MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TUESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2013
ROOM 578, CITY HALL
DOMINIQUE HAWKINS, CHAIR

PRESENT
Dominique Hawkins, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, chair
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP
Rudy D'Alessandro
Nan Gutterman, FAIA
Suzanne Pentz
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Erin Cote, Historic Preservation Planner II
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III

ALSO PRESENT
Brett Feldman, Esq., Klehr Harrison
Terri Steinberg
Andrew Blanda, Sandvold Blanda Architecture & Interiors, LLC
J. Caldwell
Ben Leech, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Joseph Morrison, Beanlab
Teresa Isabella

CALL TO ORDER
Ms. Hawkins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mses. Gutterman, Pentz, and Stein and Mr. D'Alessandro joined her.

DRAFT

ADDRESS: 2210 RITTENHOUSE SQ
Project: Construct additions
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Mark Steinberg & Terri Herman Steinberg
Applicant: Andrew Blanda
History: 1850
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Erin Cote, erin.cote@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: In October 2013, the Architectural Committee reviewed an application that proposed to demolish the rear ell as well as the back half of the main block of this rowhouse and construct a four-story stucco addition on the same footprint. That application was withdrawn before the Historical Commission meeting in November 2013. Based on the Committee's suggestions, the applicant now proposes to retain the rear ell and construct a two-story addition with a roof deck above. The addition would be clad in stucco, set back approximately four feet from the rear façade, and delineated from the existing ell with a new wood cornice. This application proposes to retain the rear slope of the main block roof and a portion of the cornice, and construct a cricket where the addition will engage with the roof. With the raising of the level of the second floor in the rear ell, this application also proposes to raise the window openings in the ell, but retain the widths of the openings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architect Andrew Blanda and attorney Brett Feldman represented the application.

Mr. Feldman stated that the owner and the architect have worked hard with the staff to revise the project to comply with the Committee's comments during the review last month. He informed the Committee that the Steinbergs purchased the property in 2011 with the intention of renovating it for their retirement. He stated that the main problem that they encountered was that the main block and the rear ell have two different floor heights. He stated that they are no longer proposing to demolish ther rear ell; they now propose to retain it and raise the floor height in the rear to align with the front, and to add a third floor and a roof deck.

Mr. Blanda stated that they have retained as much of the historic brick as possible. The proposal now involves six-over-six windows with the same width but raised up to correspond to the new floor heights. He noted that they propose to have the window infill be setback in the openings to provide a reminder of the historic window openings. He stated that the new addition will be delineated from the old with a wood cornice. He stated that, in order to preserve the existing roof structure, the owner has opted to terminate the elevator at the addition level and not have it extend up through the roof to access the roof deck; now only the stairway comes up throught the addtion.

Mr. Cluver noted that transoms are being added to the first floor windows of the ell. He observed that there is a solitary brick corbel/molding at the cornerof the existing cornice. He asked what they proposed to do with this element. Mr. Blanda stated that he and the contractor are currently working out the details of the cornice with the raising of the ceiling. He stated that they aim to

keep the cornice very simple and use the profile of the existing cornice and extend it around to the south side of the building.

Ms. Hawkins asked if they propose stucco or EIFS for the new addition. Mr. Blanda stated that the addion would be clad in stucco. She also asked about the material of the railing. Mr. Blanda stated that would be painted black metal.

Ms. Pentz stated that she thought the applicant did a great job incorporationg all the Committee's comments from last month.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided that the railing is black metal, and that the brick corbel/molding is maintained with the installation of the new cornice, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADDRESS: 269 S VAN PELT ST
Project: Construct third-floor addition and deck
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Melanie Amster
Applicant: Joseph Morrison, Beanlab Architecture and Design
History: 1870
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: In July 2013, the Historical Commission reviewed and approved a mansard rooftop addition for this property. The property owner was unable to obtain a zoning approval for that design and therefore proposes a new design for the third-floor addition. It would not be a mansard, but would be set back eight feet from the front façade.

Over time, the Historical Commission has enumerated an implicit policy regarding rooftop additions on carriage houses. The Commission has approved two types of rooftop additions for carriage houses: mansard additions that extend up from front façades and are compatible because they look like historic additions; and other additions that are set back from front facades to the point where they are inconspicuous from the street. The addition currently proposed is not a mansard and therefore should be set back from the front facade to the point where it is inconspicuous from the street.

In April 2012, the Historical Commission reviewed and approved a rooftop addition for the carriage house to the south with a setback of 13'-6". However, that application is not entirely analogous to the current application because that building stands on a corner and its rooftop is much more visible from the street.

Prior to the Architectural Committee meeting, the staff will review a mock-up of the proposed addition to determine the extent of its visibility. The addition should be inconspicuous because it is not an addition with a historic appearance like a mansard.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation until the mock-up is reviewed.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architect Joseph Morrison represented the application.

Mr. Baron displayed photographs of the mock-up of the rooftop addition and opined that the mock-up shows that the addition would be conspicuous.

Mr. Morrison explained that he favored the initial design for a mansard addition, which had been approved by the Commission. That design was not approved by the Zoning Boad because it did not provide the eight-foot setback. The current design includes the setback. Mr. Morrison agreed with Mr. Baron's assertion that the mock-up showed that the addition would be conspicuous and provided drawings of a revised design intended to reduce the visibility. The new proposal has a sloped roof at the front that reduces the height at the front edge by four feet. He said that the internal ceiling at the front would reduce from nine feet at its highest point to seven feet, six inches. The the shed sun visors over the windows have been removed in the revised design. The front edge of the roof of the addition does, however, extend forward of the eight-foot setback line. The addition would be stuccoed and have aluminum-clad windows. The chimney would have to be extended to accommodate the addition.

Ms. Hawkins opined that, although the revised is substantially shorter than the originally proposed addition, she still thinks that it will be conspicuous. Ms. Gutterman asked about other rooftop additions on the street. Mr. Baron stated that there two buildings with rooftop additions directly across the street; one has a mansard on a garage that was converted to a house and the other has a boxy addition on a three-story rowhouse. He also noted that there are two carriage houses with additions approved in 2012 at the north end of the block; one has a mansard addition and the other has a boxy addition with a seven-foot setback. Ms. Hawkins thought that the Committee had not recommended approval of that last design. It was noted that the Committee had recommended approval of the addition at 249 S. Van Pelt with the seven-foot setback in 2012. Mr. Cluver opined that the proposed addition should be set back several more feet, beyond the eight-foot setback..

Mr. Morrison explained that his client does not want to set it back further, but offered that he could lower the addition by 15 inches by moving ductwork out of the living-room ceiling. He said that the side party wall would extend higher where the neighbors' new, recently approved addition would be built. He said he could revise the mock-up for the Commission to review. Mr. Baron raised two questions. He suggested that the windows on the front façade should be slightly revised to show a casement in the hayloft door area rather than a double hung window. He also asked about the proposed color for the stucco and the paint on the existing façade. He mentioned that the underlying material is serpentine stone, although that has been covered with stucco. Mr. Morrison responded that the Commission had already approved the second-floor window when it approved his mansard design. He explained that the facade color would be an earth tone, but noted that he had not finalized a color choice. The Committee did not make a recommendation on color, but asked the applicant to bring a sample of his color choice to the Commission for review.

Ms. Hawkins asked for public comment. Judy Caldwell, the neighbor directly to the north, said that she objected to the overall height, the windows being out of alignment and assymmetrical, and a red color for the stucco. She thought that the design should have a greater setback from the front façade.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the revised design presented to the Committee, provided the height of the addition is reduced 15 inches and the updated mock-up is determined to be inconspicuous, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADDRESS: 325 S 18TH ST
Project: Install fences and flower boxes
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Teresa Isabella
Applicant: Teresa Isabella
History: 1860
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Kim Broadbent, kim.broadbent@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: These three applications propose to install fencing along the front, side, and rear façades of the property located at the corner of S. 18th Street and Delancey Place, in addition to four flower boxes on the front and side façades of the property, and a handrail at the S. 18th Street steps.

The first application proposes the installation of a metal handrail, gate, and fencing at the front (S. 18th Street) façade. The handrail would attach to the front steps and connect to a metal fence that would run to a point 4'-7 ½" north past the main block, and turn 90 degrees to a point east where it would meet the existing three-story bay. The handrail position relative to the steps is not typical of historic handrails and should be amended.

The second application proposes the installation of a wooden fence to run along the Delancey Place side yard and Bouvier Street rear yard and parking area. The proposed fence would start at the existing three-story bay, include a fence door that opens into the yard, and then travel east along Delancey Place the length of the building, turning 90 degrees to meet the rear of the building with a doorway included in this span of the fence. An additional fence is proposed to run along the property line at Bouvier Street to enclose the open parking area.

The property in question is 18'-1" wide along S. 18th Street and 88' deep along Delancey Street. The three-story bay that projects off the north façade of the building extends about 4'-8" beyond the property line into the Delancey Street right-of-way. The Historical Commission has requested that the Streets Department determine whether this incursion of the bay into the right-of-way is legal. Like the bay, some sections of the proposed fences would be situated beyond the property line, in the right-of-way. Before considering the fence portions of these applications, the Historical Commission should require the applicant to demonstrate that the Streets Department and City Council have authorized the applications. The City, not the applicant, is the owner of much of the property that would be fenced and all applications require owner authorization.

The third application proposes the legalization of four flower boxes that have already been installed. Two of these 40" long flower boxes are installed below the two first-floor windows on S. 18th Street. An additional 40" long flower box is installed below the second floor window on

the new Delancey Place bay. The final flower box is 80" long and is installed between two first-floor windows on the Delancey Place façade, to be hidden from public view by the above proposed fencing along Delancey Place. All planters are black metal with full copper lining.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of flower boxes, pursuant to Standard 9; denial of the fence applications, which currently lack the owner's authorization.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Broadbent presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Property owner Teresa Isabella represented the application.

Ms. Hawkins asked if Ms. Isabella received clarification regarding her property lines, to which Ms. Isabella responded that the Streets Department was working on it. Ms. Hawkins then asked for clarification on the location and design of the proposed handrail and fence. Ms. Isabella stated that the property previously had a handrail and fence, according to a historic drawing that was included in her application, and that she would like to obtain approval from the Commission to move forward with her handrail and fencing, contingent upon verification from the Streets Department that her property lines are in fact where she believes them to be. She explained that the metal fence for the front and side yard would be roughly three or four feet high, which she believes was the height of the fence shown in the historic drawing. She explained that her fence design was based on the design for the flower boxes. Mr. Farnham explained that the staff is not opposed to the design of the handrail in general and has no evidence of the historic railing. Therefore, it is not a matter of replicating what had been there, but positioning the railing appropriately in relation to the steps. The railing is oddly positioned in Ms. Isabella's drawing. He added that the staff would be happy to work with the applicant to develop a solution that would be appropriate in placement, attachment, and design for approval at the staff level. Ms. Isabella agreed that she would work with the staff on the handrail to obtain an approval at the staff level.

Ms. Isabella proposed a seven-foot-high wood fence for the rear of the property. She explained that the property next door currently has a rear wood fence that is seven feet in height, and that the fence that used to be in the rear of her property was a seven-foot-high wood fence. She explained that she is looking for a privacy fence for her rear yard, but is open to suggestions on the actual design of the fence and the height. Ms. Hawkins agreed that removing the construction fencing and putting something else in its place was a good idea, but that the Committee needed to have the time to discuss each component of Ms. Isabella's applications without interruption.

Ms. Hawkins directed the Committee's attention to the application to legalize the flower boxes on the property. Mr. Baron explained that these flower boxes were not previously approved, but that flower boxes had been approved for a nearby property with different window configurations; Ms. Isabella used the design of those flower boxes for her boxes. Mr. D'Alessandro raised his concern that the documentation provided with the application lacked clarity and chose to abstain from voting for that reason. Ms. Stein voiced her concern regarding the 80-inch long flower box, offering that the placement between two windows lacked a relationship with the windows, and she opposed the design for that reason. Ms. Gutterman stated that her concern is how the flower boxes on South 18th Street anchor to the historic brick.

The handrail and connecting metal fence were the next topics for discussion. Ms. Gutterman questioned whether there are other railings along South 18th Street, which was confirmed by

Ms. Isabella; however, there was some confusion regarding the vocabulary of handrail and railing, and it was clarified by Mr. Baron that there are no railings (fencing) along this group of row houses on South 18th Street, but that there is a railing (fencing) enclosing a set-back garden cattycorner to the subject property. Ms. Gutterman noted that this proposed fence is not to enclose a garden or green space, but rather to enclose a section of the sidewalk. Ms. Hawkins asked to separate the discussion of the handrail going down the steps from the discussion of the fence that would connect and wrap around to the bay on Delancey Place.

Regarding the handrail, Ms. Hawkins reiterated that the concern raised by the staff is that the placement of the handrail on the steps, as shown in Ms. Isabella's proposal, would not allow the handrail to serve its purpose. Ms. Isabella acknowledged that she had drawn the handrail incorrectly. Ms. Hawkins explained that Ms. Isabella needs to work with the staff on the drawing of a functional railing that attaches appropriately to the historic brick in a manner that will not cause damage, and that anchors at the bottom. Ms. Stein offered that she agreed with Mr. D'Alessandro's earlier comment regarding the lack of clarity in the drawings, and noted that she was uncomfortable approving anything at that time, owing to the lack of clarity. Ms. Stein recommended that Ms. Isabella prepare a set of drawings that show exactly what is to be done. Mr. Cluver stated that the concept of the railing was a fine concept, and that he has faith in the staff's ability to find the appropriate detailing and attachment method. Ms. Hawkins asked Ms. Isabella if it would be possible for the forge shop to provide a drawing of the handrail before the Commission meeting; Ms. Isabella agreed to provide the drawing. Ms. Gutterman noted that the handrail needed to meet code. Mr. Baron asked Ms. Isabella to have her forge shop talk to the staff before they create the drawing, so that the designer is aware of the issues.

Regarding the metal fence, Ms. Isabella stated that her goals were to bring back the historic appearance of the property, and to allow for handicap accessibility to a future elevator through an automatic gate in the fence. Mr. Cluver asked to table the discussion of the fence until Ms. Isabella retains an architect who can look at the design holistically to ensure that a handicap accessible route is possible within the space allocated. He felt that the Committee's consideration of the fence application at this time was premature. Ms. Isabella agreed with Mr. Cluver. Ms. Hawkins asked Ms. Isabella if she was withdrawing that portion of her application; Ms. Isabella stated that she was not withdrawing it.

Regarding the wood fence, Ms. Hawkins questioned whether Ms. Isabella had approval for the rear addition on her property shown in her drawings. Ms. Isabella stated that she is changing the design of the previously-approved rear addition. Ms. Hawkins explained planning a fence around an addition that has not yet been approved was problematic and that the fencing in the rear and side yards should be one of the last things considered in this project. Ms. Isabella raised her concern that she needed to install this fencing in order to remove the current construction fencing. Ms. Hawkins reminded Ms. Isabella of the issues at hand, including the issue that she is proposing to change the approved design of the rear addition, and the unresolved property line situation. Mr. Baron commented that the fence designs proposed in this application are not historically appropriate, and Ms. Hawkins agreed that this fence proposal, much like the previous one, is premature. Ms. Isabella voiced her opinion regarding historic preservation as a whole in the city of Philadelphia and specifically in her immediate neighborhood, and her history of struggling to renovate this property. Mr. Farnham offered that a resolution would be that the staff could work with Ms. Isabella to approve, at the staff level, an appropriate six-foot-high wood fence at the appropriate placement according to the Streets Department. He noted that a fence taller than six feet would require a zoning variance. He then

explained that the staff and Committee's concerns were driven by the inconsistencies and lack of clarity in the application materials, and that this particular proposal may not need to go to the Commission if Ms. Isabella would work with the staff on a design. He also suggested that the staff could arrange for a meeting with Ms. Isabella and the Streets Department to help find a solution to the property line issue.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the flower boxes, provided the 80-inch flower box is resized to fit under the two adjacent windows; denial of the handrail as proposed, but approval of a revised handrail at the front stair; denial of the metal fence connecting to the handrail and the side bay; and denial of the wood fence as proposed, but approval of an appropriate wood fence; with the staff to review details including shop drawings and attachment methods, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADJOURNMENT

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES

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.

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