

ADDRESS: 1132-40 N FRONT ST

Proposal: Construct addition and stair tower, replace and add windows and doors

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Franklin Properties

Applicant: Rotciver Lebron, Harman Deutsch Architects

History: 1864; enlarged 1880; J.A. Dougherty's Sons Distillery Bonded Warehouse

Individual Designation: Not designated, but under consideration for designation

District Designation: None

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OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a rooftop addition and stair tower, and replace and add windows and doors. The property is not yet designated as historic, but a nomination is pending for the property. The nomination will be considered by the Committee on Historic Designation on June 15 and the Historical Commission on July 8. The property was recently sold. The Historical Commission notified the former owner of the pending nomination, but not the current owner. The current owner became aware of the nomination when he applied for a building permit to rehabilitate the building.

The four-story building was built as part of a large industrial complex known as J.A. Dougherty's Sons Distillery in two phases in 1864 and 1880. The building faces N. Front Street to the east. The Market-Frankford elevated line runs along N. Front Street, very close to the building in question, and block most views of the upper floors. The building backs up to a vacant lot along N. Hope Street to the west. Historically, a structure of similar height facing N. Hope Street stood against the rear wall of the subject building; that structure has been demolished, leaving a vacant lot. All of the openings in the rear wall have been infilled and would have been interior openings historically.

The application proposes to construct a one-story rooftop addition clad in stucco and occupying the entirety of the roof. It also proposes to construct a five-story stair tower along the south wall of the building. The main entrance to the building would be located at what was historically the rear party-wall façade, which faces the vacant lot along Hope Street. New door and window openings would be cut and doors and windows added at the Hope Street and south facades. At the Front Street façade, the six ground-floor arched openings, which have been infilled to varying degrees, would be reopened for windows. Historically, four were door openings and two were window openings. Historic window sills would be retained at the two window openings. Panels up to the sill heights would be installed in the four door openings. Paired windows would be installed in all six openings. Panels would be installed in the transoms. At the upper floors, the windows would be replaced with square-head one-over-one windows. The historic windows were arched, six-over-six windows. The brick facades would be repointed.

Section 6.9.a.10 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations stipulates that:

The Commission, its committees, and staff may consider development plans in place at the time of the issuance of the notice announcing the consideration of a designation including but not limited to executed contracts, substantial design development, or other evidence of a material commitment to development in the review of applications.

The former owner of the property was notified of the Commission's intent to consider designation on April 28. The current owner and developer learned of the Commission's plans upon the submission of a building permit application on May 9. The owner/developer of this property has demonstrated that substantial development plans were in place at the time of the issuance of the notice announcing the consideration of a designation. While the proposed

rehabilitation may not satisfy a strict reading of the Standards in every regard, it would preserve the character-defining features of the vacant building, returning it to active use and improving its appearance, especially if more appropriate windows are installed at the Front Street façade.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the ground-floor Front Street windows, transoms, and panels approximate the appearance of the historic windows and doors and the upper-floor Front Street windows are arched six-over-six windows, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and Section 6.9.a.10 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations.