

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

**TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2025
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		
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
- Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons were present:

- Caleb Munson
- David Traub, Save Our Sites
- Derek Spencer, Gnome Architects
- Evan Litvin
- Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
- Jay Farrell
- Jeffrey Pond
- John Sofio
- Justin Bright
- Ken Acquaviva
- Markus Weidner
- Matt Fromboluti
- May Chang
- Qinghua Wang

Raymond Rola
Virgis Anusauskas

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, AND 158 N 2ND ST

Proposal: Demolish one building and rear portions of three buildings and construct six-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Balticorp, LLC

Applicant: Derek Spencer, Gnome Architects, LLC

History: c. 1800 (148), c. 1755 (150), c. 1925 (152)

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984 (148), 8/11/1982 (150)

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Contributing (148, 150, 152) and Non-Contributing (154, 156, 158), 12/12/2003

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes constructing a six-story building across six parcels in the Old City Historic District. Two of these parcels were individually designated, a third is Contributing to the district, and the remaining three properties are non-contributing to the district.

As proposed, the development calls for the full demolition of structure at 156 N. 2nd Street (non-contributing) as well as the rear portions of individually designated buildings at 148 and 150 N. 2nd Street and the Contributing building at 152 N. 2nd Street. The applicant proposes reconstructing the third floor and garret of the historic building at 148 N. 2nd Street, which were demolished sometime between 1915 and 1926.

The Historical Commission reviewed an in-concept version of this proposal in July and August and offered feedback but did not approve or deny the application.

The current proposal responds to comments from the Architectural Committee and the Historical Commission regarding the proposed massing, especially along Quarry Street, where the first two floors are clad in brick and the upper floors are set back and visually differentiated. This application proposes retaining the front 28 feet of the three historic buildings at 148, 150, and 152 N. 2nd Street and demolishing everything behind that line. It appears that the main block of the historic building at 148 N. 2nd Street may be deeper than 28 feet. The main block of the smaller historic building at 150 N. 2nd Street may also be deeper than 28 feet. To avoid invoking the demolition provision in the ordinance and satisfying preservation standards, the entireties of the main blocks of the historic buildings at 148 and 150 N. 2nd Street should be retained up to and including the rear walls. While the original proposal called for demolishing the entirety of the building at 152 N. 2nd Street, this revised proposal would apparently retain first 28 feet of the building. The overbuild would envelope the building at 152 N. 2nd Street and would be set back six feet from the front facade of the historic building.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish one non-contributing building and the rears of three contributing buildings
- Reconstruct the third floor and garret of the building at 148 N. 2nd Street
- Construct a six-story building

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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 will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - The proposal may call for demolition of a portion of the historic main block of the building at 148 N. 2nd Street. While the plans call for retaining the front 28 feet of the building at 152 N. 2nd Street, much of that material will be enveloped by the new building. The extent of demolition should be clarified and details provided which show how this building will be incorporated into the overbuild.
- *Standard 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
 - In the absence of contradictory evidence, it seems likely that the front block of the building at 148 N. 2nd Street extends past the 28-foot depth proposed for retention. Demolishing the rear of the main block and recreating the third floor and garret at this reduced depth would give a false sense of historical development.
- *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.*
 - The use of brick and maximum height are compatible with the immediate context within the historic district.
 - The proposed massing remains close to the rears of the historic buildings, but the design does attempt to break up the elevations to relate to the surrounding context.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends approval, provided that the entire historic main blocks of 148 and 150 N. 2nd Street are retained and the third floor and garret are reconstructed at 148 N. 2nd Street, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 3, and 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:03:26

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Derek Spencer of Gnome Architects represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Spencer responded to the staff recommendation, clarifying that the design team based the demolition plan on the rear of the front block of 150 N. 2nd Street. The team saw that gambrel roof as the prime historic resource of the historic buildings.
 - Mr. Spencer referred to comments by the Architectural Committee during the in-concept review about the Quarry Street elevation and highlighted the design choices which responded to those comments, including use of red brick on the first two stories and a single setback for the upper stories.

- Referring to the N. 2nd Street elevation, Mr. Spencer explained the design choices that had been made to step the massing of the development up from the historic buildings at the corner to the neighboring contemporary building. He highlighted how the window designs were intended to assist with the transition between these buildings and cited the surrounding context for the factory-style windows on the main massing of the proposed building.
- Mr. Cluver opined that the application lacks detail, including a thorough demolition plan and documentation of the existing conditions of the historic structures. While he concluded that the application, as submitted, was incomplete, Mr. Cluver offered feedback on the documents that were included.
 - Mr. Cluver supported the proposed reconstruction of the upper floors of 148 N. 2nd Street but had questions about the specifics of the proposal. He pointed to the proportions of the third floor, suggesting that it should have a lower ceiling height, with the cornice closer to the top of the windows. He asked for specifics on the profile proposed for the reconstruction of the cornice, the dormer, and the storefront. Mr. Cluver observed that the angle of the roof would also be affected by the proposed shortening of the main block of 148 N. 2nd Street to 28 feet in depth.
- Mr. Detwiler agreed that the application lacks detail and that shortening the main block of 148 N. 2nd Street would render the reconstruction inaccurate in many ways. He noted that attempts to remove the stucco on the Quarry Street elevation may offer information about the location of historic windows and the true depth of the main block of the building.
 - Mr. Detwiler criticized the choice to rebuild the existing walls of the building at 148 N. 2nd Street, especially given the existing Flemish bond brickwork with glazed headers on the front elevation. He suggested cleaning and retaining the front-façade brick.
 - He encouraged the applicants to restore the grocer's alley as part of work to the first-floor storefront.
 - Mr. Detwiler also suggested that the dormer appears to be oversized and that the window and surrounding dormer should maintain the historic ratio.
- Turning to the proposed rehabilitation of 152 N. 2nd Street, Mr. Detwiler noted that the proposed rebuilt parapet resembles neither the existing condition nor the parapet seen in the historic photograph. He also suggested that the proposed storefront for that building should be reduced in width to keep the pilasters symmetrical. Mr. Detwiler asked if there was a reason for the change to the parapet.
 - Mr. Spencer replied that it was an aesthetic choice based on the client's preference.
- Mr. McCoubrey echoed his colleagues' objections to the proposed demolition of the rear of 148 N. 2nd Street and noted that he was open to there being less of a gap between the new building and the rear of the historic building if that enabled the retention of the historic main block.
 - Mr. Spencer noted that the footprint of the historic buildings has constrained the development team, as they take up significantly to zoning coverage calculations. Retaining the full rear of 148 N. 2nd Street would require them to alter the footprint elsewhere.
- Mr. McCoubrey sought clarification that the elevations that are predominantly clad in dark charcoal panels are not visible from the public right-of-way.
 - Mr. Spencer confirmed that those are not visible from the street.
- Mr. Detwiler thanked the architect for his work on this project, particularly in

- diversifying the massing of the proposed building to fit the surrounding context.
- Mr. Cluver offered some comments about the portion of the new building next to 152 N. 2nd Street. He suggested that the arch on the first and second floors should be scaled to align with the portion of the building above rather than breaking the visual line established by the corner of the six-story portion of the building just to the north of it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Markus Weidner, a neighbor, thanked the architects for their work and described the proposal as much improved. He suggested that an alabaster brick may be more appropriate than the proposed metal panels.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites suggested that the proposal could be a positive model for future development around historic buildings. He suggested making the color palette of the building more homogenous.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The main block of 148 N. 2nd Street should be retained in its entirety, to preserve historic material and enable a more accurate reconstruction of the upper floors.
- Many of the details of the proposed reconstruction should be refined based on available research, including the proportions of the third floor and its windows, the slope of the roof, and the detailing of the chimneys.
- The existing brick on the front elevation of 148 N. 2nd Street should be retained.
- The parapet at 152 N. 2nd Street should be restored to its documented historic appearance.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application lacks sufficient detail, particularly around the demolition, restoration, and reconstruction of the historic structures.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, owing to incompleteness.

ITEM: 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, and 158 N 2nd St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: Lukachik					
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	6				1

ADDRESS: 1629-37 S 28TH ST

Proposal: Legalize removal of and remove remaining stained-glass windows; install windows

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1629-37 S 28th Street, LLC

Applicant: Raymond Rola, Raymond F. Rola, Architect

History: 1902; John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church; T.P. Lonsdale, architect

Individual Designation: 7/6/1972

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove the stained-glass windows on the north, east, and south elevations of the church building at 1629-37 S. 28th Street and install new aluminum framed windows in their places. The new windows will fill the existing masonry openings and be comprised of various combinations of fixed pane, sash, and awning windows all with clear glass. New wood brickmolds that will approximate the general proportions and appearance of the historic ones will also be installed. Located at the southwest corner of S. 28th Street and Morris Street, the former John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church historically featured wood-framed, stained-glass windows with Gothic arches and tracery. In July 2025, the historic stained-glass windows were removed from the side elevations of the church as part of a project to convert it into apartments as the windows were deteriorated and not compatible with the new intended use of the building. This removal occurred without review by the Historical Commission. Historic stained-glass windows with wood brickmolds and gothic tracery remain in the rear elevation openings, though in a deteriorated condition.

In addition, historic stained-glass windows were also removed from the front façade of the property in approximately 2014 without the Historical Commission's review or approval and were replaced with a combination of inappropriate new vinyl windows and infill panels. The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) issued a violation for that work in 2017 at the request of the Historical Commission. The violation remained unresolved, and records indicate that L&I closed it in January 2025 owing to its age, though no attempts were ever made to correct the incompatible windows and infill. The current building owner did not own the property in 2017 when the violation was issued but did purchase the property in 2022, when the violation was still open. Property certificates PC-2022-017337 and PC-2024-009874, issued in 2022 and 2024 respectively, did document the open violations for the illegal windows and infill. The current application does not address the non-compliant front windows and infill panels.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Remove historic stained-glass windows
- Install new windows

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *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.*
 - The new windows will fit the existing masonry openings, and the arches will be filled with fixed pane arched windows to match, but the proposed arrangement of sashes and panes does not closely match the design of the historic windows. The new windows could satisfy Standard 6, provided the design of the panes is simplified and more closely aligns with that of the historic windows and new

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brickmolds are made to match the surviving ones in the rear openings. In addition, the surviving stained-glass windows should be salvaged and stored in a safe location and, if possible, one window with brickmolds and tracery should be restored and left in place.

- *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.*
 - The new windows will be differentiated from the old and are compatible with the materials, features, size, scale, and proportions of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided that the details are updated to more closely align with the historic design, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. Approval of this application will not legalize the non-compliant windows at the front section of the building.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:40:51

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Raymond Rola represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Rola commented that the front facade windows had already been replaced when the current owners purchased the property. He added that the building has a lot of different window forms and types and the submitted drawings are based on drawings he did on the existing window conditions. When he first surveyed the windows, the stained glass was still extant in the side sanctuary windows in a variety of different conditions. In order to reuse the building for residences, the stained glass needed to be removed. Some of the original windows will be retained in areas where they do not need to be operable. He also added that he had surveyed the condition of the jambs on the side sanctuary windows, and the proposed new moldings reflect that and new brickmolds will be added in wood with the aluminum window system installed behind them.
- Mr. Cluver asked about the installation details. He pointed out the addition of an extra sill and a taller proposed bottom rail. He asked if those elements were aiming to match existing conditions.
 - Mr. Rola responded that the old sills and bottom rails were no longer fully extant when he made his drawings, so he cannot say whether they would match exactly, but they definitely will need to add some blocking on top of the wood sills to install the aluminum windows.
 - Mr. Cluver acknowledged the need to change out the old stained-glass windows to be able to reuse the building but noted that he is concerned that the details on the new windows are done well, especially with regard to the sizes and proportions of the stiles, rails and other window elements. Often, when new window systems are inserted into buildings like this one, they look a little bigger and “chunkier” than the originals. He emphasized aiming to keep as much clear window area as possible.

- Mr. Rola responded that there are two situations with frame thickness with this project. Where they are proposing a fixed pane, the framing can be thinner than where they are proposing operable panels or double-hung windows. In addition, the general installation plan requires nailing an aluminum flange to the blocking to create a seal and then installing the jamb molding over that.
- Mr. Cluver suggested that the window manufacturer can likely provide clever solutions to details like the ones being discussed.
- Mr. Detwiler agreed with Mr. Cluver regarding trying to keep the new windows as thin as possible.
- Mr. Cluver additionally pointed out one of the existing windows as recorded on the drawings and questioned its arrangement and framing.
- Mr. McCoubrey inquired about the staff recommendation and its concern about the proposed new window light configuration compared to the original window patterns.
 - Mr. Till responded that the arrangements of panes on the original windows were difficult to fully make out both because some of them were already removed and the extant windows are covered with a metal protecting grating, making current conditions difficult to observe. That part of the staff recommendation was intended to ensure that the new arrangement of fixed pane, double-hung, and awning windows will match the historic windows as closely as possible.
 - Mr. McCoubrey agreed that it is important to get the details right on this project.
 - Mr. Cluver suggested that it would be good to get some photographs of the window details with the metal grates removed submitted for the Historical Commission's records.
- Ms. Lukachik asked about the front-facade windows that were replaced by an earlier owner and whether the Historical Commission is pursuing enforcement efforts.
 - Mr. Rola responded that they are not in the scope of work for this application.
 - Mr. Farnham explained that this application is not proposing to legalize the front windows and that this application should be reviewed on its own merits. In addition, the Historical Commission's staff is looking into whether enforcement for the front windows will be possible given the amount of time that has passed since the first violation was issued and the change in ownership.
- Mr. Cluver commented that he is happy to see this building being put back to use.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The historic stained-glass windows are incompatible with a new residential use of the property.
- Some of the original stained-glass windows have already been removed, while others remain.
- The details of the new windows should be based on the proportions and design of the historic windows.
- Historic stained-glass windows were removed from the front façade in the past by a previous owner and this application will not legalize any violations related to those windows.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The new windows will satisfy Standard 6, provided the details of their design are

- adjusted to more closely align with those of the historic windows.
- The new windows are differentiated from the old and are compatible with the materials, features, size, scale, and proportions of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the details of the windows are adjusted to more closely align with the historic design and that photographs of the surviving window details taken after the grates are removed are submitted to the Historical Commission, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

ITEM: 1629-37 S 28th St MOTION: Approval MOVED BY: Cluver 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				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	6				1

ADDRESS: 1830 RITTENHOUSE SQ, UNIT 1A

Proposal: Replace windows

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: London Real Estate, LLC

Applicant: Lea Litvin, Lo Design

History: 1913; Wetherill Apartment House; Frederick Webber, architect

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, daniel.shachar-krasnoff@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The owner of Unit 1A on the first floor of this condominium building proposes to replace the windows by removing three historic casement windows with large wood mullions and replacing them with undivided picture windows. One window is on the Rittenhouse Square façade and two are on the S. 19th Street façade.

Since the building was designated, the staff has approved nine applications for replacement of windows at 1930 Rittenhouse that match the original in design, materials and dimensions. In 1995 the Historical Commission denied installation of a picture window in Unit 14A. In 2002, the Architectural Committee recommended denial of a picture window that was part of a larger application at Unit 15A. While reviewing that application, the Historical Commission initially voted to approve the project, including the picture window, but then sought to revise the motion and deny the picture window, the Commission's legal counsel advised against reversing the decision. Several units in the building have picture windows. Most were installed before the

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designation of the historic district in 1995; others may have been installed illegally since that time.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Remove three casement windows and install large picture windows.

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 materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
 - The project would remove character-defining features, distinctive large original casement windows.
- *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.*
 - The proposed windows will not match the historic windows in design.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 58:30

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Shachar-Krasnoff presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architects Evan Litvin and Caleb Munson represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Litvin stated that Unit 1A is a commercial condominium unit and will be used as an office. He stated that the owner selected the unit owing to its views of Rittenhouse Square. He suggested that the existing wood windows are very deteriorated, and the proposed replacement windows satisfy Standard 6. Mr. Litvin noted that the Historical Commission did not approve the adjacent windows when they were changed from casements to picture windows; yet, with so many picture windows having been installed on the building, the visual impact of new picture windows at Unit 1A will be minimal, satisfying Standard 2.
- Mr. Cluver questioned if all of the windows in the first-floor unit adjacent to Unit 1A were replaced in the past, or if only the casement windows were replaced.
 - Mr. Litvin responded that he does not know.
- Mr. Cluver stated that new windows in Unit 1A will need to be highly consistent with the appearance of the adjacent windows. He expressed concern that the new picture windows may not be detailed to match the remaining adjacent historic windows.
 - Mr. Litvin replied that the proposal is to match the detailing of the existing casement windows except to omit the center mullion.
- Mr. Cluver asked about the wood species proposed for the new windows.
 - Mr. Litvin responded that he did not know which species of wood is proposed for the new windows.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that repair of existing windows, rather than replacement, most adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He noted that the removal or

replacement with windows of a different design gives a false sense of the historic appearance of the building. He concluded that he agrees with the staff's recommendation of denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 6.

- Mr. Detwiler noted that the first-floor windows are visibly prominent compared to upper-floor windows. He expressed opposition to the installation of a picture window when the Historical Commission has not previously approved this type of window on this building where the historic window was a double casement. He noted the lack of detail in the application materials in terms of comparing the existing window with the proposed window. He recommended repair rather than replacement of the existing windows, noting that new wood species are less durable than old growth wood.
- Mr. Cluver stated that the applicant needs to document the existing condition of the historic windows for the Historical Commission's review.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The windows in Unit 1A of the condominium building at 1830 Rittenhouse Square appear to be original.
- No documentation was provided showing that the existing windows are in a deteriorated condition.
- The first-floor windows are prominently located across from Rittenhouse Square.
- The Historical Commission did not approve any of the existing picture windows on the building.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 2 because original material is proposed for removal.
- The application fails to satisfy Standard 6 because the proposed windows will not match the historic windows in design.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 6.

ITEM: 1830 Rittenhouse Sq., Unit 1A MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Detwiler 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	6				1

ADDRESS: 1919 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Paint brownstone façade

Review: Final Review

Owner: 1919 Walnut Street Associates

Applicant: John Sofio, Built, Inc.

History: 1870

Individual Designation: None.

District Designation: Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Josh Schroeder, joshua.schroeder@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes painting front façade features of 1919 Walnut Street, a contributing property in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District. The applicant proposes applying Sherwin Williams Charcoal Blue paint to the building's brownstone base as well as to the steps, windows, and cornice. No changes are proposed to the brick façade on the second and third stories or the slate on the mansard roof. The brownstone appears to have been painted brown prior to designation of the property. The original steps were removed without the Historical Commission's approval by a previous owner but were stuccoed and painted to match the surrounding brownstone in 2012 to bring the property back into compliance.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Repaint brownstone and other painted features of front façade with Sherwin Williams Charcoal Blue paint.

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 will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - The brownstone of the front façade is currently a historically appropriate color; repainting the brownstone and front steps blue would alter the building's historic appearance and would not satisfy Standard 2.
- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires the replacement of a distinctive feature, the new features will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
 - Repainting brownstone in a dark blue color does not match the historic appearance of brownstone, and therefore this application fails to satisfy Standard 6.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial of repainting of brownstone and other masonry in Charcoal Blue, but approval of painting any wood features, pursuant to Standards 2 and 6.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:11:02

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Schroeder presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- John Sofio of Built, Inc., a design-build company, represented the application.

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DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Stein stated that building's façade appeared to be in good condition and questioned the need for repainting.
 - Mr. Sofio explained that his client found the current color drab and depressing.
- Ms. Gutterman explained that painting masonry traps vapor causing the stone to deteriorate. She stated that removing the paint would be the best approach if the stone's condition were known
- Mr. Detwiler agreed and added that masonry, even when painted, should resemble the stone. Painting would only be recommended if the masonry's current condition needed protection. Personal preference is not sufficient to repaint. He also stated that the submission needed more information about the proposed paint.
- Mr. Cluver and other Architectural Committee members discussed which other features should be painted. They explained to Mr. Sofio that the wood window frames and cornice could be painted to protect the wood, but the stone lintels and sills and other masonry features should not be painted because the paint will trap moisture and cause deterioration.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The building's brownstone façade is painted brown, which is the appropriate color, in that it reflects the color of the original material. While masonry should never be painted, the current paint does not appear to be causing deterioration.
- The front-façade windows have wood frames as well as stone lintels and sills. Wood can and should be painted to protect it, but masonry including stone should not.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The proposal to repaint the brownstone a blue color would alter the historic character of the historic building and therefore fails to satisfy Standard 2.
- The application does not demonstrate that the masonry's condition has deteriorated to a point that warrants repainting and therefore fails to satisfy Standard 6.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of repainting of brownstone and other masonry, but approval of painting any wood features, pursuant to Standards 2 and 6.

ITEM: 1919 Walnut St MOTION: Denial for painting masonry, and approval for painting wood features MOVED BY: Cluver 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				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	6				1

ADDRESS: 3629 AND 3631 WARREN ST

Proposal: Apply stucco to brick facades and mansards

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Qinghua Wang

Applicant: May Chang

History: 1878

Individual Designation: none

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

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes applying stucco to the brick facades and mansard roofs of the rowhouses at 3629 and 3631 Warren Street. These two properties are in a row that stands on the southern boundary of the Powelton Village Historic District. This row is the last remnant of the Black Bottom neighborhood, which was largely demolished during the 1950s and 1960s urban renewal of the University City area. The owner is rehabilitating both properties and would like the front of the buildings to match the front of the building at 3627 Warren Street. The building at 3631 Warren Street is painted a gray-black color and the building at 3629 Warren Street is the only building on this block with its red brick still exposed, although the window openings have been significantly altered. As this row was only recently designated, there have been many alterations to the buildings in the row. This is the first substantial undertaking on this block that has been proposed since the designation of the historic district. The Historical Commission has already approved an interior demolition permit application for both properties and a window replacement permit application for 3631 Warren Street.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Apply stucco to brick facades and mansard roofs.

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.

- Applying stucco to the exterior of these buildings will forever alter their appearance. It would be very difficult to remove the stucco at a later date without damaging the historic brick.
- **Building Exterior, Masonry Guidelines:**
 - **RECOMMENDED:** *Applying new or non-historic surface treatments such as water-repellent coatings to masonry only after repointing and only if masonry repairs have failed to arrest water penetration problems.*
 - **NOT RECOMMENDED:** *Applying waterproof, water repellent, or non-historic coating such as stucco to masonry as a substitute for repointing and masonry repairs. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive, and may change the appearance of historic masonry as well as accelerate its deterioration.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Masonry Guidelines. The staff recommends removing the gray-black paint on 3631 Warren Street, and repointing as necessary, and repairing and pointing the masonry at 3629 Warren in lieu of stucco. The staff recommends against stuccoing the mansard roofs but instead repairing and reroofing them with asphalt shingles.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:24:54

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Hendrickson presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Property owner Qinghua Wang and project manager May Chang represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Wang, the property owner, spoke about his proposal to apply stucco to the front facades of 3629 and 3631 Warren Street. He noted that his goal was not to diminish the historic character of the neighborhood, but to preserve and enhance it. He noted that his main goal was to ensure that the houses remain visually consistent with the surrounding streetscape. He explained that the exterior bricks are too deteriorated for patching or pointing to be effective and that leaving them bare would accelerate deterioration. As a material, Mr. Wang opined that stucco was a historically appropriate and reversible solution that would protect the underlying masonry and extend the buildings' lifespans. He concluded that a stucco application would be a compromise that would balance preservation and protection.
- Ms. Lukachik noted that there are great details on the building with the exposed brick, 3629 Warren Street. She stated that historic brick buildings are very durable and do not need to be stuccoed, provided that they are properly maintained. She opined that with some brick replacements, repointing, and other measures, the building would perform better. She stated that stucco was not the right way to protect and preserve the brick building.
- Mr. Detwiler asked if the Historical Commission's staff could identify the original roofing material or if they had uncovered any historic photographs. He suggested that the original material would have been slate.
 - Ms. Hendrickson said she could not find any historic photographs of the properties.
- Mr. Detwiler postulated that with the visible firebreaks between the roofs, there could have been a strong cornice line and the material above the cornice was not meant to

be stucco, but slate. He noted that if slate were out of the budget or not necessary to replicate, asphalt shingle that gave the look of slate would suffice. He also agreed with Ms. Lukachik that the brick looked to be in good condition, and he added that the gray paint on 3631 looked to be failing so it might not be difficult to remove. He argued that these properties could provide a model for the block.

- Mr. Cluver commented that the properties were historically designated to prevent the kind of proposal presented in the application.
- Mr. Cluver asked the Historical Commission's staff if only one window application had been reviewed and approved from the applicant and pointed to the fact that all the windows had been removed from both properties.
 - Ms. Hendrickson noted that window replacement applications have been approved for both properties.
 - Mr. Detwiler said that the window replacement might provide an opportunity to remove the infill brick at the windows, which did not match the historic brick.
- Mr. Detwiler noted that the dormers also looked to be recently rebuilt. He asked Ms. Hendrickson if the staff had reviewed that work.
 - Ms. Hendrickson answered that the staff had only received the window replacement application and did not review reframing the windows.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The two buildings could be better preserved without the addition of stucco by replacing deteriorated brick, removing paint, and repointing the brick joints.
- The roof should not be stuccoed, but instead should be repaired

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9 or the Masonry Guidelines.

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

ITEM: 3629 and 3631 Warren St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Cluver 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				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	6				1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:41:37

ACTION: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:42 a.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.