

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

**18 DECEMBER 2007
CITY HALL, ROOM 578
9:30 A.M.**

PRESENT

Vincent Rivera, AIA, Chair
Rudy D'Alessandro
Herb Levy, FAIA
Suzanne Pentz
Robert Thomas, AIA

Jonathan Farnham, Acting Historic Preservation Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Jorge Danta, Historic Preservation Planner II
Erin Cote, Historic Preservation Planner II
Rebecca Sell, Historic Preservation Planner I
Karen Gonski, Administrative Technician

ALSO PRESENT

Alexander Rice, Gardner/Fox
Charles Loomis, Loomis McAfee Architects
Jerry Roller, J.K. Roller Architects
Julie Foreit, J.K. Roller Architects
Liz Blazeovich, Preservation Alliance
Peter Lazor, Lazor Design
Bill Aumiller, Aumiller Young
Greta Baith
John Gallery, Preservation Alliance

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rivera called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Pentz and Messrs. D'Alessandro, Levy, and Thomas joined him.

2215 WALNUT STREET

Owner: Richard Zeghibe
Applicant: Julie Forejt and Jerry Roller
History: c.1870, altered 1894 and 1902; contributing to the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District, 8 February 1995
Project: Install metal awning

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install a metal mesh awning over the side entrance to this building and replace the metal fire escape in kind. The awning would be attached to the metal fire escape and would not cover the Classical Revival door surround.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Sell presented the proposal to the Committee. Architect Jerry Roller represented the application.

The Committee discussed the application and deemed it appropriate.

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

36 N. FRONT STREET

Owner: Richard Preskenis

Applicant: Charles Loomis

History: 1833; individually designated, 6 January 1977; significant to Old City Historic District, 12 December 2003

Project: Construct third-and-fourth-floor roof decks

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct decks on the rear ell and main roof of this loft building. The lower deck would be located on the top of the rear ell with a metal stair and guardrail leading up to the upper deck. The upper deck would be located on the main block and set back about 28 feet from the front façade. The decks would be constructed of wood with three-foot mesh metal guardrails around the perimeters. A hot tub is proposed on the lower deck. The decks would be visible from 2nd Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 2 and 9, the Roofs Guideline, and the Commission's policy on roof decks.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Sell presented the application to the Committee. Architect Charles Loomis and property owner Richard Preskenis represented the application.

Mr. Loomis explained that mechanical equipment on dunnage is already located on the rear ell. He is proposing to add a deck to the rear ell and a screen around the mechanical equipment; he is also proposing a large deck on the main roof of the building. He acknowledged that the decks and equipment would be visible from 2nd Street, but contended that the screen would reduce the visibility. He claimed that none would be visible from Front Street. He distributed an aerial view of the building. Ms. Sell stated that the staff considered the deck on the rear ell appropriate, but not the deck on the main roof. Mr. Thomas agreed and asserted that the upper deck with stairs does not meet the Standards; it would be conspicuous. Mr. Loomis admitted that the upper deck would be visible, but he offered to minimize its visibility. Mr. D'Alessandro agreed with Mr. Thomas and the staff. Ms. Pentz asked about accessing the decks. Mr. Loomis explained that they would be accessed through a door in the rear of the main block, out onto the roof of the rear ell.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance supported Messrs. Thomas and D'Alessandro. He remarked that this is a very important building, like the Girard buildings to the south. He contended that the deck on the main block is inappropriate. Ms. Pentz and Mr. Rivera agreed with Mr. Gallery and their fellow Committee members.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the deck on the rear ell, but denial of the upper deck and stair, pursuant to Standard 2 and 9, the Roofs Guideline, and the Commission's policy on roof decks.

111 S. 15TH STREET (PACKARD BUILDING)

Owner: David Grasso; 111 S. 15th Street Associates

Applicant: Dru Coulson

History: 1922, Ritter & Shay, Architects

Project: Install main entrance door, signage and awnings.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install a new entrance door system, signage, and awnings. The former bank space in the ground floor of this significant Renaissance Revival high-rise will be occupied by a restaurant. The Historical Commission reviewed a very similar application in June 2005. The previous applicant, the House of Blues, proposed signage and awnings in the same locations as the current application. The Commission approved that application as submitted; however, it reviewed that application in the context of related restoration to the building. The current application is presented as a stand-alone proposal.

The applicant proposes to install two bronze plaques at either side of the main entrance. These plaques would bear the name of the restaurant. Awnings are proposed for the windows along 15th Street. These awnings would take the place of existing ones. Along Chestnut Street, the applicant proposes to install a sign in front of the ornate iron gate. This gate was executed by Samuel Yellin and it is one of his most important works in the city. The proposal does not include any details as to the attachments, or materials of the sign; furthermore, the sign is proposed to occupy the location of an original flag pole that would be removed. The applicant also proposes to refurbish the iron lanterns at either side of the door, also by Yellin, and the decorative bronze spandrel above the entry doors; no details have been provided. Finally, the application proposes to install a new door system for the main entrance of the restaurant space. The design of the original doors is not known. The applicant proposes to install a central revolving door flanked by two single-light doors.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the awnings and bronze plaques, pursuant to Standard 9; approval of restoration of the lanterns and bronze spandrel, and the installation of the door system, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 6; denial of the del Frisco sign on the Yellin iron gates, pursuant to Standards 5 and 9.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Danta presented the proposal to the Committee. Architect Bill Aumiller represented the application.

Mr. Aumiller provided additional architectural drawings and photographs. He noted that there is evidence on the floor at the Chestnut Street entranceway that there was once a revolving door flanked by single-leaf doors. He plans to recreate the missing doors in a finish to match the surrounding metalwork.

The discussion turned to the proposed sign, which would be mounted on the Yellin gate. Mr. Levy asked how the sign would be mounted. Mr. Aumiller replied that it would be pin mounted to a support behind the Yellin metalwork; neither the sign nor the support would mount to the important metalwork. The letters of the sign would stand in front of the gate. The support would attach to the stone jambs behind the gate at the sides of the doorway. The support would be

finished on all sides because it would be visible from the interior. The letters would be halo-lit. Ms. Pentz asked for additional information on the mounting of the sign. Mr. Aumiller explained that the pins would extend from the support behind the gate to the letters in front of the gate. Nothing would touch the gate itself.

Mr. Thomas stated that he agreed with the staff's recommendation. He stated that the gate is very important and should not be impacted in any way. Mr. Rivera agreed and stated that the sign would negatively impact the gate even if it did not touch it. Mr. D'Alessandro suggested an interior sign, behind the glass. Mr. Thomas advised Mr. Aumiller to develop a signage system that did not involve the gate in any way. Mr. Levy asked about the sign approved for the earlier tenant for this doorway. Mr. Danta explained that the Commission had approved a sign, but not the details for mounting it. Mr. Baron suggested using the extant flag pole for a banner. Mr. Aumiller asked about the possibility of hanging the sign directly below the gate. Mr. Thomas rejected that idea. Mr. Levy asked if the gate was ever closed. Mr. Aumiller stated that he does not believe that the gate is ever closed.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance stated that the Yellin gate is a work of art. He asserted that no sign on, behind, or in front of the gate would be appropriate. He suggested that the flag pole offered the best solution for signage.

Mr. Baron asked if the revolving doors would be installed in their historic location. Mr. Aumiller replied they would. Mr. Gallery asserted that the original doors could not have been revolving; he claimed that revolving doors were not used in the 1920s. Messrs. Levy and Thomas stridently disagreed; they claimed that revolving doors were widely used in the 1920s.

Mr. Aumiller agreed that the gate is very important and would also be used as a selling point for the restaurant. He offered to investigate other solutions for the signage.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the awnings and bronze plaques, pursuant to Standard 9; approval of restoration of the lanterns and bronze spandrel, and the installation of the door system, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 6; denial of the del Frisco sign on the Yellin iron gate, pursuant to Standards 5 and 9.

111 S. 15TH STREET (PACKARD BUILDING)

Owner: David Grasso; 111 S. 15th Street Associates

Applicant: Peter Lazor, AIA

History: 1922, Ritter & Shay, Architects

Project: Penthouse addition

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct an addition to the penthouse on the Packard Building. Currently, the building has a one-story penthouse for mechanical equipment. The applicant proposes to alter the existing penthouse into a two-story residential space. The proposed design for the penthouse is contemporary in style and would be clad in metal panels and cast stone. Owing to the height of the building and obstruction of the sight lines by neighboring high-rise buildings, the proposed alterations would be minimally visible. The west elevation facing Chestnut Street would be the most visible. The architect has made this elevation the focal point of his design. The addition would be compatible in rhythm and scale to

the upper stories of the Packard building without copying any of its Renaissance design elements.

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

DISCUSSION: Mr. Danta presented the proposal to the Committee. Architect Peter Lazor represented the application.

Mr. Lazor summarized the proposal. Mr. Rivera asked how much the height of the penthouse would be increased. Mr. Lazor stated that the altered penthouse would be nine feet taller than the existing penthouse. He stated that the new construction would be set back from and deferential to the existing building.

Mr. Levy stated that the projecting balconies and sunshade appear “too heavy.”

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance stated that he considered the design to be thoughtful. However, he objected to the aluminum siding. He suggested brick instead. Mr. Lazor stated that he had chosen the metal siding to unify the penthouse, giving it an identity as a single residence. He did not choose brick for the cladding because he sought to differentiate the penthouse from the historic building. He noted that the siding would have no shadow lines like traditional aluminum siding, but would look like flat panels instead. It is not typical aluminum siding. Mr. Rivera agreed with Mr. Gallery that aluminum siding would not be appropriate. Mr. Lazor stated again that he is not proposing traditional aluminum siding, but instead a metal panel system with a matte finish. Mr. D’Alessandro suggested that the penthouse should not have a residential appearance, but should maintain its utilitarian appearance. He opined that the metals would be respectful of the utilitarian look. Mr. Lazor stated that he also chose the metal siding because it is much lighter than a masonry material. Mr. Rivera stated that the cladding should be masonry or metal, but not an aluminum siding. Mr. Lazor again stated that he is proposing a metal panel system, not traditional aluminum siding. Mr. Baron suggested that brick would be more appropriate. Mr. Lazor explained that there are at least three different types of bricks of varying colors on the penthouse. It would not be possible to match one historic brick.

Mr. Rivera asserted that this application should be reviewed in concept because of the question regarding the cladding. Mr. Lazor responded that the application is complete and worthy of a final review.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval in concept, provided the aluminum siding is replaced with masonry or metal panels.

906 SPRUCE STREET

Owner: William Manfredi

Applicant: Alexander Rice

History: 1820, William Strickland, architect; part of Portico Row; individually designated

Project: Construct two-story rear addition

OVERVIEW: This application proposes constructing a two-story rear addition on a one-story section of the rear ell of this important building at Portico Row. The building has been divided into condominiums. It suffered a fire in the 1980s and was reconstructed with a lot of modern

windows at the rear of the rear ell. The owner would like to enlarge his unit, which is located in the rear ell, with the addition of a sun and dining room. In order to fit a large table into the dining room, the applicant proposes an addition that would overhang the first floor of the rear ell by 30 inches on two sides. This projection would sit on brackets. The rear of this building is highly visible from 9th Street as well as Cypress Street, the service alley at the rear.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the New Additions Guidelines.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Committee. Architect Alex Rice represented the application.

Mr. Rice stated that his client is seeking to increase the area of his unit. He does not want to limit the width of the addition to the width of the existing ell because it will not allow him to place a large table in the new dining room. Mr. Rice stated that he would be willing to consider the staff's suggestion that the projecting sections of the addition be implemented as bays. He explained that Cypress Street is a service alley. The alterations to the rear of the ell would be visible from 9th Street, but the alterations to the side of the ell would only be visible from Cypress. Mr. Baron stated that he understood the desire for greater space on the second floor, where the dining room would be located. He asked if there was a similar need for space on the third floor. Mr. Rice replied that there was not a similar need on the third floor. He also stated that the client was willing consider other materials for the exterior. For example, the client was willing to use real wood instead of the AZEK called for on the drawings. Mr. Thomas stated that he does not consider the projecting upper floors to comply with the Standards. However, an addition that stayed within the footprint of the existing rear ell, but projected beyond it with bays could satisfy the Standards.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance displayed photographs of the rears of some of the Portico Row buildings. He stated that the alterations would be highly visible to the public. He reported that there have been very few alterations to the rears of the Portico Row buildings and no significant alterations since the buildings were designated as historic. He objected to the current proposal and posited that no proposal for a large addition at the second and third floors would be appropriate. Mr. Gallery stated that he agreed in principal with the staff's recommendation. He asserted that the character of the rears is brick with standard-sized windows, not bays or other projections. He suggested extending the rear ell on its current lines without bays or, at most, a single bay at the second floor. He contended that the inappropriate brackets would be visible from 9th Street.

Mr. Rice disagreed with Mr. Gallery and asserted that the majority of the rear ells at Portico Row had been altered. He stated that the examples of unaltered rears provided by Mr. Gallery were the exception, not the norm. He also asserted that there are many two and three-story bays in the surrounding area.

Mr. Rivera stated that the interior plan was inappropriate. He suggested an open living-dining area. He claimed that the client's program could fit within the existing footprint of the first story, if it was extended up to the second and third floors. He stated that furnishings should not direct the design; that is not the appropriate way to plan for an historic building.

Mr. Rice explained that the floor levels would differ between the existing rear ell and the addition; therefore, an open plan does not work. He also explained that he wants to retain as much historic masonry as possible; Mr. Rivera's proposal would require the removal of more old

brick. Mr. Rice offered to redesign the project and submit a new application. He asked for definitive guidance. Messrs. Levy and Rivera stated that they would accept a two-story bay. Ms. Pentz stated that the real wood, not AZEK, should be proposed. Mr. Rice asked if casement windows would be acceptable. Ms. Pentz stated that she considers casements acceptable. Mr. Rice stated that he intended to withdraw the application and submit a revised one.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 9 and the New Additions Guidelines.

214 PINE STREET

Applicant: Todd Curry, Emerald Windows

Owners: Frank & Catherine Signorello

History: 1968, Frank Wiese, architect; contributing to Society Hill Historic District

Project: replace windows with simulated divided lights

OVERVIEW: This proposal calls for replacing the windows on the front façade with wood simulated- divided-light windows.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Committee. No one represented the application.

Mr. Baron presented a letter from the Society Hill Civic Association opposing the proposal. Ms. Pentz stated that she agrees with the association's position and would recommend denial. Messrs. Thomas and Levy agreed and suggested true-divided-light sash.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

2129 GREEN STREET

Owner: Andrew Faytek

Applicant: Todd Curry

History: c. 1864; contributing to the Spring Garden Historic District, 10/11/2000

Project: Install sash replacements with simulated divided light

OVERVIEW: This application proposes installing simulated-divided-light sash replacements. Originally, this building had four-over-four double-hung sash with 1-1/8 inch vertical muntins and 7/8 inch horizontal muntins. This application proposes to install four-over-four windows with 1-1/8 inch vertical true-divided-light muntins and 7/8 inch horizontal simulated-divided-light muntins with a space bar.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the application to the Committee. No one represented the application.

Ms. Pentz and Messrs. Thomas and Levy noted their agreement with the staff recommendation.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

1942 WALLACE STREET

Owner: Greta Braith

Applicant: Greta Braith

History: c. 1875; contributing to Spring Garden Historic District, 10/11/2000

Project: Install metal railings and gate

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install a two metal railings and a gate at a side entrance to a condominium unit along 20th Street. The railings would have a simple vertical picket design and would be mounted into the mortar joints of the building and into the sidewalk, avoiding the marble steps. A simple vertical picket gate would span from railing to railing in front of the steps. There is no historic precedent for gating steps.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal to the Committee. Property owner Great Baith represented the application.

Ms. Baith explained that the entrance to her unit is on the side of the building along 20th Street. She also explained that she would like the gate for security reasons. The entrance to her condominium is adjacent to a bus stop and deli. Strangers often sit on her steps, blocking her entrance, making noise, and leaving garbage. At night, teenagers congregate on the steps and disturb the area residents. She stated that the railings and gate would not be mounted to any historic material and would be easily removable in the future. She also stated that many secondary entrances like hers are gated in the neighborhood.

Mr. D'Alessandro stated that he consider the proposal appropriate because it would not directly impact historic materials and because it would be reversible. Messrs. Rivera, Thomas, and Levy agreed.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES

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

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

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

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

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

Masonry Preservation Guideline: Not recommended: Applying paint or other coatings such as stucco to masonry that has been historically unpainted or uncoated; Not recommended: Changing the type of paint or coating or its color; Not recommended: Using new paint colors that are inappropriate to the historic building and district; Recommended: Cleaning masonry surfaces with the gentlest possible method, such as low pressure water and detergents.

Roofs Guideline: Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

New Additions Guidelines: Recommended: Placing functions and services required for the new use in non-character defining interior spaces rather than constructing a new addition; Recommended: Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that the character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed; Recommended: Placing a new addition on a non-character-defining elevation and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building; Recommended: Designing a rooftop addition when required for the new use that is set back from the wall plane and as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.