

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

**TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2024  
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM  
DAN MCCOUBREY, CHAIR**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following Committee members joined him:

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

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  
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III  
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons were present:

Ann Nevel  
Anne McNiff  
Ashley Maass, Chestnut Hill Conservancy  
Bill Klotz  
Danny McGoldrick  
Jake Blumgart  
Carla Robinson  
Catherine Rooney  
Celeste Hardester  
Chwen-Ping  
Ciara Schuster  
David Lo  
David Traub, Save Our Sites  
Eileen Javers

Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance  
John Weckerly, Boxwood Architects  
Laura Holland  
Laura Lucas  
Leah Silverstein  
Linda Baldwin  
Lori Salganicoff, Chestnut Hill Conservancy  
Matthew McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Michael Phillips, Esq., Klehr Harrison  
Patricia Cove  
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance  
Robert Fleming  
Roy Aharonovich  
Stephanie Magagna, Esq., Klehr Harrison  
Susan Fleming  
Zamir Garcia, Morrissey Design

## **AGENDA**

### **ADDRESS: 1423 SPRUCE ST**

Proposal: Demolish non-contributing building; construct seven-story building  
Review Requested: Final Approval  
Owner: K of C Federal Credit Union  
Applicant: David Lo  
History: 1980; K of C Federal Credit Union; Arthur Basciano, architect  
Individual Designation: None  
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District, Non-contributing, 2/8/1995  
Staff Contact: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, daniel.shachar-krasnoff@phila.gov

### **BACKGROUND:**

This application seeks final approval for the construction of a seven-story, mixed-use building with ground floor commercial space and apartments on floors two to seven. The existing two-story building was constructed in 1980 and is non-contributing to the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District. Demolition of the existing building can be approved without a finding of financial hardship or public necessity. The Historical Commission has full jurisdiction over the proposed construction.

The Historical Commission has considered proposals for this project twice. At the January 2024 meeting the Commission concluded that a seven-story height was appropriate with sufficient setbacks, light-colored cladding of upper stories, and compatible design details. The proposed eight-foot setback from the fourth to the seventh stories was deemed insufficient. The Historical Commission denied the most recent proposal at its May 2024 meeting due to incompleteness.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of proposals at the September, October, and December 2023 meetings. The applicant withdrew the September and October proposals prior to Historical Commission's meeting at which they would have been reviewed.

The newly revised proposal again calls for a 75-foot-tall building and pilot house, in the middle of the 1400 block of Spruce Street, the primary elevation, and the 1400 block of Bach Place, the secondary elevation. The graduated setbacks increase with each story beginning at 10 feet on

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 JULY 2024**

**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV**

**PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

the fourth story to 25 feet at the seventh story. The ground floor commercial storefront is contemporary in design and is brick, unlike previous versions with a metal system. The second to seventh stories of the Spruce Street façade feature three bays with a contemporary window design. The fourth-story balcony is formed by a sloped roof matching the contributing building to the east. Floors four to seven on the east and west elevations will be clad in metal panels with varying colors while the west elevation has two light wells that reduce the visual impact of the metal panels.

All buildings on the north side of the 1400 block of Spruce Street and the south side of the 1400 block of Bach Place, except for the easternmost parcel, are within the Rittenhouse Fittler Historic District and all but one is contributing. These buildings are three-and-one-half stories tall, except for the western-most structure, which is 19 stories tall. At the east end of the block, the 20-story Atlantic Building is not within the historic district. The contemporary Kimmel Center on the south side of Spruce Street is also not within the district. There is little historically significant context fronting Bach Place; only one building's primary facade fronts this street.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Construct seven-story 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 that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
  - o The Historical Commission's guidance is addressed with the significantly increased setbacks of the upper stories.
  - o The use of red brick, fenestration pattern and matching cornice on the first three stories creates compatibility with the block's contributing buildings.
  - o The contemporary design of windows on the first three stories, storefront design and colorful metal panels on the upper stories of the east and west facades clearly differentiates the building from contributing buildings on the 1400 block of Spruce Street.
  - o The application meets Standard 9.
- *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.*
  - o The proposed building could be removed from the historic site in the future, leaving all surrounding contributing structures intact; therefore, the proposal meets Standard 10.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends approval, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:03:41

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Shachar-Krasnoff presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Developer David Lo and architect Chwen-Ping Wang represented the application.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 JULY 2024**

**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV**

**PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

## DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cluver intoned that the colorful pattern on the party walls draws attention from the front brick facade that seeks to harmonize with the historic context.
  - o Mr. Chwen-Ping noted that the colors are understated and based upon those of nearby buildings.
  - o Mr. Lo expressed a willingness to remove colored panels on the east and west facades.
- Mr. Cluver suggested continuing the brick on the first three stories of the front facade continued onto the gable end at the fourth story.
- o Mr. Detwiler observed the need for design elements on the tall east and west facades.
- o Mr. McCoubrey opined that reveals or shadow lines can be used create visual interest. Color is not the only way.
- o Ms. Gutterman suggested varying the width of the metal panels to increase the visual interest on the side facades.
- Ms. Gutterman wondered about the location of the HVAC equipment.
  - o Mr. Lo said that the condensers would be located on the roof.
- Mr. Detwiler expressed concern that the application lacks details regarding upper-story windows and the commercial storefront. The facade is flat without reveals or shadow lines. He suggested supplementing the application for the Historical Commission. It should include window installation details and other construction documents.
- Mr. D'Alessandro echoed this concern, particularly regarding the transom windows on the storefront and the large blank space between the first and second stories.
- Mr. D'Alessandro wondered about the type of gutter system.
  - o Mr. Chwen-Ping said these details will be provided.
- Mr. McCoubrey encouraged the applicant to provide greater details such as the cornice, windowsills, and lintels.
- Mr. D'Alessandro argued that the brick color of the proposed building match that of the adjacent building to the west.
  - o Mr. Chwen-Ping agreed.
- Mr. Cluver intoned that he will never support a seven-story building at this location.
- Ms. Stein agreed with Mr. Cluver.
  - o Mr. Chwen-Ping stated that the increase in setback of upper stories from previous designs was done to minimize the impact of the height on the streetscape.
- o Mr. McCoubrey and Mr. Detwiler suggested aligning the fourth and fifth stories.
  - o Mr. Chwen-Ping expressed interest in pursuing that design change.
  - o Mr. Lo noted that the sightline study showed that pedestrians will have difficulty seeing the upper stories from across the street.
- Mr. Detwiler observed that the rendering looking east is accurate and therefore the upper stories will be prominently visible if the building is executed as shown.
- Ms. Stein suggested setting back the building to the line of the penthouse, so it appears as a separate structure behind the three-story section.
  - o Mr. Lo noted that the building at 262 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street was approved, and it is similar in form to what is being proposed.
- o Mr. Detwiler said the context makes the proposal at 1423 Spruce Street more visible than the project at 262 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that the 262 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street has a four-story base and three

stories of setbacks while the proposed project has a three-story base and four setback stories.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance spoke in favor of the project. He noted that the non-contributing south side of the block aspects the block lessens the impact of the new building on the north side. Also, the new building is a more appropriate than the poorly designed non-contributing building it will replace. He finished by stating the proposal provides an opportunity to increase residential density.
- David Traub represented Save Our Sites. He intoned that the project represents progress in the evolution of the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District. He supports using expansion joints to increase the visual appeal of the side facades. He also suggested that the three-story base could be more finely detailed.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The existing building at 1423 Spruce Street is non-Contributing to the Historic District.
- The proposed building at 1423 Spruce Street is seven-stories tall.
- The proposed plans are lacking in detail.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The height of the proposed building is too great for the context; therefore, the proposal fails to satisfy Standard 9.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial.

|                                  |     |    |         |        |        |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>ITEM: 1423 Spruce St</b>      |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOTION: Denial</b>            |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Cluver</b>          |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>VOTE</b>                      |     |    |         |        |        |
| 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: 1108 S FRONT ST**

Proposal: Legalize addition and roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Lauren Revak

Applicant: William Klotz, Restoration Development Group

History: 1800

Individual Designation: 3/30/1965

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, [theodore.maust@phila.gov](mailto:theodore.maust@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** Between December 2023 and March 2024, a significant addition was constructed at the rear of 1108 S. Front Street without a building permit or the Historical Commission's review or approval. The Historical Commission did approve interior demolition and make-safe permit applications in August and December 2023, respectively, but those permits did not cover the new construction. When a Historical Commission staff member visited the site, he saw that the unpermitted addition was under construction despite a Stop Work Order issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections on 9 February 2024. A similar application for legalization was reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission earlier this year, which was denied pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

This new application includes elevation views of the addition and proposes a rear balcony and spiral stair to replace the pilot house which was constructed without Historical Commission approval. This application also proposes replacing the solid wall around the roof deck with a black metal railing. Current photographs show removal of front façade windows and alteration of the front dormer and cornice, for which restoration details are not provided.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Remove pilot house; legalize rear addition, roof deck, and work to front façade.

**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.*
  - o The rear addition is very large in comparison to the historic structure. Removing the pilot house is an improvement, but the roof deck is still very visible from the public right-of-way and changes the established spatial relationships of the property.
  - o A two-story addition with a roof deck on the rear ell rather than the main block may be able to satisfy this Standard.
- *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.*
  - o From the submitted floor plans, it appears that at least some of the existing rear walls were demolished without the Historical Commission's approval.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Denial, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10 and owing to incompleteness.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 JULY 2024**

**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, [PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV](mailto:PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV)**

**PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:47:10**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Contractor Bill Klotz and developer Danny McGoldrick represented the application.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Cluver commented that from what he had seen, it seemed that all of the work to the front facade could be reviewed at the staff level.
- Mr. Detwiler noted that the property to the south appears to have the oldest cornice in the row and should be replicated.
- Ms. Gutterman noted that the bulk of the addition would likely not have been approved if the applicant had come to the Historical Commission before constructing it.
  - o Mr. Klotz alleged that nearby houses were built to the same scale.
- Mr. McCoubrey sought to clarify that this application only proposes removing the pilot house and the solid rail around the roof deck.
  - o Mr. Klotz confirmed that the Historical Commission's staff had highlighted those as the chief problems, and that they were proposing a metal rail around the roof deck and a cantilevered platform at the rear to give access to the roof deck by a spiral stair.
  - o Mr. McGoldrick contended that the rear deck and spiral stairs were suggested by the Architectural Committee at the previous review.
  - o Ms. Stein commented that any access to the roof deck should be within the footprint of the addition rather projecting at the rear, whether by some roof hatch or within a third-floor setback.
- Mr. Klotz asked if the Committee would recommend approval if the roof deck were removed.
  - o Ms. Stein commented that the application's drawings do not include the surrounding built context or depict what the building would look like without the roof deck, making it difficult for the Architectural Committee to evaluate the proposal.
  - o Mr. Detwiler noted that the Architectural Committee is not able to strike deals and stated that the roof deck is "a challenge" and that the rear deck and spiral stair is not something that the Architectural Committee would typically approve. He reiterated that the front facade details should be worked out with the staff, with special care given considering that the property was individually designated in the Historical Commission's early years. Finally, Mr. Detwiler objected to the materials of the rear addition's cladding.
  - o Ms. Gutterman concurred that the application as presented does not include sufficient detail for the Architectural Committee to have confidence in the end product.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The rear addition remains larger than an addition that would satisfy the Standards.
- The rear addition would preferably be of masonry construction.

- The Historical Commission's staff should be able to review any work to the front facade including the restoration of the dormer and cornice, replacement of the windows, and any other rehabilitation.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9. The rear addition is too massive and constructed out of incompatible materials and the proposed rear spiral staircase to the roof deck is incompatible with the historic structure.

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

|                                                                                                                         |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>ITEM: 1108 S Front St</b><br><b>MOTION: Denial</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Gutterman</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| 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: 2012 SPRUCE ST**

Proposal: Construct addition and decks

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Acacia Holding Partners LLC

Applicant: Michael Phillips, Klehr Harrison

History: 1860

Individual Designation: None

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

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

**BACKGROUND:**

This application proposes to construct an addition on the rear portion of the fourth story of a Second Empire rowhouse at a contributing property in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District. It also proposes to construct a large roof deck along with a pilot house and elevator shaft and a smaller rear first-story deck. The building was constructed c. 1860 and is four stories tall with a prominent mansard roof, brownstone façade, and three-story rear ell that faces Cypress Street. The proposed addition will be located behind the main block of the building on top of the current three-story rear ell and will occupy its entire footprint. The main roof deck will be set eight feet back from the roof edge and extend from in front of the peak of the roof to the rear edge of the new addition. It will feature a pilot house set near the front portion and an elevator shaft in the middle. The smaller rear deck will be set at the rear of the building off of the first floor and will be located behind an existing wall and roll-up gate at the rear of the property. The addition and roof

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 JULY 2024**

**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV**

**PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

deck will be visible from Cypress Street, but that street serves as an alley for access to the rears of surrounding houses and none of them front on the street.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Construct a fourth-story rear addition
- Construct a roof deck with pilot house and elevator shaft
- Construct a rear deck

**STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:**

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

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
  - o The proposed addition satisfies Standard 9. It will be differentiated from historic portions of the house and is compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the historic property.
  - o The proposed rear deck satisfies Standard 9. It will be differentiated from historic portions of the house and is compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the historic property.
  - o The proposed roof deck does not satisfy Standard 9. It is too extensive and covers part of the roof of the historic main block of the house including its peak.
  - o The proposed pilot house does not meet Standard 9. It is set too far forward, is too large, blocky, and undecorated and is not compatible with the size, scale, and architectural features of the property.
- *Roofs Guideline | Recommended: Designing rooftop additions, elevator or stair towers, decks or terraces, dormers, or skylights when required by a new or continuing use so that they are inconspicuous and minimally visible on the site and from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining historic features.*
  - o The proposed roof deck and pilot house are located on the main block of the house and cover the historic peak of the roof, obscuring and potentially damaging character defining features of the building. This work does not satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of the proposed addition and rear deck, pursuant to Standard 9. Denial of the proposed roof deck and pilot house, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 01:15:09

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Attorney Michael Phillips and architect John Weckerly represented the application.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Gutterman asked if the building will be taller than or the same as its neighbors with the new addition.
  - o Mr. Till clarified that the addition will be constructed on the rear ell and will be the same height as the main block of the house.
  - o Mr. Weckerly commented that, at the rear, the immediate neighbors are three

- stories high, so this project will be taller. He pointed out that there are other four-story tall rears of buildings on the block.
- o Ms. Gutterman commented that, in the rendering submitted, one neighboring building appears taller.
  - o Mr. Weckerly clarified that the neighboring buildings to the east are the same height as the proposed building but the ones to the west are shorter.
  - Mr. Cluver asked about the design of the walls of the addition. As proposed, they are clad on two sides in a way that mimics a mansard. He asked if the walls are angled or straight.
    - o Mr. Weckerly responded that the west wall is brick to match the existing walls around it. For the south and east walls, they aimed to mimic the slate cladding of the main block mansard, but the walls are vertical.
    - o Mr. Cluver commented that it would be odd to have a roof material on a truly vertical wall and that they should look to make them angled like a mansard instead. He continued to say that the span of shingle on the front mansard is also narrower than that on the proposed addition.
    - o Mr. Weckerly responded that they are happy to look into altering the design to appear more like a true mansard and to better reflect the proportions of the front.
    - o Mr. Cluver also pointed out that there will be a small transition area where the new addition meets the mansard at the rear of the main block.
  - Mr. Detwiler commented that the Architectural Committee usually recommends that new overbuilds with pilot houses or elevator overruns are as small as possible and, in this case, the height of the proposed pilot house appears to be excessive.
    - o Mr. Weckerly responded that he will double check the stair arrangement but would be open to reducing the height of the pilot house as much as possible. The elevator overrun is at its minimum requirement.
    - o Ms. Gutterman commented that they have not shown the heights of the chimneys on the main block of the house. She stated that the Architectural Committee does not usually recommend in favor of decks on the main blocks.
    - o Mr. Weckerly replied that they have discussed the chimney heights, but that is not reflected in the current plans. He added that they are working with the client to see which chimneys are operational and which ones might need to be extended.
    - o Mr. Detwiler suggested that the applicants make sure the chimneys are not shared between neighbors.
  - Mr. D'Alessandro questioned why both a pilot house and an elevator are needed.
    - o Mr. Weckerly responded that the intent was to make the roof accessible directly from the ground floor via the elevator. Additionally, this offers multiple means of egress.
    - o Mr. Detwiler commented that the Architectural Committee usually discourages the use of elevators as roof access unless there are accessibility issues for the owners.
  - Mr. McCoubrey commented that the Architectural Committee's guidelines discourage building a deck on the main block of a house and allowing one here would set a precedent for the rest of the block. He added that he feels that there is plenty of space left for a deck on the rear ell and that the neighbors to the west are only three stories tall, so the railings and pilot house would be visible obliquely from the street. He also questioned the overall height of the proposed addition and suggested that it could be lower in the rear.
    - o Mr. Cluver referred to his previous comment about the mansard design on the

addition. Mr. Detwiler also echoed Mr. Cluver's comment and added that the addition's mansard should not be too tall and should be in proportion to the rest of the building.

- Ms. Stein asked about the arrangement of the interior stairs as it relates to the proposed pilot house.
  - o Mr. Weckerly responded that the pilot house does not currently align with the stairs inside.
  - o Ms. Stein questioned why the pilot house is positioned where it is as it could be visible in its current location.
  - o Mr. Weckerly responded that based on their mockups, it will not be visible from anywhere on the block. He stated that he is happy to alter it so that it is angled to match the stairs.
  - o Ms. Stein asked about the possibility of leaving the pilot house in its current position but removing the deck from the main block of the house.
  - o Mr. Weckerly responded that both recommendations are achievable, and they could feasibly reduce the height of the pilot house and angle it.
  - o Mr. Detwiler suggested that the applicant include floor plans as part of their final submission.
    - Mr. Weckerly agreed.
  - o Ms. Stein also asked for the chimney to be added to the roof deck site plan.
  - o Mr. Weckerly reiterated that they would check with the owner on which chimneys are functional and if any are shared and add that to future plans.
  - o Ms. Stein replied that, if the deck is removed from the main block, then the chimneys are not needed.
    - Other committee members agreed.
- Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that, if the rear skylight is removed from the deck, then there will be plenty of room for a deck on the rear ell.
  - o Mr. Weckerly responded that the skylight is a necessary feature that provides light to the center of the house down the stairway.
  - o Mr. Detwiler reiterated that there is adequate space for a large roof deck even without using the main block of the building.
  - o Mr. D'Alessandro pointed out that the proposed pilot house takes up much of the space at the front of the deck anyway.
- Ms. Stein asked about any potential mechanical units and commented that they should not be visible.
  - o Mr. Weckerly responded that they are consulting about the mechanicals currently and will ensure that nothing is visible.
- Mr. McCoubrey clarified that his earlier statement about the skylight applied to the rearmost light and not the central one.
- Mr. Weckerly wanted to clarify the Architectural Committee's position on the deck size and what they mean by the main block of the house. Would they also oppose the pilot house staying on the main block if the size was reduced and the shape redesigned?
  - o Ms. Gutterman stated she was not comfortable saying that she would approve of a redesigned pilot house on the main block without seeing the new design first.
  - o Mr. D'Alessandro reiterated that he would not recommend approval of a pilot house on the main block.
  - o Mr. Detwiler responded that they would have to demonstrate a good reason as to why the pilot house could not be relocated to the rear ell.
  - o Mr. McCoubrey commented that it would be considered but the Architectural

Committee would need to understand all of the reasons and implications for the proposed location.

- o Mr. Cluver responded that the chances for final approval are greater with the pilot house located at the rear instead of the front of the building.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Architectural Committee found that:

- A fourth-floor rear addition would be appropriate on this building, but it should be redesigned to be shorter and appear more like a traditional mansard.
- The proposed roof deck and pilot house cover portions of the main block of the building and may be visible from Spruce Street.
- There appears to be ample roof to limit the roof deck and pilot house to the rear ell of the building.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9. The proposed deck is too extensive and covers part of the roof of the historic main block of the house including its peak. The proposed pilot house is set too far forward, is too large, blocky, and undecorated and is not compatible with the size, scale, and architectural features of the property.
- The application fails to satisfy the Roofs Guideline. The proposed roof deck and pilot house are located on the main block of the house and cover the historic peak of the roof, obscuring and potentially damaging character-defining features of the building

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval in concept, provided nothing is constructed on the main block and the addition on the rear ell is designed as a mansard and reduced in height, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

|                                    |     |    |         |        |        |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>ITEM: 2012 Spruce St</b>        |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOTION: Approval in concept</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Gutterman</b>         |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Detwiler</b>       |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>VOTE</b>                        |     |    |         |        |        |
| 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: 8226 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Proposal: Construct multi-unit residential building

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Vich Properties LLC/VP 8226 Germantown LLC

Applicant: Michael Phillips, Klehr Harrison

History: 1760; new front facade 1800; Detweiler House

Individual Designation: 5/28/1957

District Designation: None

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

**OVERVIEW:** This application seeks in concept approval for the construction of a five-story building at 8226 Germantown Avenue. An eighteenth-century historic stone building, known as the “Detweiler House” stands at the southeast corner of the property. This application proposes construction of a residential building and rehabilitation of the historic building as part of the property’s overall redevelopment. No part of the historic building will be demolished or significantly altered as part of the new construction. This application proposes to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the historic building as an amenity space for the residential building.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Construct five-story building with parking and roof deck.
- Rehabilitate historic 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 that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
  - o The proposed new construction does not significantly alter the historic building. However, the in-concept application does not meet Standard 9. The proposed massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the new construction are not sufficiently compatible with the historic building.
- *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.*
  - o The proposed new construction connects to the historic property at the rear and could be removed from the historic building in the future, leaving it largely intact; therefore, the proposal meets Standard 10.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval in concept of a new building in the location shown in the application, with the following comments:

- The proposed materials shown such as brick, shingle, and masonry elements are mostly compatible with the historic residence and the local architecture of Chestnut Hill.
- The new construction should be revised to maintain existing setbacks along Germantown Avenue.
- The scale of window openings and floor heights, especially at the front of the new building, should be revisited for better compatibility with the surrounding historic architecture.
- The staff recommends simplifying the design and removing stylized historic details.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:47:27**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Attorney Michael Phillips and architect Zamir Garcia represented the application.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Phillips said their team met with the Chestnut Hill Civic Association in June 2024 to receive their feedback and thoughts on the proposal. He stated the proposal would require variances and relief from the zoning code and that prior to pursuing zoning approval they wanted to receive feedback from the community and Historical Commission about the project.
- Mr. Garcia said this location is a transitional area along Germantown Avenue that ities together the two sides of Chestnut Hill, the upper section which is more commercial and the lower area, south of the project site, which is more residential in scale. He noted that the specific block where the site is located has buildings of a larger scale than other areas of Chestnut Hill.
- Mr. Cluver said he is concerned about the scale of the individual elements of the proposed building. He noted there is the scale of the building and then there is the scale of the individual elements, which are overpowering the historic building. Mr. Cluver observed that elements like the windows and light fixtures are bigger, and the floor-to-floor heights are taller. He said that while some of this may be unavoidable, the proposed building feels oversized in comparison to the historic resource and the elements feel off key.
- Mr. Garcia stated that the proposal shown was originally based on CMX-2.5, which allows a 55-foot height but, after speaking with the Planning Commission, the development team plans to revise the design based on zoning less than CMX-2, which would reduce the height of the building to 38 feet tall. He noted that the overall building scale would be reduced accordingly based on the 38-foot height.
- Mr. McCoubrey commented that the height change from 55 to 38 feet is a significant change and would likely eliminate the fifth floor and lower everything. He said his primary concern about the proposal was the massiveness of everything. Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that the historic building stands in a row of similarly sized buildings.
- Mr. Detwiler pointed out that the building and property were individually designated in 1957, noting that this is part of the first generation of designated buildings in Philadelphia. The early designation date indicates the historical importance of this building. He added that, if the property were up for designation today, the land around the building would likely be proposed for having archeological potential. Mr. Detwiler noted that historic landscapes are also protected in Philadelphia. He said the proposed new building dramatically overwhelms the historic building. Mr. Detwiler said he wished it stepped back from the street and that the driveway was not located right next to the historic building. He said the cantilever over the driveway appears odd and out of context with the site and Chestnut Hill. Mr. Detweiler also pointed out that the historic building would potentially be used as a gym, and he has concerns about the potential structural impact of the heavy equipment on the historic building.
- Mr. D'Alessandro said he did not understand why the applicant is viewing Chestnut Hill as two zones and expressed concerns about a five-story building in this area.
- Ms. Gutterman reminded Mr. D'Alessandro that the applicant had explained that the height of the building would be significantly reduced in height, owing to zoning

- requirements. She commented that they would likely be looking at a very different design in the future, so this specific design is no longer part of their consideration.
- Mr. Cluver interjected and acknowledged that the design would change but stated he appreciated having the opportunity to comment on the application at this stage and for others to provide feedback.
    - o Mr. Garcia responded that he welcomed the comments received and this was the goal of the presentation of the in-concept proposal. He said their goal was to do something sensitive at this site.
  - Mr. McCoubrey said he was glad the applicant brought the in-concept proposal to the Architectural Committee and expects to see changes to future submissions based on the feedback provided. He expressed his concerns about the details, noting that the windows could look more like double hung windows. Mr. McCoubrey said the frontispiece in front of the historic house did not seem appropriate. He commented on the existing slope and potential grading issues on the site.
  - Mr. Cluver said he was glad the applicant included context photographs showing existing architectural elements in Chestnut Hill. He said the applicant should now narrow down the number of elements to be incorporated into the design. He said the design is presently too busy and eclectic.
  - Mr. Cluver asked if parking was required for the site.
    - o Mr. Garcia replied that it was not required but seen as a desirable amenity.
    - o Mr. Detweiler encouraged the applicant to maintain some of the green space currently present in the landscape. He said the front of the building should have less of a hard edge and noted the nearby green spaces in front of and around the nearby buildings.
  - Ms. Stein said that, based on the application, the intent is to protect and preserve the historic building. She said that, for final review, they will need a lot more detail about the work on the historic building and encouraged Mr. Garcia to work with the staff on the details of the restoration and rehabilitation.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Attorney Matt McClure of Ballard Spahr represented the owners of the adjacent property at 8236 Germantown Avenue. He stated the zoning is currently RSA-3 and would only allow for a twin or semi-detached house to be constructed under the current zoning code. He said the project as shown would require a massive amount of zoning relief both for its size and use. Mr. McClure called out the applicant's admission that the building will be revised down to 38 feet from 55 feet in height, which would significantly change the building's design. He echoed Mr. Detwiler's comments about the designation being an early one and that this would have been during Mayor Dilworth's era and that if it was designated it was likely because of its historical importance in the City of Philadelphia.
- Lori Salganicoff of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy pointed out that this is one of two eighteenth-century buildings constructed by the Detweiler family on this block. She said she agreed with many of the comments made by the Architectural Committee members. Ms. Salganicoff pointed out that the new building does connect at the rear of the property so perhaps it should be considered an addition. She said that the historic resource and adjacent buildings should be better respected. Ms. Salganicoff said the new building should be designed in deference to the historic building. She also noted that the sidewalk in front of the property is an important element of the streetscape. Ms. Salganicoff concluded by stating that the open landscape of the property has been undisturbed for over 250 years and the Historical Commission

- should be questioning the potential impact on above and below ground resources.
- Laura Lucas of the Chestnut Hill Community Association said that the application submitted to the Historical Commission is the same one presented to the community for comment. She said the application received strong negative feedback at their June 2024 meeting and she would like to pass some of their comments on to the Architectural Committee. Ms. Lucas said 46 individuals attended this meeting and this attests to the high level of interest in the project. She pointed out that all of the buildings surrounding this property are listed as significant or contributing to the Chestnut Hill National Register Historic District and they are concerned that this development will destroy what remains of the garden context in which the Detweiler House has survived for 250 years. Ms. Lucas said the community was concerned about the amount of density planned for the site and noted that many of their concerns had also been expressed at this meeting by the members of the Architectural Committee.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites expressed his concerns about the compatibility of the proposed new construction with the historic property. Mr. Traub read from the email he sent to the Historical Commission dated 22 July 2024.
- Patricia Cove, the chair of the Historic District Advisory Committee at the Chestnut Hill Conservancy, said she was pleased to hear the Architectural Committee discuss many of the concerns that she and the community members have about the project, especially the outsized scale and massing of the proposed new construction that would greatly diminish the designated historic building. She said she looks forward to revisions that will reconsider many aspects of this project.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The property was designated in 1957 and it was one of the earliest designated properties on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- The proposed building would require zoning relief and variances to move forward. The property at 8226 Germantown Avenue is currently zoned RSA-3. The application is based on a potential zoning of CMX-2.5 but the applicant stated during the review that they have learned from the Planning Commission that the new zoning will be less than CMX-2. Therefore, the height of this building will be reduced from 55 feet to 38 feet and future design proposals for this project will reflect this.
- The overall scale of the building is too great for the historic site. The new construction would overwhelm the historic building and the scale of the new building's elements are not compatible with the historic building and the adjacent buildings on this block of Germantown Avenue.
- The design incorporates too many architectural elements and should be simplified.
- More detail must be provided on the restoration and rehabilitation of the historic building.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9 as the proposed new construction is not compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the eighteenth century building and its environment.
- The application fails to satisfy Standard 10 as the application lacks sufficient drawings and elevation showing how the new construction connects to the historic property. It is not clear from the materials submitted if the new construction could be removed from the historic building in the future, leaving it largely intact.

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

|                                  |     |    |         |        |        |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>ITEM: 8226 Germantown Ave</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOTION: Denial</b>            |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Detwiler</b>        |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>VOTE</b>                      |     |    |         |        |        |
| 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:** 02:33:16

**ACTION:** The Architectural Committee adjourned at 11:35 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](http://www.phila.gov/historical).