9 cited in the application notes a "three Story Brick House" to the east of No. 9 and a "9 feet wide alley" to the west. There has neither been a house to the east of 109, nor an alley to the west, but both conditions are satisfied by the property at 115. The claim that the piazza was originally three stories must be dismissed. No insurance survey is available for 109 Elfreth's Alley, but the 1916 Sanborn atlas does show the piazza to be two stories in height, not three. The Historical Commission reviewed proposals for the extant addition in 2004 and 2005. The 2004 application proposed constructing a third story on the two-story piazza. The Historical Commission rejected that proposal, owing to the addition on the eighteenth-century piazza portion of the building and advised the application to limit his addition to the rear of the property, behind the historic piazza. Complying with the advice, the applicant proposed a three-story rear addition behind the piazza with no addition on the piazza in 2005, which the Commission approved.

The proposed addition is very large, larger than the main block of the historic house. Moreover, it has a very large scale, owing to the heavy neo-Colonial ornamentation, which treads closely

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 14 NOVEMBER 2017

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to the line dividing history from a false sense of history. Constructing the addition, which would attach to the side and rear of the piazza, would require demolishing the side wall of the piazza, which is original eighteenth-century fabric.

The application also proposes adding a dormer to the front slope of the roof of the main block, facing Elfreth's Alley. The building did not historically have a front dormer and adding one would certainly violate Standard 3, the prohibition against creating a false sense of history. The application also proposes to replace the front door based on the cited insurance survey; however, the cited survey describes 115 Elfreth's Alley, not 109, and should not serve as a basis for any alterations to the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant Standards 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Engineer Elizabeth Springer, architect Alex Sciacca, and property owner John Moore III represented the application.

Ms. Springer explained that the architect could not be present because he is in the hospital having heart surgery. She stated that he designed the addition to bring back certain historic features but also to address some very poor conditions at the property. She said that the details of the architect's plan could be easily modified. Mr. McCoubrey reminded everyone that this is a review in concept. Ms. Springer said that she visited the property and found it in poor condition. To bolster her point that this house needed significant repairs, she noted that, many years ago, a report for the Elfreth's Alley Association had recommended that the Association sell this and other houses in its possession to private owners in order to help fund the repair of roofs and other structural deficiencies. Mr. D'Alessandro asked if the roof can be repaired. Ms. Pentz said that, even if the rafters are deficient, it should be possible to sister the rafters. Ms. Springer said that the problem is based on the wall that the roof bears on.

Mr. McCoubrey stated that the issue is that the plans show overbuilding the main roof, demolishing the roof of the ell as well as the main exposed wall. He said that the historic rear ell should be preserved in its current shape and size. Mr. Baron explained that the historic ell and its roof have survived even though the east wall has been raised several feet to change the original roof pitch. He pointed out how this is visible on the photograph of the side and rear walls.

Ms. Springer reported that the 2008 addition is in terrible condition and filled with mold. The Committee members clarified that they are not opposed to the demolition of the 2008 addition. Mr. Cluver said that there are three items that need to be addressed. The first is whether the Committee agrees with the staff assessment that the cited insurance survey is for the wrong property. The second question is whether the construction of a third story on the rear ell is acceptable. The third question is about the appropriateness of the rear addition. Mr. Moore said that he does not dispute the staff's findings, but observed that the survey was incorrectly included with the Historical Commission's materials for this property. He said that he is very concerned with the preservation of the property, but has faced difficulties. Shortly after he bought the house, there was a flood in the kitchen and his insurance company recommended demolition. He is trying to make the house work for himself, his wife, two children, and dog. Mr. McCoubrey said that this house has been the subject of several Historical Commission reviews in the past, which have established parameters for massing and the locations of

additions. Mr. Moore said that they have been working with Mr. Baron and that he has said that past decisions are not necessarily binding or guarantees of approvals. Mr. Baron clarified that he has told the architect that he would probably be held to the same standards regarding the massing and location of the addition, but that he always has the right to make a case for his specific proposal. Mr. McCoubrey said that he does not see any evidence being presented now that would override the Commission's previous recommendations that the ell should remain two stories and be preserved in its current form. Ms. Springer asked for more recommendations for the rear addition, specifically in terms of size. Ms. Gutterman said that the proposed addition is too large and the detailing does not fit in with Elfreth's Alley. She mentioned that the Juliette balconies and the rear bay seemed inappropriate. She pointed out that the building is visible from three sides. Mr. Moore said that, in doing the research, they learned that the building was historically landlocked and the rear ell could not be seen from the street. Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that this condition has now changed and that the Commission protects character defining features even if they are not visible such as rear roof slopes and ells. Mr. Moore asked if the Committee could suggest a design that would allow them to connect the front house with the rear addition without building on the rear ell. Mr. McCoubrey said that that is a design problem for his architect. Mr. Baron pointed out that the Commission previously denied a narrow passage on the roof of the rear ell to a proposed addition. The previous approved addition retained the half gable shape of the rear ell as it extended backward as was encouraged by the Commission. The addition proposed today with its rear bay does not comply with that massing. Mr. McCoubrey said that rear ells were always secondary to the main block. This proposal turns a little house into a manor house with the grandest portions at the rear competing with the main block. He said that the addition should be stripped down and made secondary to the main house. Mr. Moore said that it is actually a large house at 3000 square feet. He said that the front door has been changed if you look at the 1932 HABS drawing. The doorway was filled in to make it narrower in 1979. Mr. Baron explained that the doorway had been altered in the nineteenth century and that it was restored to its earliest design in 1979 to match the neighboring house.

Ms. Stein asked the applicants about the garden at the corner, which is currently accessible to the public. Mr. Moore said that a previous owner of the house purchased that piece of property from the Elfreth's Alley Association. Ms. Stein also asked about whether the stuccoed side wall is being rebuilt. The drawing mentions brick and the addition of belt courses. This was a former party wall that was never exposed. Ms. Springer said that the stucco is in questionable shape. She pointed out that the bricks might leak. They may also need more support. Mr. McCoubrey asked about the height of the proposed garden walls. Mr. Baron showed the photograph of the former house that faced Front Street and backed up against this house. Ms. Stein asked about the view shed to the ell. She said that she could recommend approval of a two-story addition that might block the view to the rear ell because it was originally hidden. Mr. McCoubrey and Ms. Pentz said that they thought that the ell should remain exposed to view from the street. Ms. Springer said that visitors do not view that side and she did not think that the Commission should protect that view. Mr. McCoubrey said that this is a most significant block from the eighteenth century and it deserves protection. He said that the applicants have a large area to build an addition behind the house without covering or hiding the rear ell. That alone makes this house more privileged than the other houses on the street. Mr. Cluver said that the fact that the side facade is now open is part of the evolution of the building. This evolution allows them to entertain the idea of an addition. He said that he would support adding a deck to the one-story side addition but that the side of the ell should remain exposed. He thought that the architect should propose a more modest historically based design. Mr. Moore showed a 1792 survey that

showed a former house at the side of this building. Mr. McCoubrey said that that does not mean that it could be rebuilt. He asked about the parking area and if it is part of the property. Mr. Moore said that it is part of the property. Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that the extra space on the rear allows the applicant to reduce the pressure on the front. Mr. Moore asked if he could build on that back area. The Committee members agreed that they would be open to a house at the rear that faced onto Front Street.

Mr. McCoubrey opened the floor for public comment, of which there was none.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10.

ADDRESS: 312-14 N 2ND ST AND 204 WOOD ST

Proposal: Demolish non-contributing building, construct 6-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Teresa Eck

Applicant: Jason Morris, 204 Wood St LLC

History: 1961

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Non-contributing, 12/12/2003

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish a non-contributing building and to construct a six-story building with a penthouse at the corner of 2nd and Wood Streets. The Historical Commission has full jurisdiction over the proposed new construction. The building would be clad in grey brick and feature a cast-stone base, large metal-paneled bays, and metal windows. A penthouse clad in metal paneling running the height of the rear elevation would access a roof deck enclosed by a parapet.

It is difficult to understand how the building would relate to the neighboring properties, as they do not appear to be accurately depicted in the drawings. Likewise, it is difficult to surmise from the drawings how the materials themselves would interact and connect.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the applicant submits renderings that demonstrate that the proposed development is compatible with the district, and provided the 2nd Street elevation is revised to be more in keeping with the district, particularly with the addition of fenestration; the breakthrough of the cornice line by the vertical ribbon window is eliminated; the projecting metal banding around the bay windows is eliminated; and the applicant provides materials colors and samples.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Developer Lee Brahın, architect Charles Kerr and consultant Phil Katz represented the application.

Ms. Stein said that she was struck by the diminutive height of the first floor. She asked about its height. The architect said that it is 10 feet 10 inches tall. Ms. Stein asked if it could be increased. She noted that the new townhouses to the south have steps. Mr. Kerr said that they are trying to provide all of the floors with sufficient ceiling heights and that the building as designed has reached its maximum height of 65 feet. The Committee members recommended that the first

floor should be redesigned with a greater floor-to-ceiling height, perhaps taking away height from the other floors and raising the cast-stone cladding on the outside. The Committee members requested photographs of the neighboring houses and a site plan. They asked about the height of the proposed building in comparison to the neighboring townhouses. Mr. Cluver asked if there were other tall buildings in close proximity. The applicants mentioned two buildings on N. 2nd Street. Mr. Baron said that the Commission has reviewed several tall buildings in the area, but some of them have only been subject to review-and-comment jurisdiction. He pointed out that there have been several tall buildings constructed in the district near the bridge and that this building is a kind of bookend in a block of newer buildings. Mr. Cluver asked how the height of this building compares to the neighboring townhouses. The applicants said this building is one-story taller counting the pilot house on the townhouses. The Committee members disagreed, suggesting that it seems that this building is two-stories taller. Mr. Baron urged the applicants to bring context photographs to the Commission meeting, saying that the context is significant to the review.

Mr. Cluver asked about the grey color of the brick. He asked for any precedent. The applicants mentioned the neighboring townhouses. Mr. Cluver pointed out that there is no precedent for grey brick in the older buildings of the district. Mr. McCoubrey asked about a balcony. The applicants said that they had removed that element from their design. He noted a vault in the sidewalk for the transformer. Mr. Baron asked if the Committee had any other recommendations for the first floor, for example regarding the sills and lintels on the windows. Mr. Cluver recommended raising the windows to create more privacy. The Committee members asked about the color of the spandrel panels. On their rendering the panels looked tan and on the sample board they look dark grey. The Committee members commented that this will make for a very dark building. They recommended using a lighter color metal for the metal portions. They noted that the townhouses had many lighter elements including the cream colored lintels and sills. Ms. Stein recommended omitting the vertical ribbon-like registers and substituting punched openings with larger windows, lintels, and sills.

Ms. Gutterman suggested a recommendation of approval with several caveats. The renderings should show the context. The first floor should be raised and made more prominent. Punched openings with light colored lintels and sills should be substituted for the ribbon-like registers. The HVAC equipment should be shown in a location that will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The first-floor bathroom window should be studied. The cornice should be continuous rather than broken. The staff should review the details. Mr. Cluver said that he did not feel comfortable recommending approval with all of these suggested changes. He said that the burden of proof needs to be on the applicant. He suggested a recommendation of denial, but with the suggestions for revisions that might allow the Commission to approve a revised application.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial for the application as submitted, but approval, with the staff to review details, with the following revisions:

- the renderings show the context,
- the first floor is raised and made more prominent,
- punched openings with light colored lintels and sills are substituted for the ribbon-like registers.
- the HVAC equipment is shown in a location that will not be visible from the public right of way,

- the first-floor bathroom window is studied, and
- the cornice is made continuous rather than broken.

ADDRESS: 2225-27 SPRING GARDEN ST

Proposal: Demolish non-contributing building, construct 4-story hotel

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 2225-27 Spring Garden Street LLC

Applicant: Paulina Madajewska, MMB Contractors, Inc.

History: 1957; Spring Garden Medical Arts Building

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Spring Garden Historic District, Non-contributing, 10/11/2000

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish a non-contributing building and construct a four-story hotel. The proposed building will occupy the same footprint as the existing building. The front of the proposed building will be clad in brick and will feature large window openings with small glass balconies. The highly-visible west side façade will be clad in fiber cement panels in mixed neutral colors. The staff asserts that the overall massing, scale, rhythm, and materials are appropriate for this location within the Spring Garden Historic District, but suggests that the brick façade return at the side elevation so that the façade appears to be less of a separate brick veneer.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Zoning attorney Joseph Beller, developers Marek Maj and Paulina Madajewska, and architect Ian Cope represented the application.

Mr. Cluver asked if the Registered Community Organization provided a letter of non-opposition. Mr. Cope responded that there is an agreement between the applicant and the Spring Garden Civic Association, and the project did receive a variance which was requested, provided the roof deck was removed. Ms. Gutterman asked about the balconies. Mr. Cope explained that it is a steel system, and the balusters are glass, attached to the window jambs. It is a singular unit with louvers for the air conditioning system built into it, with a piece of spandrel glass above. Ms. Pentz asked about the bay window on the neighboring property. Mr. Cope responded that it will remain, and they will take precautions to not disturb it. Ms. Stein asked about the rear alley. Mr. Cope responded that it is a public alley that the neighbors use. Ms. Stein questioned the appropriateness of paneling versus brick. Mr. Cope responded that the rears of many of the residential properties along the alley are clad in stucco. The hotel will be serviced exclusively from Spring Garden Street.

Ms. Stein asked about the suggestion that the brick façade return on the sides so that the façade does not look so thin. Mr. Cope responded that the design intent is to do something fairly contemporary and clean. The façade as proposed will be approximately six inches thick. There will be cast stone over concrete below it at the base. Mr. McCoubrey asked about the highly visible side wall. Mr. Cope responded that the parking lot does not belong to the hotel, and they cannot add fenestration to that side wall. Mr. McCoubrey agreed with the staff that the brick should return at the sides. Mr. Cluver disagreed, as the façade is not making any attempts to

look like a true brick façade, but rather it is a skin. Mr. Cope suggested a brick return of approximately sixteen inches. The Committee members agreed with the suggestion.

Mr. Cluver asked about context and how the proposed design relates to the historic district. Mr. Cope responded that this block is a hodgepodge. The Parkway House is across the street. The site is next to four vertical Victorian houses. To the west is a 1960s-era credit union. A gas station is at the far end of the block. Mr. Cluver agreed with the basic premise that the location of the building is rather context-less despite being in the historic district.

Mr. Cluver asked about the alternate north elevation shown on Page 9 of the drawings. Mr. Cope responded that the immediate neighbors had some concerns originally about the size of the window openings on the north wall, which faces the alley. A compromise was proposed via an alternate elevation, but either design will be acceptable. Mr. Cluver commented that the original design on Page 5 is more consistent with the overall design intent. Mr. Cope responded that he agrees, and it was proposed to appease neighbors, but they seem to be accepting at this point. Mr. McCoubrey suggested that a mullion be added to the spandrel glass so that it looks more window-like. Mr. Cope responded that it would be an easy change.

Ms. Stein asked if the brick proposed for the front façade is a similar color to that of the Parkway House across the street. Mr. Cope responded that he is proposing a larger format brick, but has not yet selected a final color. Ms. Stein asked why he chose a large-format brick. Mr. Cope responded that it is a contemporary brick and shows it is a new building. The dimensions are four inches by twelve inches, as opposed to an eight-inch brick. Mr. Cluver commented that the change in scale starts to distance itself from the historic district, when one combines the larger industrial openings, Juliet balconies, and large-format brick. He suggested that the line be drawn at the size of the brick, and that a standard-size brick be used.

Mr. D'Alessandro asked about the cornice. Mr. Cope responded that it is shown as a soldier course, using a tall brick. The parapet can be reconsidered if a standard brick is used. Ms. Gutterman asked if the base can be increased slightly in height because it becomes very narrow. Mr. Cope responded that it can be increased slightly in height.

Mr. McCoubrey asked for public comment, of which there was none.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, pursuant to Standard 9, with the following suggestions:

- the brick is reduced in size to a standard-sized brick;
- the north elevation is as shown on page five of the drawings, rather than the alternate design on page nine, with a mullion added to break up the larger vertical spandrel glass;
- the brick on the north elevation returns approximately sixteen inches on the sides; and
- the base is increased slightly in height.

ADDRESS: 2108 SANSOM ST

Proposal: Construct third-floor addition with pilot house and decks

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Joseph Ianoale and Amanda Korson

Applicant: Joseph Ianoale

History: 1870

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a third-story addition on a two-story former carriage house in the Rittenhouse-Fidler Historic District. The addition would be designed to mimic qualities of the modern neighboring structure at 2101-07 Walnut Street; the addition's brick cladding and window and door openings would resemble the cladding and fenestration of the adjacent structure. The application also proposes to construct a deck at the front of the addition, as well as a roof deck, pilot house, and pergola above the addition. The front deck would contain a five-foot setback, with the front façade of the addition set back an additional five feet.

At its 26 September 2017 meeting, the Architectural Committee reviewed a similar application for a third-story addition with decks at the property. In reviewing the previous application, the Committee commented that the addition and front deck were too conspicuous, owing to their height and minimal setback. The Committee also requested punched openings at the windows and doors. In the current application, the height of the addition has been greatly reduced by reconstructing much of the existing roof in order to support the load of the addition. The fenestration has also been modified to reflect the Committee's request for punched openings. However, the deck and addition maintain the same setback as shown in the previous application.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided a mock-up demonstrates that the addition will be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Chris Tantillo and Billy Wang and owner Joseph Ianoale represented the application.

Mr. Tantillo asserted that he incorporated the Architectural Committee's comments from a previous review into his new proposal. The first submission, he explained, attempted to keep the homeowner in the house during construction by retaining the existing roof, which raised the addition's height. Subsequent to the last Architectural Committee meeting, he continued, the design was revised to remove the steel framing and roof framing, which allowed the addition to sit lower. Mr. Tantillo also noted that he incorporated punched openings into the design. He argued that his thesis remains that the setback of the building is enough to minimize visibility from the public right-of-way. The tenor of the design, he added, is to pick up elements of the adjacent apartment building rather than mimic the carriage house.

Ms. Gutterman stated that the question remains the addition's visibility and how inconspicuous the addition and roof deck may be.

Ms. Keller noted that the application contains examples of additions and clarified that the example at 222 S. Van Pelt Street was not approved by the Commission, since it predates designation. The other two located at 247 and 249 S. Van Pelt Street, she added, were approved by the Commission.

Ms. Gutterman asserted that those precedents shown in the application do not have decks on top of the additions or, if they do, they are not visible. She reiterated her concern over the visibility of the stair enclosure, deck, and pergola on top of the addition from the public right-of-way. She questioned whether the project would be viable with approval of the addition but not the second roof deck.

Ms. Gutterman then asked if there is any way to push the addition back farther, if it is visible from the public right-of-way. Mr. Tantillo responded that the stair to the addition is centered over the existing stair, so it would be difficult to move the pilot house portion.

Mr. Cluver expressed hesitation over the proposal, because he thought the addition appears as two stories in height, owing to the roof deck. He argued that the way the design is presented gives the addition a larger feel. He observed that some of the concern results from the railing along the front parapet and the mass of the stair access. He commented that the proposal is well-designed, particularly the relation of the trellis to the mass of the stair access, the enclosure of the mechanical equipment, and the creation of the sitting areas. However, he argued that what he calls the “signs of life” never show up in renderings. He explained that those details are what animate the spaces and give them a presence that they would not otherwise have. He contended that, if the front portion of the roof deck were eliminated at the upper story, the proposal would be less problematic. Currently, he continued, the third story appears too close to the street and reiterated that the potential for animating that space is troubling.

Mr. Tantillo inquired whether the issue would be resolved if he were to pull back the roof deck to the pilot house. Mr. Cluver agreed that, if the guardrail were to be installed adjacent to the pilot house, the concern would be addressed. Mr. McCoubrey added that the revision would allow Mr. Tantillo to lower the parapet at the front façade and further reduce the addition’s height. Mr. Tantillo agreed that the parapet could be reduced and that the railing currently shown at the parapet could be removed if the front portion of the deck is eliminated. Mr. D’Alessandro requested clarification on whether the proposed wood decking would be removed from the front portion of the upper roof. Mr. Cluver clarified that the railing would extend from the north wall of the pilot house.

Mr. McCoubrey expressed appreciation to the applicant for incorporating the Committee’s previous recommendations, adding that those comments were integrated nicely into the new application. However, he acknowledged that the visibility of the proposed addition from the public right-of-way remains a concern.

Mr. Cluver stated that the setback of the third-story deck allows the feature to remain relatively inconspicuous, but reiterated that “signs of life” could intrude. He opined that, in the past, the Committee has limited deck furniture above guardrail height. Others disagreed.

Mr. McCoubrey opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline, provided:

- the railing at the roof deck of the addition is eliminated and the railing instead extends from the north wall of the pilot house;
- the parapet at the front of the addition is lowered 12 to 18 inches;
- no furnishings project above the height of the guardrail; and
- a mock-up demonstrates that the addition will be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way.

ADDRESS: 123 CHRISTIAN ST

Proposal: Construct window well at front façade

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Silvia Maia

Applicant: Emerson Maia, Impact Construction

History: 1830

Individual Designation: 6/24/1958

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to cut a window well in the front elevation of this individually-designated property, to replace glass-block basement windows with aluminum-clad simulated-divided lite windows, and to relocate the handrail from the right side of the front steps to the left.

The staff notes that the drawings feature numerous inaccuracies. They do not accurately depict a three-lite window in the non-altered basement opening; they feature a note regarding glass block windows at the first and second floors; and the first-floor plan shows a fence and gate around the front steps and proposed window well. These items should be revised for submission to the Historical Commission. The application should also clarify whether there is a curb proposed around the well, which appears in section, but not in elevation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the fence and gate shown in the first-floor plan are eliminated; the window openings are not widened; the grate and well surround are completely flush with the sidewalk, with no curb; the grate is simplified, not decorative, and no Plexiglas is added; and the basement windows appear as three-lite windows with 7/8-inch putty-slope muntins above grade.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee. No one represented the application.

Ms. Stein asked whether there was precedent for the approval of window wells on designated buildings. Ms. DiPasquale responded that the Historical Commission has approved a few window wells, where the windows look like the appropriate basement windows above grade and the grate is flush with the sidewalk. Ms. Stein opined that the means and methods of that intervention would be important, and that she does not believe that would be the case with the proposed drop-in fiberglass pre-fab window well system. Ms. Gutterman questioned the

proposed window material, and asked whether it was vinyl. Ms. DiPasquale responded that the application calls for aluminum-clad windows.

Ms. Gutterman questioned the purpose of the proposed window well, and whether it was for light or egress. Ms. DiPasquale responded that she believes it is for egress.

Ms. Stein expressed her concerns about the system proposed for the window well. She noted that it appears to be a pre-fab Bilco unit made of fiberglass or some other material that is inappropriate and which would be exposed at the sidewalk. She expressed concerns about the metal mesh covering with a decorative arched ornamental metal piece. She argued that the proposed unit is inappropriate overall for a historic property. She suggested that a custom masonry formwork with a flush metal grate would be more appropriate. She opined that aluminum clad windows on an individually-designated building are not appropriate. Ms. DiPasquale responded that the Historical Commission staff has approved aluminum-clad basement windows that otherwise replicate the appropriate historic appearance owing to potential issues with moisture at the basement level.

Ms. Pentz commented that she is not familiar with the proposed window well system and whether it is load-bearing to retain earth or any equipment that might drive over the grate. Mr. McCoubrey questioned the curb condition and whether the proposed system would be able to be concealed within the sidewalk. Ms. DiPasquale explained that the staff had noticed a curb on the sides of the well. Ms. Pentz observed that the well would drain into the building. Mr. Cluver stated that the applicants are proposing to install a new slab and underpin the basement walls, so the opportunity would be there to hard-pipe in the drain. Ms. Pentz mentioned that she had not realized there would be underpinning. Mr. Cluver replied that he is concerned that the underpinning notes do not address the methodology for the underpinning. Mr. D'Alessandro observed that the original foundation of the basement probably does not allow for sufficient head heights.

Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that the application shows the security bars on the basement windows as being face-mounted to the brick, and argued that they should be recessed into the window jambs. Mr. McCoubrey agreed with Ms. Stein that the means and methods of the installation of a window well are critical, and opined that the proposed system does not seem appropriate for an individually-designated building. He argued that more traditional construction methods and materials should be used.

Mr. D'Alessandro questioned the appearance of the proposed window well system, noting that it appears to be highly decorative and include plantings. Mr. Cluver replied that he believes the system is intended to be functional and decorative.

Mr. D'Alessandro argued that the proposed window well seems unnecessarily large. Mr. Cluver agreed, and suggested that the code minimum be the maximum size allowed by the Historical Commission. He stated that the concerns are not only the materials, but also the size. Mr. D'Alessandro suggested that a traditional vertical ladder, rather than the proposed tiered steps, could help reduce the size of the opening. Mr. Cluver opined that, based on the documentation provided, the proposed system does not seem to be inconspicuous, and is therefore inappropriate. He agreed with previous comments that the window well should be of more traditional masonry construction, and that it should be the code minimum size. Mr. D'Alessandro

noted that they understand the necessity for egress, but are not in favor of the proposed methods for achieving that egress.

Mr. Cluver asked if there is currently a window well. Ms. DiPasquale responded that there is not; there are two blocked-in window openings. Mr. Cluver asked whether it is just the location of the building that makes the Committee members and staff feel that this is an acceptable intervention. He questioned whether the Committee would feel the same way if the building was in a different part of the city, and opined that it would not. Mr. Cluver questioned whether there are other neighboring properties that have window wells, or whether it goes against the character of the building and street to install such a well. Ms. DiPasquale noted that where window wells have been approved in the past, they have appeared more like flush bulkhead doors. Ms. Stein noted that there are two Bilco doors on neighboring properties.

Mr. McCoubrey suggested that, if the Committee were to recommend approval of a window well, it be located at the other basement window in order to avoid impacting or undermining the marble steps to the front door. Mr. Cluver opined that he would prefer to see it tucked away by the stairs. Mr. McCoubrey respectfully disagreed, and opined that the stairs would need to be removed to dig a hole for the well. Mr. D'Alessandro noted that they probably could support the stairs and marble cheeks in place.

Ms. Gutterman noted that it appears that the property has a rear yard, and questioned why the window well was not proposed for the rear. Ms. DiPasquale responded that the cover letter indicates that "the enclosed rear yard does not provide direct access to an alley, street, or other as required." Ms. Gutterman replied that it would be preferable to see the egress opening at the rear.

Ms. Gutterman opined that the window well itself might be acceptable, but all of the elements for the proposed window well are inappropriate: the fact that it is a fiberglass/composite material, that it is not flush with the sidewalk, and the issue of where the grate is with the window. She also questioned whether it would be feasible to relocate the stair hand railing to the other side of the marble steps without causing damage to the historic materials of the building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of a window well, provided it is reduced in size, is of masonry construction, has no curb, and has a more conventional, flush grate; approval of the window security bars, provided they are installed on the window jambs, not the face brick; and approval of the relocation of the handrail, provided it is not attached to the marble of the stairs, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADJOURNMENT

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 11:08 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 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

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

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.

Roofs Guideline: Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.