

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

**TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2016  
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  
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C  
Suzanne Pentz  
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III  
Kim Broadbent, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner I

**ALSO PRESENT**

William Martin, Esq., Fox Rothschild  
Glenn Werner, JKRP Architects  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
Serge Nalbantian, Liberty Property Trust  
Lorna Katz Lawson, Society Hill Civic Association  
Vern Anastasio, Esq.  
Stephan Salisbury, Inquirer  
Nancy O'Donnell, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation  
Theresa Stuhlman, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation  
Stephanie Craighead, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation  
Cheryl Morris-Davis  
Mark Thompson, Mark B. Thompson Associates LLC  
James Karmolinski, Kelley-Maiello  
Ashley Hahn

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Hawkins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mes. Gutterman, Pentz, and Stein and Messrs. Cluver, D'Alessandro, and McCoubrey joined her.

**ADDRESS: 150 S INDEPENDENCE W ML**

Proposal: Replace doorway

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Abdi Mahamedi

Applicant: Glenn Werner, JKRP Architects

History: 1923; Public Ledger Building; Horace Trumbauer, architect

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Significant, 3/10/1999

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to remove an original, ornamental bronze panel with marble base at the center of the main, historic, Chestnut Street entranceway to this building. It also proposes to remove the existing single-leaf doors, which are not original but are in original openings. The extant doors are ADA-compliant. The application proposes to replace the historic entryway with brass double-doors and large sidelights.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, and 9.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architect Glenn Werner and designer Allison Rametta represented the application.

Mr. Werner noted that he and other members of his firm had met with Dr. Farnham several weeks prior and expressed the owner's desire to modernize the entire contents of the entrance archway with glazing. He noted that the owner feels that the lobby is closed off from the street. The entranceway lacks transparency. Entering through the dark vestibule is cumbersome. He opined that the historic entry dates to a time when the building had a single user, and it now has dozens of tenants, and the owner's desire is to make the entry more user-friendly to people entering and exiting the building. He opined that these doors are cumbersome and it is difficult to see in and out, and that the visibility of the barrel-vault ceiling of the lobby is limited. He opined that occupants arrive through two sets of doors and miss the view of the lobby as a whole. He stated that the doors and vestibule are physically inconvenient, as one does not see who else is coming and going or get a sense of the lobby. He stressed that the proposal is a matter of convenience and perception of the grand lobby.

Ms. Gutterman noted that the Commission does not have jurisdiction over the internal set of doors in the vestibule, but asked the applicants to provide information about their materials and configuration to better understand the problem. Mr. Werner responded that the interior doors match the exterior doors.

Mr. Cluver noted that the application proposes to replace two separate doors with two contiguous doors. He asked how that would improve convenience. Mr. Werner responded that two contiguous doors would create a six-foot opening, which would be more convenient to someone using a wheelchair or carrying parcels in and out. He opined that the double doors would also allow a person to see someone approaching from the other direction. Mr. Cluver noted that the current configuration of the doors separates inflow and outflow traffic.

Mr. Cluver asked how changing the doors would alter the perception of the vaulted lobby ceiling. Mr. Werner responded that they would also remove the interior vestibule doors and replace them with additional glazing. He noted that the intent is to replace the entire vestibule, which he described as an opaque box, with glass, including a glass ceiling.

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Mr. Cluver asked if the glass on the doors is tinted. Mr. Werner responded that the glass would be clear. He noted that they propose to leave the header over the doors and to replace the doors and sidelights, but would not do anything with the windows to either side of the entry. He reiterated that there are numerous tenants utilizing the space and that the owner faces a challenge trying to attract high-quality tenants in the building. The building owner wants the entrance to make a good impression. Ms. Hawkins responded that the doors alone cannot account for a drop in tenancy. Mr. Werner disagreed.

Ms. Hawkins stated that there is a historic geometry to the entry, which is clear and evident and has been maintained to this day. She noted that the two verticals define the door opening, and that the proposed doorway violates that geometry. She stated that the application proposes to remove historic fabric and change the geometry of the building without a legitimate reason like improving ADA access. She noted that the existing doors are ADA compliant. Mr. Werner countered that the doors are compliant, but not convenient. Ms. Hawkins responded that the proposal is driven by aesthetics, not a need to comply with the building code. She stated that the monumental entrance is in its historic condition and should be preserved. She explained that the Commission has no jurisdiction over the interior of the building; the applicant could choose to rehabilitate the vestibule with a fully-glazed system without the Commission's review.

Mr. Werner asked if any of the Committee members had been to the building lately. Ms. Hawkins and Ms. Stein responded that they had, Ms. Hawkins noting that she attended an event there recently and that it was lovely.

Ms. Hawkins opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, and 9.

**ADDRESS: 1726-32 ARCH ST**

Proposal: Remove fence; regrade site; convert three windows to doors

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Arch Street Presbyterian Church

Applicant: Mark Thompson, Mark B. Thompson Associates LLC

History: 1855; Arch Street Presbyterian Church; Joseph C. Hoxie, architect

Individual Designation: 9/26/1961

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to convert three existing windows on the south elevation into doorways to create a new entrance to the Arch Street Presbyterian Church. The current entrance along Arch Street requires visitors to climb eight steps, while the new entrance along Cuthbert Walk would be situated near grade. In addition to the partial removal of each existing window, the conversion would involve removing a portion of the masonry wall below each window to lengthen the opening. The area adjacent to the new Cuthbert Walk entrance would also be reconfigured into a plaza.

As part of the construction of the Comcast Innovation and Technology Center at 1800 Arch Street, the City of Philadelphia has authorized an increase in the elevation of 18<sup>th</sup> Street between Cuthbert Street and Arch Street. In response to the change in grade adjacent to the

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church's west site wall, the application proposes to remove the non-historic fencing and historic curb along 18<sup>th</sup> Street and to install a new 8" granite curb. The brownstone cheek walls, steps, and landing at an 18<sup>th</sup> Street entrance will be removed and reset, and brick paving to match the existing paving will be installed at this location. New plantings and precast concrete pavers will replace existing paving along the rest of this elevation.

The staff contends that there is insufficient justification for replacing the historic curb, although removal of the non-historic fence and resetting of the brownstone cheek walls, steps, and landing of the west entrance comply with the Standards. Any new paving should be completed with material to match the existing brick pavers. The proposed conversion of three windows to doors on the south elevation should be limited to the conversion of one window to a single door.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Keller presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Mark Thompson and James Karmolinski, attorney William Martin, and developer Serge Nalbantian represented the application.

Mr. Martin introduced the project, stating that the work presented in the application is required because of the raising of the grade at 18<sup>th</sup> Street between Cuthbert and Arch Streets. The grade at 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Cuthbert Walk, and adjacent sidewalks will be raised to accommodate the underground pedestrian walkway from the existing Comcast building to the new Comcast Innovation and Technology Center currently under construction. Mr. Martin commented that the proposed alterations provide an opportunity for the church to further integrate itself into the community.

Mr. Thompson gave a presentation to offer additional commentary on the drawings and graphics included in the application submitted to the Committee. He noted that the owners would like to remove the non-historic fencing to connect with the neighboring Comcast campus and to move the entrance from Arch Street to Cuthbert Walk to open the church toward the campus. He emphasized that the raising of the street, which allows for the 8-foot high underground tunnel, would create a gutter or moat between the Comcast campus and the church.

Ms. Hawkins asked for clarification on the alteration to the west door entrance. Mr. Thompson stated that, because the grade will be raised at this location, two historic brownstone risers would be eliminated and cheek walls modified, but no alterations would occur to the column bases along the west elevation. He also noted that stainless steel flashing and waterproofing would be introduced at the plinth. Mr. Cluver asked whether the step adjacent to the 18<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk would be eliminated in addition to the two brownstone risers already identified, and Mr. Thompson confirmed the change.

Ms. Hawkins inquired whether the steps will be compliant once rebuilt and if a landing would be inserted at door height. Mr. Karmolinski responded that the existing landing would remain. Ms. Gutterman asked why the top step immediately outside the door would be retained. Mr. Karmolinski answered that the decision was made to maintain as much historic fabric as possible. Mr. Thompson added that the step serves as a weather step and its presence preserves the full height of the adjacent column base. Ms. Gutterman expressed concern over the safety of having a step immediately outside the door.

Mr. Thompson presented the scope of work for the south elevation. Ms. Hawkins asked which building was served by the large mechanical equipment visible in the foreground. Mr. Karmolinski responded that the equipment serves as emergency generator for an underground Septa substation. Mr. Thompson commented that because of the congestion at the Arch Street elevation, the church, in their desire to grow and connect with the greensward at the south side of their property, is proposing to provide three doors at the south elevation.

Ms. Hawkins summarized the physical changes to the building. At the west elevation, she identified the changes as including the removal of the fence and associated curb, the modification of the entranceway stair system, and the repaving of the path. At the south elevation, she identified the cutting of three openings and regrading along the perimeter edge.

Ms. Stein remarked that the addition of stainless steel flashing at the west elevation plinth was a concern and asked whether it would extend across both the west and south façades. Mr. Thompson stated that the flashing would extend across both façades and would be painted to match the plinth, and a splash block would be added below. Ms. Stein requested clarification about the placement of the flashing and whether or not it would not extend across the plinth blocks. Mr. Thompson clarified that on the west elevation, the flashing would be well below the plinth block. Mr. Karmolinski added that the flashing will wrap the façade as a waterproofing detail when the grade is raised and the splash block is inserted to prevent water from entering the basement. Mr. Cluver inquired about the depth of the waterproofing below grade. Mr. Thompson responded that the waterproofing would extend to floor grade. Mr. Cluver then asked whether the ground would be excavated eight feet to install the waterproofing. Mr. Karmolinski explained that, although he did not know the exact depth, the ground would be excavated to allow for the proper installation of the waterproofing, so it could prevent water from wicking up the plaster walls, which has contributed to damage. Ms. Hawkins noted that much excavation would occur to accommodate the underground tunnel and asked whether the counterflashing could be inserted into a reglet extending across the entire west façade. Mr. Thompson clarified that the reglet and flashing would extend from approximately the northernmost window of the façade to the southern end. Mr. Cluver felt the flashing was intrusive and would be equally effective at the paving level. Mr. Thompson noted that the plinth flashing would also extend across the south façade, and Mr. Karmolinski added that he and Mr. Thompson would consider placing the flashing at the paving level.

Ms. Gutterman questioned whether the conversion of three windows to doors was necessary at the south elevation. Mr. Thompson responded that the adjacent interior space functions as a chapel and, in contrast, the space at the north elevation holds a very narrow vestibule that serves as a transition or weather space rather than an event space. He elaborated that the church would like to create a welcoming community and activity space inside the south entrance. Ms. Gutterman asked whether three doors, rather than one, were necessary for egress purposes. Mr. Thompson replied that the three doors provide a more generous and welcoming entrance and that one door would not give that impression. He felt one door would be constrained and would not enable the church to open itself to the community. Mr. Cluver and Ms. Stein asked whether a floor plan was available, since the scale and magnitude of the change cannot be properly understood within seeing the interior plan for context. Ms. Stein also inquired about the height and volume of the interior space, and whether the first floor terminates at the spandrel. Mr. Thompson explained that, floor plans were not provided since the proposed changes affect the building's exterior and that the windows extend into the interior space.

Ms. Hawkins stated that there is a very definitive painted brownstone sill at the base of the windows that has been proposed for removal and asked if such a sill could be incorporated into

the door design. She also inquired about the ramifications of their removal, since no detailed photographs were provided. Mr. Thompson responded that it would be feasible to incorporate them. He continued by stating that the doors would swing open and would be constrained by hardware and reiterated that the entrance change from the north to south side of the property would support the church's ministry and outreach functions.

Mr. Cluver asked about the width of the proposed doors. Mr. Thompson clarified that they would be 5'-2" wide. Mr. Cluver stated that the new doors would not be ADA compliant owing to their width and the steps leading up to them. Mr. Thompson replied that the doors were intended to be in proportion with the other doors and columns. Ms. Hawkins asked if they had considered the possibility that they would be required to use a single-leaf door to comply with a future ADA code. Mr. Thompson noted that a single-leaf glass door would be installed behind the entry doors. Ms. Hawkins asked if the proposed doors are intended as drawn, and Mr. Thompson replied that they are intended as drawn to be in proportion with existing features.

Ms. Gutterman questioned whether there was any consideration to modify the single step at the doorway by inseting a landing and making the entryway more code compliant. Mr. Thompson explained that they intended to maintain the entire column base and that a doorway east of the entryway in question is fully code compliant. Mr. McCoubrey indicated that, since the application proposes to make the south entrance the main entrance, there is a responsibility to have it be accessible and code compliant.

Ms. Hawkins noted that the application lacks details on materials and does not identify the materials of the proposed features. Mr. Thompson replied that the materials of new features would match existing features with the exception of the stainless steel flashing.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9, with the following comments:

- the stainless steel flashing detail should not be exposed, and any waterproofing should be at grade or below;
- the drawings showing the reconfiguration of the 18<sup>th</sup> Street entrance should be revised to accurately reflect the proposed changes; however, the Committee is amenable to removing the single step adjacent to the sidewalk and one or two risers at the doorway, as well as leaving the existing threshold in place;
- the Committee objects the conversion of three windows to doors at the south elevation and asserts that it would not be permitted because it is not code compliant.

**ADDRESS: 221 PINE ST**

Proposal: Legalize demolition and construction of rear ell

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: William Harlam

Applicant: Vern Anastasio, Anastasio Law

History: 1820

Individual Designation: 12/7/1964

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Contributing, 3/10/1999

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to legalize demolition and new construction at a rear ell of this rowhouse on Pine Street. The side of the main block and rear ell of the building are visible from Pine Street because it stands at the end of the row, adjacent to a large parking lot. The

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work that was completed exceeds the Historical Commission's approvals for the property in 2010. In February 2010, the Commission reviewed an application to demolish visible sections of the rear ell and construct a wider addition with deck. The Commission denied that application. The applicant returned in August 2010 with a revised application, which proposed retaining more of the rear ell. The Commission approved the plan to retain the oldest portion of the rear ell with its half gable roof and allow a wider addition to the north with a more transparent deck railing. A building permit was obtained for the approved work. The approved work was not initiated, but the windows of the rear ell were removed and the building was left exposed to the elements for years. The Department of Licenses & Inspections issued a violation for demolition by neglect in 2011. In 2015, the Commission received reports of floor joists being removed from the portion of the rear ell that was supposed to be retained. The Commission requested that Department of Licenses & Inspections issue additional violations. As a result of this unpermitted work, the rear ell was unstable and a majority of the remainder was demolished. A wider rear addition was then constructed on the location of the historic rear ell. The applicant now seeks to legalize this work.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9 and the Historical Commission's actions of February and August 2010.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Attorney Vern Anastasio represented the application.

Mr. Anastasio explained that the property owner began working on the building after he obtained the Historical Commission's approval in 2010. He later stopped the work to seek a zoning variance for a two-family residence, which he eventually received. During the period while the work was stopped, the elements took a toll on the property, Mr. Anastasio recounted. Ms. Hawkins asked if the windows had been removed. Mr. Anastasio replied he did not know when the windows were removed or if they had been missing when the property owner began the work. He stated that, once the work was restarted, the owner and contractor determined that the rear ell was not able to be salvaged and removed it. The owner then rebuilt the rear ell to a wider dimension. He explained that the owner's father had died and the owner wanted to move his disabled mother into the rehabilitated building. To accommodate his disabled mother, the owner enlarged the rear ell by several feet to install an ADA compliant bathroom.

Ms. Gutterman asked two questions. First, she asked if an engineering report had been obtained to determine the ell could be salvaged. Second, she asked why the owner, being familiar with the Historical Commission's process, did not seek the Commission's approval for the change from the approved plan. Mr. Anastasio responded that, as far as he knows, there was no engineering report. He contended that the property was in very poor condition. Ms. Hawkins reminded Mr. Anastasio that every owner has a responsibility to keep his property in good repair such that it is not demolished by neglect. To Ms. Gutterman's second question, Mr. Anastasio replied that the owner concluded that, once the rear ell was unstable and unsalvageable, he had the right to change it. Mr. Anastasio affirmed that the owner elected to rebuild differently than the approved plan. Mr. Anastasio noted that he had learned from staff that the materials used on the new rear ell might not be acceptable.

Ms. Hawkins explained that when building are altered without permits and approvals and then those permits and approvals are sought after the fact, the Historical Commission and its Architectural Committee apply the same standards that they would have if reviewing in advance.

Ms. Hawkins asked for public comment. Lorna Katz-Lawson of the Society Hill Civic Association stated that had been struggle for a long time to compel the property owner to comply with the preservation ordinance and other regulations. She claimed that he willfully allowed the building to become unstable through his actions and inactions. She stated that the community called the Department of Licenses & Inspections multiple times after witnessing the floors being removed and the back of the building being left open for many winters. She noted that, eventually, the building was partially enclosed. She opined that the situation has been very difficult for the neighbors and has resulted in a loss of historic fabric in a tourist area.

Mr. Baron clarified that the Commission had approved the removal of a newer addition to the building and the construction of a wider addition, but the owner was required to retain the older rear ell including its roof. Instead, the owner removed most of the narrower original section of the building and built a much longer wider section. Ms. Pentz inquired whether any of the half gabled roof had been retained. Mr. Anastasio said it had not. Ms. Gutterman noted that the new roof was not only flat but much higher than the original. Mr. Anastasio noted for the record that many neighboring properties are out of compliance. Ms. Hawkins advised Mr. Anastasio that he could report those properties to the staff, who would request inspections and violations if merited. Mr. Anastasio responded that he did not wish to turn in the neighbors.

Mr. D'Alessandro suggested that the Committee should recommend denial of the legalization.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9 and the Historical Commission's actions of February and August 2010.

**ADDRESS: 405-25 QUEEN ST**

Proposal: Rehabilitate playground

Review Requested: Review and Comment

Owner: City of Philadelphia

Applicant: Nancy O'Donnell, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

History: 1810; Bethel Burying Ground; Weccacoe Playground

Individual Designation: 6/14/2013

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to refurbish a section of the Weccacoe Playground at 405-25 Queen Street. The section of the playground where the work would take place is not designated as historic. Another section of the playground, the former Bethel Burying Ground, is designated as historic. The Historical Commission designated the Bethel Burying Ground in June 2013 and is charged with protecting archaeological resources at the former cemetery, which was associated with Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Owing to the boundary of its designation, the Historical Commission does not have plenary jurisdiction over the proposed project. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec) and its partners are presenting the project to the Historical Commission as a courtesy for review and comment only.

Prior to developing the playground project, Parks & Rec retained an archaeologist to verify the bounds of the historic cemetery to ensure that archaeological resources would not be disturbed while refurbishing the playground. The archaeologist conducted documentary research as well as excavations and identified the locations of the perimeter wall of the historic cemetery. All work on the playground will take place outside the historic perimeter wall of the cemetery. Two

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fences will be erected outside the historic cemetery to protect the cemetery from incursions during construction. During the construction at the playground, an archaeologist will advise, be on site for work near the cemetery, and be on call for unexpected occurrences.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the application demonstrates that the playground project satisfies Standard 8: archaeological resources at the Bethel Burying Ground will be protected and preserved in place.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Nancy O'Donnell of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation represented the application.

Mr. McCoubrey asked if the perimeter fence that currently surrounds the entire site would remain in place. Ms. O'Donnell stated that it would be retained in place. Mr. D'Alessandro asked about any below-grade work. Ms. O'Donnell explained that no work will take place at the historic burying ground. The only below-grade work outside the burying ground will be the installation of footers. An archaeologist will be on site and will implement protocols if any archaeological resources are discovered. Ms. Pentz asked if plans for the building that stands on the burying ground had been developed. Ms. O'Donnell explained that there are no set plans for the building, which was erected on the former burying ground in the 1920s and later enlarged. She stated that Philadelphia Parks & Recreation will develop a plan to commemorate the former burying ground, but work on that plan has not yet begun.

Ms. Hawkins asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak on the matter. Stephan Salisbury, a reporter with the *Inquirer*, asked about the tennis court, which extends out onto the former burying ground. Ms. O'Donnell replied that the portion of the tennis court outside the burying ground would be resurfaced. The portion that is located on the burying ground would not be altered.

Ms. Hawkins thanked the representatives of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation for the sensitivity they have shown with regard to this important historic site. She thanked them for preserving the archaeological resources undisturbed in place and for presenting the proposal to the Historical Commission despite its lack of jurisdiction.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend that the application demonstrates that the playground project satisfies Standard 8: archaeological resources at the Bethel Burying Ground will be protected and preserved in place.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:17 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 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

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

Standard 8: Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

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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