

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

**TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 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:

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
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
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:

Daniel Trubman, OCF Realty
Dongjoo Jo
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
Lee Elsey, Living City Architecture
Nancy Pontone
Sam Katovitch, Toner Architects
Steven Peitzman

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 3434 MIDVALE AVE

Proposal: Construct addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Kevin Todd and Sarah Carroll

Applicant: Ian Toner, Toner Architects

History: 1930

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Tudor East Falls Historic District, Contributing, 10/9/2009

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

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a small addition to the house at 3434 Midvale Avenue. The two-story building was constructed in 1930 and is classified as contributing to the Tudor East Falls Historic District. The application proposes to extend a projecting bay on the side of structure at the second floor. The extent bay includes a painted wood double door out to the rooftop. The bay would be extended out further onto the rooftop for a walk-in closet. The extant door opening in the bay would be repurposed as the entrance to the closet. Some HVAC equipment would be moved. The bay is and the addition would be visible from the public right-of-way along Midvale Avenue.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct small addition to second floor.
- Move HVAC equipment to rear roof area.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - o The small addition would be attached to an original bay window on the second floor. The bay window is clad with decorative half-timber and stucco, character-defining features of the Tudor-Revival house and the historic district. The covering up of two-thirds of the bay window and its architectural features does not meet Standard 9.
 - o The massing of the proposed addition is larger than the bay window itself, alters the spatial relationship of this architectural element, and is not visually compatible with the historic property. If the addition was set back further to the door opening and reduced in size, the proposed addition could potentially meet Standard 9.
 - o The proposal of stucco cladding on the addition would be compatible and meet Standard 9.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired.*
 - o If the historic bay window's exterior architectural details and finishes are covered up and preserved as part of the construction process, rather than demolished, this application would meet Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial as presented, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:03:12

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Sam Katovitch represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Detwiler asked if the neighboring building had a similar bay facing the bay in question. He observed that the applicant's drawings do not include the neighbor's bay and that the proposed alteration extends up to their property line. Mr. Detwiler said he was concerned about setting a precedent for this historic district where the side bays could be significantly altered. He added that the bays are character-defining features of the Tudor East Falls Historic District.
 - o Mr. Katovitch confirmed the neighbor does have a bay that mirrors the one at 3434 Midvale Ave.
- Mr. Cluver said that, although the bay is not highly visible, it still can be seen from the public right-of-way. He pointed out that the proposed addition will appear appended on, with no windows and no architectural treatment. Mr. Cluver stated that an acceptable proposal must fit more within the character of the district and building. He added that an approval in this case would set a precedent for future projects; if one project like this approved, others will seek similar approvals.
- Mr. Katovitch inquired about the type of exterior treatments that would be viewed favorably by the Architectural Committee. He asked if there were specific materials and architectural details that the Architectural Committee would like to see, that would make the application more successful.
 - o Mr. Cluver responded that it is tricky because an addition should be compatible without mimicking the historic building. He commented that the Architectural Committee would need to review a proposal to be able to determine whether it is compatible or not.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked the applicant if he considered something that appended or bracketed off the rear of the building.
 - o Mr. Katovitch replied that anything projecting from the rear would overhang an easement area, which is not permitted. He noted there is a transit easement in place to preserve the road behind the building as a common driveway.
- Mr. Detwiler said he wrestled with making the proposal more compatible. He noted that his biggest concern with the addition is its extension almost to the property line. He agreed with Mr. Cluver that, if the Architectural Committee approves this project, someone in the future will propose the same type of addition, causing the bays to be lost.
- Mr. Katovitch asked the Architectural Committee if pulling the addition back to make it shallower, for example decreasing the depth of the addition from 4'-6" to 3', would make it more compatible.
- Ms. Gutterman asked if there is a setback required by the zoning code for this type of addition.
 - o Mr. Katovitch stated that there is no required setback in this situation. He added that, as long as they specify a one-hour-rated firewall, they can build up to the property line.

- Mr. D'Alessandro said the proposed addition would cause too much of a visual impact for just 69 square feet of additional interior space.
- Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that the bay is the only half-timber area of this house that relates directly to the theme of the Tudor East Falls Historic District. He said he is not sure about the existing easements on the rear, but he views the rear as the only area where new space would be acceptable.
 - o Mr. Katovitch said he would explore the rear easement to determine if anything could be proposed in the rear area of the property. He asked Ms. Mehley how proposals to the rear of this type of property would be evaluated by the staff.
 - o Ms. Mehley replied that the staff recognizes that the driveway at the rear of this row of properties is not a public street. She stated that changes to the rear would more likely be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Nancy Pontone, a neighbor and the owner of 3428 Midvale Avenue, opposed the application.
- Steven Peitzman of the East Falls Historical Society opposed the application.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed extension to the bay would be visible from the public right-of-way along Midvale Avenue.
- The addition would extend to the neighbor's property line.
- The addition would alter a character-defining feature of the historic property and is not compatible with the property and historic district.
- The rear of the property has a transit easement in place, which makes building off the back of the building more complex and perhaps impossible.
- The approval of this addition would set a precedent for the historic district that would potentially encourage similar projects.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9 as the proposal would significantly alter an original bay that is visible from the public right-of-way along Midvale Avenue. The bay is presently clad with decorative half-timber and stucco, character-defining features of the Tudor-Revival house and the historic district.
- The application fails to satisfy Standard 10 as presented because the applicant has not clarified if the historic bay's exterior architectural details and finishes will be preserved as part of the construction process, rather than demolished.

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

ITEM: 3434 Midvale Ave 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	7				

ADDRESS: 4124-28 PARKSIDE AVE

Proposal: Construct multi-unit residential building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Beywatch Property Management LLC

Applicant: Lee Elsey, LC Architecture LLC

History: 1894

Individual Designation: None

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

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

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a three-story building at a property classified as significant in the Parkside Historic District. The new building will be located in the side yard of the lot and stand between five and 10 feet from the historic building. The entrance to the new building will be located at the end of a narrow pathway that runs between the buildings. The existing building was constructed in 1894 and is four stories tall with a prominent porch and features distinctive late-Victorian decorative elements and a mansard roof. The new building will include a stucco and brick front façade with a fiberglass cornice and belt courses. Both side elevations, including the large exposed east elevation will be clad in a combination of Hardie board panels and vinyl siding behind a return of the front façade materials. The new building will stand beside the historic building and will be prominently visible from Parkside Avenue.

The Architectural Committee reviewed and recommended denial of two earlier versions of this project in February and June 2024. Those applications were withdrawn before the Historical Commission reviewed them.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a new three-story building adjacent to an existing historic building at 4124-28 Parkside Avenue.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not*

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

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 vinyl siding and Hardi board cladding materials for the east and west side elevations of the addition do not meet Standard 9. The materials are not compatible with the historic materials or features of the building. The cladding should be replaced with an alternate material that is more appropriate for the district such as brick or stucco.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends approval, provided more appropriate cladding materials are used on the east and west side elevations, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:23:28

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cluver summarized the application as being similar to the previous iterations. He noted that the proposed building has been reduced to three stories in height with a more robust cornice and the previously proposed penthouse and roof decks have been removed.
 - o Mr. Elsey agreed that Mr. Cluver's summary was generally accurate. He added that the owner originally intended to live in the penthouse and use the property as a centerpiece to show his efforts at affordable housing in the neighborhood but has now changed his plans. He described the current proposal as having four apartments and pointed out that the separation between it and the historic building has been increased from three to five feet. The height has been reduced to provide more clear views of the historic building and the brick front has been wrapped around one bay on the west side. The remainder of the sides use more economical materials and windows have been added to the west elevation as well.
- Mr. Cluver commented that the scale is much improved and the building fits in better with its surrounding context. He added that he would like to see the brick return on the east façade also used on the west.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that he is concerned about the view of the west facade from the historic building. He acknowledged that the separation between the two has been increased to five feet, but that it is still very close. In addition, he noted his concern with the use of the vinyl siding and panel system on the east façade. He stated that they are not in character with the historic building and district.
 - o Mr. Elsey responded that the currently exposed east façade of the historic building is less articulated than the front of the building and that it is a repeated design that is seen on other buildings in the district. Those other buildings all have close set neighbors, so it is rare to see the sides fully exposed. In addition, they are leaving more of it exposed, owing to the relatively lower height of their proposed building.
- Mr. Cluver commented on the cornice. He explained that the scale looks off and it looks too large compared to the cornice and similar elements on the historic building. He suggested redesigning it to fit better.

- o Mr. Elsey agreed to use a more subtle cornice.
- o Mr. Detwiler agreed about the cornice scale but was concerned that revealing more brick above the windows would throw off other proportions.
- o Mr. Cluver pointed out that the currently proposed cornice does align nicely with the overall height of a bay on the historic building. He suggested altering the lower portions of the cornice while maintaining that height could be a good solution.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked about the parapet height and if it could be lowered.
 - o Mr. Elsey responded that there is a bit of room to lower it.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked the applicant to explain the proposed window configuration on the east façade.
 - o Mr. Elsey outlined the various window choices for the east facade. He explained that the center bay of windows is set on a six-inch projection and are narrow and high because they are in bathrooms. The windows to the north of that open onto an internal stair and the ones to the south into kitchens.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey expressed concern with the various window shapes as well as with the use of vinyl siding. He suggested extending the panel system to the entire east façade would be more appropriate. He also suggested using a darker or more subdued color for the siding as the proposed very light color makes the large wall stand out more.
 - o Mr. Elsey pointed to the sheet he submitted with color and material details on it. He highlighted that the brick tone they are proposing to use beside the color for the siding and asked if the Architectural Committee was suggesting they go closer to the brick in color.
 - o Mr. McCoubrey replied that he would like to see the siding match the brick color's value or tone more than the exact shade and added that siding like this usually tends to lean on the lighter side. He suggested that they may need to bring samples to the site to evaluate the color in person before making a final decision. He also requested that the windows opening onto the stairs should be more conventional.
- Mr. Detwiler asked if it would be possible to use the panel siding for the whole building instead of changing to vinyl.
 - o Mr. Elsey responded that the budget for the project is tight due to the owner using loans for affordable housing to fund the project, so he is not fully sure that can be done.
 - o Mr. Detwiler stated that he finds it difficult to approve a project that employs vinyl materials so close to a significant historic building.
- Mr. D'Alessandro asked if the proposed building was stick built and added that he does not think siding is appropriate at all in this case as it does not look right against the historic materials. He also commented that the windows should have frames that better align with the character of the district.
- Mr. Detwiler pointed out that the application does not include an elevation for the rear wall.
 - o Mr. Elsey described that elevation as having three double-hung windows per floor along with a door at the ground floor and vinyl siding. It looks out onto a blank wall of a neighboring building approximately nine feet away and is not visible from any surrounding streets.
 - o Mr. Detwiler replied that this elevation needs to be included in the final application to the Historical Commission, to which the applicant agreed.
- Mr. McCoubrey summarized the changes he would like to see including eliminating

the vinyl siding from the exposed west elevation and from the east elevation as well, if possible.

- Mr. Cluver proposed a list of changes that would likely make the application acceptable to the Historical Commission including: adding a brick return for one bay to the west side elevation, adjusting the scale and proportions of the cornice, lowering the parapet, eliminating the vinyl siding from the side elevations, and changing the color of the siding materials to be a slightly darker color.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The application proposes to construct a new building on a side yard on the property at 4126-28 Parkside Avenue.
- The property at 4126-28 Parkside Avenue is a significant resource in the Parkside Historic District.
- The redesigned three-story building in this latest application is appropriate for the size and scale of the historic district.
- The proposed cornice is overly large.
- The vinyl siding proposed for the new building on the east and west sides is not in keeping with the character of the historic district.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9. The proposed vinyl siding for the east and west side elevations, the cornice design, and the east facade windows are not compatible with the historic materials or features of the historic district.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial as proposed, but approval provided a brick return of one bay is added to the west side elevation; the scale and proportions of the cornice are adjusted; the parapet is lowered; the vinyl siding is eliminated from the side elevations; and the color of the siding materials is changed to a slightly darker color, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ITEM: 4124-28 Parkside Ave					
MOTION: Denial as proposed, but approval with revisions					
MOVED BY: Cluver					
SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	7				

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:47:15

ACTION: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 9:47 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.