

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

**TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
DAN MCCOUBREY, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The following Committee members joined him:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Dan McCoubrey, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, Chair	X		
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP	X		
Rudy D'Alessandro	X		
Justin Detwiler		X	
Nan Gutterman, FAIA	X		
Allison Lukachik	X		
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP		X	

The meeting was held remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner III
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner I
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons were present:

Allison Weiss, SoLo/Germantown
Andra Wooton
Andre Kim
Bill Long
Jake Blumgart
Carl Primavera
Chagai Bader
Dennis Carlisle
Emma Dooling
Eric Leighton
Glen Blumenfeld
Georgette Bartell

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV
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Gina Michaels
Greg Feld, KC Signs
Gregory Charnock, Stokes Architecture
Harvey Ostroff
Heather Ascher
Jaci Pollock
Janice Woodcock
Jay Ernst
Jay Farrell
J. Chang
Jenny Volbeda
Jeremy Hull
Jill Deuel
Jim Dragoni
Judith Robinson
Kathleen Wilson
Kathy Dowdell
Kazuri S.G.
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Kevin J. O'Neill, KJO Architecture
Larry Bendesky
Lee Elsey
Lori Bendesky
Melissa Loney
Meredith Ferleger
Michael Ascher
Michael Kouvaris, MBH
Michael Palermo, Smallville Restaurant Associates LLC
Monica Goodhart
Nancy Pontone
Paul Galetto
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
R. Breen
Ron Patterson, Esq., klehr Harrison
Spencer Pollock
Steve Stoughton, Mara Restoration
Susan Blumenfeld
Tim Shaaban, Astoban Investments
Trish Roque
Tuomi Forrest, Historic Germantown
William O'Brien, Esq., Manayunk Law Office
Yvonne Haskins, Esq.

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 1805-09 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Replace storefront; install signage and awnings

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1805 Retail Partners LP

Applicant: Michael Palermo, Smallville Restaurant Associates LLC

History: 1924; Presbyterian Ministers Fund for Life Insurance, Alison Building

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Heather Hendrickson, heather.hendrickson@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to convert the first and second-floor retail space at 1805-09 Walnut Street into a new restaurant. The building was constructed in two phases. A four-story building with a central entrance flanked by storefronts was constructed at 1805-07 Walnut Street in 1924. In 1950, the building was extended west onto the property at 1809 Walnut Street with an additional storefront and entrance. At the time, three stories were added to the top of the building. The original 1924 storefronts have been modified many times and the original central entrance was converted to a narrow storefront. Many of the storefront elements are aluminum replacements that roughly approximate the original elements. A close field inspection by the staff indicates that the only surviving original elements of the 1924 storefronts are the scalloped transom windows at the first and third bays, counting east to west. The remaining storefront elements are a patchwork of repairs and replacement pieces as well as a non-historic storefront system in the first bay.

The application proposes removing the existing storefronts and replacing them with wood and glass storefronts. Stone bases would be added to the storefronts. The new fenestration above would feature four rows of horizontally oriented glazing. The lower two rows of glass would be fluted, with clear glass above. At the top of the storefront openings, transoms would be replaced by large back-painted glass signage panels. Three retractable awnings are proposed across the three storefront openings and former entrance. Above the awnings, the application proposes a face-lit sign with individual letters mounted on a painted steel channel. At the second floor, the existing metal casement windows would be rebuilt and refurbished.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Remove existing metal and glass storefronts.
- Install wood and glass storefront.
- Install face-lit channel letter sign.
- Install retractable awnings.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *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 work will 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.*

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

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- *Storefront Guideline: Recommended: Designing and installing a new storefront when the historic storefront is completely missing or has been previously replaced by one that is incompatible. It may be an accurate restoration based on documentary and physical evidence, but only when the historic storefront to be replaced coexisted with the features currently on the building. Or, it may be a new design that is compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building.*
 - o Only two intact sections of the original storefronts remain, the scalloped transoms at the first and third bays. The rest of the storefronts are a patchwork of repair and replacement pieces. While a few grainy photographs are available, sufficient documentary and physical evidence does not exist to accurately recreate the missing storefronts. The original transoms could be removed and stored on site or documented with photographs and measured drawings. The proposed new storefronts are compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9 and Storefront Guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the two original transoms are removed and stored at the site or documented with photographs and measured drawings, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Storefront Guideline.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:03:35

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Hendrickson presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Attorney Ron Patterson, architect Gregory Charnock of Stokes Architecture + Design, and Michael Palermo of the Starr Restaurant Organization represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Gutterman inquired about the “Borromini” sign, noting that it appeared to be mounted directly to the limestone.
 - o Mr. Charnock responded that individual face-lit letters would be mounted onto one c-channel which would be mounted to the façade, preferably within the mortar joints. He noted that each letter would not be mounted individually to the façade, which would preserve the limestone.
- Ms. Gutterman asked about the electricity source for the sign.
 - o Mr. Charnock responded that there would be one conduit that enters through the façade through a channel behind the letters. He explained that there would be a chase in the c-channel which would power each individual letter so only one puncture through the façade would be necessary.
- Mr. Cluver asked how the letters would be lit, noting that the letters are described as both “lightbox letters” and “face-lit letters” in the application.
 - o Mr. Charnock explained they would have a translucent face material and be lit from the inside with a warm, low light, measuring around 2200 Kelvin, just above that of candlelight.
- Mr. Cluver asked about the height of the letters.
 - o Mr. Charnock stated the letters are approximately 16 inches tall.
- Mr. Cluver suggested that this would be the only face-lit sign on Rittenhouse Square. He opined that the nature of the lighting and the scale of the signage was not in keeping with the historic character of the building or the district.

- Ms. Gutterman asked if there was any consideration of putting the restaurant name on the awnings rather than installing signage as proposed.
 - o Mr. Charnock explained that the intention with the sign was to have it span the whole façade and present warmth and energy out into Rittenhouse Square.
- Mr. D'Alessandro objected to the removal of the storefront bronze work. He suggested further investigation into ways to retain it other than storing it in the basement.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked the Historical Commission's staff if the horizontal bars below the transoms were original.
 - o Mr. Farnham responded that he believes that the bar under the scalloped transoms in the first and third bays is original. He noted that of the two historic transoms, one was in fairly good condition and the other, furthest to the east, was in worse condition. He added that most of the storefront elements are replacement elements installed as the storefronts were reconfigured numerous times. He stated that the surviving storefronts are a patchwork of replacement pieces.
- Mr. McCoubrey questioned the use of a wooden storefront system as opposed to a thinner metal system, which would be more evocative of the historic storefront.
 - o Mr. Charnock explained the desire to translate the warmth of the interior design to the exterior. He stated he believed they would still be able to achieve a thin mullion with the wood system.
- Mr. Palermo asked if incorporating the historic transoms into the interior design of the restaurant would be more meaningful than storage in the basement.
 - o Mr. D'Alessandro opined that removing any aspect of the surviving storefront pieces would not comply with the Standards.
 - o Ms. Gutterman opined that, if the transoms were to be taken down, it would be better to have them displayed in the interior than stored away.
- Mr. Cluver questioned the height of the light fixtures.
 - o Mr. Charnock responded that they were roughly 18 inches tall.
 - o Mr. Cluver stated that on the plans they seemed to be around three feet tall and may be over-scaled in the drawings and result in more penetrations through the stone.
- Mr. Cluver questioned the type of stone proposed beneath the sidelights and storefront windows.
 - o Mr. Charnock responded that they would seek to match the limestone on the façade.
 - o Mr. Cluver opined that limestone might not be the best choice for these locations.
- Mr. Cluver noted the wooden window system frame interrupted the stone-to-stone connections. He suggested having the framework of the window rest on the stone instead of passing it.
- Ms. Gutterman asked if there were a way to lower the awnings so that the architecture would not be covered. She opined that an issue in this application was that the proposal was overwhelming to the historic storefront.
 - o Mr. Charnock commented that a challenge of this building was that the facades were originally conceived as different storefronts and with their proposed design they were attempting to unify them.
 - o Ms. Gutterman questioned whether that was necessary, suggesting each storefront window could have its own awning.

- o Mr. Charnock responded that each storefront window does have its own awning. However, the center storefront window and former entrance that was converted to a very narrow storefront share one awning.
- Mr. McCoubrey agreed that the scale of the light fixtures was too large, and the design of the storefront could incorporate extant elements to celebrate them rather than replace them.
- Mr. McCoubrey also questioned the use of the wood, believing that the design should evoke the thin metal profiles of the original historic storefront design. He opined that the awnings could be an opportunity to add color and warmth and identity.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The scale of the light fixtures and the backlit channel letters should be reduced.
- The awnings might be used for branding in place of the sign.
- The profiles of the proposed wood storefront system should be reconsidered to replicate the thin profile of the historic metal system more closely.
- The two surviving historic bronze transoms should be incorporated into the design.
- The placement of the awnings within the storefronts should be studied.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 2, owing to the proposed removal of the remnants of the historic storefronts.
- The application fails to satisfy Standard 5, owing to the proposed removal of the remnants of the historic storefronts.

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

ITEM: 1805-09 Walnut St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: Gutterman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5				2

ADDRESS: 1617 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Replace French door, alter entranceway and install security gate, add signage

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: GAM 1617 Walnut LLC

Applicant: Michael Kouvaris, MBH Architects

History: 1921; Seeburger & Rabenold, architects

Individual Designation: 9/11/2020

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install signage, replace a historic second-floor French door, and make significant changes to the non-historic first-floor entryway to 1617 Walnut Street. The first floor of the building has been modified several times, most recently in a style which echoes features of the second floor.

At the first floor, the application proposes to remove the existing non-historic central entry doors and install a new fully-glazed door and sidelight recessed in a new metal-clad vestibule. A metal panel with illuminated signage would be installed in front of the existing transom location. The housing for a metal roll-down gate would be installed behind the panel. The staff notes that the dimensions of the panel appear differently in section and elevation.

In the central bay of the second floor, the application proposes to replace the historic divided-light French door with plate glass windows. Only the historic transom bar would remain.

The application proposes a plaque sign, illuminated sign, and projecting sign at the first floor. The sign at the second floor would be located behind the glass and therefore not within the Historical Commission's jurisdiction.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Modify entryway and install roll-down security gate.
- Replace second-floor French door.
- Add signage.

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 shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
 - o The existing first-floor storefront windows and doors are not original to the building. The proposed system at the first floor does not remove historic materials that characterize the property.
 - o The application proposes to remove the character-defining divided-light French door in one of three openings at the second floor. This portion of the application fails to satisfy Standard 2.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the alterations at the first floor but denial of the alterations at the second floor, pursuant to Standard 2.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

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START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:29:50

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Michael Kouvaris and Andra Wooton of Nike represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cluver commented that the proposal includes several different kinds of signs. On a very symmetrical façade, he suggested that two plaque signs or two flag signs would be more appropriate than one of each.
- Ms. Gutterman asked for clarification about the security gate and suggested that it should be inside the entry door, not outside it.
 - o Mr. Kouvaris noted that the security gate is intended to prevent people using the alcove when the store is closed.
- Ms. Gutterman objected to the removal of the central window and door system at the second floor and its replacement with large pieces of glass.
- The Committee members discussed the previous alterations to the first floor and received clarification from Messrs. Maust and Farnham that the current storefront façade dates to 2011. The historic storefront looked nothing like the three-arched storefront façade that was installed in 2011.
- Ms. Gutterman asked if there were other options considered at the second floor.
 - o Mr. Kouvaris said that because the building is overshadowed by taller buildings, the design team saw the second floor as an opportunity to have a visual impact on the pedestrian view.
- Ms. Wooton with the Nike Designs Operations Team noted that the location of the security grille is positioned to make the front door meet ADA clearances and so the grille would have to move into the interior square footage. She also asked whether the Committee had suggestions for security measures that have been successfully employed in this area.
 - o Ms. Gutterman noted that, while many of the shops on Walnut Street have alcoves, in her experience, people sleeping in alcoves usually choose side streets rather than main thoroughfares.
- Mr. Cluver suggested that the “portal” design of the entry way, which builds down the doorway opening, is making the ADA compliance more complicated. He suggested that avoiding the portal may give greater flexibility to the designers.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia suggested that two nearby stores located at 1701 Walnut Street and 1700 Chestnut Street might provide good examples of security gates inside doors and thanked the applicants for their respect for the historic building.
- Bill Long suggested that security doors could be disguised to appear like historic French doors or to feature local artists’ work.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The first floor, as a construction of 2011, is considered non-historic and thus there is significant flexibility with the redesign of the ground-floor storefront.
- The second floor retains its original fenestration, which would be altered by the proposed project.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

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The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The proposed changes to the second floor fail to satisfy Standard 2.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 2.

ITEM: 1617 Walnut St					
MOTION: Denial					
MOVED BY: Gutterman					
SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5				2

ADDRESS: 3847 SPRING GARDEN ST

Proposal: Construct pilot house and roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: William Long and Mariia Alibekova

Applicant: William Long

History: 1869

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Powelton Village Historic District, Contributing, 11/10/2022

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a pilot house and roof deck on a two-story corner property in the Powelton Village Historic District. The roof deck railing would be set back five feet from both the Spring Garden and 39th Street elevations. The pilot house would be set back 15' 1 1/4" from Spring Garden Street and 7' 5 3/8" from 39th Street. The pilot house would be clad in vinyl siding and feature a bay window. At its front edge, the pilot house would be 9' 2 1/8" high from the surface of the roof.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct pilot house and roof deck.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

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

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

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- *Roofs Guideline* | Not Recommended: *Changing the configuration or shape of a roof by adding highly visible new features (such as dormer windows, vents, skylights, or a penthouse).*
 - o The proposed pilot house, with its overall scale and bay window, would be relatively visible from the public right-of-way and out of scale with the existing building.
 - o The staff suggests that a narrower pilot house with a sloped roof leading to a deck on the lower rear roof would be less conspicuous and may meet the Roofs Guideline, and that a mock-up should be conducted to demonstrate visibility.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial as proposed, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:02:00

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Owner Bill Long represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Lukachik asked for clarification about the extent of the project, citing the lack of a full elevation drawing in the application.
 - o Mr. Long noted that the submission included a cross-section of the pilot house from the roof surface.
- Mr. McCoubrey noted that the Committee's concerns focused on the visibility of the pilot house.
 - o Mr. Long contended that trees would obscure the view of the pilot house and indicated a willingness to choose a color for the pilot house to help it blend in.
- Ms. Gutterman asked whether the pilot house or roof deck could be relocated to the rear block of the house.
 - o Mr. Long answered that the stair location was limited by the configuration of the interior plan of the upper floor.
- Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the proposed location of the stairs might enable access to a roof deck located on the rear block.
 - o Mr. Long noted that the front roof requires replacement, enabling reinforcing it for a roof deck while addressing its condition.
- Ms. Gutterman expressed concern about the width and height of the proposed pilot house and noted that many pilot houses had sloped roofs following the slope of the stair. She further asked for details of the railing.
 - o Mr. Maust noted that the drawings included a reference to a 42" aluminum railing but no visual details.
 - o Mr. Long noted that the width of the pilot house is based on the swing of the door.
- Mr. Cluver suggested that stretching the pilot house back slightly might address the door swing and allow narrowing the structure. He further commented that the overhang of the roof accentuated the pilot house's width.
- Mr. McCoubrey noted that the Architectural Committee typically discourages locating roof decks on the front or main blocks of rowhouses with rear ells.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

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ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed pilot house would likely be significantly visible from the public right-of-way, though it is difficult to establish exactly how visible without elevation drawings or an on-site mock-up.
- The application would be improved if the pilot house were made smaller by narrowing its width and/or sloping the roof.
- Locating roof decks on rear ells is preferable to siting them on the main or front blocks of rowhouses.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The proposed pilot house will be too large and conspicuously visible from the public right-of-way, and thereby fails to satisfy Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

ITEM: 3847 Spring Garden St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Gutterman SECONDED BY: Cluver					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5				2

ADDRESS: 923 CHRISTIAN ST

Proposal: Install digital sign

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: St. Paul's Church, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Applicant: Greg Feld, KC Sign Company

History: 1847; St. Paul's Church; Reconstructed after fire, 1861

Individual Designation: 11/30/1971

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to replace the existing wall sign and message board on the front façade of St. Paul's Church at 923 Christian Street with a 36 inch by 72 inch digital LED message board.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

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SCOPE OF WORK:

- Remove existing sign.
- Install LED message board.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *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.*
 - o The proposed features of the LED message board are not compatible with the historic church building; therefore, the application does not meet Standard 9.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:22:25

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Sign company representative Greg Feld and Father Paul Galetto represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Feld briefly summarized the project, explaining that the application would remove the extant, older-style, changeable track message board and replace it with an LED sign. He noted that the existing sign has been in place for years and the church wishes to replace it with a new sign that will allow church members to update messages remotely rather than physically by hand.
 - o Father Galetto added that the new sign will be an upgrade for the church as they work to respond to the needs of the community.
- Mr. Cluver said that he understands the convenience of the proposed sign and that it is intended to be a similar size, but he asserted that LED signs produce an unpleasant glare. He commented that LED signs emit different light than backlit signs and are much more visually obtrusive to a neighborhood than the older-style signs.
- Ms. Lukachik pointed out that the proposed sign is larger than the current sign.
- Mr. McCoubrey raised the potential issue of the City's signage ordinance and said that the City strictly controls digital signage.
 - o Mr. Feld replied that they are aware of the zoning restrictions for digital signage. He said the church building is in an RSA-5 district and animated signs are not allowed without zoning relief. Mr. Feld added that they are prepared to pursue a variance if needed. Mr. Feld addressed the illumination concerns regarding intensity of the LED light. He pointed out that there are controls that enable the light to be dimmed to limit the impact on neighbors.
 - o Father Galetto said they intend to turn the sign off by 8:00 pm every night.
 - o Mr. Cluver acknowledged the plan to turn the sign on and off for day and night, but contended that these type of agreements regarding LED controls can change over time.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

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- o Father Galetto asked in response if they are forever to be stuck with outdated signage or are there options for a solution. He reiterated his earlier comments that their intention is to keep people up to date on events in their community.
- o Ms. Gutterman asked Mr. Feld if there are other options besides the existing sign and an LED type sign.
- o Mr. Feld replied that, for message boards, those are the two options available. He stated again that there are controls on the LED message boards. Mr. Feld pointed out that the zoning approval restrictions will likely dictate how the board can be used in terms of lighting and graphics.
- Ms. Gutterman asked Mr. Farnham about a previous application for a similar LED sign at a church on N. Broad Street.
 - o Mr. Farnham said that the Historical Commission had approved the sign at 704-12 N. Broad Street on the condition that it was freestanding. He cautioned the current applicant that the sign was then installed without a building or zoning permit, so it should not be considered precedent-setting.
- Ms. Gutterman said she is concerned about the size of the sign and inquired about the top area of the sign.
 - o Father Galetto said that intended for the new sign to be the same size as the old sign.
 - o Mr. Feld explained that the top area of the sign, showing the church's name, would be static and lit on the interior, and constructed of an acrylic face material mounted onto a metal cabinet. He noted the maroon portion of the sign would be opaque and the only part visible when lit would be the white letters of "St. Paul Parish."
- Ms. Gutterman inquired how the church sign would be used.
 - o Father Galetto said that the message board would announce church events and social services that would be helpful for parish members and the greater Bella Vista community to know about.
- Mr. Cluver said he understands the need for a more dynamic sign. He said the new sign should be equal or smaller in size to the existing message sign. Mr. Cluver added that it should have controls so it is not too bright, flash, or have dynamic movement, and can be turned off during specific hours. He said that, if the sign could incorporate these elements, he could support an LED replacement sign.
- Ms. Lukachik agreed with Mr. Cluver comments and recommendations. She said her biggest concern was the proposed width and that, if it could match the size of the existing sign, the new sign would be acceptable to her.
- Mr. McCoubrey inquired if any consideration had been given to making the sign freestanding rather than attached to the building. He noted that the Historical Commission had approved kiosk type LED signage in other locations.
- Ms. Gutterman said she would prefer it to be freestanding rather than attached to the building.
 - o Mr. D'Alessandro agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed sign is larger than the existing message sign. The proposed sign would be more compatible if it was the same size or smaller than the existing sign.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

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- Adding controls to the sign would be important for its compatibility with the building and neighborhood. Lighting levels, graphic limits, and timing controls should be considered as important components of the application.
- The Historical Commission has approved freestanding LED signs that stand in front of historic buildings rather than directly attached to them.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9 as the proposed features of the LED message board are not compatible with the historic church building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend Denial as presented, pursuant to Standard 9.

ITEM: 923 Christian St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Gutterman SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5				2

ADDRESS: 4126-28 PARKSIDE AVE

Proposal: Construct four-story building

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Beywatch Property Management LLC

Applicant: Lee Elsey

History: 1894

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Parkside Historic District, Significant, 12/11/2009

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a four-story building at a property classified as significant in the Parkside Historic District. The new building will be located in the side yard of the lot and stand between three and 10 feet from the historic building. The entrance to the new building is located at the end of a narrow pathway that runs between the buildings. The existing building was constructed in 1894 and is four stories tall with a prominent porch and features distinctive late-Victorian decorative elements and a mansard roof. The new building will include a stucco and brick front façade and prominent fourth-floor balcony as well as a roof deck set on a flat roof. The new building will stand beside the historic building and will be prominently visible from Parkside Avenue.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

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SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a new four-story building adjacent to an existing historic building at 4126-28 Parkside Avenue.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - o The proposed new addition does not meet Standard 9. It is not compatible with the architectural features, materials, scale, or proportions of the historic building and district.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:42:24

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Lee Elsey represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Elsey presented the application to the Committee. He described the site and the existing four-story historic building, and where the proposed building would be added. The proposed building will house affordable units, so they have designed it with efficiency in mind. He pointed out the lower building to the east of the subject property. He briefly described the new design as a three-story building with a bi-level fourth story and a roof deck. He added that they are looking to engage with the Historical Commission in the design process and are looking for initial feedback at this point.
- Mr. Cluver commented that the scale of the proposed building appears to better align with the non-historic property to the east rather than the historic building on the same lot. The historic building is elaborate, and it would be difficult to design an affordable project that competes with it. He added that the general design concept of proposing a smaller building that is set back and narrower at the front is a good starting place but the design elements that attempt to mimic those on the historic building do not work.
- Ms. Gutterman added that the deck at the front of the proposed building disrupts the scale and massing of it compared to the historic buildings in the district. She thinks that any proposed deck needs to be on the rear of the building, not the front.
 - o The applicant responded that he is aware of the deck's impact and also is unsure how to treat the east façade of the building.
 - o Ms. Gutterman reiterated her issue with the front-facing deck and suggested moving the wall on that fourth floor up to the front of the building and adjusting the glazing and openings there to better fit in with the district. She also suggested skylights as a possible solution to allow additional light to enter the upper floors.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- o Mr. Cluver commented on the scale and suggested potentially changing the front facing open railing to a parapet to better align with the details on the historic building on the lot.
- o Ms. Gutterman compared the design of the deck to houses seen at the Jersey Shore and described that as out of character for the Parkside Historic District.
- o Mr. McCoubrey agreed and commented that the deck will be highly visible from a great distance both along the street and in the park across.
- Mr. Cluver commented on the design of the windows. He described them as shorter and out of proportion with those on the historic building and suggested their proportions be redesigned to appear more vertical.
 - o The applicant responded that they have been looking into that and currently they have three-foot windows. They are happy to work on the proportions.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked about the pilothouse on the fourth story.
 - o The applicant explained that the owner would like to use this building as a sort of showpiece for future affordable development in the area and would like a large roof deck area for entertainment. The pilothouse allows access to a higher second roof deck.
- Mr. D'Alessandro also objected to the current deck design. He described the project as being driven by the decks, which are not compatible with the historic site and district.
 - o The applicant responded by highlighting that they are mirroring the design of the railings on many of the porches in the district with the front facing deck. He acknowledged that the current deck is an issue and posited replacing the railing with something more like a parapet.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked what they are proposing for the party wall that faces to the east.
 - o The applicant responded that they have been struggling with the east façade a bit. It is partially blocked by trees, but they are trying to decide whether they wrap the first five or 10 feet with brick and then switch to panels. They are also thinking about adding some texture or other visual interest to an otherwise large, blank wall.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey asked if they considered adding windows to that wall. He pointed out that, although it is a party wall, there is no specific prohibition to putting windows in a party wall, but they would have to have fire separation and understand that they could potentially be covered by the adjacent property owner in the future.
 - o The applicant responded that they are certainly open to that and were not aware that it would be possible to put windows in that wall.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey explained that he has worked on projects that used windows on a party wall with the understanding that they meet fire separation requirements. However, the windows would have to be some sort of protective windows.
 - o Mr. D'Alessandro added that the windows would have to use fire glass. He suggested that they could reduce costs by shrinking the decks to cover the additional cost of the glass.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The application proposes constructing a building on a side yard on the property at 4126-28 Parkside Avenue.
- The property at 4126-28 Parkside Avenue is a significant resource in the Parkside Historic District.
- The proposed building will have a prominent fourth-floor front deck as well as a higher roof deck.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9. The proposed building is not compatible with the architectural features, materials, scale, or proportions of the historic building and district.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

ITEM: 4124-28 Parkside Ave MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Gutterman SECONDED BY: Cluver					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5	0	0	0	2

ADDRESS: 2112 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Construct six-story addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Bruce and Lisa Ginsberg

Applicant: Eric Leighton, cbp Architects

History: 1870

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes demolishing portions of the four-story, Second Empire brownstone building at 2112 Walnut Street and to construct a six-story plus penthouse addition with setbacks. The historic building is 53 feet tall and the addition would be approximately 94 feet tall. The proposal would remove the entire rear mansard roof and portions of the rear wall and encapsulate the building in the addition. The addition would be clad in glass curtain walls and metal, fiber cement, or terra cotta panels. Decks with glass railings would be located on each floor. At the front mansard, the historic cornice appears to be replaced or covered by a

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

parapet or other support structure from which a deck enclosure rises. The drawings lack details and clarity on these important elements. At the rear, a two-story brick portion of the addition with blank masonry openings topped with a one-story-tall vertical metal screen wall would provide access to the parking area from Chancellor Street.

The Architectural Committee and Historical Commission have reviewed a few iterations of additions for this property. Most recently, at its December 2023 meeting, the Historical Commission found that a proposed 11-story addition removed the same character-defining features of the rear mansard and bay window as the current proposal, and that the new construction was overly differentiated from the old and incompatible with the property and its environment.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct 6-story addition

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New addition, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will 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.*
 - o The proposed project demolishes portions of the historic building, including the character-defining rear mansard and bay, destroying historic materials. The new work will be overly differentiated from the old and incompatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing, failing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. The application fails to satisfy Standard 9.
- *Roofs Guideline | Recommended: Designing rooftop additions, elevator or stair towers, decks or terraces, dormers, or skylights when required by a new or continuing use so that they are inconspicuous and minimally visible on the site and from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining historic features.*
 - o The proposed addition would be conspicuous and visible on the site and from public rights-of-way. The application fails to satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:03:13

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Attorney Meredith Ferleger, architect Eric Leighton, and developer Tim Shabaan represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Ferleger and Mr. Leighton described the revised project, including the reduction in height from the previous iterations reviewed and the proposed setbacks in the design.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Mr. Cluver commented on the second-floor rear terrace, noting that it appears to be inches away from the adjacent bay window.
 - o Mr. Leighton confirmed that the proposed addition would abut the neighboring bay window, which is near the property line. He noted that the bays along the block are typically angled and paired.
 - o Mr. Cluver noted that there is a difference between having a bay window that is paired versus straight along the property line.
 - o Mr. Shabaan replied that there will be screen wall for privacy.
- Mr. Cluver argued that he is not convinced that the front railing will not be visible, noting that the Architectural Committee is consistent in objecting to roof decks on main block roofs unless there is a compelling reason.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey agreed and noted that the sight-line drawing goes through the dormer window, which makes the visibility appear less, but that the dormers only take up a portion of the mansard roof.
 - o Mr. Shabaan responded that they could set the railing back, but opined that it is in line with the railing at 2110 Walnut which is not visible.
 - o Ms. Gutterman retorted that the building at 2110 Walnut is a new building.
- Ms. Gutterman noted that there are also concerns about the extent of the proposed demolition.
 - o Ms. Ferleger responded that they are proposing less demolition now than they originally proposed.
 - o Mr. Leighton explained that they are removing the bay window and mansard at the rear, along with the first-floor addition. He explained that they are keeping and encapsulating more of the roof and would utilize passages through the existing exterior wall on the interior.
- Ms. Gutterman questioned the colors of the addition cladding material and glass, which are rendered differently within the application materials.
 - o Mr. Leighton responded that the intent is to match the adjacent building at 2110 Walnut Street. He explained that the upper left image on A203 shows the color of glass and noted that the pattern of the proposed panels would be similar to detail 3, and may be metal, terra cotta, or cementitious panels.
 - o Ms. Gutterman questioned the color of the proposed panels.
 - o Mr. Leighton responded that they intend for them to be more neutral than brownstone.
 - o Ms. Ferleger suggested that they could work with the staff on the final color choice.
- Mr. McCoubrey commented that the reduction in height of the overbuild is an improvement, and reduces the conspicuousness from Walnut Street, but that the level of demolition with the removal of the rear bay window and mansard roof, as well as the massing and materials of the addition will be disruptive to the character of Chancellor Street. He noted that a rendering showing the unblocked view of the addition closer to the end of Chancellor Street would be helpful to show the relationship between the proposed addition and the neighboring buildings.
- Mr. Cluver noted that the dormers on the elevation drawing look odd and asked the intent for work to the front façade of the building.
 - o Mr. Leighton responded that the intent is to restore the windows to their original appearance.
 - o Mr. Cluver asked whether the windows would be replaced or restored.

- o Mr. Leighton replied that the intent is to replace them but would work with the staff to get historically accurate replacements and restore the woodwork and surfaces around the windows to their original appearance.
- Mr. Shabaan responded to the neighbors' concerns saying that they would repair damage to Chancellor Street. He noted that the proposed construction would be stick built, not heavy construction. He opined that they are trying to respect the idea of keeping with the carriage houses by stepping the addition down at the rear.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Neighbor Jaci Pollock, a resident of English Village, opposed the project. She explained that residents of Chancellor Street and English Village would be impacted by the project, and that the renderings do not show what the experience would be like for them. She argued that tenants of the proposed overbuild would have views into homes on Chancellor Street and that the addition would set a precedent for other projects on the block, creating a tunnel-like effect for the Chancellor Street residents.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance registered the Alliance's non-opposition of the project, opining that the project will not have a negative impact on the Rittenhouse Fittler Historic District. He noted that the reduction in height from previous proposals will render the overbuild largely invisible from Walnut Street, and that the restoration of the principal façade on Walnut Street will be positive.
- Attorney Carl Primavera, representing owners of 2108-2110 Walnut Street, opposed the project. He noted that the significant number of people who signed a petition in opposition to the previous iteration of the project remain opposed. He argued that the changes have not addressed the underlying issue that the existing building does not present any type of hardship and is reusable without an addition.
- Neighbor Ralph Woerhide, a Chancellor Street resident, opposed the project, citing in particular the demolition and excavation traffic down Chancellor Street, an old Belgian block street not made for heavy equipment. He noted that the Chancellor Street residents' utilities are buried under the street, and the proposed project would undoubtedly damage the street and even the facades of neighboring properties.
- Neighbor Glen Blumenfeld of 2110 Walnut Street explained that he is part of a group opposed to the development. He noted that for one of the previous reviews, he was among 30 neighbors who submitted a letter of opposition. He opined that the looming glass structure, four or six stories of which will be visible from Chancellor Street, is out of scale with Chancellor Street carriage houses. He opined that it would set bad precedent for other owners on the 2100 block of Walnut Street that would destroy the nature of Chancellor Street. He argued that there is nothing wrong with the existing building, which was only recently vacated and is not falling into disrepair. He noted that the addition will also pose privacy issues for the neighboring properties.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The extent of demolition and height of the proposed addition have been reduced from previous schemes, but the proposal still removes character-defining features of the property, including the rear mansard and bay window.
- Front decks, particularly with visible railings, are not typically approved on the front roofs of main blocks of historic buildings.
- The proposed overbuild remains out of keeping with the character of the historic building in terms of massing and materials, particularly at the rear.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The proposed addition removes character-defining features of the property and is incompatible in scale and materials with the historic property at the rear, failing to satisfy Standard 9.
- The proposed overbuild would be conspicuous from Chancellor Street and the proposed front railing would likely be visible from Walnut Street, failing to satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

ITEM: 2112 Walnut St					
MOTION: Denial, Standard 9 and Roofs Guideline					
MOVED BY: Cluver					
SECONDED BY: Gutterman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5	0	0	0	2

ADDRESS: 502-04 S JUNIPER ST

Proposal: Demolish building owing to hardship; reconstruct building with addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: James Ernst

Applicant: James Ernst

History: 1830

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes demolishing a three-story residential building at 504 S. Juniper Street and the adjacent non-historic garage at 502 S. Juniper Street. The building at 504 S. Juniper Street is a small three-story detached trinity built about 1830. The small building is freestanding and does not attach to any of the surrounding buildings. The house has been vacant for many years and is in very poor condition. The application also includes architectural plans for a new building to be constructed on the site, which are not fully developed yet, and which propose a reconstruction of the historic building with a four-story adjacent "addition." James Ernst, the property owner who intends to reside at the reconstructed building, not a developer, submitted the application.

Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance prohibits the Historical Commission from approving the complete demolition of a historic building unless the Historical Commission

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

finds that issuance of the building permit is necessary in the public interest, or unless the Historical Commission finds that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted, i.e. that compelling the preservation of the building would cause the owner to suffer a “financial hardship.” In order to show that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted in order to justify a demolition, the owner must demonstrate that the sale of the property is impracticable, that commercial rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return, and that other potential uses of the property are foreclosed. This application claims that the condition of the building and the cost to repair it prohibit a sale or reuse of the building. The financial hardship application will be reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Committee on Financial Hardship as well as the Historical Commission.

In late 2017, the Historical Commission and its advisory Architectural Committee reviewed an application for this property which proposed demolition of the rear wall and roof of the historic building, demolition of the non-historic garage, and construction of a four-story addition. At that time, the Historical Commission voted to deny the application pursuant to Standards 2, 9, the Roofs Guideline, and the prohibition against demolition, Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. The Architectural Committee, which recommended denial of the application, suggested that the applicant provide a letter from a structural engineer substantiating the demolition. In late 2018, the Architectural Committee reviewed a similar proposal which included the requested structural engineering reports. At that time, the Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to the Historical Commission's denial of October 2017 and Standards 2 and 9, the Roofs Guideline, and the prohibition against demolition, Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. That application was withdrawn prior to review by the Historical Commission. In May 2022, the Architectural Committee reviewed an application that proposed complete demolition and included several engineering reports that recommended demolition of the building owing to its condition. At that time, the Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the demolition of the three-story building, pursuant to Standard 2 and the prohibition against demolition, Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance, but approval of demolition of the adjacent non-historic one-story garage. That application was withdrawn prior to review by the Historical Commission. The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) issued Unsafe violations for this property in 2018 but has not since upgraded the condition to Imminently Dangerous.

The application includes an affidavit by the owner, a discounted cash flow and internal rate of return analysis, and multiple supporting documents. The financial analysis looks at four scenarios: rehabilitate and rent the existing structure; leave the building in its existing uninhabitable condition; demolish the structure and sell the cleared lot; and demolish the structure and construct a larger residence that covers the full lot.

The first scenario, to rehabilitate and rent the existing structure, utilizes two different renovation costs, a seemingly high \$691 per square foot, and a more reasonable \$309 per square foot. Given the poor condition of the building, the \$691 per square foot cost may be reasonable, but even when using the lower \$309 per square foot renovation cost, the analysis predicts a negative cash flow through its first decade with a net present value of negative \$111,879. The staff questions the applicability of this scenario, however, given that other documentation in the application claims that the building is unable to be rehabilitated owing to its condition. For the second scenario, to do nothing with the current structure and leave it uninhabitable and therefore unable to rent or sell, the analysis predicts a negative cash flow through its first decade with a net present value of negative \$235,589. This scenario notes that the property has been listed for sale several times over the last few years and no offers have been received

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

to purchase the property in its current condition. The third scenario assumes that the building can legally be demolished but with the Historical Commission disallowing new construction on the property, which results in a negative net present value. The application claims that this scenario would constitute a “taking.” This scenario does not need to be part of the consideration. The fourth scenario, to demolish the building and build a larger rentable building, proposes the project that the property owner would like to undertake. This scenario results in a net present value of \$667,886.

The application includes two engineers’ reports that conclude that the building at 504 S. Juniper Street is severely deteriorated and suffers from structural defects. The application also includes two letters from contractors that conclude that the masonry structure is unable to be repaired. The application concludes with new construction plans for the site, which show the owner’s intent to reconstruct the historic building using new materials while also constructing a four-story structure on the adjacent half of the lot in order to have a new residential property with sufficient square footage for his family.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Historical Commission:

- acknowledge that the complete demolition of the designated resource triggers the demolition prohibition in Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. For the Historical Commission to approve the complete demolition, the applicant must demonstrate that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted;
- find that the financial analysis demonstrates that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may reasonably be adapted; and,
- approve the application, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:44:30

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Property owner James Ernst represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Gutterman asked if any work has been done to the building since the last review by the Architectural Committee a few years ago.
 - o Mr. Ernst responded that significant work was done to the rear wall which had started to collapse, and more recently steps were taken to secure some of the bricks around the top of the building. He stated that he recently contracted with a company to further secure the star bolts which were not secured properly. Despite all of this, he has been told by every contractor that there is no way to secure the structure without removing most, if not all, of the brick facades. He explained that when you combine that with the internal wooden structure which has insect and water damage along with the footings which are shifting and the rotted roof, it leaves you with a structure that needs to be replaced in full. He stated that he has not found a contractor willing to attempt to fix the entire structure without taking it down.
- Mr. Cluver asked about Mr. Ernst’s intention when he purchased the property.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA’S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- o Mr. Ernst responded that he purchased the property in 2016 intending to restore the building and construct an addition over the non-historic garage as a place for his mother to live. After removing drywall and realizing that decades of water infiltration had caused significant damage, he found another place for his mother to live. He stated that this property will become his family's house when they move back to Philadelphia after he has completed his military service overseas.
- Mr. Cluver noted that, if this building were to collapse owing to neglect, the Historical Commission would require that it be rebuilt to its historic appearance, which is precisely what Mr. Ernst is proposing to do in his application.
- Ms. Lukachik, the structural engineer on the Architectural Committee, stated that she read through the engineers' reports, and she does not see any way in which large areas of the building could be saved.
- Mr. D'Alessandro highlighted the letter from William Proud Masonry, which states that the structure is unstable and repairing it would be impossible. Mr. D'Alessandro stated that he highly respects the work and opinions of William Proud Masonry.
- Mr. Cluver shifted the discussion to the design of the new construction. He stated that there are a few minor design elements that could be revised, including the design of the front door and the incorporation of a brick cornice on the reconstructed building to replicate the existing cornice. He added that the garage door should be narrower and the Juliet balcony with wide opening on the addition should be reconsidered.
 - o Ms. Gutterman added that the rainwater conductor should be revised to provide an alternative way of removing water from the roof of the addition.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey added that there are currently three marble steps at the front entrance, but only one shown on the drawing. He recommended salvaging and reusing the existing marble steps if possible.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that he appreciates the effort Mr. Ernst put into demonstrating the difficulties with the building. He observed that the fact that the building has no party walls is likely a cause of some of the issues. It is very tall for its footprint and is not supported by any other buildings. Mr. McCoubrey noted that the application will be reviewed by the Committee on Financial Hardship, of which he is a member. He stated that he has reviewed the hardship application and will support the finding of a financial hardship.
- Ms. Gutterman asked for a roll-call vote, noting that she would never vote to support a demolition under any circumstances.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The complete demolition of the designated resource triggers the demolition prohibition in Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. For the Historical Commission to approve the complete demolition, the applicant must demonstrate that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The application includes architectural plans for a new building to be constructed on the site, which are not fully developed yet, and which propose a reconstruction of the historic building with a four-story adjacent "addition." The proposed design is compatible with the historic context.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- The application will be reviewed by the Committee on Financial Hardship as well as the Historical Commission.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application materials sufficiently demonstrate that the building at 504 S. Juniper Street is in disrepair and the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The design of the proposed reconstruction and addition are compatible with the historic context of the area, but could be improved with some minor revisions.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted 4 to 1 to recommend approval of the application, contingent upon a finding of financial hardship by the Committee on Financial Hardship and the Historical Commission, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance, with the understanding that a subsequent application will be required to review a final proposal for the new construction.

ITEM: 502-04 Juniper St MOTION: Approval with contingencies MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman		X			
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	4	1			2

ADDRESS: 26-34 CHURCH LN

Proposal: Construct five-story residential building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Olympia Holdings

Applicant: Kevin O'Neill, KJO Architecture LLC

History: vacant lot

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Germantown Urban Village Historic District, 2/9/2024

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes constructing a five-story mixed use building on a vacant lot at 26-34 Church Lane. The property is a contributing parcel to the Germantown Urban Village Historic District. The proposed building will contain commercial space on the ground floor and 33 dwelling units spread over the floors above, with a roof deck. The façade fronting Church Lane will be clad in a light-colored brick and feature a large grid of regularly spaced, narrow, rectangular windows.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Historical Commission sent notice to all property owners in the proposed Germantown Urban Village Historic District, which includes this property, on 16 November 2023. Prior to the issuance of the district notice, the property owner had applied for a zoning permit in eCLIPSE, L&I's online permitting system, for the construction of this building. The zoning permit was issued on 28 November 2023. Section 6.9.a.10 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations, the so-called "transition rule," allows the Commission, its committees, and staff to consider development plans in place at the time of the issuance of the notice announcing the consideration of a designation, including but not limited to executed contracts, substantial design development, or other evidence of a material commitment to development in the review of applications.

Before approximately 1841, no buildings stood on the property, which was a part of a pair of larger lots owned by Caspar Wistar and Paul Kripner. Between 1841 and 1871, four stone twin houses were constructed on the lots that now make up the subject property. In 1916, those houses were demolished, and a two-story brick building with no basement was constructed in their place and used as a garage and offices. This building was demolished sometime after 2008 and the lot has sat vacant since. The historic district nomination contends that the property at 26-34 Church Lane is additionally significant under Criterion I for its potential to yield archaeological information important to history, specifically for its potential to yield information related to the Battle of Germantown in 1777 and the development of Germantown's cross streets in the nineteenth century.

An initial application for this project was considered at the Architectural Committee meeting on 23 January 2024. The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial for that application and a revised design was reviewed by the Historical Commission at its 9 February 2024 meeting. At that meeting, the Historical Commission voted to remand the application back to the Architectural Committee with the comments that the design appears to be improved but there were not enough application materials submitted to constitute a complete application. They recommended the applicant resubmit a more complete set of plans with additional information showing the context of the surrounding buildings.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a five-story mixed use building at 26-34 Church Ln.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 8: Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*
 - o The proposed new construction will meet Standard 8 provided appropriate archaeological mitigation measures are undertaken.
- *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 work will 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.*
 - o The proposed new construction materials and design meet Standard 9. It will be differentiated from the surrounding buildings and use compatible materials and features. The proposed massing, scale, and proportions do not meet Standard 9.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, owing to the size, scale, and massing of the building relative to its context, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:04:20

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Kevin O'Neil and developer Chagai Bader represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. O'Neil provided a summary of the project and its revisions to the Architectural Committee. He highlighted the changes since the first application including: redesigning the windows to give them a more traditional double-hung appearance, additional brick decorative detailing like a more prominent cornice, continuing the brick along portions of the side facades in addition to the front facade facing Church Lane, and redesigning the ground floor to give it more separation from the upper stories. He also explained that some of their renderings show a sister building that is planned for an adjoining lot with a similar design, though that is not being presented to the Architectural Committee today. He added that, since the previous Historical Commission meeting, they have reduced the size of the elevator overrun and have added more renders and drawings showing all the building's facades and multiple views from the surrounding streets including Market Square.
- Mr. Cluver commented on the overall size of the proposed building and referred to its height as a "fundamental issue." Although the applicants included documentation of some nearby buildings of similar heights, none of them are within a block of this proposed building and none are within sight of Market Square, which defines the heart of this historic district. He added that, without some sort of solution for the height, he is unsure that this building could fit within the district.
- Ms. Gutterman commented on the design of the ground floor. She questioned the use of the triangular openings along the street and did not think that design element fit within the neighborhood. She also agreed with Mr. Cluver's comments on the overall height and thought that a three-story building with similar elements could perhaps work in this context, but she believes the proposed building is too large.
 - o The applicant responded with some more details about the first floor of the building. He explained that they are proposing a commercial space in the first floor along with a partial garage along the side. In addition, there are structural elements that necessitate the proposed floor-to-floor height at the first floor.
 - o Ms. Gutterman described this building as "super-sized" and reiterated her comments that the scale of this building does not fit well within the neighborhood.
 - o The applicant responded with some additional context. They are attempting to respond to some of the initial feedback from the previous Architectural Committee and Historical Commission meetings by breaking up the ground floor from the floors above to make the building appear less monumental. He added that the design of the arches was an attempt to make the street level more appropriate and mirror some of the other openings on buildings on the street.
 - o Ms. Gutterman accepted the thinking behind the first-floor arches but added that when those design elements are incorporated into a taller building, she thinks they become more visible and do not allow the building to blend with the neighborhood.
- Mr. Cluver asked the applicant to present the floor plans briefly.

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- o The applicant explained the first-floor plan and pointed out the parking, mail room, and other utility areas. He added that there is one residential unit at the rear of the first floor and highlighted the locations of the curb cut and parking. He also explained some of the material choices for the building overall including the color and layout for the brick and the details on the other cladding materials proposed.
- Mr. McCoubrey expressed concerns about the siding proposed for the side and rear elevations. The siding makes those portions look like wood clapboard and the overall building appears to be masonry at the front with a wood frame attached to the back. He suggested that they consider using a panel system instead.
 - o The applicant responded that in the past they have had issues with panel systems warping and, in this case, they think that the siding offers a cleaner look that is appropriate for a residential area.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey responded that five-story clapboard buildings are not common and reiterated that he thinks an alternative would better match the scale of the brick.
 - o Mr. Cluver added that they usually approve siding like this for non-visible areas of buildings, but because of the overall size and location, this building will be visible from all sides.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey suggested the applicants consider extending the brick portion of the Market Square facing side of the building back a bit more to mitigate the amount of siding visible from that spot. He suggested about two-thirds brick, one-third siding.
 - o The applicant responded that they would be willing to make that change.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey added that he also does not like the design of the ground floor. He suggested that they could make the openings for the commercial space larger to make that portion look more like a shop.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Yvonne Haskins opposed the application. She was concerned with the overall height of the building and it not fitting in with the historic district.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society opposed the application. He appreciated the design revisions but suggested that the building is too tall for the district, especially when considering a potential future sister building next to it.
- Tuomi Forest of Historic Germantown opposed the application. He explained that Historic Germantown occupies the building just across the street from this proposed one. He took issue with the overall height of the building and additionally did not like the use of the light-colored brick and would prefer to see a red brick like those on many of the historic buildings in the district.
- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association opposed the application. She concurred with the previous statements and specifically called out the height of the building as an issue.
- Jim Dragoni, a near neighbor, opposed the application. He expressed concerns about parking and construction activities, which might disrupt the neighbors.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The application proposes to construct a five-story mixed use building on a vacant lot in the Germantown Urban Village Historic District.

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- The proposed design has been revised since it was first presented to the Architectural Committee and its overall appearance has been improved.
- The overall size and height of the building is not in keeping with the scale and proportions of the surrounding buildings in the historic district.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9. The design, massing, scale, and proportions of the new building are out of character with the historic district.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

ITEM: 26-34 Church Ln MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Gutterman SECONDED BY: Cluver					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler					X
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein					X
Total	5				2

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:37:37

ACTION: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and its advisory Committees are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.
- Application materials and staff overviews are available on the Historical Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.