

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

**TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2015
ROOM 578, CITY HALL
DOMINIQUE HAWKINS, CHAIR**

PRESENT

Dominique Hawkins, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, chair
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP
Nan Gutterman, FAIA
Suzanne Pentz
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kim Broadbent, Historic Preservation Planner I
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner I

ALSO PRESENT

Harry Schwartz, Preservation Alliance
Jared Brey, PlanPhilly
Ryan Solimeo, Harman Deutsch Architects
James Campbell, Campbell Thomas & Co.
Nathaniel Hammitt
Jean Jang
Robert J. Shusterman, Esq., AIA

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Hawkins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mses. Gutterman, Pentz, and Stein and Mr. Cluver joined her.

ADDRESS: 1529 NORTH ST

Project: Construct residential building

Review Requested: Review and Comment

Owner: Linda Littlejohn & Apostolos Vardakis

Applicant: Rotciver Lebron, Harman Deutsch

History: vacant lot

Individual Designation: None

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

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a four-story, three-family dwelling with roofdecks and pilot houses on a vacant lot. The Commission's jurisdiction is limited to Review-and-Comment because the lot is considered an undeveloped site. The proposed building would be located between two newly constructed, three-story buildings. The proposed building would be clad in brick and feature a cast-stone base. At the first floor, the building would feature concrete steps to the front door and two casement windows, as well as large utility boxes. The upper floors would each feature three bays of fixed and casement windows within a metal panel system. The building would be capped with a Fypon cornice. The pilot houses, which would be set back 11'-2" from the front façade, would be clad in cement board. The rear of the property, which would be limited in visibility or completely invisible from N. Sydenham Street, would be clad in stucco.

STAFF COMMENT: The staff comments that the proposed construction is generally appropriate to the Spring Garden Historic District in terms materials, scale, and massing, pursuant to Standard 9, but encourages the applicant to install the utility meters out of sight from the public right-of-way.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architect Ryan Solimeo represented the application.

Mr. Solimeo noted that both PGW and PECO have approved an 18-inch cavity with a metal screen mesh covering, and asked whether the Historical Commission would approve of it. He noted that the utility companies have been resistant to allowing them to place any meters in the interior of the building. Ms. DiPasquale explained that the Historical Commission's staff frequently sends letters to PGW and PECO stating that a property is located in a historic district and asking them to allow for the placement of the meters in the interior of the building. She noted that the utility companies often comply. Mr. Solimeo responded that the builder would be happy to see the meters located in the interior of the property.

Ms. Hawkins noted an incongruity between the contemporary treatment of the windows and doors and the historic-looking bracketed cornice. Mr. Solimeo responded that the design was intended to be a compromise with the builder. He noted that a building is currently being constructed directly to the west, which looks to be very contemporary in style. The builder pushed for something contemporary, but the architects pushed for something that would be a little more contextual, Mr. Solimeo said he tried to take some cues from the newer building to the east. Ms. Hawkins responded that a molded cornice would be appropriately contextual, and that the cornice does not need to be bracketed like a historic cornice.

Mr. Cluver questioned how this building relates in height to the neighboring buildings, noting that, in Philadelphia, rows frequently share cornice height and shape. Mr. Solimeo responded that the proposed building should be close in height to the neighboring buildings, approximately

38 feet tall. Mr. Cluver suggested continuing the neighboring cornice across. Ms. Hawkins disagreed, noting that this building is four stories tall, while the neighboring buildings are three, so they might not align. Mr. Solimeo noted that, although the building is four stories, the floor-to-floor heights are shorter than the adjacent properties. He noted that the parapet may rise a bit taller. Mr. Cluver questioned the design of the side elevations, and whether the cornice should return onto the side elevations. Ms. Hawkins further questioned the proposed materials for the side elevations. Mr. Solimeo responded that, if the building does extend above the neighboring buildings, they would stucco the side walls. Ms. Hawkins clarified, and Mr. Solimeo confirmed, that the properties abut one another, and that there are no alleys between the properties.

Ms. Stein asked whether the front façade of the proposed building would be planar with the adjoining properties, and Mr. Solimeo responded that it would be. Mr. Solimeo presented the zoning plan showing the immediate context.

Ms. Hawkins noted that the proposed front door looks more institutional than residential, and that the proposed material for the door is not specified. Mr. Solimeo responded that the door was rendered poorly, and that the intention was to use a natural wood door with a large piece of glass.

Ms. Hawkins asked about the proposed windows. Mr. Solimeo responded that the first-floor windows are fixed, while the upper-floor windows include casements.

Mr. Cluver commented that the pilothouse is square, not sloped to follow the stairs. Ms. Hawkins noted that the pilothouse provides access from two directions.

Mr. Cluver questioned the proposed material above the cast-stone base, depicted in what appeared to be a stucco hatch pattern on the drawings. Mr. Solimeo responded that that is meant to depict a rough-finish to match the steps. He explained that the base capping would be an ornate piece constructed from the same material as the limestone base, while the tops of the steps would be poured concrete to match.

Mr. Cluver questioned the window well detail, the section of which, he noted, is shown extending above the sidewalk. Mr. Solimeo responded that the section shown is a standard Streets Department egress well, but that this application proposes a deeper well that allows the head of the window to be directly below the base of the building.

Ms. Hawkins asked if the coloration of the windows is accurate. Mr. Solimeo responded that the color shown is the color that they are seeking.

Mr. Cluver commented that, if the cornice line does come above the adjacent properties, it should turn back on itself a minimum of one foot or more. Ms. Stein noted that the additional information they received in the zoning plan shows the building at 38 feet plus a parapet, so it is likely that the building will extend above the neighboring properties.

Ms. Hawkins opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE COMMENT: The Architectural Committee commented that:

- the cornice should be simplified,
- the front façade brick and cornice should return a minimum of one foot on any exposed side elevations,
- the front door should be less institutional,

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- the color of all the cast or poured stone materials should be in the same family, and,
- the utility meters should be located in the basement or at least recessed and covered.

ADDRESS: 2022-24 CHANCELLOR ST AND 2026-30 CHANCELLOR ST, UNIT D

Project: Add garage opening at rear, restore windows and doors

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 2022 Chancellor Street LLC

Applicant: James Campbell, Campbell Thomas & Co.

History: 1890

Individual Designation: None

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

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to rehabilitate a dwelling that occupies a carriage house at 2022-24 Chancellor and one unit of the adjacent carriage house at 2026-30, which has been divided into condominiums. On the exterior, this application proposes to cut a garage in a rear façade as well as reopen and restore several windows and doors on both the front and rear facades. The new garage opening would be cut into the south or St. James Street façade, where a window is now located. This block of St. James Street is a service alley with numerous garages and surface parking pads. The carriage house includes two historic carriage openings that have been infilled, but could be reopened. The applicant does not propose to reopen those infilled historic openings because a garage in either of those locations would disrupt the floor plan. The Historical Commission has already approved two such garages in the carriage houses in question, setting a precedent for the proposed garage.

The application also proposes to restore a square window on the front façade that is buried behind the brick infill and restore the front and back doors using an historic door on the rear as a model. A three-part window on the rear would also be restored.

This building was altered without permits or approvals by a former owner, and is therefore in violation. The façade was painted green and the second-floor arched window was replaced with a vinyl window.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standards 6, 9, and 10, provided the building is brought into compliance by removing the paint and replacing the second-floor arched vinyl window with an appropriate window.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architect James Campbell and developer Robert Black represented the application.

Mr. Baron displayed the designation photograph of the second-floor front window to show that it had been illegally altered. He also showed a photograph of mock-up areas where the paint had been successfully removed and opined that the removal had not damaged the brick. He explained that the applicant has not proposed removing the illegal paint or replacing the illegal window.

The Committee first considered the proposed work to the front door, which would be reconstructed to its original size. Mr. Cluver suggested that it was likely originally a two-leaf door. Mr. Campbell explained that they are using an existing historic rear door as the model, but he admitted that that door is narrower. Ms. Hawkins expressed concern about the mismatch in

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the size of the panels and said that, as a two-leaf door, the panels would be narrower like those in the adjacent door.

The Committee then considered the window to the left of the door. There was some confusion about the window because the plans provided by the applicant were not consistent. Two different versions of the proposal were provided to the Committee members. Mr. Campbell explained that the original window, a six-pane sash, exists walled up behind an outer layer of brick. The area below that sash was cut out and a large show window installed. Mr. Campbell proposes a double hung window to extend down into the area that was cut out in order for the window to be low enough to be useful to people using the living room. Ms. Hawkins commented that the proposal was difficult to understand.

On the south elevation Mr. Campbell explained that they wish to cut a new garage entrance next to an existing garage entrance. The new garage entrance would partially replace an infilled window. It was noted that the Commission had previously approved a very similar garage entrance on this façade. Mr. Campbell explained how the proposed garage placement would be less disruptive to the floor plan. The Committee members asked that the window area near where the garage would be added be infilled with brick recessed about one inch to indicate the former window.

Regarding the paint removal, Mr. Campbell said that they had not proposed to remove the paint because they were not sure what they would find under the paint. Ms. Gutterman asked if the building was previously painted green. Mr. Campbell explained that it was previously beige. Ms. Gutterman asked if perhaps repainting it beige would be a compromise. Mr. Baron said that, when the Commission has allowed masonry to be painted, it has required it to be painted the color of the underlying material, in this case brick. Ms. Hawkins said that she thought that adding an additional non-breathable coating could be harmful. Ms. Hawkins questioned whether the Committee could add an element to the approval that was not part of the application. Mr. Baron said that the ordinance permits the Commission to condition approvals. Ms. Hawkins suggested that the Committee leave the illegal work to the Commission to address.

The Committee considered the boarded-up window on the south façade. Mr. Campbell said that he wishes to infill the boarded-up window with stucco and move all four mechanical vents to that location. He would then reinstall the metal grate over the opening. Ms. Hawkins asked the applicant to submit drawings that showed the current and proposed conditions including the vents.

The Committee members agreed that the garage was acceptable, owing to the previous Commission approval, which set a precedent.

Ms. Hawkins asked for public comment, of which there was none.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the application, with the staff to review details, provided:

- the paint is removed from both facades,
- the illegal arched window at the second-floor front façade is replaced with the correct historical window,
- real brick is installed with a one inch reveal where the window is infilled above the new garage opening,
- it is demonstrated that the arched window where the vents are proposed was infilled at the time of designation,

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- all louvers are recessed behind the grill, and,
- all new windows are wood.

ADDRESS: 1501-05 FAIRMOUNT AVE

Project: Remove ornamental feature from building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: J. Mark Kreider

Applicant: J. Mark Kreider

History: 1930; Overseas Motor Works; Samuel Brian Baylinson, architect

Individual Designation: 2/13/2015

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove an ornamental finial at the northwest corner of the tower. The finial is one of four that ornament the corner tower of this building. The finial is highly visible from the street and is a significant character-defining feature of the building. An engineer has stated that the finial is beyond repair. However, the same engineer initially told the staff that it could be repaired. The staff suggests that it should be repaired; if it cannot be repaired, it should be removed and a facsimile installed in its place.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, and 6.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Attorney and architect Robert Shusterman represented the application.

Mr. Shusterman referred the Committee to the letter by engineer Fred Baumert. The Committee members stated that they had not received the letter. Mr. Baron apologized for not distributing the letter with the application materials and provided copies of it to the Committee members. The Committee members read the letter.

The Committee members reviewed photographs provided by Mr. Shusterman and the staff to determine the visibility of the finial from the street. Mr. Shusterman directed the members to look at photographs that he provided, which he claimed showed that the finial is not visible from some points on the street. Mr. Shusterman provided some background. He said that, at the time of the designation of the building in February 2015, the owner did not know the poor condition of this northwest finial. The owner did express his concern with the condition of the cast stone panels making up the walls at the time of the designation. Ms. Hawkins reminded the applicant that J. Mark Kreider has owned the building for about 30 years and has an obligation to keep it in good repair. Mr. Shusterman remarked that the owner does not normally go up to the roof, but that subsequent to the designation he went up on the roof and drilled a hole into the finial to assess its condition. Mr. Shusterman displayed a video on his computer of the drilling into the finial. He acknowledged that Mr. Baumert, the engineer, had initially advised that the finial could be repaired, but changed his mind once he saw the video. After seeing the video, Mr. Baumert decided that the finial needed to be removed, not repaired. The Committee members decided that, based on the letter from Mr. Baumert, the finial cannot be repaired. Mr. Shusterman said that the applicant obtained pricing from the Masonry Preservation Group to remove the finial and store it on a pallet. That price was \$25,700. After receiving that estimate, Mr. Kreider, the owner, decided to propose demolishing the finial instead of repairing it. Mr. Shusterman claimed that working on the finial would require a road closure and a crane.

Mses. Hawkins and Stein expressed concern that other finials or parts of the building might also need repair. They asserted that the owner needs to develop a method to repair or replace failed elements on the building. Mr. Shusterman responded that the owner was told that repairing all the panels would cost \$300,000. In light of the cost, he would repair panels as he sees displacement. Mr. Shusterman stated that the owner has been assured that the other finials do not need repair at this time.

Ms. Hawkins asked for public comment. Harry Schwartz of the Preservation Alliance spoke in support of the staff recommendation of denial. He asserted that the finial should be repaired or replaced in kind.

Ms. Pentz and other Committee members agreed that the finial in question is visible from the street and is a character-defining feature of the building. They also agreed that, if it is beyond repair, it can be replaced either with cast stone or some other material such as glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) that replicates the appearance of the existing material and the shape of the finial. Mr. Shusterman asked if his client should replicate the original finial rather than the damaged one. The Committee members replied that the owner should restore the finial by replacing it with an accurate replica of the original finial. Mr. Cluver commented that, if the finial is dangerous, the applicants should address the dangerous condition immediately. Mr. Baron stated that the staff can always approve the removal of an imminently dangerous feature administratively, with the proviso that it is restored to its original condition within 12 months. Mr. Farnham clarified Mr. Cluver's statement, advising that, if the finial poses a danger, the owner should contact the Department of Licenses & Inspections and obtain the requisite approvals and permits to abate the dangerous condition. Mr. Farnham cautioned that the owner should not seek to abate the dangerous condition without involving the Department of Licenses & Inspections and obtaining the requisite approvals and permits.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the application as proposed, but approval of the removal of the finial, provided it is replaced within 12 months with a new finial that matches the original finial in appearance, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, and 6.

ADJOURNMENT

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES

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

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

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

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

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.