MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2014
ROOM 578, CITY HALL
DOMINIQUE HAWKINS, CHAIR

PRESENT
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP
Nan Gutterman, FAIA
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP

Jonathan E. Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner I

ALSO PRESENT
Morris Clarke, DAS Architects
David Schultz, DAS Architects
Theodore Bazil, Atrium Design Group
Snežana Litvinović, Atrium Design Group
Jennifer Cooperman, Keystone
Robert Powers, Powers & Co.
Martin Rosenblum, MJRA
Jennifer Arnoldi, MJRA
Guy Gindhart, Pearl Properties
Lauren Leonard, Pearl Properties
Ed Eimer, Eimer Design
Kevin Towey, Eimer Design

CALL TO ORDER
Mr. Cluver called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Mses. Gutterman and Stein and Mr. McCoubrey joined him.

DRAFT

ADDRESS: 2126 AND 2128 WALNUT ST
Project: Construct five four-story townhomes with ground floor commercial space
Review Requested: Review and Comment
Owner: Walnut Estates, LLC
Applicant: Shimi Zakin, Atrium Design Group
History: surface parking lot
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Non-contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes the construction of five townhouses and an apartment building on a vacant lot bordered by Walnut, 22nd and Chancellor Streets. The site satisfies the definition of an "undeveloped site" and, therefore, the Historical Commission has review-and-comment jurisdiction only. The apartment building at the corner of Walnut and 22nd would be six stories tall with a commercial space at the first floor and residences above. The townhouses would face 22nd Street and have parking at the rear accessed through Chancellor Street. The houses would be four stories tall along the front property line with a setback fifth-floor penthouse and deck. The buildings would be contemporary in style and have a palette of white stone, grey brick, and dark grey metal panels. This portion of the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District includes some taller buildings and buildings clad in a variety of materials and colors.

STAFF COMMENT: The proposed buildings are compatible with the historic district, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Snežana Litvinović and Theodore Bazil represented the application.

Ms. Litvinović explained that they are proposing a mixed-use residential and commercial building on the corner and five townhouses along S. 21st Street. She added that the commercial space will house a restaurant, which will enliven Walnut Street. Mr. Cluver and Ms. Stein both commented that the buildings do not seem to relate to their context within the historic district because they are grey rather than red brick and the other materials also are not common to the district. Mr. Cluver noted that the balconies are also not a common feature in the district. He also noted that the proposed Chancellor Street façade does not have a rowhouse-like rhythm.

Ms. Stein opined that the design is "self referential." She asserted that the applicant should include the adjacent buildings on Walnut Street in the architectural elevation drawings to explain the relationships between the existing and proposed buildings. Ms. Litvinović said that she would revise the drawings. Ms. Litvinović contended that the design does relate to its context in the fact that the Walnut Street and 22nd Street facades do have rowhouse-like divisions of space. Also, the material, while not red brick, has a level of detail and quality typical of the district. She rejected the criticism of the Chancellor Street façade, contending that Chancellor Street is an alley.

Ms. Gutterman noted inconsistencies in the various depictions of the spacing between the new building and the adjacent building on Chancellor Street. Ms. Litvinović said that they will have to construct a brick wall to close off the two lots from each other.

Mr. Baron contended that there are several instances of taller buildings at the corners and shorter rowhouses in between along this section of Walnut Street. Also, there is quite a bit of variety of cladding materials in this section of the district. He also noted that, because the proposed buildings would be set apart from other buildings and would not fall in the middle of a row of similar buildings, the configurations and colors of the proposed buildings would have a lesser impact on the historic district.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE COMMENT: The Architectural Committee commented that, while the buildings are contextual in terms of massing, the materials and color are not a good fit with the district. The Chancellor Street façade should be more balanced and respond better to its context. The drawings should be revised to show the context.

ADDRESS: 170 S INDEPENDENCE W ML
Project: Construct two-story rooftop addition; alter lobby
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: KPG-MCG Curtis Tenants, LLC, c/o Keystone Property Group
Applicant: Morris Clarke, DAS Architects, Inc.
History: 1910; Curtis Publishing Company building and Dream Garden mosaic; Edgar Seeler,architect
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Significant, 3/10/1999
Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application for the Curtis Publishing Company building at the corner of 6th and Walnut Streets proposes the conversion of office space into residential units as well as the construction of a penthouse. The lobby space would be reconfigured, but would not impact the Dream Garden mural, a designated object within the lobby. The penthouse would be added to the east side of the building facing Independence Square and would include seven bi-level residential units. Several utilitarian rooftop sheds will be removed for the addition. The addition would sit back from the edge of the roof behind a balustrade cornice in a U-shaped space created by existing rooftop penthouses. The addition would be constructed in a vocabulary sympathetic to the existing building in scale, rhythm and materials. The addition would be visible but inconspicuous by virtue of its size, setbacks, and sympathetic architectural vocabulary.

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

DISCUSSION: Mr. Cluver recused himself and left the room because his firm is engaged on another project at this same building. Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Morris Clarke and David Schultz and historic preservation consultant Robert Powers represented the application.

Mr. Baron displayed photographs of a mock-up of the addition that he had taken recently. He noted that the applicants would like to remove the flagpole from the roof.

Ms. Stein asked for clarifications about the placement of the elevators and glass wall in relation to the marble piers in the lobby. Mr. Schultz explained that they do not intend to modify the piers or impact the mosaic mural in any way. The elevators will be set in an existing stairwell and the

new partitions will attach to non-historic partitions only. The Dream Garden mosaic will not be altered, he assured the Committee.

Mr. Schulz provided some background about the building's rooftop, where he proposes to add a structure. He noted that a penthouse had been added in 1927. He explained that they plan to remove some rooftop elements including some skylights that are currently covered. Mr. Schultz described the design of the proposed penthouse. The proposed two-story penthouse would be seven feet shorter in height than the existing rooftop penthouse. The lower floor of the penthouse would be clad in brick and the upper floor has been revised and would now be clad in white stucco. Mr. McCoubrey asked if the parapet-like feature on the top of the new penthouse could be reduced in height. He also recommended a hipped roof sloping down to the front wall. Mr. Schultz remarked that he would likely be able to reduce the height of the parapet-like molding to some extent. In response to a question, Mr. Schultz stated that the new mechanical equipment would be located in an existing mechanical room, not on the roof of the penthouse. Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the upper floor of the penthouse should not be white, but rather a grey color more in the tone of a blue sky. Mr. Schulz replied that that was their initial preference, but that he had modified the color at Mr. Baron's suggestion. He stated that he preferred a grey color for the stucco, not the white suggested by Mr. Baron. Ms. Stein asked if the vertical glass partitions could be trimmed back. Mr. Schultz explained that they are privacy screens between the balconies. The Committee members suggested that glass might be too reflective.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the parapet on the penthouse is reduced in height, the stucco is a warm grey color not white, and the privacy screens are not reflective, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ADDRESS: 1836 PINE ST
Project: Reconfigure front door opening; install structural support; install door surround and door
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Bruce and Shelley Menkowitz
Applicant: Jennifer Arnoldi, Martin J. Rosenblum & Associates
History: 1845
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to narrow and shorten an existing doorway on this Greek Revival multi-family rowhouse. Although all other details of the building match its neighbors to the east, 1836 Pine is an anomaly in that it has the only un-paired doorway along the row. The doorway itself is also unusually wide. The applicant notes that this may reflect early twentieth century renovations, as the decorative iron grates on the existing doors as well as the paneling on the interior of the vestibule are Edwardian in style.

The wide doorway leaves a very slender pier of brick between the doorway and corner of the building to bear the load of the façade. Despite the fact that numerous star bolts have been installed on both the front and side facades, and the building has been re-pointed repeatedly, cracks continue to form along the façade, including in the lintel above the doorway. A structural

engineer determined that, in order to repair the shifting masonry, two masonry piers should be constructed inside the existing doorway opening. These piers would be disguised by a new wood frontispiece painted with sanded paint to replicate a stone finish.

The application proposes to install a single door to resemble the existing door and a transom with molding details to match the adjacent property at 1834 Pine Street in the newly narrowed doorway.

Since no early photographs of this building have been found, and there is not a consistent door style used along the block, the staff contends that a restoration or reconstruction of the original doorway is not possible. As such, the door and doorway should be compatible in size, scale, material and color. The staff contends that the current proposal satisfies all of those requirements except for material.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided that the door surround is constructed of masonry, such as cast stone, rather than wood, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Martin Rosenblum and Jennifer Arnoldi represented the application.

Mr. Rosenblum displayed photographs of the doorway and described the structural problem resulting from the narrow pier at the corner to the right of the door. He noted that the door opening is not centered on the window above, which is one reason they believe the doorway was widened in the past.

He noted that, generally, when a building is located on a corner, the main entrance is frequently located on the side façade of the building, so that it can be centered. He did not advocate for relocating this entrance to the side. Relocating the entrance, he opined, would be creating a false sense of history. Narrowing the door to be on the centerline of the windows above seemed like the most reasonable solution, he stated.

Mr. Cluver noted that the architectural drawings proposed new infill on both sides of the door, not just on the one narrow, weak side. Mr. Rosenblum noted that infill on both sides was simpler structurally because it allowed for a lintel to be installed across the tops of the new piers, and also allowed the door to remain centered on the hallway and stair behind. Ms. Arnoldi noted that it is the stoop rather than the window upon which the doorway is centered. Mr. McCoubrey noted that the first-floor windows and door often do not align with the upper-floor windows in historic buildings.

Mr. Cluver noted that the staff suggested that an exact restoration of the historic doorway was not possible. Ms. DiPasquale responded that, given the fact that this building has the only unpaired doorway in the row of identical buildings, the staff did not want to speculate about the design of the original door surround. Ms. Arnoldi distributed photographs of buildings in the area that have a single, Greek Revival style frontispieces.

Ms. Gutterman asked if the applicants objected to constructing the frontispiece of stone or cast stone rather than wood. Mr. Rosenblum responded that their greatest concern is structurally stabilizing the walls. He noted that they had considered retaining the design of the existing dooway opening by infilling the sides with brick, but felt that matching the existing brick perfectly

would be difficult and the result might appear shoddy. The proposed surround, he noted, would camouflage that infill.

Mr. Cluver expressed his concern that the proposed frontispiece, which is one foot wide, would appear heavier than those of the neighboring buildings. Ms. Arnoldi responded that the widths of the other frontispiece pillars are also approximately one foot, but that the height of the drawing may skew the proportions.

Ms. Gutterman questioned the design of the door. Mr. Rosenblum responded that the current doors have beautiful iron grates and hinges, which they would like to reuse in some way. The door itself, he noted, is not dissimilar to other historic doors in the neighborhood, if not the block. He noted it was not necessary to reuse those elements, if the Committee objected.

Ms. Stein asked whether one of pair of the existing doors could be used in the new opening, and Mr. Rosenblum responded that individually, the doors are too narrow to fill a new opening. Ms. Gutterman commented that a door with a double panel at the bottom might be more appropriate. Mr. Cluver agreed, noting that since the original opening likely had a pair of paneled doors, a new door with the double-panel geometry would be appropriate.

Mr. McCoubrey asked if the existing marble steps would be retained, and Mr. Rosenblum responded that they would be.

Mr. Cluver opened the floor to public comment. There was none.

Mr. Cluver commented that the proposal seemed generally compatible with the block and district, and that there might be subtle detail changes that could be made to differentiate it from the historic openings along the block.

Mr. Rosenblum asked whether the Commission would prefer that the applicant try to match the existing brick with new brick infill and use a simple lintel, with the option to apply a surround at a later time if necessary. Ms. Gutterman responded that she had no problem with simplifying the existing design and using a stone or cast stone surround as proposed by the staff. Ms. Stein expressed concern that, if a surround was not used, the brick would be mismatched. Mr. McCoubrey noted that houses of this stature would have had surrounds historically.

Mr. Cluver commented that the proposed strap hinges seem out of place. He noted that, if the applicant were to propose a simple lintel design in keeping with the existing door, the strap hinges might be appropriate. However, if the applicant were to propose a reconstruction with a surround, the detailing should relate more to the neighboring properties; the hinges would not be appropriate. Mr. Rosenblum agreed, noting that it was also not necessary to reuse the grate. Ms. Gutterman commented that they could probably keep the grate and eliminate the hinges.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided that the door surround is masonry such as cast stone rather than wood, that the design of the door include two lower panels, and that the strap hinges are eliminated, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADDRESS: 1700-06 CHESTNUT ST
Project: Install exterior egress stair connector; replace windows
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: 1700 Chestnut Street, LLC
Applicant: Ed Eimer, Eimer Designs
History: 1927; Bonwitt Teller; Daffy's; Nordstrom Rack; Clarence E. Wunder, architect
Individual Designation: 1/3/1985
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install an enclosed exterior egress stairway on the rear or Ionic Street façade of the building. Ionic Street is a service alley. The upper floors of the building are being converted to residential use. The commercial use of the lower three stories of the building precludes the construction of the stairway inside the building. The proposed stairway would be architecturally contemporary in style, with glass and folded metal elements.

The application also proposes to replace all windows on floors four through eight on the north and east facades, and floors five through eight on the west façade. Infilled windows on the west façade would be opened and the masonry restored to its original pattern.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided that the stairway does not extend onto the return limestone 17th Street façade onto the Ionic Street facade, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Ed Eimer and Kevin Towey represented the application.

Mr. Cluver asked if the Committee was being asked to review the fire escape and the windows. Ms. DiPasquale responded that the windows should be able to be approved at the staff level, provided that the Committee and Commission found the use of painted aluminum windows acceptable. Mr. Cluver asked if the windows would be the same configuration as currently exists, and Mr. Towey responded that they would be. He noted that they would be attempting to match the narrow profile of the existing windows. Ms. DiPasquale asked the Committee if they found the material to be acceptable, and Ms. Gutterman responded that it was, as long as it was above the first floor.

Mr. Cluver asked the applicant to explain why they chose to run the exterior egress stair west to east and why the stair was necessary at all. Mr. Eimer responded that, as with many historic buildings, the property has seen numerous campaigns of development and construction, and has been combined with other adjacent properties over time. Currently the property is being developed with retail on the first two floors with residential units above. All of the upper floors disperse down two egress towers that empty onto Ionic Street through the use of an old-style fire tower and counterweight fire escape ladder. The ladder opens onto Ionic Street right next to a door that also discharges residents from the building. The goal of this project would be to eliminate the use of the counterweight escape ladder by redirecting residents safely into the lobby, where they can empty onto 17th Street.

Mr. McCoubrey asked if the proposed stair would be used as a communicating stair in addition to an emergency egress stair, or solely as an egress stair. Mr. Towey responded that the

intention would be to use it as an egress stair, but that increasing numbers of people are using the stairs these days, and as such, it may be used as a communicating stair as well.

Mr. Cluver asked what the third-story portion of the stair tied into, and Mr. Eimer responded that it would be picking up the population of the adjacent building, which was once a separate property but has since been combined with the main building. One of the former egress stairs has been cut off, and the building is left with only one egress stair.

Ms. Stein noted that the stair would be a very large and visible addition to the building, and questioned why sufficient egress does not currently exist. Mr. Eimer responded that the building has been adapted over time, and that the current egress patterns are designed primarily for the retail units, not for a large residential population. Mr. McCoubrey asked whether the new stair was required under the building code, and Mr. Eimer responded that it is required; a secondary means of egress is necessary.

Ms. Gutterman expressed a concern based on her experience with truck drivers in the city and the proposed stair's proximity to the intersection of Ionic and 17th Streets. She claimed that, sooner or later, a truck would hit the stair, tearing it off the building. Others suggested that, while Ms. Gutterman's concern might be legitimate, it was unrelated to the historic preservation review.

Mr. Cluver asked why the stair needed to extend to the limestone return of the 17th Street façade onto the Ionic façade. Mr. Towey responded the stair structure extends that far east in order to reach the column located at the corner of the building. Ms. Stein noted that there is a column between the elevators approximately 20 feet back from the corner that might be used instead. Mr. Towey explained that they are connecting into that column as well. Mr. Eimer commented that, although they plan to tie into the corner column, they attempted to clip the corner angle to decrease the profile of the stair along 17th Street. Ms. Stein asked why it would not be possible to cantilever the stair from the last column, as the structure would not carry a significant load. Mr. Cluver added that, since they are building a new interior wall in the lobby, they could install a structural support within that space instead of tying into the column at the corner.

Mr. Cluver expressed concern that the proposed egress stair, which should be inconspicuous, is instead designed deliberately to be conspicuous. He suggested that a more subtle design would be preferable.

Mr. McCoubrey asked whether the proposed red/orange color within the stairway would be painted onto the brick. Mr. Eimer responded that they are still exploring colors, but that they are proposing to paint the brick within the stair area.

Ms. Gutterman asked whether the applicants had provided any drawings depicting the relationship between the proposed stair and the canopy next door at the Sofitel. Mr. Eimer responded that they had not provided such plans, but that the relationship was shown in a rendering.

Mr. Towey asked whether the Committee felt that the appearance of the stair would detract from the building's main facades. Ms. Gutterman responded that she felt the proposed design did, in fact, detract from the appearance of the building.

The Committee members asked why it was necessary to bring the stair up three levels instead of straight across, and Mr. Eimer responded that the floor levels between the buildings differ; the stair must have a vertical component.

Ms. Gutterman remarked that one of the main concerns is the color choice; she objected to the dark grey and red/orange colors depicted in the rendering submitted at the meeting. If the colors were to be more subtle, background colors, the stair would be less conspicuous, she claimed. Ms. Stein agreed, noting that the proposed colors are very dark, but a lighter color would blend into the buff color of the brick. Ms. Gutterman reiterated that the structure should be pulled back from the 17th Street façade, whether by means of structural column in the interior of the building or a cantilever.

Mr. Eimer commented that the lines of the metal panels on the stairway were taken from early Bonwitt Teller marketing materials in an attempt to create a contemporary element from the history of the building. He asked whether the Committee's objection to the panels was based on their shape or tone. Ms. Gutterman responded that the main issue was with the color of the panels, and the relationship of the structure to the corner of the building.

Mr. McCoubrey commented that the current proposal does not seem to relate to the Sofitel design, but instead creates yet another contemporary object, and loses the opportunity to enhance the Sofitel entrance. If the material of the stair structure were a lighter silver or grey color, it would connect better with the Sofitel, as well as be more appropriate for the building itself. It would also help justify creating an architectural piece out of a utilitarian structure. Mr. Cluver disagreed with Mr. McCoubrey, commenting that the structure should be as simple as possible to avoid drawing attention to itself.

Mr. Towey asked whether the Committee would look favorably on a proposal to expand an existing abandoned door into a window for the lobby. The Committee members responded that it would be acceptable to turn the existing door into a window, but not to expand the opening.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided that the colors of the stair relate to the Sofitel building and that the stair is at least three feet from the 17th Street facade of the building, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9.

ADJOURNMENT

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:20 a.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 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.

DRAFT