MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2013
ROOM 578, CITY HALL
DOMINIQUE HAWKINS, CHAIR

PRESENT
John Cluver
Nan Gutterman
Dan McCoubrey
Suzanne Pentz

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Jorge Danta, Historic Preservation Planner II
Rebecca Sell, Historic Preservation Planner II

ALSO PRESENT
Dan Louis, Theta Consulting
Scott Donahue
David Traub, David S. Traub Associates
Sam Gordon, SGA
Ben Leech, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Amy Green
Bill Green
Thomas Griffin
Jen Shin
Kfir Binnfeld
Sean Schellenger, Streamline Solutions

CALL TO ORDER
Mr. McCoubrey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mses. Gutterman and Pentz and Mr. Cluver joined him.

DRAFT

ADDRESS: 2351 ST ALBANS ST
Project: Alter exterior
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: F. Scott Donahue
Applicant: F. Scott Donahue
History: 1869; Charles Leslie, developer
Individual Designation: 9/30/1969
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Rebecca Sell, rebecca.sell@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to alter and restore the exterior of this building. The application proposes to install wood windows and doors, clean the marble base, clean and repoint brick, install decorative wood panels on the rear shed, and restore existing bays and dormers.

This application also proposes to install synthetic slate shingles with clipped corners in a continuous pattern on the mansard roof. The historic slate roofing pattern consisted of alternating double rows of rectangular slates and clipped corner slates, as is shown in photographs taken in 1969, when the historic roof was in place.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the roofing pattern matches the historic configuration, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Sell presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Owner Scott Donahue and architect David Traub represented the application.

Mr. Donahue stated that this is the third house he has renovated on the 2300 block of Saint Albans Street; the first was his personal residence at 2350 Saint Albans Street and the second was a long-time vacant property at 2307 Saint Albans. He asserted that he knowledgeable about the block and cares about its historic significance and appearance, as he is a current resident.

He explained that the proposal raises two issues: the slate pattern and the bay window. He turned to a photograph of his own home, located directly across the street from this building, and explained that, owing to the lack of historic documentation, he was permitted to install continuous rows of clipped corner synthetic slate shingles. He explained that the two buildings are the gateway houses to the block. He stated that he would like to repeat the same roofing pattern on the building he is currently renovating so there is no dissonance between the two houses. He showed historic photographs of the two corner buildings at the east end of the block with a band of rectangular shingles at the top of the mansard followed by rows of clipped corner shingles in a continuous pattern. He contended that it is strange that the house at 2351 Saint Albans Street would have a different roofing pattern than the houses at all of the other corners on the block.

Ms. Gutterman stated that there is a historic photograph of the house at 2351 Saint Albans Street that shows the historic slate pattern. Mr. Donahue questioned whether it showed the original pattern or a later change. Ms. Gutterman conceded that it is impossible to know whether the roofing pattern in the photograph is the original pattern. Ms. Sell explained that the earliest photographs of the building are included in the packet. She noted that Mr. Baron visited the site. She stated that there is evidence of early alterations for a commercial use and that it is unclear

whether the slate pattern in the photograph from 1969 dates to the time of those changes or if it is original. She acknowledged that there is not enough evidence to make that determination. She explained that, if the historic pattern in the photograph is not the original, it is a very early alteration.

Mr. Traub showed a current photograph of the east adjoining house and noted that it would be inconsistent to have different roof patterns between the two adjacent, adjoining houses. He noted that the proposed slates and pattern were used property on the house at 2307 Saint Albans Street, which won an award from the Preservation Alliance last year. Mr. McCoubrey asked if any other houses have different slate patterns. Mr. Donahue asserted that none have different slate patterns and few have original roofing material. Ms. Pentz asked if he proposes to use a synthetic material. Mr. Donahue explained that he proposes to use a synthetic slate shingle that has been approved for other buildings that lack original slate and was used on the house at 2307 Saint Albans Street.

Ms. Gutterman asked if the Committee should review the restoration aspect of the proposal or if they would be reviewed at the staff level. Ms. Sell explained that there are several pieces of the proposal that could be approved at the staff level. However, it was presented to the Commission as a package and the Committee may consider the entire application. Mr. Cluver asked the applicant to explain the alteration of the side bay window. Mr. Donahue explained that there is replacement brick below the window. He noted that the photograph from 1969 shows that it was once a much larger opening and was told that it was used for moving caskets when the building served as a funeral home. He explained that the inspiration for the window design is derived from the building at 2300 Saint Albans Street. However, it is not an exact copy of the bay window at that property. He explained that they propose to use salvaged marble to fill in the base and install double window. Mr. Cluver noted a transom bar in the historic bay window. Mr. Donahue stated that he noticed that element as well, but it does not work with the marble base restoration. Mr. Cluver agreed and added that the proposed alteration is in keeping with the concept that the bay was not an original opening. Mr. Cluver asked if the applicant proposes to reproduce the cast iron grilles. Mr. Donahue stated that he had B&B Foundry recast an original grille and he has used the reproductions on his other properties. He stated that this property needs five grilles, which will cost almost $5,000.

Mr. Donahue observed that the remainder of the restoration proposal can be reviewed by the staff. Ms. Pentz asked the applicant to explain the decorative wood panels on the shed. Mr. Donahue explained that the shed has been stuccoed and is unattractive. He showed a photograph of the proposed treatment he installed at 2307 Saint Albans Street. He opined that it is a more attractive appearance than re-stuccoing. He explained that the stucco was applied with a wire mesh and there is little if anything to restore beneath the substrate.

Mr. Donahue noted that the block appeared in an 1871 rendering published in a monthly magazine. He explained that he will be acquiring salvaged marble lintels, replacing brick infill, and replicating a wooden decorative dormer element that appears in the 1871 rendering.

Ms. Gutterman stated that she is in favor of approving the clipped corner slates as opposed to the pattern as shown in the 1969 photograph as there is not enough evidence to prove that that is either the original pattern or a later replacement. She stated that there is evidence on the rest of the block and maintaining consistency is important.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9.

ADDRESS: 1231 RODMAN ST
Project: Legalize and repair deck
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Ernest Varalli
Applicant: Dan Louis, Theta Consulting
History: 1852
Individual Designation: 6/29/1967
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Rebecca Sell, rebecca.sell@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to repair and legalize a two-story, cantilevered roof deck. The deck was damaged by the recent hurricane.

The lower portion of the deck is located on a two-story section of the rear ell and cantilevers out beyond the rear façade of the rear ell. The upper deck is located on a three-story section of the rear ell and cantilevers out beyond the rear facade of the rear ell and partially sits on the rear slope of the roof on the main block. A set of stairs on the cantilevered section connects the two levels.

In July 1997, the Historical Commission approved an application for a single-level roof deck and trellis that was restricted to the two-story portion of the rear ell only. The deck was to be situated within the footprint of the rear ell, not cantilevered. The cantilevered portion of the lower part of the deck, the stairs to the upper part of the deck, and the entirety of the upper part of the deck exceed the 1997 approval and are illegal.

The deck and stairs are visible from Lombard Street. The deck approved in 1997 satisfies the Standards and Guidelines; the deck as constructed does not.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guidelines.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Sell presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Dan Louis of Theta Consulting represented the application.

Ms. Gutterman asked the applicant if he knew why the owner constructed a deck that was not compliant with the original approval. Mr. Louis stated that he did not and that his firm was brought in to assess the recent storm damage and make a recommendation to the owner. He explained that the owner would like to legalize it, but he understands that he would likely need to remove the roof portion and would remove the cantilevered portion if it is denied. He explained that the owner wishes to come into compliance. Ms. Pentz stated that the Committee should be consistent with the previous approval and recommend denial of the roof level deck, cantilevered portions of the lower deck, and stairs.

Mr. Louis asked if the Committee would recommend approval if the application were amended the application to remove the upper deck and legalize the cantilevered portions. Ms. Gutterman explained that the Committee would recommend denial to an application proposing to legalize only the cantilever. Mr. Cluver explained that the Committee frequently reviews rear deck

proposals and has a clear set of guidelines that require decks to remain within the footprint of the building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guidelines.

ADDRESS: 1828 DELANCEY PL
Project: Construct addition with terrace and parking
Review Requested: Review In Concept
Owner: William Green
Applicant: Samuel Gordon, Samuel Gordon Architects, PC
History: 1855
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Jorge Danta, jorge.danta@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

DISCUSSION: Mr. Danta presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Attorney Carl Primavera, property owners Bill and Amy Green, and architects Sam Gordon and Jen Shin represented the application.

Mr. Danta stated that the level of details shown in the drawings merit a review for final approval, rather than conceptual approval, as originally requested. Mr. Gordon requested that the application be reviewed for final approval, rather than conceptual. There was no objection from the audience to the change from conceptual to final. Mr. Gordon stated that he would change the design at the third floor to accommodate the access to the terrace at the new curtain wall as the staff had suggested, rather than cutting down the historic windows. He noted that all windows would be replaced, but that he would work with the staff on those details.

Mr. McCoubrey asked for clarification on the details of the curtain wall. Specifically, he asked how it attaches to the neighbor's house along the party wall. Mr. Gordon explained that the curtain wall would attach to the party wall of the neighboring property. Mr. McCoubrey asked if there was a lintel or cornice present underneath the existing non-original addition. Mr. Gordon answered that he did not known, but that it was unlikely. Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the curtain wall should fit within the masonry wall opening. Mr. Gordon stated that he would be receptive to that installation detail, but that his original idea was to make it slightly proud so as to make it appear more like a bay. Ms. Gutterman stated that the bay idea was acceptable, as long as it protrudes from within the masonry opening and not from an overlap on the rear wall. Ms. Gutterman suggested that, if original masonry that was once part of the rear façade survives in the interior of the property, it should be exposed. Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the curtain wall be kept below the cornice line so as to enhance its bay-like appearance and avoid an awkward connection. Ms. Gutterman asked about the translucency of the glass for the curtain wall. Mr. Gordon answered that the glass would be opaque, not mirrored. He also explained that the curtain wall would be of quality materials, similar to the curtain wall found at the Bridge Theater in University City.

Mr. Cluver asked for clarifications on the garage door. Mr. Gordon answered that the door would be a metal roll-up gate. It would be factory painted. He specified that all mechanicals would be kept inside the garage and not exposed along the alley. Ms. Gutterman asked if new

mechanical units were proposed. Mr. Gordon answered that there would be new condensing units on the roof of the house, which would not be visible from Delancey Place or the alley.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend final approval, provided that the curtain wall is kept within the existing masonry opening.

ADDRESS: 1227 PANAMA ST
Project: Legalize installation of brick steps
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Patricia Griffin
Applicant: Patricia Griffin
History: 1830
Individual Designation: 11/24/1959
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes legalizing the demolition of a stoop and the construction of a new stoop in brick. The work was done without the Historical Commission's approval or a building permit. The owner claims that the old stoop was constructed of concrete. However, other houses in the row have marble stoops. The Commission has a long history of working with the current owner on projects for this building including windows and roofing. The house has a Historical Commission plaque. To bring the building into compliance, the stoop should be replaced using marble blocks.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Property owner Tom Griffin represented the application.

Mr. Griffin explained that the building had concrete steps, which he replaced with new brick steps. He said that the street was recently repaved by the City's Streets Department. He said that his sidewalk stoop and planter were in poor condition and he asked the contractor who was reconstructing the street in Belgian block to rebuild his sidewalk and stoop in brick. He had the brick planter removed at that time. He said that, although his immediate neighbor has a marble stoop, several houses on his block and on Iseminger Street have brick stoops. He displayed photographs of houses with brick stoops.

Mr. Baron stated that he spoke to the contractor soon after he completed the construction of the new steps, who stated that he has the marble blocks with which he could reconstruct the stoop to match the neighboring house. Mr. Griffin explained that he found that option cost prohibitive.

Mr. Baron showed a photograph documenting that the stone threshold or sill was replaced in brick at the same time. He explained that, although the house might have had a concrete stoop at the time of designation, concrete was not a material used for stoops on Philadelphia rowhouses in the early nineteenth century. The Commission cannot unilaterally require an owner to restore a grandfathered element, but the Commission does have the authority to review the replacement of a non-historic grandfathered element and typically requires restoration.

Mr. Griffin surmised that the house might have had wood steps at an earlier period. Ms. Gutterman asked if the designation photograph shed any light on this question. Mr. Baron explained that the stoop is hidden by a car in the designation photograph. Mr. McCoubrey contended that the Standards would support the staff's recommendation of denial and that marble blocks were the appropriate material for the stairs. Mr. Cluver disagreed and opined that the evidence was inconclusive and expressed his willingness to recommend approval.

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

ADDRESS: 1227 RODMAN ST
Project: Legalize façade alterations
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Kfir and Leona Binnfeld
Applicant: Kfir Binnfeld
History: 1852
Individual Designation: 12/31/1984
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to legalize work to the front façade of this rowhouse. In 2010, the Commission's staff approved a rear addition for the building. The permit applications and drawings for that addition specified that there would be no work to the front façade. The architect's drawings show existing single-block steps, 6-over-6 windows as well as thin lintels and sills. The staff noticed several unapproved changes to the façade in 2012. These changes did not exist in the 2009 Google Street View photograph of the property or the architect's drawings for the addition. These changes included new stucco on the base of the front facade, a new storm door, the removal of marble steps and their replacement in brick with stone treads, new wood show lintels and sills installed over the marble ones, new 9-over-9 windows with new frames, the removal of the shutter hardware, installation of star bolts, and modifications to the cornice. The owner has claimed that most of this work was undertaken before he purchased the property. A photograph on a 2010 appraisal report and the architect's drawings would seem to contradict this claim. The owner does concede to changing the glass but keeping the frames in the six front windows. However, the current frames are a different color than the old frames and the muntin grids are now 9-over-9 rather than 6-over-6. In any case, the work was done since the 2009 Google photograph without a building permit or the Commission's approval.

To bring the building into compliance, the windows and frames should be replaced with 6-over-6 windows, the stucco should be removed from the base, the steps restored with marble blocks, the false lintels removed from the marble ones, and the insulation removed from the exterior of the cornice. The storm door and star bolts could be approved at the staff level.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 6 and 9.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Property owner Kfir Binnfeld represented the application.

Mr. Binnfeld explained that he and his wife purchased the property in 2010 from a bank. He stated that he had an architect draw up plans for its renovation. He submitted the plans to the Department of Licenses & Inspections for a building permit and was referred to the Historical Commission. He stated that he met with Ms. Sell of the Commission's staff to review the renovation plans, which included an addition and deck. Mr. Binnfeld reported that, during his meeting with Ms. Sell, she told him that there was an old violation for vinyl windows at the property. He claimed that Ms. Sell remarked that the violation was currently inactive and, if he did not touch the vinyl windows, he could retain them. He also noted that he deleted a deck from the plans at Ms. Sell's request. Mr. Binnfeld acknowledged that he did work on the illegal vinyl windows, but contended that he employed a contractor who only "serviced" the windows with new glass and new muntins. He based the new muntin pattern on the windows in the buildings across the street. Mr. Binnfeld claimed that the building had a stucco base and storm door before he began his work. He claimed that he simply renewed them. He said that he did not rebuild the steps, as Mr. Baron has claimed. He explained that he added spray foam insulation to the cornice because of squirrels. He said that he has now trimmed off the excess insulation that was oozing out of the cornice. Ms. Guttermann noted that the star bolts should be acceptable because they help to preserve the property.

Mr. Baron explained that the windows have been changed in many ways that exceed a simple repair. He pointed out that a Google Streetview photograph of 2009 and an architectural drawing executed by Mr. Binnfeld's architect as well as photograph that was part of Mr. Binnfeld's appraisal report all show that the windows had shutter hinges and clamshell frames. Mr. Baron observed that, although Mr. Binnfeld said that he only added panning to the existing frames, the frames with capping are currently narrower than the old wooden frames, precluding the possibility that the old frames sit behind the capping. In addition, the shutter hardware, which was attached to the old frames, is now gone. The new windows are also a different color than the windows in 2009 and do not appear to have been painted. The lintels and sills now have wider projecting wood covers. Mr. Binnfeld offered to change the muntins back to the 6-over-6 pattern and remove the panning. Mr. Baron said that the windows cannot be modified to appropriately replicate the historic windows and should be replaced.

The conversation turned to the front steps. Mr. Baron pointed out that in 2010 Mr. Binnfeld's architect depicted the steps as blocks of stone without treads. He noted that the architect's drawing is very detailed and depicts all elements including hinges and a single star bolt. Ms. Gutterman asked Mr. Binnfeld why he had replaced the steps. He replied that he did not replace them. Mr. Baron pointed out that the identity of the person or persons who undertook the illegal work is not necessarily germane because the current owner is responsible for any alterations that were undertaken since designation without a permit. We know that this work was undertaken without a permit by comparing the designation photograph and the 2009 Google Streetview photograph with the current condition of the building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the legalization of the alterations to the steps, windows, sills, and lintels, but approval of the legalization of the star bolts, stucco at the base, and storm door.

ADDRESS: 1519-21 N 16TH ST
Project: Legalize installation of transformer
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: PMS Development, LLC
Applicant: Plato Marinakos, Plato Studio Architect, LLC
History: 1886; addition, 1893
Individual Designation: 7/1/1982
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes legalizing the installation of an electrical transformer in the front yard of the addition to this house on N. 16th Street. In April 2011, the Historical Commission approved a large side addition to this house. The contractor deviated from the approved plan for the addition. The Department of Licenses & Inspections issued violations for the non-compliant work. The owner submitted an application with a plan to correct the violations to the Commission in June 2012, which was approved. The applicant undertook some aspects of the corrective work, but did not undertake the work to relocate a large electrical transformer, which had been placed in the front yard of the addition. The plan approved in June 2012 proposed constructing an underground vault for the transformer. However, the vault was not built and the transformer was not moved, apparently owing to cost. The applicant now proposes to hide the transformer with plantings, rather than relocating it. No financial information about the cost to relocate the transformer has been submitted.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Contractor Sean Schellenger represented the application.

Mr. Baron explained that this project failed to comply with many aspects of the original approval. He noted, however, that the contractor has undertaken the other corrective work required by the Commission in June 2012. The transformer is the only open issue remaining at this project. Mr. Baron noted that the transformer sits in front of the recent addition, not the historic house.

Mr. Schellenger stated that, although he was not involved in the June 2012 review by the Historical Commission, the owner has placed the burden of correcting this problem on him because his contract stipulates that he will satisfy all Historical Commission requirements. He stated that the original architectural plans from which he worked made no mention of a transformer. He reported that PECO installed the transformer in this location. He said that he spoke to several employees at PECO, all of whom said that it would be very expensive to build an underground vault. He also reported that they discouraged him from placing such a transformer underground. He claimed that he does not have the money to build the underground vault. Mr. Baron noted that any application for a hardship exemption would be complicated by the fact that the applicant is a contractor, not the owner of the property. Mr. Schellenger also argued that views of the transformer have been obscured by the reinstallation of the historic fence. He also noted that a building will soon be constructed on the adjacent lot, blocking views of the transformer from the south. He offered to further screen the transformer with a "green screen."

The Committee members suggested that the transformer could be successfully screened if it was integrated into a landscape plan. They urged Mr. Schellenger to hire a landscape architect

to develop a plan to screen the transformer. Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the Committee recommend the legalization of the installation of the transformer, provided it is screened by plantings with benches or a pergola designed by a landscape architect. He noted that, if a new fence is included in the plan, it should not mimic the old iron fence. He asserted that such a solution is only acceptable because the transformer sits in front of the new addition and does not block views of the historic building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the legalization of the installation of the transformer, provided it is screened by plantings, fencing, benches, and/or a pergola, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ADJOURNMENT

The Architectural Committee adjourned at 10:35 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 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

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 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.

Roofs Guideline: Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

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