

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

**TUESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2020
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 9:00 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		
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP	X		

Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Commissioners, staff, applicants, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

- Jon Farnham, Executive Director
- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Megan Cross Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department

The following persons were present:

- Inga Saffron
- Allison Weiss
- Jay Farrell
- Suzanna Barucco
- Adam Montalbano
- David Traub
- Job Itzkowitz
- Dennis Carlisle
- Leo Addimando
- Alberto Smeke
- Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
- Nate Sunderhaus
- Adrian Trevisan

Dennis Pickeral
Randal Baron
Allee Davis
Kate McGlinchey
Zoe Sheaffer
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Michael Prifti
Rustin Ohler
Mary Dankanis
Brian McIntyre
George Poulin
Susan Wetherill
Mathew Huffman
Allie Lukachik
Nancy Pontone
Harrison Haas
Karlene, Harman Deutsch Ohler
Deborah Woodward
Kathy Dowdell
Michael Bixler
Nissa Eisenberg, Alma Architecture
Glenn Mancini
Laura Keim
Kelly Wiles

ADDRESS: 4600 N 16TH ST

Proposal: Modify service wing; construct addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: City of Philadelphia

Applicant: Deborah Woodward, Krieger + Associates Architects

History: 1723; Stenton Mansion and Log House

Individual Designation: 6/26/1956

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to make a series of modifications to the north elevation of the service wing, which includes the c. 1790 kitchen, 1811 greenhouse, 1960s restrooms, and c. 1730 carriage house. The modifications are the result of a decade-long study to explore improvement options to the wing as a means of separating office and visitor spaces, creating accessibility, upgrading restroom facilities, and clarifying visitor circulation. Several options for the new offices and restrooms were considered including adapting the barn and log house, constructing a new stand-alone building, and acquiring offsite space. After much deliberation, the current proposal was deemed the least intrusive and most effective.

The current application follows an in-concept application approved by the Historical Commission at its 11 January 2019 meeting. At the time, the Commission concluded that maximizing the use of the service wing is preferable to building a new structure on the site, though it asked the applicant to minimize the size of the dormers proposed to create additional space on the second floor of the kitchen building. It also requested that a closer study of the service wing space be undertaken.

Like the in-concept application, the current application proposes to separate the administrative and visitor functions by relocating offices to the second story of the kitchen. To accommodate the offices, a 1930s dormer would be removed and replaced with two new shed dormers. The new dormers would feature a series of wood two-over-two double-hung sash windows and would have standing seam metal roofs. The cheek walls would be clad in composite siding. The applicant responded to the concerns raised by the Historical Commission regarding the 2019 in-concept application by presenting two options for the proposed dormers: Option A proposes two dormers similar in size to those proposed in the in-concept application; Option B reduces the width of the dormer closest to the mansion by eliminating one window. Additional studies of the impact of the dormer on the historic fabric have been included.

At the greenhouse portion of the wing, the application proposes to install an accessible visitor entrance that would clarify and demarcate the tour entrance and ticketing area. Owing to the varying floor levels at the interior, the entrance would be elevated several feet and would require new steps and an ADA ramp. A modern glass double-door system would be punched through the existing stucco wall, and a sliding barn door would enclose the door system.

The application further proposes to reconstruct the 1960s bathroom, originally created by infilling the space between the greenhouse and carriage house. The exterior wall would be clad in wood siding above a concrete water table. A new standing seam copper roof would be installed to match the existing metal roof.

The application proposes to create a dedicated program space within the carriage house. A large infilled opening would be reopened in the existing stuccoed wall, and a double door system with sidelights and a transom would be installed. Like the entrance proposed at the greenhouse, this new entrance would be comprised of modern glass doors with two sliding barn doors; however, this entrance would remain at grade. The location and dimensions of the entrance are based on an existing lintel that once defined a historic opening.

A driveway extension is proposed to redirect the flow of traffic to afford visitors views of the front of the mansion when entering the property. Under this plan, the current parking area would be relocated from the north side of the mansion to an area adjacent to the service wing.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Install two shed dormers at service wing;
- Install ADA ramp and glass door system;
- Reconstruct 1960s bathroom addition between greenhouse and carriage house;
- Reopen infilled entryway at carriage house; and
- Relocate existing parking lot to area adjacent to service wing.

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.*
 - The proposed alterations to the north wall of the service wing will be done sensitively and, where possible, impact areas that have been previously modified. The new entryway at the carriage house would reopen a larger infilled opening that was enclosed in 1923-24. While the construction of the eastern dormer would remove historic fabric, the construction of the western dormer would enlarge an existing, non-original dormer. The reconstruction of the bathroom addition would remove non-original material dating to the 1960s, though the installation of the accessible entrance would require the creation of a new opening in the greenhouse wall. The work largely complies with this standard.
- *Standard 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
 - The proposed dormers would cause a loss of portions of seven rafters and some roofing, though the majority of the modified rafters and roofing would remain intact. The installation of the ADA entrance would cause some loss of historic material; however, little to no historic material or distinctive features would be lost due to the installation of the entryway at the carriage house or the reconstruction of the bathroom addition. Additionally, the service wing's south elevation, including the roof slope, would remain unaltered. All distinctive features, finishes, and craftsmanship that characterize the property would be preserved at this location. The proposed work largely complies with this standard.
- *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.*
 - The proposed alterations would cause the loss of some material at the sloped roof of the kitchen and the stuccoed greenhouse wall; however, the additions and

alterations would be differentiated from the old and would be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the service wing. They would also have minimal impact on the mansion and the larger site. The proposed work largely complies with this standard.

- *Accessibility Guideline: Recommended: Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled person to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features.*
 - This application proposes to construct an ADA ramp and entrance at the stuccoed wall of the greenhouse, providing barrier-free access for visitors. While it would cause the loss of some historic masonry, it would not impact any character-defining features of the building or site.
- *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.*
 - The application proposes to construct two dormers on the north slope of the kitchen roof. One of the dormers would be constructed in place of an existing, non-original dormer. Located on the north wall of the service wing, the dormers would be visible from the future visitor parking lot. The dormers would be inconspicuous from the main viewsheds of the mansion, and would not be visible from the significant courtyard space. The work complies with this standard.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of Option B, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, 9, the Accessibility and Roofs Guidelines, and the Historical Commission's 11 January 2019 approval of an in-concept application, with the staff to review details, provided wood siding is used at the dormer cheek walls and six-over-six or one-over-one double-hung sash windows are installed at the proposed dormers.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:02:25

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Dennis Pickeral and Laura Keim of Stenton and architect Debbie Woodward represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McCoubrey asked the applicant to explain the changes between this application and the one approved in-concept by the Historical Commission.
 - Ms. Woodward replied that she studied the dormers and surveyed where the roof rafters are located, so that it was clear which rafters would be affected by each option. She stated that the drawings have been updated to show that they would minimize the number of rafters removed. She noted that Option A affects eight rafters, while Option B affects seven rafters, adding that Option B eliminates one needed work space.
- Mr. Cluver suggested that the interior space could be arranged to avoid losing a workspace with the smaller dormers. He opined that the dormers look more balanced on the exterior when symmetrical, as they are with the three-window dormers presented in Option B.

- Ms. Woodward responded that she has had reviews with Fairmount Park Conservancy's Technical Review Committee and that the group prefers the asymmetrical appearance, noting that the group also requested the two-over-two double-hung windows within the dormers. She explained that she initially proposed one-over-one windows but made the change at the committee's request.
- Mr. Cluver agreed that the three-window dormers are preferable to the four-window dormer, since the location of the four-window dormer is more visible when approaching from the mansion. He asked that it remain smaller and stated his preference for one-over-one double-hung sash windows, noting that the two-over-two windows have Victorian proportions. He contended that one-over-one windows would differentiate the dormer windows from the historic windows below.
- Mr. Cluver asked why the conservancy requested two-over-two windows.
 - Ms. Woodward replied that the committee expressed concern that the one-over-one windows appeared too commercial and were not detailed enough.
 - Mr. Detwiler stated that he understands that perspective and agreed with Mr. McCoubrey about reducing the size of the dormer nearest the mansion. He argued that there is such delicacy on the first story with the nine-over-nine windows and that a smaller division would be more balanced. He suggested that the dormer windows be a six-over-six configuration, contending that they would still be differentiated from the windows below due to their size and roofing material. He opined that the windows would seem larger and more open with one-over-one windows.
 - Mr. McCoubrey responded that he would be amenable to six-over-six windows but that he objects to the two-over-two windows that are proposed.
- Mr. Cluver questioned whether it would be possible to create a 1:20 walkway to achieve ADA access to the visitor entry rather than installing the ADA ramp with concrete sides and the handrail.
 - Mr. Pickeral replied that it may be possible but that they would need to navigate the existing entry door to the kitchen.
 - Ms. Keim added that they operated from the beginning under the premise of increasing accessibility as much as possible and looked at the ramp as the most straightforward and comfortable way to achieve that goal.
 - Mr. Cluver asked why a 1:12 ramp would be more comfortable than a 1:20 sloped walkway.
 - Ms. Keim contended that they had not fully explored the sloped walkway, adding that they entered into the plan with the idea that a ramp was necessary.
 - Mr. Detwiler commented that the proposed ramp is a very strong visual intervention, noting that a graduated walkway would create a more open and accommodating entry.
- Mr. Cluver asked whether it would be possible to lengthen the ramp in the direction of the kitchen, though he observed that the kitchen entry has several steps. He suggested that lengthening the ramp would enable it to become a discreet and less visible element. He elaborated that the large concrete structure and handrails would no longer be necessary. He added that there would be cost benefits to a longer ramp as well.
 - Mr. McCoubrey responded that it would be dependent on the existing grade.

- Mr. Cluver acknowledged that the Committee will not be able to determine whether that type of ramp is possible but asked that the applicant consider it ahead of the Historical Commission meeting.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that he supports the staff recommendation regarding the dormer cheek walls, noting that wood siding should be used rather than a composite material. He explained that traditionally the boards were sloped to follow the roofline. He then stated his preference for sloping the boards but perhaps changing the width to differentiate them.
 - Ms. Woodward replied that the existing dormer clapboards are sloped and that she intentionally designed all new siding to be vertical. She added that the boards of the historic cheek walls are 8- or 9-inches on a diagonal and that she is proposing 5-inch vertical boards.
 - Mr. Detwiler supported using a narrower board but placing them diagonally.
- Mr. Cluver inquired whether the same boards are proposed for the restroom addition.
 - Ms. Woodward answered that the siding of the restroom addition would be a different, unpainted wood and that the dormer cheek walls are proposed to be painted to match the other woodwork of the wing.
- Ms. Stein asked whether any mechanical units would be installed as part of this project and whether those units would be visible.
 - Ms. Woodward responded that there would be exterior condensing units located at the far end of the wing, closer to the park. She added that other units would be concealed from view inside the service wing.
 - Mr. Pickeral noted that the proposed location for the mechanical equipment is screened from public view.
- Mr. McCoubrey expressed his gratitude toward the applicants for the amount of thought put into the project over many years, stating that he believes they have come to a good resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Randal Baron commented that the six-over-six window configuration would allow the dormers to be more contextual, adding that grouping the three windows together makes a strong statement that the windows are not historic. He recommended that the muntins be applied to the exterior of the glass and not be a sandwich muntin. He also supported using horizontal siding rather than applying it vertically.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- This application follows an in-concept application approved by the Historical Commission in January 2019.
- The applicant has revised since the initial in-concept application to present two options. Option A follows closely the original application, while Option B reduces the size of the dormer closest to the mansion.
- The dormer windows in the in-concept application were proposed as one-over-one double-hung sash. The current application proposes two-over-two double-hung sash windows at the new dormers.
- Any new mechanical equipment would be located out of sight of visitors.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- Six-over-six double-hung sash windows would give the new dormers additional articulation and scale but would remain differentiated from the historic fabric.
- The dormer siding should be wood rather than composite and should be installed at an angle to match the historic siding of the other dormers on the service wing. However, the boards should be a different dimension to distinguish them from the building's other dormers.
- If possible, a 1:20 ramp would minimize the visual impact and still provide ADA access.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of Option B, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, 9, the Accessibility and Roofs Guidelines, and the Historical Commission's 11 January 2019 approval, provided the following:

- wood siding is installed at the proposed dormers;
- six-over-six double-hung sash windows with simulated divided lights are installed at the proposed dormers; and
- the use of a 1:20 ramp without railings is studied.

ITEM: 4600 N 16TH ST					
MOTION: Approval, with conditions					
MOVED BY: Stein					
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				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 140 N 2ND ST

Proposal: Demolish rear ell; construct three-story rear addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Birdnest Group

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto Design Shop

History: 1845

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984

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

Staff Contact: Megan Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish the rear ell of this contributing, Greek Revival building with Renaissance Revival storefront and cornice. The applicant argues that the condition of the existing rear ell is not sound enough to carry the weight of an addition, and therefore must be demolished. The applicant is proposing a three-story rear addition.

The area of the building that is proposed for demolition is not visible from any right-of-way, and therefore the public's understanding of the subject property would not be impacted by demolition of the rear ell and construction of a new rear addition.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish rear ell
- Construct three-story rear addition

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.*
 - Standard 9 prohibits the destruction of historic materials that characterize properties. Owing to its condition and its lack of visibility from any public-right-of-way, the rear ell in question does not characterize this property. The public's understanding of the historic building would not be impacted by the implementation of this proposal.
- *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 will be unimpaired.*
 - No alterations are proposed to the front façade of this building, and therefore the historic characteristics of the property that are visible from the public right-of-way will not be changed.
 - The original roofline and dormer windows at the front and rear of the main block will not be altered.
 - Considered from the public's perspective, the removal and replacement of the rear ell will not alter the essential form and integrity of the historic building.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:31:08

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Adam Montalbano represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Montalbano summarized the project and said that the main question they had was whether the proposed demolition of the rear ell could be approved in order to accommodate the addition.
- Mr. Cluver asked the applicant what materials they were proposing to use for the addition.
 - Mr. Montalbano responded that they were very open to input from the members of the Architectural Committee in selecting the most appropriate materials for the addition.
- Ms. Gutterman asked the applicant where they intended to locate the mechanical equipment.

- o Mr. Montalbano responded that they did not yet know the exact location of the mechanical units; however, they understood that they would need to be inconspicuous. He added that he was confident that there were solutions such as mini-split units that could be placed at the interior courtyard.
- Ms. Gutterman asked the applicant if the proposed addition would build out the entire site or if there would still be some space for a yard.
 - o Mr. Montalbano responded that there would still be some outdoor space.
- Ms. Gutterman asked whether there was any proposal for roof decks.
 - o Mr. Montalbano responded that no roof decks were proposed.
- Ms. Stein asked if the work as proposed would require a variance for some of the egress issues she saw.
 - o Mr. Montalbano responded that he was aware of the issues Ms. Stein raised and though he did not yet have an answer, they were in the process of investigating solutions to the potential egress problems.
- Mr. McCoubrey said that he was concerned with how the top floor of the addition engaged the cornice of the main block. He stated that he would like to explore ways to lower the height of the roof of the addition so that it stayed clear of the existing cornice.
 - o Mr. Montalbano acknowledged that the section drawing did currently show the roof of the addition engaging with the existing building in a way that would adversely impact the cornice. He said that he would likely revise this detail by lowering the roof of the addition between eight and 12 inches in order to make the addition more sympathetic to the existing structure.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked if the additional photographs provided by the applicant were intended to show the condition of the rear ell.
 - o Mr. Montalbano responded that they were intended to show more views of the rear of the property from the public right-of-way.
- Mr. Detwiler said that his understanding of the letter from the structural engineer was not that the rear ell was in danger of collapse, but rather in its current state it could not support the additional weight of an addition. He added that he was not convinced that there was no way to work with the existing fabric of the rear ell and still achieve an addition. Mr. Detwiler said that he was not at all in favor of the total demolition of the rear ell, especially since it seemed like there were ways to work with the existing fabric and still build an addition.
- Ms. Gutterman asked if the age of the rear ell was known and whether all three sections were built at the same time.
 - o Ms. Schmitt showed the members of the Architectural Committee images from two atlases that showed the rear ell from 1860 and 1895 that showed the rear ell.
- Mr. Detwiler asked the date of construction of the building, and Ms. Schmitt responded that it was built in 1845. Mr. Detwiler commented that the building's ell was an example of a classic rear ell, and while he was not opposed to an over-build or an addition, he was not in support of its demolition.
- Mr. Cluver stated that it appeared that they were reviewing a conceptual application more so than a final approval. He added that the key point of their discussion was to determine whether or not something could be constructed at the rear, and he believed that something could; however, the details would be important in terms of receiving a final approval.
- Mr. Detwiler agreed that the application seemed more like an in-concept application than a final approval application.

- Ms. Gutterman agreed and stated that she wanted more information about why the rear ell needed to be completely demolished. She suggested that an in-concept approval could be for an addition at the rear of this property.
- Mr. McCoubrey added that further study could determine which sections of the rear ell could be retained.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Randal Baron commented that he thought that the three-story portion of the rear ell was significant and should be retained.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The current design of the rear addition proposed to demolish the entire rear ell, which was not appropriate.
- The applicant had not studied the option of retaining more of the historic fabric of the rear ell sufficiently and needed to do so before receiving a final approval.
- Conceptually, a rear addition that did not adversely impact the historic structure was possible.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- Conceptually, an addition at the rear of this property could be designed to meet Standards 9 and 10 as long as the applicant found a way to retain more of the existing rear ell in the design.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval in concept of a rear addition, with the applicant to study the need to demolish the entire rear ell, and to provide further details about the design of the addition, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ITEM: 140 N 2ND ST					
MOTION: Approval, in concept with conditions					
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				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 1505 N 16TH ST, AKA 1504 N SYDENHAM ST

Proposal: Construct three-story building on subdivided parcel

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Brian McIntyre

Applicant: Brett Harman, Harman Deutsch Ohler

History: 1880; Robert Dornan House

Individual Designation: 7/1/1982

District Designation: None

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

BACKGROUND:

A five-story brick townhouse constructed in 1880 and historically known as the Robert Dornan House stands at the property at 1505 N. 16th Street. The designated property extends the full width of the block from N. 16th Street to N. Sydenham Street and includes some open land along Sydenham Street. The current owner subdivided the property in April 2020 and is proposing new construction of a three-story residential building on the open, subdivided parcel along N. Sydenham Street. The new building would be clad in brick, vinyl, and metal panel and would be set back at the rear from the historic building by approximately 20 feet. In addition to the front façade along N. Sydenham Street, the new building will also be visible from Jefferson and N. 16th Streets.

Pursuant to Section 5.15 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations, all of the new addresses created from subdividing a designated property are automatically placed on the Register. The project on the subdivided piece of land is subject to full jurisdiction, not review and comment, which is limited to lots in historic districts that were vacant at the time the district was designated. This site is individually designated, not in a district, and also was not vacant at the time of designation.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a three-story residential building.

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, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed new construction is not compatible with the historic building in materials, features, size, scale, and proportion. While the proposed brick on the façade is compatible, the vinyl siding and metal panels are not. The size, pattern, and detailing of the window and door openings more accurately reflect nearby new construction rather than the historic building on the designated property.
- *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 will be unimpaired.*

- The new construction will not physically connect with the historic building and could be removed in the future without disturbance; therefore the application satisfies Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:55:00

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Rustin Ohler represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Ohler explained that the owner subdivided the property at 1505 N. 16th Street and, at the time his firm took on the project for the new subdivided lot, they were not aware that it was under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction. He noted that it was designed as a more modern building at the client's request.
- Ms. Gutterman inquired about project information sent to the Committee members a day before the meeting. She asked Mr. Ohler if he could explain if the design has been revised or if it was just additional information.
 - Mr. Ohler replied that the design was not revised but the application was primarily supplemented with an elevation (SP0.1) to show the visibility of the project from Jefferson Street. He pointed out the site plan and elevation shown on SP0.1 provides clarification and further context for Committee to review.
- Ms. Gutterman asked if the architect would have presented a different design if the owner knew that the property was under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction.
 - Mr. Ohler responded that this is the building the owner wanted reviewed. He noted the firm is looking at alternatives to the vinyl siding shown and added that, as a policy, they do not like to put stucco on new wood construction buildings in this environment, owing to moisture issues.
- Ms. Gutterman inquired about the metal roofing on the front of the building.
 - Mr. Ohler stated that is not metal roofing. He explained that they are aluminum composite panels that are creating the cornice line at the top of the front façade and are also included between some of the windows.
- Ms. Stein noted that in the surrounding neighborhood most of the buildings are designed as volumes instead of flat façades, perhaps because of the extensive number of alleys. She pointed out that the brick of the front facades of many of the neighboring buildings wraps around the corners onto the side elevations; however, this design is basically a facade with blank side walls, and it does not seem to be in keeping with other buildings in and around this site in this historic area. She said that it would be much more sympathetic to the neighborhood if it was designed more as a volume, like many of these other buildings, and not just façade
 - Mr. Ohler pointed out that approximately four feet of brick turns the corner onto the south side of the building. He said that he could consider extending that return. He said that he can look at extending the brick around that corner on the northern side as well, where there is an existing brick building on the property line.
- Mr. McCoubrey inquired about the extensive height of the cornice panel and asked if the plan included a roof deck.

- Mr. Ohler replied that there would be no roof deck or pilot house. He said there would be mechanical equipment including four condensers. Mr. Ohler noted that the parapet is 42 inches as it is currently designed.
- Mr. McCoubrey said that it is making the building appear much taller than it really needs to be. He added that there are ways to screen mechanical equipment in a much smaller enclosure.
- Mr. Ohler agreed that they can look at lowering it and adding guardrails around the mechanical equipment.
- Ms. Stein said that she would like to discuss the scale of fenestration and openings on the façade. She pointed out that the proposed design seems to have a very different scale from the other buildings in the neighborhood. Ms. Stein stated that many of the buildings around the property have larger scale openings but there might be one on a façade but on this proposed new building each of the windows is sort of a large-scale object or monumental element. She continued that what results is an extensive amount of glass and not very much solid masonry, which is definitely not in keeping with this neighborhood. Ms. Stein noted that the facade should be studied to try to bridge that divide and add more masonry into the facade to make it more sympathetic with this neighborhood.
 - Mr. Ohler said that they were looking at the other new construction that came from similar historic subdivisions on this street.
 - Ms. Stein pointed out that they may not have been historic properties so they may not have been under the Historical Commission's purview. She said that the subdivided lot is tucked among very historic buildings. Ms. Stein also noted that the proposed balconies result in large recessed openings on the front façade.
- Mr. Cluver stated that it is important from a regulatory standpoint to remember that this property is an individually designated property rather than part of a district. The proposed building should be judged in relation to the historic building on the front part of the lot. He continued that one of the questions that comes to his mind is the validity of building on this back lot at all. He asked about the significance of the property that resulted in its designation and any potential significance of the back portion of the property. Mr. Cluver questioned the relationship of the new building to the main house and how the backyard might relate to the significance.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that he agreed with Mr. Cluver. He said that, when you look at that site plan and the proposed building relative to the existing building, the proposed building is not appropriate for the historic site. He noted that he personally does not know about the significance of that rear yard but would recommend that pulling away from the historic building is preferred. Mr. Detwiler said he agreed with Ms. Stein about the materials of the neighborhood. He pointed out that stucco is appropriate on masonry, but not on wood frame construction. He added that he thinks masonry in this location would be a much more appropriate material. Mr. Detwiler also agreed with Ms. Stein about the issues with the large openings and balconies on the front façade.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked if the subdivision has been completed.
 - Mr. Ohler confirmed that the subdivision had already taken place and the new lot has a separate OPA account.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The rear property has been legally subdivided by the property owner.
- The scale, fenestration, and materials of the proposed design reflects new construction on neighboring lots rather than its association with the historic building.
- The history of the site may render a building of this size incompatible with the historic lot.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The project does not meet Standard 9 as the new construction is not compatible with the historic building in materials, features, size, scale, and proportion.

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

ITEM: 1505 N 16TH ST, AKA 1504 N SYDENHAM ST MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Gutterman SECONDED BY: Detwiler					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro					X
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 3701-15 CHESTNUT ST

Proposal: Construct additions

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: CSC Coliving

Applicant: Leo Addimando, Alterra Property Group

History: 1970; International House; Bower & Fradley, architects

Individual Designation: pending

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This in-concept application seeks the Historical Commission's opinion on the construction of two additions to the building known as International House at 3701-15 Chestnut Street.

International House is not yet designated as historic, but has been nominated. The Committee on Historic Designation will review the nomination on 3 December 2020. The nomination proposes that International House satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criterion A for its association with the International House organization, the oldest institution of its kind in the United States to support international

students. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the building is a significant example of Brutalist architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that architecture firm Bower & Fradley influenced the architectural development of Philadelphia. Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the International House building is a prominent visual feature in the heart of University City. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that International House stands as one of the first high-rises constructed as part of the West Philadelphia Corporation and Redevelopment Authority's urban renewal efforts. The nomination is provided with the application and includes numerous current photographs of the property.

International House Philadelphia, the non-profit organization that constructed the building in 1970 and managed it as a residence and support hub for international students for 50 years, recently sold the property, attributing the closure to a competitive residential market and the economic challenges of the outdated building. CSC Coliving, a real estate firm from New York that specializes in this type of building, purchased the property and is partnering with local developer Alterra Properties to rehabilitate it.

In the application and in conversations with the staff, the applicant has asserted that the profitable redevelopment of the building is extremely difficult, owing to the idiosyncratic, rigid nature of the structure, which was erected for communal living. The reinforced concrete structure does not allow easy modifications to the plan of single-room units with shared kitchen, bathroom, and living areas. Such a configuration is especially problematic at a time of viral pandemic. The ownership partners have indicated that unless the Historical Commission allows options for significant additions to the structure at the time of designation, they will have no choice but to pursue a financial hardship application claiming that the adaptive reuse of the building in its current configuration is not feasible.

The in-concept application proposes the addition of two masses to the building. At the south or Chestnut Street section of the property, a one-story structure for retail space would be erected on the plaza. At the north, along Ludlow Street, part of the original structure would be removed and a tower would be constructed for additional living units. The nomination describes the open area along Chestnut Street as a "landscaped plaza in a series of terraces." The plaza is enclosed at the south and east by a concrete wall that would be retained and used as the base for the new addition. No decisions have been made regarding the exterior design and materials for the addition, but two possible designs are presented. The application requests a decision on the massing alone. The nomination describes the rear portion of the structure to be removed and replaced as "support and utility areas, as well as a parking garage, much of which is housed in secondary, yet connected, concrete structures of similar poured-in-place construction." The nomination is not entirely correct. The main space in the rear structure is an auditorium. The rear structure would be replaced with a 16-story addition that would include living units, retail space, and utilities shared by both buildings. For example, the addition would provide additional elevators, which cannot be added to the original building, owing to restrictions imposed by the concrete structure. Again, no decisions have been made regarding the exterior design and materials for the addition, but two possible designs are presented. The application requests a decision on the massing alone. A subsequent review for final approval would propose the exterior design and materials for the additions.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct addition at front plaza;
- Remove rear structure and construct tower.

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.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
 - The application of these standards is predicated on a previous identification of the features, materials, and spaces that "characterize the property." In that the property is not yet designated, the Historical Commission has not yet determined those aspects of the property that characterize it, that are character-defining, and that constitute its essential form and integrity. The nomination, which has not yet been reviewed, does not define or list the character-defining features. However, it seems to indicate that the front plaza, which faces Chestnut Street, and the main building slab are character-defining but the rear structure, which faces Ludlow Street, a service alley, is not. If the plaza is character-defining, infilling it with a structure would not satisfy Standard 2. However, the infill structure would be differentiated from and compatible with the massing and size of the historic building and would be reversible, satisfying Standards 9 and 10. If the rear structure is not considered character-defining, removing and replacing it with a differentiated yet compatible tower addition would satisfy Standards 2, 9, and 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff advocates for the compromise position proposed by the application and recommends approval in concept because it will promote the preservation of the main slab of the building, the primary expression of International House Philadelphia and its Brutalist architecture, while allowing for a feasible redevelopment of the idiosyncratic, inflexible building. Strict adherence to the Standards in this case will likely lead to a financial hardship application and the eventual loss of the entire building.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:08:25

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Matt Huffman and developers Alberto Smeke and Leo Addimando represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Addimando stated that CSC Coliving, the owner, and developer Alterra have been working for one year to redevelop the property with the goal of preserving the building. He noted that the building's preservation has proven to be challenging, adding that the interior is currently under renovation. He elaborated that the feasibility of the project is dependent on the owner's ability to add a retail structure at the front in the location of the existing sunken plaza with a larger building at the rear

along Ludlow Street. He commented that much thought went into designing additions that were distinctly separate from the original building but that were not so detached from the Brutalist architecture.

- Mr. Huffman explained that he attempted to contrast the historic building in design and color, though the materials have not yet been selected. He elaborated that there may be an opportunity to retain the perimeter plaza wall and to incorporate it into the retail space. At the Ludlow Street addition, he continued, the proposed design would be elevated two stories to allow people to congregate and for retail spaces. He added that he envisions people entering the building from the 37th Street walkway, which is located at the side of the building. He then explained the differences between the two options submitted as part of the application.
- Mr. Addimando clarified that the project would need the proper zoning approvals and that the current proposal is preliminary and has not been reviewed by neighbors or the councilwoman. He noted that those reviews would need to occur before the application comes back to the Historical Commission for final approval. He stated that his intention is not to contest the designation; however, without an approval of the front and rear additions, the owner will be forced to submit a hardship application. He explained that his statement is not intended to be threatening but that a real hardship would be created without the additional construction. He elaborated that the pandemic has exacerbated the issues they are facing with redeveloping the property. He noted that the intention is to create a co-living environment. Now, he continued, he believes the pandemic has permanently impaired this style of living accommodations.
- Ms. Gutterman stated that she accepts the massing at the rear but is very troubled by the massing along Chestnut Street and its impact on the appearance of the building. Though it would be a one-story addition, she continued, it overtakes the relationship of the historic building to the street. She added that she understands the need for retail but questioned whether there was an attempt to break up the solidity of the wall to create more openness, which would be more akin to the historic design. She called the Chestnut Street addition “heavy handed.”
 - Mr. Addimando responded that he does not disagree with Ms. Gutterman’s comments. He contended that the tiered concrete is largely obscured by trees, adding that he took great care to have the retail addition not extend higher than the first balcony. He argued that all the tiering at the front façade would remain intact and would be more visible than it is today with the removal of the trees and construction of a one-story addition. He remarked that his team struggled with the materials and that while glass and metal are more transparent, the paneled system is more complementary to the original building. He added that he is open to a design that is more transparent and less complementary to the Brutalist building, should the Committee make that recommendation. Mr. Addimando explained that the one-story addition needs to be tall enough to accommodate retail space while also accounting for mechanical space at the ceiling. He commented that the requirements are just barely accomplished by bringing the height to the first concrete tier, noting that no tier would be obstructed.
- Mr. Cluver stated that all views presented as part of the application show the building from a distance. He contended that when standing immediately in front of the building along Chestnut Street, there is currently a view into the plaza and building that would be lost with the addition. He argued that Brutalist architecture is about the object in space and that the relationship to space would be lost. He added that the

- addition is counter to the design intent. Mr. Cluver acknowledged the need for retail space and questioned whether the western portion of the current plaza could be built on, with the eastern portion remaining open. He then stated that the rear addition is very tight to the building and again causes the building to lose its spatial relationship. He did agree that an addition is possible at the rear. He stated the retail portion could fill the footprint of the existing auditorium, but questioned whether the tower could be pulled back to reveal the historic building. He then commented that he would support a taller tower that allows for views of the existing building's eastern edge.
- Mr. Addimando responded that the proposed building contains the minimum amount of square footage necessary to make the finances work. He argued against reducing the mass. He then stated that he had already considered Mr. Cluver's suggestion, explaining that the building would need to be 10 stories taller to capture the lost square footage. That scenario, he continued, makes the building cost 50% more per square foot to erect.
 - Mr. Cluver asked whether Mr. Addimando was suggesting that the construction type would need to be changed in order to add height to the building, and Mr. Addimando affirmed that that is the case.
 - Mr. McCoubrey agreed with Mr. Cluver's assertions that a portion of the existing building should be revealed.
 - Mr. Cluver asked if the rear addition could be shifted west to better reveal the northeast corner of the original building.
 - Mr. Huffman responded that it cannot be shifted to the west because the cooling tower is located in that spot.
 - Mr. McCoubrey noted that cooling towers can be moved and suggested that the corners of the original building should be revealed. He added that the Chestnut Street retail space could be limited to the west end of the plaza, leaving the east end open. He observed that the proposed blank wall on Chestnut Street would be detrimental to the pedestrian experience.
 - Mr. Addimando stated that they did explore reducing the size of the retail space, leaving the plaza open to the original entrance. He stated that the project would not be economically viable with the smaller retail space. He stated that there is not a way to leave any of the plaza open and created a viable retail space.
 - Mr. McCoubrey responded that the current configuration allows views into the building all along Chestnut Street.
 - Mr. Addimando disagreed, stating that the tall concrete wall at the sidewalk blocks views into the building at all places except for a 30-foot stretch in front of the entrance. The wall is taller than a pedestrian. It is very imposing.
 - Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the wall could be modified to reduce its adverse impact on pedestrians.
 - Mr. Addimando agreed that it could be modified, but noted that they plan to retain and reuse it because it is historic fabric.
 - Ms. Stein suggested that the proposed retail space could be moved within the existing building.
 - Mr. Addimando responded that the interior space is already programmed for back of house space for the retailer and also for an existing tenant. He stated that their analysis shows that they need an additional 15,000 sf of retail space to make the project work.
 - Mr. Cluver asked if the applicant has considered using federal historic preservation tax credits.

- Mr. Addimando responded that they looked very closely at tax credits and determined that they were not viable for this project. He stated that he has undertaken more than a dozen tax credit projects and is better equipped than any other developer in Philadelphia to leverage the tax credits, but they just do not work for this project.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that the applicant has no willingness to modify his design in any way.
 - Mr. Addimando disagreed and stated that he cannot redesign the basic volumes of the two additions and maintain a viable project, but he can adjust the exterior appearances of the volumes to suit the Historical Commission.
 - Mr. Detwiler responded that the plaza is a character-defining feature of the building and some portion of it should be left open. He noted that the Architectural Committee could support the rear tower, but would like to see some part of the plaza left open.
 - Mr. Addimando responded that he understands the Committee's position and is only presenting this plan because it is the only option that makes financial sense. He stated that he will not oppose the designation of the property if this plan is approved, but will have to oppose the designation or seek a hardship exemption for complete demolition if he cannot proceed with this plan. He stated that he is a supporter of historic preservation, but is forced into this proposal by the economic realities of the site.
 - Mr. Detwiler asked the applicants if they could add a two-story retail space on the western half of the plaza, leaving the eastern half open.
 - Mr. Addimando explained that that would adversely impact the exterior of the building, blocking windows and making the interior space unusable. He added that two-story retail space is not desirable. He stated that he has conferred with several possible tenants and none will accept a two-story space. He stated that they showed a design for a two-story space covering 60% of the plaza to retailers, but no one expressed interest in it.
 - Ms. Stein suggested placing the retail space under ground, below the plaza.
 - Mr. Addimando responded that retailers object to ramps and stairs. They want retail spaces at grade. He noted that they did study lowering the retail space below the current plaza level, but it did not work. He stated that they may be able to shave a few feet off the height of the retail box, but not six feet.
 - Ms. Stein and Mr. McCoubrey objected to the massing of the front retail box. Ms. Stein stated that she could accept the rear tower.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- George Poulin stated that he represents the University City Historical Society, which nominated the property with DOCOMOMO. He stated that he is frustrated that the designation process was not completed before an architectural application was reviewed. He noted that the nomination was submitted in August 2019. He stated that the building is the best example of Brutalism in the city. He stated that he has met with the former and current owner, but is unwilling to comment on the architectural merits of the proposed addition until the designation process is complete. He asked the Architectural Committee to consider all options, not just the one presented. He also suggested that the Committee look more closely at the economic viability of various schemes and not rely on the developer's assertions.

- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance stated that he too has met with the owners. He stated that the Preservation Alliance agrees with the Architectural Committee and does not object to the tower, but would like to see alternative designs for the retail space. He stated that he understands the need for an economically viable retail space, but would like the opportunity to see other possible designs.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites opposed the construction on the front plaza because it would overwhelm the historic building behind it. He stated that his organization does not oppose the rear tower.
- Kelly Wiles of the University City Historical Society concurred with George Poulin's comments.
- Allee Davis of DOCOMOMO stated that she agrees with the comments of the University City Historical Society and Preservation Alliance.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The rear auditorium section of the building is not a character-defining feature and may be removed without adversely impacting the historic character of the building.
- A rear tower of the proposed massing could be constructed without adversely impacting the historic character of the building.
- The front plaza is a character-defining feature and infilling it in its entirety would adversely impact the historic character of the building.
- A front retail space of the proposed massing could not be constructed without adversely impacting the historic character of the building.
- Depending on its design, a smaller retail space on the western half of the front plaza may not adversely impact the historic character of the building

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The massing of the rear tower addition satisfies Standard 9.
- The massing of the front retail addition does not satisfy Standard 9

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the concept of the massing of the rear tower addition, but denial of the concept of the massing of the front retail addition, pursuant to Standard 9.

ITEM:					
MOTION:					
MOVED BY:					
SECONDED BY:					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro					X
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	5				1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 01:53:25

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Architectural Committee are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the audio 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.