

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

**TUESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2025
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
AMY STEIN, ACTING CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Dan McCoubrey, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, Chair		X	
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP	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
- Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons were present:

- Alex Lipkin
- A. Mateo
- Brian Wise
- Charles Elison
- Connor Burke, Alterra
- Courtney Foote, PAU
- Dan Van Dyk
- Gina Maria Ross
- Gregory P. Montanaro
- Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
- Jake Blumgart
- James Hill
- Jay Farrell
- Jon McMillan

Jonathan Broh, JKRP Architects
Lorenzo Locatelli
Mark Cartella, Alterra
Mark Faulkner, PAU, Practice for Architecture and Urbanism
Mary Berzinsky
Matt Masterpasqua, Mass Architecture Studio
Megan McGaffigan
Paul Schwedelson
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
Ramona Thornton
Sara Pochedly, Toner Architects
Steve Gonzalez, TF Cornerstone
Wendy Sumida, Via Laulima

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 1301-25 CHESTNUT ST

Proposal: Install signage; add doorways; install interior partitions; construct rooftop additions with pool and deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: TF Cornerstone

Applicant: Jonathan Alan Broh, JKR Partners

History: 1910, John Wanamaker Department Store, Daniel H. Burnham & Co., architect

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes several changes to the Wanamaker building as it transitions from a department store with offices to a mixed-use retail and residential building. The building and the Grand Court portion of the interior are individually designated and the Eagle statue in the Grand Court is designated as an object.

At the ground floor, the application proposes dividing the department store retail space into several smaller retail spaces. Bronze and glass storefront partitions would be added in arched openings in the Grand Court to create retail spaces. New entrances to retail spaces in the north and south sections of the building would be inserted into existing window openings at all four exterior facades on Market, Juniper, Chestnut, and 13th Streets. The designs for the new doorways would be based on the building's historic doorways. Standardized tenant signage is proposed for the exterior.

At the rooftop, the application proposes two small, one-story additions, roof deck, and pool. The rooftop additions would not be visible from the street.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Install signage.
- Add doorways.
- Install interior partitions.
- Construct rooftop additions with pool and 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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The alterations and additions will not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships. They 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, satisfying 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.*
- The proposed alterations and additions are reversible, satisfying Standard 10.
 - *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.*
 - The rooftop additions including the deck with railings and pool will not be visible from the public right-of-way.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10 and the Roofs Guideline.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:02:47

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architects Jonathan Broh and Mark Faulkner and developers Steve Gonzalez, Connor Burke, and Mark Cartella represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Broh explained that he and his firm are responsible for rooftop work and will be the architect of record for the whole project. The other firm, PAU, is responsible for the Grand Court space, signage, and other modifications for the retail spaces.
- Mr. Cluver asked about the numbers and locations of the banner signs.
 - Mr. Faulkner explained that there will be six each on Market and Chestnut Streets and two each on 13th and Juniper Streets at the corners. There will be 16 banner signs total, eight at the north and eight at the south. He added that the signs are needed for brand identity, especially for retailers located on the second floor.
 - Mr. Broh added that the building will have multiple retail tenants, and having an identity on the street is essential to every retailer.
 - Mr. Cartella noted that the signs will be fabric banners, not blade signs. The banners will be able to be swapped out easily, seasonally. He reported that the department store building had banner signs historically.
 - Mr. Detwiler directed the Architectural Committee to the attachment detail for the banner signs in the architectural drawing package. He stated that the detail should be reviewed to ensure that wind loads do not cause the anchors to damage the masonry façade. He noted that he is not opposed to the banner signs but wanted to make sure that they are attached appropriately to the building.
 - Mr. Faulkner stated that they will supplement the application with historic photographs of signage on the building.
 - Mr. Broh observed that he has detailed similar sign attachments on similar buildings in Center City. Those attachments have held up well. He stated that he will ensure that the attachment details are reviewed to protect the integrity of the facades.
- Mr. Broh discussed the additional entrances needed to access the separate retail spaces that will be created in the building.
 - Mr. Cluver stated that he understands the need for the additional entrances and

added that the scale of the new entrances feels appropriate.

- Mr. Cluver asked about the other signage.
 - Mr. Broh stated that the goal is to try to establish general parameters regarding the signage size, font size, and overall dimensions that can be presented to prospective retailers. Each retailer will then file its own application for signage as part of tenant fit out. He suggested that, if the sign is compliant with the general approval, then the staff could approve the signage details, without each sign being presented to the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission. He stated that they need to be able to inform prospective tenants about allowable signage parameters.
- Mr. Detwiler asked about the painting of the Grand Court.
 - Mr. Faulkner stated that they plan to repaint plaster ornament but will not paint masonry. They will conduct a paint analysis to determine how the Grand Court was painted historically. They will not necessarily recreate the original paint scheme precisely but will be guided by the paint analysis and repaint in a scheme that is like the historic schemes. He noted that the Grand Court and been painted and repainted many times.
 - Mr. Detwiler stated that the paint colors are critical to the character of the space. He stated that the space should not be painted “landlord white.” He added that he believes that the space was originally painted several tones of white.
 - Mr. Faulkner responded that they will use a range of white tones to paint the space to emphasize the verticality. They will use both glossy and matte finishes to highlight various features. He noted that they will paint plaster but not stone.
- Mr. Detwiler asked about the storefront systems in the arches. He suggested that the staff review samples of the metal. He also asked the applicants to guarantee that the storefronts would be set back in the openings to expose the coffers.
 - Mr. Faulkner stated that the storefronts will be located at the backs of the arches to expose the detailing in the arches.
 - Mr. Detwiler stated that the storefronts are very nicely designed. Ms. Stein asked the applicants to include historic views of the Grand Court in the supplemented application materials.
 - Mr. Cluver asked the applicants to revise the design of the metal band in the storefronts so that it better relates to the profile of the imposts in the piers that support the arches. He stated that the metal band could be better coordinated with the moulding details at the bases of the arches.
 - Mr. Faulkner agreed to make the revisions.
- Mr. Cluver asked about emergency exits from the Grand Court.
 - Mr. Faulkner pointed them out on the plan.
- Ms. Lukachik asked about the roof additions.
 - Mr. Broh stated that the additions are relatively light in weight and will not require significant changes to the roof.
 - Ms. Lukachik asked about the sightline studies and asked if the additions will be visible from the street.
 - Mr. Broh stated that there are numerous structures and equipment on the roof already and the additions will not change the current views. He reported that the railings will be set 15 feet back from the edge of the very large cornice, and they will only be 42 inches tall, so it is unlikely that railings or the deck will ever be seen from the street. He noted that the new additions will be smaller and less conspicuous than other features currently on the roof. Mr. Broh noted that they are working with a structural engineer.

- Ms. Lukachik asked about the rooftop mechanical equipment.
- Mr. Broh stated that they are relocating a few pieces of equipment and removing a few others.
- Ms. Stein remarked that the Architectural Committee is very pleased that this building is being reused and will remain open to the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance stated her organization's support for the approval of the project and the rehabilitation of the important historic building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The building is individually designated. The Grand Court section of the interior is individually designated. The Wanamaker Eagle is designated as an object.
- The applicant will conduct a paint analysis of the Grand Court.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The alterations are compatible with but differentiated from the historic fabric. The application satisfies Standard 9.
- The alterations are reversible. The application satisfies Standard 10.
- The rooftop additions will be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way. The application satisfies the Roofs Guideline.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the banner sign mounts do not damage the masonry, the paint scheme for the Grand Court is guided by the paint analysis but does not need to replicate the historic color scheme, and the metal bands on the Grand Court storefronts better relate to the imposts of the arched openings, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10 and the Roofs Guideline.

ITEM: 1301-25 Chestnut St MOTION: Approval with conditions MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: Detweiler					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey					X
John Cluver	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				X
Allison Lukachik					
Amy Stein	X				
Total	4				2

ADDRESS: 1601 S 13TH ST

Proposal: Convert church to apartments; remove stained-glass windows; alter openings; install doors, windows, window wells, roofing, and dormers

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Annex Investments II

Applicant: Ian Toner, Toner Architects

History: 1892; St. John's Baptist Church; Samuel Hall Day and Charles E. Oelschlager, architects

Individual Designation: 6/12/2020

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This in-concept application proposes to convert the former St. John's Baptist Church in South Philadelphia to residential use. The church, which is currently vacant, was designed in 1892 as the Church of the Reconciliation, and the attached chapel and school building was designed in 1899, both in the Romanesque Revival architectural style. The application proposes renovating the building and inserting additional floor levels inside to convert it to use as a 26-unit apartment building. It proposes to install a series of new "doghouse shaped" dormers clad with fiber cement siding along both sides of the steeply pitched main church roof and to replace all the existing stained-glass windows with aluminum framed clear glass windows. It further proposes infilling several existing doors and converting them to windows, replacing the entry doors, inserting window wells at existing basement window locations and enlarging the associated windows, installing several new windows and skylights, and replacing the current slate roof with asphalt shingles with a rectangular slate-like appearance.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Install new roof dormers
- Replace all existing windows
- Replace doors
- Alter openings
- Install window wells
- Replace roofing

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary or pictorial evidence.*
 - While some of the existing windows are later replacements, many are original stained glass. Details for the proposed windows are not clear but could be appropriate if they accurately approximate the visual qualities of the historic windows. The new windows could potentially satisfy Standard 6.
 - The existing doors are likely not original, but the proposed replacement doors appear too contemporary in design and do not match the historic character of the originals. The new doors do not satisfy Standard 6.
 - The existing rectangular gray slate roofing has reached the end of its useful life and the proposed replacement with a slate-like asphalt shingle satisfies Standard 6.

- *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.*
 - The proposed new dormers are too large, too numerous, and are not compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the property. They do not satisfy Standard 9 but potentially could if they were redesigned to be less intrusive.
 - The proposed alteration of some existing door openings to windows and installation of basement level window wells will satisfy Standard 9 if the new windows approximate the visual qualities of the historic windows.
- *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.*
 - The proposed new dormers are too large, too numerous, and conspicuous. They do not satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval in concept, provided the new windows and doors accurately reflect the historic character and proportions of the originals, and the proposed new dormers are redesigned to be smaller, less numerous, and better blend with the existing historic roof structure, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9, and the Roofs Guideline.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:51:09

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Sara Pochedly represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Stein asked the applicant to respond to the staff's comments regarding the dormers.
 - Ms. Pochedly explained that they have successfully added dormers to historic churches in the past and, in this case, the close spacing of the interior trusses pushed the dormers close together. She acknowledged that they appear a bit large for the scale of the church and they attempted to get them as small as possible while still maintaining usable space inside.
 - Ms. Stein replied that the proposed dormers stand out because of their gabled profile. She suggested a shed roof design would help them appear less obtrusive.
 - Ms. Pochedly asked if they would prefer individual dormers or one contiguous dormer with a shed roof.
 - Ms. Stein responded that the Architectural Committee's role is to respond to the proposed design and offer advice and the Committee members would prefer not to design a solution for the applicant.
 - Mr. Detwiler agreed and added that the wide blank roofs of the church are a character-defining feature of the building, and the proposal to add numerous new dormers and skylight openings to it negatively impacts that simplicity. He continued that he agrees that shed roofs for the dormers would improve the

visual impact and also pointed out that the edges of the dormers appear a bit wide compared to the windows, and tightening up those dimensions would also help them fit in better. Additionally, if they are clad with a material that is similar to that of the roof, they would likely blend better.

- Ms. Stein addressed the question of combining the dormers. She suggested that the applicant can include several different options when she presents the project at the next Historical Commission meeting.
- Mr. Detwiler commented that he appreciates the applicant bringing this project to them as an in-concept application and emphasized showing options during these types of reviews.
- Ms. Pochedly replied that they discussed several options internally but did not realize she could bring those to the reviews and will do so at the follow-up Historical Commission meeting.
- Mr. Detwiler commented that the number and size of the proposed skylights should be reduced.
- Ms. Pochedly inquired about the Architectural Committee's opinion on materials. She added that they were considering a fiber cement lap siding for the dormers, though they have not investigated colors yet.
 - Mr. Detwiler responded that there is precedent in roofs like this one that the dormers would have been clad with the same material as the roof, or one that is close in color to it. He added that the application is also proposing to replace the current slate roof with asphalt shingles and he would be upset with the loss of the slate. He acknowledged there are likely budgetary reasons to propose asphalt, but the roofs of this building are character defining features.
 - Mr. Cluver agreed about the slate and asked if the bell tower's roof was copper.
 - Ms. Pochedly responded that it appears to be some kind of standing seam metal, but they have not verified that exactly. She added that that roof will not be replaced.
- Mr. Cluver addressed the proposal to infill and replace several doors. He suggested that the design of any new doors and windows will be critical though the general concept of altering them is acceptable.
 - Mr. Detwiler agreed and added that the materials used will be important and that something similar to a modern storefront system would likely not work well.
 - Mr. Cluver added that the amount of glazing and how open the doors look will contribute to how well they work. The doors and first-floor windows are at eye level in this building and a fully glazed door, for example, will likely not work.
- Mr. Detwiler returned to the material proposed for the roof. He suggested that they price different options including new slate.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia commented in support of the in-concept application. She stated that the Preservation Alliance was the nominator of this property, and they support the concept of adaptively reusing it as apartments.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The concept of converting the church building at 1601 S. 13th Street to use as apartments is acceptable.
- Adding dormers and skylights to the roof of the building will likely be acceptable if

- they are re-designed to be less conspicuous than currently presented.
- Losing the slate on the roof would negatively affect the character of the building and the applicants should explore all roofing options.
- The final design and materials of the new windows and doors will be important for a final approval and should be compatible with historic designs.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- No action on the application is required because the application requests an in-concept review, and the Architectural Committee's comments during the discussion provide the requested advice.

ADDRESS: 2224 AND 2226 W TIOGA ST

Proposal: Construct rear additions

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Wise Holding Group, LLC

Applicant: Matthew Masterpasqua, Mass Architecture Studio

History: 1898; Conkling-Armstrong Houses; Edgar V. Seelers, architect

Individual Designation: 3/8/2019

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, Theodore.Maust@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This in-concept application proposes constructing a three-story addition at the rear of 2224 and 2226 W. Tioga Street, the Conkling-Armstrong Houses. The development of the site to create 12 apartments will enable the restoration of the elaborate front and side facades of the historic twin buildings, which have sat vacant for several years.

In 2021 and 2023, the Historical Commission's staff reviewed and approved a make-safe application, which required the interior demolition of the building so that it could be shored up. The third-floor mansard roof and dormers on the rear ell were demolished with the condition that they would be reconstructed. This proposal includes that reconstruction work. The applicants have also submitted a thorough masonry restoration plan, which can be reviewed at the staff level.

The application also proposes the creation of basement egress in the historic structures by creating wells and lengthening existing basement windows on the side elevations.

The proposed addition would face Estaugh Street but be set back from the street across a small parking lot. The proposed addition would also be visible from N. 23rd Street and minimally visible from W. Tioga Street.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct three-story addition at rear of property.
- Restore historic structure.
- Create basement egress.

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.

- The proposed addition would read as a separate building to the Conkling-Armstrong houses and not negatively impact the view of the resource from W. Tioga Street.
- The building is taller than neighboring buildings on Estaugh Street but does not overwhelm any designated historic resources.
- The proposed addition is compatible in material with the historic building and surrounding context, with its masonry construction and architectural detailing including a cornice, water table, and sills and lintels around window openings.
- *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.*
 - An application for final approval will need to include details about how the proposed addition intersects with the historic houses. Given the heavily altered rear wall, however, this intersection may be done in a way which is largely reversible.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval in-concept, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

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

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Matt Masterpasqua represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Detwiler applauded the applicant for taking on the role of rehabilitating these buildings. He highlighted the design choices, which respond to the context and especially the selection of brick for the proposed addition.
 - Mr. Masterpasqua noted that budget is a concern and that the architects are considering more affordable materials as well. He asked if a thick veneer would be acceptable.
 - Mr. Cluver replied that it is difficult for the Architectural Committee to comment on materials that have not been presented. He encouraged the applicant to use brick, owing to its longevity.
- Mr. Cluver asked for clarity about the existing condition of the rear wall and which openings were being modified or added to accommodate the proposed floor plans.
 - Mr. Masterpasqua responded that the rear wall is significantly modified and the oldest portions of it appear to be later additions to the historic building. The design team did, however, work with historic openings where possible.
 - Mr. Cluver asked whether there were any existing remains of older rear walls.
 - Mr. Masterpasqua responded that some segments do survive and they are incorporated in the walls between units on the proposed floor plans.
- Mr. Cluver inquired about the framed portion of the rear ell.
 - Mr. Maust clarified that portion of the building, and one part of the second floor, had been demolished as part of the make-safe application, with the condition that the mansard roof and dormers would be reconstructed.

- Mr. Masterpasqua confirmed that that area had been framed out, but not yet reconstructed.
- Mr. Cluver asked about the fenestration plan.
 - Mr. Masterpasqua referred to the historic image included in the nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, which shows one-over-one double-hung windows in most openings. The proposal utilizes similar windows throughout the historic buildings and rear addition.
 - Mr. Cluver speculated that window elements of this era might be dark in color to somewhat blend into the stone surrounds.
 - Mr. Masterpasqua pointed to another photograph from the 2018 nomination, which shows dark green paint on the windows.
- Mr. Detwiler expressed some trepidation about the joint between new and old and suggested that the intersections of the cornices will need some study.
 - Mr. Masterpasqua responded that the team would study it further. He asked if the Architectural Committee would support using the flat framed wall on the rear ell as it exists rather than reconstructing the mansard roof as it previously existed. He suggested that the mansard may have been a later addition.
 - Mr. Detwiler asked to see this compromise reconstruction drawn in more detail but indicated a willingness to exercise leeway given the loss of material.
 - Ms. Stein agreed with Mr. Detwiler and commented that this portion of the building is minimally visible from the public right-of-way.
 - Mr. Cluver also agreed but wanted to ensure that the cost savings would be invested elsewhere in the building.
 - Mr. Detwiler suggested that restoring the terracotta elements would be worth such a compromise.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia commented in support of the application and materials selected for the rear addition.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed rear addition is appropriate in scale, style, and material.
- Cost-saving compromises, including a simplified rebuilding of the rear ell's top floor, may be acceptable given the extent of restoration required of the heavily ornamented front portions of the building.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- No action on the application is required because the application requests an in-concept review, and the Architectural Committee's comments during the discussion provide the requested advice.

ADDRESS: 4221 PINE ST

Proposal: Legalize replacement of slate mansard with brown asphalt shingles

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Gina and Thomas Ross

Applicant: Gina Ross

History: 1900; William Kimball, developer

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Southeast Spruce Hill Historic District, Contributing, 7/12/2024

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes legalizing the removal of slate and replacement with GAF Timberline HDZ fiberglass asphalt shingles in a brown color on the mansard at 4221 Pine Street. This twin property is part of a larger development row on the 4200 block of Pine Street, all of which historically featured slate mansard roofs. The properties on the block were listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in July 2024 as part of the Southeast Spruce Hill Historic District, meaning that any slate mansard replacement prior to written notice being sent to property owners was not reviewed by the Historical Commission.

In November 2025, a community member contacted the Historical Commission to inform it of the recent replacement of slate with brown fiberglass asphalt shingles at this property. The Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a violation for the roofing work without a building permit, prompting this request for legalization from the property owner.

According to the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #29, slate roofs have a lifespan of 60 to 125 years. Section 6.10.c.4 of the Commission Rules & Regulations states that "the staff shall review and may approve without referral to the Architectural Committee and the Commission permit applications proposing the replacement of slate roofing materials, with the exception of mansards, turrets, and other character-defining features, provided the severity of deterioration requires replacement and the substitute materials closely approximate the color and shape of the historic slate roofing materials." The Historical Commission staff acknowledges that the slate on the mansard reached the end of its lifespan, but it would have been unable to administratively approve a brown fiberglass asphalt shingle as a replacement, had this application been submitted as a building permit application for review in advance of the work commencing.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Legalize replacement of slate on mansard with brown asphalt shingles.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
 - The brown GAF Timberline HDZ fiberglass asphalt shingles do not match the old in design, color, texture, or materials. This application fails to satisfy Standard 6.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:29:05

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 16 DECEMBER 2025

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Property owner Gina Ross represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Stein explained that the Architectural Committee would review this application as if it was a proposal for the roofing scope and the work had not yet been done.
- Ms. Ross stated that her roofing contractor was responsible for obtaining the building permit and failed to do so, and she was not made aware of the lack of a permit. She explained that she acted in good faith as a homeowner, relied on the professional responsibilities of the contractor, and had no intention of avoiding the proper procedure. She added that she was unaware that the property was designated as historic and asked for information on changing the classification to non-contributing. She concluded that she wants to bring her property into compliance.
- Ms. Stein suggested that Ms. Ross could obtain a quote from a roofer for replacement with real slate. She recommended that Ms. Ross speak with the staff about next steps.
- Mr. Cluver stated that the slate on a mansard is a prominent visible element of a roof, and that the change to brown asphalt shingles impacts the character of the building. He stated that the Architectural Committee would have recommended slate as a replacement material, had this application been submitted in advance of the work being done.
- Ms. Lukachik commented that the brown color is jarring compared to the surrounding slate mansards.
- Mr. Detwiler commented that this application could be precedent-setting within the new historic district. He noted that there are flashings and other pieces of trim that are lost at the top edge of the roof, and the corner of the mansard now has a different detail than the historic detail. He opined that the installation of the brown shingles was poorly done and will not age well.
 - Ms. Ross noted that the roofing contractor was on the call and she was glad that they were able to hear this feedback.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- This twin property is part of a larger development row on the 4200 block of Pine Street, all of which historically featured slate mansard roofs. The original slate on this mansard roof was recently removed without a building permit or the Historical Commission's approval, and was replaced with an inappropriate roofing material.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The brown GAF Timberline HDZ fiberglass asphalt shingles do not match the old in design, color, texture, or materials. This application fails to satisfy Standard 6.

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

ITEM: 4221 Pine St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Detwiler SECONDED BY: Lukachik					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey					X
John Cluver	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman					X
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	4				2

ADDRESS: 423 AND 425 VINE ST

Proposal: Demolish part of ell; construct rear addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Charles Elison and Alina Mateo

Applicant: Wendy Sumida, Via Laulima

History: 1799

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Significant, 12/12/2003

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

OVERVIEW: This application seeks final approval to demolish a section of the rear ell of the rowhouse at 423 Vine Street and construct a wider ell in its place. The building at 423 Vine Street was constructed in 1799 and is classified as a significant resource in the Old City Historic District. The property at 423 Vine Street is now combined with the property at 425 Vine Street as a single-family residence. The house that once stood at 425 Vine Street was demolished in the 1940s and the land is used for parking, open space, and a roof deck. The rear ell has two sections, a stucco-clad section closer to the main block and a brick-clad section at the rear. The stucco-clad section is proposed for demolition. The brick-clad section would be retained. Based on historic maps and current photographs, the area proposed for full demolition appears to be original. It is likely that the ell's original exterior was brick but is now covered with stucco. A porch was added to the stucco section of the ell and the historic windows were replaced at some point with one-over-one windows. The stucco section of the ell was originally three stories but the third floor has been removed in the interior. The new infill construction is proposed to be a similar height but with a wider footprint. Brick veneer cladding and Fibrex windows are proposed for the exterior. The staff recognizes that, although the stucco section of the ell is likely original and therefore significant, this area at the rear of the main block is not visible from the public right-of-way.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish rear ell
- Construct new two-story infill addition

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 16 DECEMBER 2025

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- *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.*
 - The application proposes the demolition of the section of the rear ell that likely dates to 1799; therefore, the application does not meet Standard 9.
 - The proposed design of the infill construction is more contemporary in its features and fenestration. The red brick cladding material is compatible with the historic building. If the fenestration, proportions, and details of the proposed façade facing the courtyard were revised, the new construction could meet 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.*
 - The proposed demolition permanently removes historic materials; therefore, this application does not meet Standard 10.
 - If the demolition is approved, the rear ell should be documented to HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey) standards. Creation of this documentation would allow the application to better meet Standard 10.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:51:14

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Wendy Sumida and owner Charles Elison represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Stein commented that the property is individually designated, and therefore the fabric itself is significant, and important to maintain under the preservation guidelines. She asked the applicant why the demolition is necessary.
 - Ms. Sumida replied that the owners recently purchased the home and also welcomed their first child. She added that the owner's elderly mother has moved in with them. Ms. Sumida pointed out the two non-code compliant stairways currently in place and noted they pose a physical challenge to family members. She said the alterations to the stairs are intended to make the residence more comfortable for family use, as well as functional and code compliant.
- Ms. Stein asked Ms. Sumida to focus on architectural aspects of the project. She asked why they were removing the wall facing the courtyard.
 - Ms. Sumida responded that, because of the relocation of the stairway, it narrowed the existing dining room; to create more space they are pushing out the wall to match the width of the front section of the house. She stated that the new façade would be brick to respect the historic context of the property. Ms. Sumida pointed out the proposed height is similar to the existing ell. She added that this design would accommodate a future third-floor expansion.
- Ms. Stein inquired if other Architectural Committee members had comments. She added that the addition of a stair on the interior is irrelevant to the Architectural Committee's review unless it affects that structure or exterior historic fabric in some

manner.

- Mr. Elison reported that the rear ell has been significantly altered over time. He explained that the former owner transformed the building from a sandwich shop back to a single-family residence during the 1970s and added stucco to the rear ell's façade in 1985. Mr. Elison said the former owner told him that the original wall on the ell had been replaced.
- Mr. Elison explained that the floors on the second floor do not align. He said one of the project goals was to better align the floors as the existing stairs posed mobility challenges for his family. Mr. Elison acknowledged the Architectural Committee's focus on preserving historic elements of the ell and said they intend to comply as much as possible but added that the mobility needs of his family must be resolved.
- Mr. Cluver asked Mr. Elison to clarify his comments about the intent to align the floors. He pointed out that the floorplans still show stairs after the renovation.
 - Mr. Elison confirmed that most of the stairs between rooms would be removed but some steps would remain.
 - Mr. Detwiler commented that traditionally rear ells were at a different floor level in homes like this.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that the rear ell appeared original. He pointed out that both the existing King of Prussia marble step and entry door with transom likely date to the original 1799 construction.
 - Ms. Sumida referenced a 1964 black and white photograph included in the staff's recommendation. She expressed concern that the window patterns did not match the ell's current configuration, and rather than be part of the 1799 construction, this area may have been altered as part of the 1986 and 1987 renovation.
 - Mr. Detwiler observed that the rear area seen in the 1964 photograph is not the area proposed for demolition and the subject of the review.
 - Ms. Mehley stated that the extensive work completed in the 1980s was a historic tax credit project. She explained that the scope of work would have been guided by the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service and would have been sensitively done.
- Mr. Detwiler said the designation classification was giving him pause. He pointed out that the building was individually designated but also classified as significant within the historic district. Mr. Detwiler said that, owing to this fact, he is inclined to be more cautious with this review.
- Ms. Stein suggested that, if the rear ell was retained, the owner could create an addition in the open courtyard to support the interior program space they need. She added that she assumed the lots of 423 and 425 Vine Street were now combined.
 - Ms. Sumida asked Ms. Stein to explain how a courtyard addition would comply.
 - Ms. Stein responded that the Architectural Committee's main concern is the removal of the original 1799 wall facing the courtyard. She continued that if an addition was constructed in the courtyard, the demolition issue would no longer exist.
 - Ms. Sumida asked if they retained the historic wall could a stair be constructed outside of it. She requested confirmation if this was what Ms. Stein was suggesting.
 - Ms. Stein asked for other Architectural Committee members to weigh in. She inquired if the rear ell's railing and colonnade were original.
 - Ms. Mehley said that the staff concluded it was not part of the original construction and was a later addition.
 - Mr. Cluver asked if they could retain the original wall and construct an exterior

- stair adjacent to it.
 - Ms. Sumida stated this was a design option that she proposed and reviewed with the homeowner, and there were concerns it took away from the natural daylight capabilities, and it did not seem like an attractive option to select.
- Mr. Cluver said if the historic designation was limited to the historic district, the focus would be the impact on the district. He asked if this portion of the property was visible from the public right-of-way.
 - Ms. Sumida replied it is not visible. She stated that the garage with a roof deck and railing at 425 Vine Street would likely block any view of the rear of the property even after the new construction.
- Ms. Stein inquired if the application included a contemporary photograph of the front of the building.
 - Mr. Elison responded that it was difficult to obtain decent photographs of the building's façade, owing to the trees in front of the property.
- The Architectural Committee members asked the applicants to add contemporary photographs of the property as viewed from the public right-of-way to the application prior to the Historical Commission's meeting.
- Mr. Cluver said that he is struggling with the proposed demolition because, while he recognized the negative impact to the historic district is minimal, he stated there are so few buildings of this age with their elements intact such as this one and it would be a shame to lose them.
- Mr. Detwiler suggested they could insert a two-story bay into the wall to accommodate the dining area.
- Mr. Elison said he would be open to compromises that preserve some of the wall's fabric. He stressed that having a functional dining room was important to his family and creating enough space was not possible without moving the wall.
- Ms. Sumida and Mr. Elison spoke at length about the current staircases in the house, noting that there are separate stairs that lead to different parts of the house. Mr. Elison noted that, because of his mother-in-law living with them and his own combat injuries, a new, primary stair was key to the function of the house.
- Mr. Cluver commented that the applicants likely sensed the Architectural Committee's struggle with the application. He observed that the Architectural Committee had focused their discussion primarily on the merits of the demolition but had not addressed the proposed design. Mr. Cluver said that he was concerned about the scale of the upper floor windows relative to the rest of the windows on the building and that generally the façade has too much glass. He also noted that the door felt squat. He noted that the window configuration does not feel compatible with the rest of the building's design.
- Ms. Stein said that the new construction projects out two to three feet and it may end up being visible based on the historic image.
- Mr. Cluver stated that, if the applicant finds information that confirms this section of the ell is not historic, that will change the tenor of the conversation.
 - Ms. Sumida agreed with Mr. Cluver's comment and confirmed that she and the owner would continue their research.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The property is classified as significant in the Old City Historic District.
- The section of the rear ell in question may date to the construction of the main block in 1799.
- The proposed new construction would not be visible from the public right-of-way.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9 as the proposed demolition permanently removes a section of the rear ell that likely dates to construction in 1799.
- This application fails to satisfy Standard 9 as the proposed new construction is more contemporary in its features and fenestration. The red brick cladding material is compatible with the historic building. If the fenestration, proportions, and details of the proposed façade facing the courtyard were revised, the new construction could meet Standard 9.
- This application fails to satisfy Standard 10 because the proposed demolition permanently removes historic materials.

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

ITEM: 423 and 425 Vine St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: Detwiler					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey					X
John Cluver	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman					X
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	4				2

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:23:08

ACTION: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 11:26 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.