

**THE MINUTES OF THE 709TH STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2021
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
ROBERT THOMAS, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00

Mr. Thomas, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Comment
Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair	X		
Donna Carney (Philadelphia City Planning Commission)		X	
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair	X		
Mark Dodds (Department of Planning & Development)	X		
Kelly Edwards, MUP	X		
Steven Hartner (Department of Public Property)	X		
Sara Lepori (Commerce Department)	X		
Josh Lippert (Department of Licenses & Inspections)	X		
John Mattioni, Esq.	X		
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Architectural Committee Chair	X		
Jessica Sánchez, Esq. (City Council President)	X		
Kimberly Washington, Esq.	X		

Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Commissioners, staff, applicants, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
Megan Cross Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Arielle Kerstein
Michael Ramos
Jay Farrell
Sophie Dong
Faye Messner
Mary McGettigan
Justin Detwiler
Paige Jaffe
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance
Matthew McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Scott Gerlica
Dennis Carlisle
Steven Peitzman
Nora Okoro
Devon Beverly
Sam Katovitch
Brian Zoubek
Shimi Zakin
Kevin Brett
Michael Phillips, Esq., Khelr Harrison
Yoav Shiffman
J.M. Duffin
Jordan Mrazik
Dan Kayser
Lynette Illen
Sammy Purnell
Allan Domb
Jenn Patrino
Jeremy Avellino
Scott Shinton
Tim Lux
German Yakubov
Nancy Pontone
Matthew McCarty
Jackie, Tierview Development
Sara Chafi
Allison Weiss
Alex Balloon, Tacony CDC
Snezana Litvinovic
Catherine Timko
Arden Jordan
Kevin McMahon
Susan Wetherill
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
Sara Pochedly
David Hollenberg

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 708TH STATED MEETING, 13 AUGUST 2021

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:04:18

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and members of the public if they had any additions or corrections to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Historical Commission, the 708th Stated Meeting, held 13 August 2021. No corrections were offered.

ACTION: Ms. Edwards moved to adopt the minutes of the 708th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 13 August 2021. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adoption of the Minutes of the 708th Meeting					
MOTION: Adoption of minutes					
MOVED BY: Edwards					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11				1

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE

ADDRESS: 6901 GERMANTOWN AVE

Proposal: Construct multifamily building in side yard

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Dennis M. McCarthy and John V. Miglionico

Applicant: Lea Litvin, LO Design

History: 1798; Joseph Gorgas House; porch added, 1860

Individual Designation: 5/28/1957

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

The property at 6901 Germantown Avenue includes a late-eighteenth-century stone structure, the Joseph Gorgas House, located at the corner of Germantown Avenue and Gorgas Lane,

and a large parking lot at the side and rear. The property's large open space historically functioned as a side and rear yard. Aside from a wood-frame shed or stable building at the rear of the stone house, historic maps show that no other structures existed on the site. This application proposes to construct a three-story, multi-unit building on the site of the parking lot. The new building would have frontages on Germantown Avenue and Gorgas Lane, would be clad in stone and blackened cedar siding, and would feature large dormers with terraces and a standing seam metal roof.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct three-story, multi-unit building in location of existing parking lot.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Rehabilitation Standards of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed three-story building would be differentiated from the historic building, though it would not be compatible. While the standing seam metal roof and stone cladding reflect the materials of the historic building and surrounding context, the blackened cedar siding, the dominant material of the new construction, would not be compatible. The proposed building is too large in massing, size, and scale and should be reduced to more closely match the massing of the historic building.
 - *Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction:*
 - *Recommended: Designing new construction on a historic site or in a historic setting that it is compatible but differentiated from the historic building or buildings.*
 - *Recommended: Considering the design for related new construction in terms of its relationship to the historic building as well as the historic district and setting.*
 - *Not Recommended: Adding new construction that results in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the building, including its design, materials, location, or setting.*
 - The first-story wall fronting Germantown Avenue, the primary façade of the building, would be clad in stone with one door centered on the elevation. It would include no other fenestration. The lack of fenestration at this façade would adversely impact the historic streetscape, a main commercial corridor through Northwest Philadelphia, and should be modified to include punched window openings.
 - Owing to the massing, size, and scale of the new construction and its siting around the building, the new construction would result in the diminution of the historic character of the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:04:55

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Historical Commission, explaining that the staff had already granted one continuance for the review of the building permit application and was prohibited from granting additional continuances by the Rules & Regulations. He suggested that the rule made little sense and should be amended at some later point.
- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners for comments on the continuance request. None were offered.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ACTION: Mr. Mattioni moved to continue the review of the application for 6901 Germantown Avenue for one month, to the Historical Commission's meeting on 8 October 2021. Mr. Hartner seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Continue review of application for 6901 Germantown Avenue for one month					
MOTION: Approval					
Moved BY: Mattioni					
SECONDED BY: Hartner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11				1

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 24 AUGUST 2021

CONSENT AGENDA

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:09:15

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and public for comments on the Consent Agenda. None were offered.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee for the application for 223-25 Market Street. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Consent Agenda					
MOTION: Approval					
MOVED BY: Thomas					
SECONDED BY: McCoubrey					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11				1

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 1435-41 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Cut window sills; install new windows

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: ADR Drexel, L.P.

Applicant: Matthew McClure, Ballard Spahr

History: 1927; Drexel Co. Building; Day & Klauder

Individual Designation: 2/23/1971, 8/2/1973

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The building at 1435-41 Walnut Street was constructed in 1927 for Drexel & Company, a private banking house. The design for the building was drawn from the Renaissance palaces of Florence, Italy. A once-grand banking hall occupies the first floor. The banking hall has been alternatively vacant and underutilized for many years. The application claims that the chronic vacancy of the commercial space on the Walnut Street shopping corridor results from the lack of visibility from the street into the space. The first-floor window sills are between 88 and 99 inches above the sidewalk, several feet above eye level. The application asserts that the windows must be enlarged to make the first-floor interior space attractive to retail tenants. The application includes an analysis of the building and its leasing difficulties by an expert in the marketing of retail space.

The application proposes to remove the masonry panels below first-floor windows on Walnut and 15th Streets and install mullions and glazing in place of the panels to allow for views from the street into the interior space. The Moravian Street windows would not be altered. The original application, which was reviewed by the Architectural Committee, proposed altering seven windows, three on Walnut and four on S. 15th Street. In response to the Architectural Committee recommendation to reduce the number of alterations, the revised application proposes altering five windows, three on Walnut and two on S. 15th Street. With the revision, the windows flanking the entrance on S. 15th Street would not be altered. The easternmost opening on Walnut Street is already altered; it was cut down for a doorway many years ago. After the stone panels below the windows are removed, the new openings would be glazed, with the new window systems fitting below the decorative historic windows.

Drexel & Co. opened its banking hall at 15th and Walnut Streets on 7 November 1927. Despite the Stock Market Crash and the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, which separated commercial and investment banking, Drexel & Co. survived the Great Depression, albeit with several reorganizations. Drexel & Co. sold the property to 1435 Walnut Street Corporation in 1938, but continued to occupy the building under a lease. In 1943, when the First National Bank of Philadelphia purchased the property, Drexel & Co. removed from the building at 15th and Walnut. Interestingly, Drexel and First National swapped quarters, with Drexel & Co. moving to First National's former offices at 1500 Walnut Street and First National moving into the Florentine palace. First National merged with the First Pennsylvania Bank & Trust Co. and then sold the property to Bankers Securities Corporation, Albert M. Greenfield's parent company, in 1957. It appears that Bankers Securities Corp. never occupied the building and the main banking room remained vacant for decades, from 1957 to 1987. In 1979, developer Jay Nathan and partners obtained the property and set out to rehabilitate it with new retail and restaurant spaces in the banking hall and offices above. They inserted a series of freestanding mezzanines in the banking hall, while trying to maintain the historic features and finishes. At the time, while reporting on the rehabilitation, the *Inquirer* noted that "the building has long been a white

elephant largely because its ornate main banking floor, with its 35-foot ceiling, has been considered difficult to use economically.” While the offices rented, the banking floor remained vacant until 1987, when Dimensions, a men’s clothing store, moved into the space. Murray Korn’s Dimensions did not last long, declaring bankruptcy in 1991. In 1987, Nathan and his partners sold the property to a British investment company. Bally’s Health and Tennis Corporation leased the banking hall in 1994 for use as a fitness center, which opened in 1995. Bally’s sold to LA Fitness in 2011. LA Fitness closed its 1435 Walnut location in 2015, after the space was rented to another gym operator. However, the new fitness center scheduled for the space in 2015 defaulted on its lease and the banking hall has been vacant since that time. In summary, the first-floor space was used as a banking hall from 1927 to 1957, was vacant from 1957 to 1987, was used as a clothing store from 1987 to 1991, was vacant from 1991 to 1994, was used as a gym, albeit not the highest and best use for the historic interior on the city’s premier shopping corridor, from 1994 to 2015, and has been vacant since.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Lower window sills and add glazing in five openings.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The removal of the stone panels and addition of glazing does not comply with a strict reading of Standard 9, but will have minimal impact on the historic integrity of the property and should be approved to ensure that the important historic building is self-sustaining and to allow for the restoration and public appreciation of the significant interior space.
- *Standard 10: New additions or 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 impaired.*
 - The work will comply with Standard 10, provided the stone panels are carefully removed and safely stored for potential reinstallation in the future.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review window and stone shop drawings and stone samples, provided the stone panels are carefully removed and safely stored for potential reinstallation in the future.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the application as submitted, with the suggestion of reducing the number of window openings proposed for alteration to maintain more historic fabric.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:10:05

RECUSAL:

- Mr. Thomas recused. Ms. Washington assumed the chair.

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Historical Commission.

- Attorneys Matt McClure and Devon Beverly, architects Dan Kayser and Matthew McCarty, retail consultants Catherine Timko and Paige Jaffe, and property owner's representative Arielle Kerstein represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McClure introduced his team. He thanked the Architectural Committee for the rigor it applied to its review. He stated that in response to the Committee's recommendation, they have reduced the number of windows proposed for alteration from seven to five. He discussed the chronic vacancy of the ground floor and the challenges to adapt it for new uses. He stated that earlier efforts to convert the space to retail use have failed. He stated that a restaurant use is not feasible. The space is too small, only about 5,000 square feet, and the costs for the conversion would be too high, about \$12 million. The nearby buildings that have been converted for restaurant use have much more space for tables. Mr. McClure discussed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He noted that the preamble in the Standards indicates that the Standards should be applied taking into account the economic and technical feasibility of each project. The Standards also acknowledge that historic buildings must be altered for new uses.
- Mr. Kayser explained the architectural aspects of the project. He displayed the architectural plans and discussed the proposal. He displayed photographs showing the height of the window sills relative to the height of pedestrians on the sidewalk. He stated that pedestrians cannot see into the first-floor windows. He displayed photographs of the interior. He discussed the revised plan to alter two windows on S. 15th Street and three on Walnut Street. He displayed drawings of the work with details showing the removal of the stone and the addition of a steel support and new windows. He stated that any new stone inserted at the openings would match the existing stone.
- Mr. McCarty stated that the historic building was constructed in such a way to allow for the panels below the windows to be removed very easily and cleanly. He stated that the work is entirely reversible; the stone panels could be reinserted later. He stated that the stonework is a like a puzzle, with the pieces easily removed and reinserted. He stated that they decided not to retain the sill in place, as some on the Architectural Committee had suggested, because it would block views into the space and would cause unnecessary modifications. He confirmed that any new steel supports would be hidden behind the stone and any new stone would match the existing exactly.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked if all of the stone pieces would be removed intact and saved.
 - Mr. McCarty stated that all stone pieces would be removed cleanly along the joint lines, without damage, and saved.
- Ms. Timko introduced herself and stated that her firm, the Riddle Company, does real estate and economic development marketing. She stated that she is a city planner and is a specialist in retail development. She stated that she developed a downtown marketing and retail strategy for the Center City District in 2009. She stated that it focused on finding national and anchor tenants for retail spaces. She stated that she was hired in 2010 to implement the strategy with a focus on retail marketing and attraction. She stated that she has worked in retail attraction for cities across the country. She noted that she worked on plans for attracting retail to Chestnut and Walnut Streets. She explained that national retailers looked at the first-floor space at 1435-41 Walnut Street, including Balducci's, and rejected it because pedestrians cannot see in. She stated that pedestrians want to be able to see into

the store to see the merchandise as well as understand the type of experience that they might have in the store. She stated that she discussed the property with Crate and Barrel, but it rejected it because of the lack of sightlines into the store. Crate and Barrel leased space directly across the street, in a new building with very large display windows at the street. She stated that the storefront is the retailer's lifeline. Retailers with low visibility will fail. She stated that successful retailers know exactly what they need including what they need with storefront visibility. She explained that the corner at S. 15th and Walnut has one of the highest pedestrian counts in the city, but those pedestrians cannot see into the space. She stated that the site is limited with regard to vehicular traffic because both streets are one-way streets. She concluded that the height of the window sills makes this space unattractive to retailers because potential customers cannot see in. She summarized the site selection factors that retailers use. She stated that the size of the space is the most important factor; visibility is next. The visibility is paramount.

- Ms. Kerstein stated that she is the director of marketing and commercial real estate at Allan Domb Real Estate. She stated that she has been involved with trying to lease the retail space in question. She stated that the company purchased the building in 2005. She stated that the last tenant, LA Fitness, was paying \$1.4 million in rent annually, or \$270 per square foot. The mezzanines and basements were included for no additional rent. She stated that they are now marketing the property for \$1 million annually or \$192 per square foot. She stated that they have shown the space to dozens of potential tenants and have marketed it to hundreds, but no one has been interested. She stated that they have marketed to restaurants, fitness centers, and hard and soft retailers, and have also worked with commercial brokers throughout the region. She stated that they entered into negotiations with about 10 potential tenants, all at rates below \$1 million, but were not successful. Potential tenants all wanted large contributions from the owner for rehabilitation. She listed several restauranteurs with whom they have negotiated. No deals have come to fruition. She stated that restaurant deals are cost prohibitive for both the restauranteur and landlord. The floor plate is too small to support the costs. A restaurant conversion would cost more than \$12 million. Ms. Kerstein stated that her real estate company is involved with more than 70 restaurants, so they know the business well. Gyms are not interested in the space because they require a pool. She listed several retailers who rejected the space because of the lack of street-level visibility. She stated that they revised their application based on the Architectural Committee's recommendation. She stated that they need to undertake the work now to attract a tenant. She concluded that the market has spoken on this building; it will not lease the space without visibility into the space.
- Ms. Jaffe stated that she is a managing director at the Philadelphia office of JLL, a commercial real estate broker. She stated that she specializes in retail leases on Walnut and Chestnut Streets. She stated that comparable spaces along Walnut between Broad and 18th Streets, the prime retail area, all receive more than \$200 per square foot, up to about \$250 per square foot. The rent under consideration at the building in question is low and is not preventing the space from being leased. She stated that the cost to convert the space to a restaurant is too high, given the revenue the space could generate. Soft and hard goods retails require visibility into the space. Visibility is the number one criterion for a potential tenant.
- Mr. Hartner asked why the consultants have concentrated on retail uses for the space. He asked about other potential uses.
 - Mr. McClure responded that they have considered retail, gym, and restaurant use. The space is not conducive to office use. He stated that the Planning

Commission and Commerce Department want to see an active use in the space. The zoning code would require an active use if you were to construct a new building at this site.

- Mr. McClure stated that they have not taken this application lightly. The first-floor space has been vacant and underutilized for decades. The alterations proposed are minor in nature and can allow this space to be adaptively reused. The Standards promote the rehabilitation of buildings to meet new challenges in the marketplace.
- Mr. McCoubrey noted that a restaurant use would not require the alterations to the sills.
- Ms. Washington observed that the applicants have accounted for a diversity of potential tenants including retail, restaurant, gym, and office.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert stated that he supports altering buildings for new uses, but observed that this is one of the city's finest buildings. He stated that the applicants have a lack of vision. He stated that the owner is a City Councilperson and should have taken steps to activate the alley running along the north side of the building. He stated that it is just a "trash alley." He stated that this building requires "thinking outside of the box." He noted that malls do not have windows, yet they seem to work. He stated that the Historical Commission should not be "giving all kinds of allowances" for an important building like this one. He concluded by asking for "more creativity."
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance suffered from technical difficulties, but was eventually able to make a statement. He stated that the owner, Allen Domb, is a powerful man. He stated that he has studied this question for three years and has toured the property. He stated that the building is very significant. He noted that there is no tenant for the space and suggested that an eventual tenant may not want the windows altered. He stated that the building is based on a Florentine palace design. He noted that other similar buildings in the area are occupied. He said that altering some windows, but not all of them, "makes a mockery of the palazzo design." He again noted that nearby buildings with sills high above the street are occupied. He also noted the former Banana Republic store, with its windows high above the sidewalk. He acknowledged that the store has closed. Mr. Steinke stated that "then another one is two blocks away at 16th and Locust. A contributing building to the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District, with a ground-floor retail space occupied by a men's apparel retailer called Suitsupply that has limited window visibility, including large window boxes with plantings. You really can't see into that space. It's not on Walnut. It's on Locust. Much less prestigious shopping street. Much lower pedestrian traffic. I'm sure Ms. Timko would agree with that, yet a hard goods retailer, Suitsupply, selling men's apparel and accessories has been there since 2013. So I think the proof that the building is not at fault is really easily visible in a short walk from this location." He also discussed Ocean Prime, across the street. There, the window sills were lowered and then raised again. He opposed the application. He stated that the likely use for this building is restaurant or hospitality use. To really review this application, the Historical Commission should consider information like rental rates and tenant allowances, like the information that was presented by Ms. Jaffe earlier. He stated that the Committee on Financial Hardship should review this application. He concluded that altering these windows would be like "gouging the eyes out of an old master." He stated that, if a tenant says that they want the windows opened up, then that would be a different story. However, at this time, no tenant has asked to alter the windows.

- David Traub of Save Our Sites stated that he opposes the application. He said that the building is very significant. He stated that the base is very important for Italian palazzo buildings. The panels under the windows are important. He suggested that the building should be used as an art gallery. There are too many clothing stores in the area, he asserted.
- Steven Peitzman stated that he was a faculty member at the Drexel University College of Medicine, but has no connection to the Drexel Building. He stated that there is no evidence that the businesses that have occupied the space failed because of windows. He offered his thoughts on what retailers and restaurateurs need in terms of space to be successful. He stated that visibility from automobiles should be disregarded because the city should be more walkable. He suggested an “academic or out-of-the-box tenant.” He stated that the owner should accept the vacancy until a tenant is found. He stated that his sister lives on 15th Street, so he has walked by the building.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McClure asked Ms. Jaffe to discuss the Banana Republic situation.
 - Ms. Jaffe stated that the Banana Republic at 1401 Walnut Street closed in the spring of 2021 and is not seeking a new location because the store’s sales performance was not “stellar.” She stated that retail is always changing. It is not static. She also stated that the claim that Walnut Street retail is in decline is not correct. While there are vacant stores along the stretch of Walnut, there is a story behind each one of them, and in general retail is thriving along the corridor. She listed several companies that have recently signed leases. Retailers continue to want brick-and-mortar locations.
 - Mr. McClure stated that the property at 1601 Locust Street, which Mr. Steinke discussed, has much lower sill heights than the building in question. He stated that the sills are about five feet above the sidewalk, which is much lower. He asked Ms. Jaffe to comment.
 - Ms. Jaffe stated that the Suitsupply company is looking for new space with improved visibility and façade frontage despite having term left on its lease. She added that there are not many restaurants on the Broad to 18th corridor on Walnut because the real estate is too expensive. She stated that the highest and best use for the Drexel Building is hard or soft retail.
 - Mr. McClure asked Ms. Jaffe to discuss Del Frisco’s, which Mr. Steinke mentioned.
 - Ms. Jaffe stated that restaurant planners estimate how many seats that can fit in the space and how many times they can turn the tables, and from that calculate how much revenue they can generate with a pro forma. Once they have an estimate, they can determine how much rent they can pay. They also calculate how much improvements will cost. On Walnut Street, landlords are willing to pay from \$0 to \$100 per square foot in tenant improvements. Restaurants cannot be built for \$100 per square foot, so restaurants tend to locate elsewhere, not on Walnut Street. She stated that Butcher & Singer had an advantage because the space was already converted for restaurant use. Alma de Cuba, the other restaurant on the Broad to 18th Street corridor is closed and rumored to not be reopening. She concluded that Walnut Street does not attract restaurants because of the economics.
- Mr. McClure stated that they have been considering this problem for several years, long before the onset of the pandemic. There have been numerous attempts to reuse

this space over many decades and those attempts have failed. The problems are not with this current owner or with this current economic situation, but are chronic, extending back decades. Mr. McClure stated that this application is tailored to address the fundamental problem. He also stated that the interior is architecturally significant and will be brought back to life for the public if the change can be made. He stated that he is asking for a tradeoff, a minor, reversible change to the exterior to make the grand interior available to the public, and to activate one of the most important corridors in the city.

- Ms. Edwards stated that the company that she works for has made changes to historic buildings, but never before there is a signed lease, showing a financial commitment from a tenant. She also suggested destination retail, which does not rely on passers-by. She also suggested awnings and signage to call attention to the building. She stated that, after looking closely at the stone, she disagrees with the applicant's architects and contends that the stone would be damaged when the sections are removed to enlarge the windows.
- Mr. Mattioni stated that the building is stunning. He stated that the proposed alteration is significant. He stated that he cannot support the proposed changes at this time.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the panels slated for removal are right at eye level. She stated that the members of the public have proven that there are other alternatives than removing the panels. She stated that the panels are an important part of the experience of the building.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that any work should await the demands or particular needs of a tenant. He suggested that removing the panels on the Walnut Street facade might be acceptable because it is the side façade, not the front façade.
- Ms. Lepori suggested that all windows on each façade should be the same size. If windows are enlarged, the entire façade's windows should be altered.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The property at 1435-41 Walnut Street is individually listed on the Philadelphia and National Registers of Historic Places.
- The first-floor interior space, a grand banking hall, has suffered several periods of vacancy dating back to 1957. The space is currently vacant and a new tenant has not been identified, despite marketing efforts.
- The window sills in question are between 88 and 99 inches above the sidewalk.
- The building is a significant example of the Renaissance or Florentine Palazzo Style of architecture.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The proposed alteration should not be approved without a tenant who demonstrates a need for the alteration.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to deny the application. Mr. Lippert seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1435-41 Walnut St
MOTION: Denial
MOVED BY: Cooperman
SECONDED BY: Lippert

VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair				X	
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	10			1	1

ADDRESS: 3322 WILLITS RD

Proposal: Construct stairtower and elevator addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Shqipes E. Bijte

Applicant: Bujar Gjoka

History: 1794; Lower Dublin Academy

Individual Designation: 10/14/2016

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a stairtower and elevator addition on the rear of the former Lower Dublin Academy building, as well as to replace windows and doors. The building was under renovation when it was gutted by arson in 2006, and has subsequently sat vacant. The building has been at risk and renovating and occupying it is the best way to ensure that it survives. This application proposes to rehabilitate it for single-family use.

The addition for the stair and elevator would be constructed at the rear of the building, where a non-historic dormer has already disrupted the cornice and roofline. The addition would be clad in stucco.

The application also proposes to install several windows and doors, many of which are currently missing. The application also proposes to repair some existing windows. Vinyl windows installed recently in one of the wings should be removed and replaced. The application does not provide door or window schedules, but historic photographs offer a guide to the appropriate window

configuration. While no details are provided for the windows and doors, but the staff can work with the applicant to ensure that appropriate units are specified and installed.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Rehabilitate building
- Construct rear addition
- Replace windows and doors

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*
 - The application calls for window and door replacement, but details of those elements are not provided. Numerous historic photographs exist showing the original configuration. To comply with this Standard, the windows and doors must replicate the appearances of the historic windows and doors. The staff can work with the applicant on the details.
- *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 work will 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.*
 - The proposed addition is compatible with the size, scale, proportion, massing, materials and features of the historic building. It will be differentiated from the old, and calls for minimal removal of historic fabric. It will be located at the rear, where a large non-historic dormer already impacts the cornice and roof.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the windows and doors approximate the historic appearance, with the staff to review details, especially window and door details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial as presented, owing to the size of addition and the use of vinyl windows, but approval of a revised application with a smaller addition and the appropriate windows, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:43:55

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry explained that the applicants had just withdrawn the application by email with the intention of resubmitting for review at the following meeting.

ADDRESS: 862-72 N 41ST ST

Proposal: Construct buildings; demolish portion of site wall

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Friends Rehabilitation Center/41 BROWN LLC

Applicant: German Yakubov, Haverford Square Properties

History: 1899; Allen B. Rorke House

Individual Designation: 5/12/2017

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The property at 862-72 N. 41st Street consists of what was historically a large single-family stone residence, known as the Allen B. Rorke Mansion, a side yard, and a rear carriage house. The rear carriage house that fronts Palm Street is non-contributing. When the property was designated in 2017, the mansion was exposed to the elements with large holes in the roof, a missing porch, and missing windows. It was in extreme disrepair from decades of neglect.

To enable the restoration of the historic mansion, this application proposes to construct two new buildings on the property. The first building would be constructed to replace the non-contributing carriage house at the rear and would have a frontage on Palm Street. The second building would be constructed on Ogden Street and would share a party wall with an existing, undesignated rowhouse. While the building would be constructed in the side yard, it would be located at the rear of the mansion and would not obstruct views of the historic house. Both buildings would be four stories in height with brick cladding at the front façade, and each with one pilot house and roof deck. A small portion of the stone wall would be demolished along Ogden Street to allow for the construction of the rowhouse.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct four-story rowhouse with roof deck and pilot house in side yard fronting Ogden Street;
- Construct four-story building with roof deck and pilot house at rear of property fronting Palm Street; and
- Demolish portion of historic stone wall.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed buildings would be four stories in height and clad in brick where highly visible from the public right-of-way. The buildings would be compatible in massing, size, and scale. The application satisfies Standard 9.
 - The new building fronting Ogden Street would result in the select demolition of the historic stone wall. However, the applicant has provided plans to recreate the missing iron railings that once existed between the stone piers. The loss would be minor and would allow for the restoration of the remainder of the wall. The work complies with Standard 9.

- Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction:
 - *Recommended: Designing new construction on a historic site or in a historic setting that it is compatible but differentiated from the historic building or buildings.*
 - *Recommended: Considering the design for related new construction in terms of its relationship to the historic building as well as the historic district and setting.*
 - *Not Recommended: Adding new construction that results in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the building, including its design, materials, location, or setting.*
 - The buildings would be differentiated from the historic building and would be compatible with the immediate context in material, massing, size, and scale.
 - The two buildings would be located on the periphery of the property. Neither building would obstruct the views of the historic building nor intrude on the side yard; a buffer would remain around the historic building. The work complies with this guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:44:35

RECUSALS:

- Mr. Mattioni recused.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Owner and developer German Yakubov represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert supported the application.
- Paul Steinke supported the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The applicant submitted a revised application, which now proposes to construct one building, a combination of the two proposed earlier. The application reviewed by the Architectural Committee proposed two separate buildings, with one fronting Ogden Street and the other fronting Palm Street. The massing, size, and scale of the new single building remains largely unchanged from the massing, size, and scale of the two buildings. Under the revised proposal, the building will be set back from the streets and will have an ell shape.
- The historic stone wall once had granite globes above each pier. The globes all are now missing. The applicant intends to install globe lights to replace the granite features.

- The new construction is necessary to offset the cost of renovating the historic stone house.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The proposed building is appropriate in massing, size, scale, and material. The work complies with Standard 9.
- The proposed building would be differentiated from the historic and would be constructed on the property's periphery. It would not obstruct views of the historic house. The work complies with the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, provided dark sky lighting is used on the stone wall only where needed, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 862-72 N 41st St					
MOTION: Approval					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni				X	
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	10			1	1

ADDRESS: 7208-10 GERMANTOWN AVE AND 16 NIPPON ST

Proposal: Construct additions

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: TVC PA 7208 Germantown Avenue LLC/Tierview Development

Applicant: Jeremy Avelino

History: 1928; Mt. Airy National Bank; Norman Hulme

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: 7208-10 Germantown Ave, Central Mt Airy Historic District, Contributing, 7/9/2021; 16 Nippon St, not designated

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The property at 7208-10 Germantown Avenue was designated as a contributing resource in the Central Mt. Airy Commercial Historic District in July 2021. The property was recently consolidated with a vacant lot at 16 Nippon Street, which is located outside the district boundary. The Central Mt. Airy Commercial Historic District does not include any properties on Nippon Street and was established to regulate proposed changes to the buildings fronting Germantown Avenue on the 7100 and 7200 blocks of the street. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission nominated the Central Mt. Airy Commercial Historic District at the same time it was working with City Council to upzone the area. The City Planning Commission's goal with the joint zoning and preservation program was to encourage greater density along the Germantown Avenue commercial corridor, to provide a customer base for businesses along the corridor, without encouraging the demolition of historic buildings.

This application proposes to construct a five-story building on the vacant Nippon Street parcel and a two-story addition at the rear of the historic building at 7208-10 Germantown Avenue. The addition would be located behind the gable of the historic structure and would be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way. The addition would be clad in fiber cement lap siding and would connect to the Nippon Street building, which would be clad in fiber cement shingle siding. Removals of material from the historic building would be limited to a portion of the rear brick wall, part of the brick parapet, and three openings punched through the north wall. The application also proposes to replace windows and doors and to restore the stone facades and roof of the historic building.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct five-story building on vacant Nippon Street parcel;
- Construct two-story addition behind gable of historic building;
- Replace windows and doors; and
- Restore stone façade and slate roof.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - Most of the massing of the proposed addition would be located on the vacant, undesignated Nippon Street lot. The two-story addition on the historic structure would be set back from the gable roof and would not destroy any historic

materials that characterize the property. The work is compatible in massing, size, and scale and complies with Standard 9.

- The application proposes to install aluminum clad windows to match the historic windows. This work satisfies Standard 9.
- *Standard 10: New additions or 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 impaired.*
 - The proposed additions would require minimal removals of materials from the historic structure. The removal that is proposed is limited to the brick walls at the side and rear of the building, facing Nippon Street. If the additions were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be left unimpaired. The work complies with Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:01:20

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Michael Phillips, architects Jeremy Avellino and Jordan Mrazik, and property owner Jenn Patrino represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert supported the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The application was revised to reflect comments from the Architectural Committee.
- The parapet height has been reduced at the front of the massing, but would benefit from a reduction in height or a change to a 42-inch railing in lieu of a parapet where the additions connect.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- Most of the massing of the proposed addition would be located on the vacant, undesignated Nippon Street lot. The two-story addition on the historic structure would be set back from the gable roof and would not destroy any historic materials that characterize the property. The work is compatible in massing, size, and scale and complies with Standard 9.
- The proposed additions would require minimal removals of materials from the historic structure. The removal that is proposed is limited to the brick walls at the side and rear of the building, facing Nippon Street. If the additions were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be left unimpaired. The work complies with Standard 10.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, provided the side parapet is replaced with a railing, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 7208-10 Germantown Ave. and 16 Nippon St. MOTION: Approval MOVED BY: McCoubrey SECONDED BY: Washington					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11				1

ADDRESS: 415 S 17TH ST

Proposal: Construct rooftop addition with roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 415 S 17th St LLC

Applicant: Ian Toner, Toner Architects

History: 1865, The Disorderly House of Elizabeth Roberts

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The property at 415 S. 17th Street is a contributing resource in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District situated at the corner of 17th and Waverly Streets. The district inventory states that this two-story Italianate-style building was constructed about 1865. This application proposes to construct a rooftop addition with a roof deck.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct one-story rooftop addition;
- Construct roof deck;
- Repair existing cornice as needed.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - Conceptually, a third-story rooftop addition is acceptable for this building. The use of a mansard fits into the context of the historic district and the proposed use of synthetic slate roofing is also compatible. This aspect of the proposal satisfies Standard 9.
 - The details of the windows proposed at the third-story addition should be reconsidered to better integrate into the design of the designated building.
 - The proposed roof deck would be accessed by a highly visible metal spiral stair. The mansard roof is awkwardly interrupted by this spiral stair on the north or Waverly Street elevation. Owing to its corner location, a roof deck on this building will likely be highly visible from the public right-of-way. As currently designed, the stair to the roof deck or the deck itself are not inconspicuous. This aspect of the work does not satisfy Standard 9.
- *Standard 10: New additions or 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 impaired.*
 - No demolition to any significant features is proposed with this application. One existing door on the north or Waverly Street elevation is proposed to be filled in and a new door opening is proposed. The work complies with Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial of the roof deck as proposed, and approval of the third-story addition, provided that the mansard roof extends the full length of the building, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:19:40

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Sam Katovich of Toner Architects represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- Mansards were historically used to create an additional story which can be seen in other nearby buildings as well as throughout the historic district.
- The revised design reflects the Architectural Committee's recommendations regarding the visibility of the roof deck

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The redesigned mansard and windows, and the relocated deck, are appropriate for the context of the subject property's immediate surroundings as well as the district, satisfying Standard 9.
- No demolition to any significant features is proposed with this application, pursuant to Standard 10.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 415 S 17th St MOTION: Approval MOVED BY: McCoubrey SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11				1

ADDRESS: 223-25 MARKET ST

Proposal: Construct three-story addition on existing two-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: American Investment Associates, LP

Applicant: Snežana Litvinovi, Atrium Design Group

History: 1960; second story and rear added, 2001

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Non-contributing, 12/12/2003

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

The two-story, two-bay, brick-clad building at 223-25 Market Street is non-contributing structure in the Old City Historic District. This application proposes to construct a three-story addition on top of the existing structure. The building fronts Market Street and has a secondary façade that fronts Church Street to the north. An extremely narrow private alley named W. Grishom Alley runs north – south between Market and Church Streets to the east of the subject property.

Earlier versions of the design were reviewed by the Architectural Committee in July and the Historical Commission in August 2021. After the July meeting of the Architectural Committee, the applicant revised the application to take into account the Committee's guidance. At its meeting on August 13, the Historical Commission reviewed and then denied the revised design. The Historical Commission directed the applicant to make two changes to the design reviewed and denied on August 13. First, the Commission directed the applicant to clad the Market Street façade of the addition in brick. Second, the Commission directed the applicant to reduce extent of the projection of the cornice at the top of the Market Street façade. The revised application implements the Commission's two directives.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct three-story addition on existing two-story building:
 - Construct roof deck with pilot houses/roof access;
 - At the Market Street or primary façade, new brick cladding to match existing will be used at the new, upper floors;
 - A stone cornice, reduced in height and depth from previously proposed designs, is proposed for the Market Street façade;
 - Metal cladding is proposed for the new floors at the secondary facades of Church Street and W. Grishom Alley; the existing first and second stories on Church Street will receive a brick cladding to match the brick seen on the Market Street façade.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed three-story addition would not adversely impact any historically significant architectural features at the subject property because the subject property is classified as non-contributing, and therefore inherently has no significant features. The proposed addition will be differentiated from but compatible with the historic district in massing, size, scale, and architectural features and therefore satisfies Standard 9.
- Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction:
 - *Recommended: Designing new construction on a historic site or in a historic setting that it is compatible but differentiated from the historic building or buildings.*
 - *Recommended: Considering the design for related new construction in terms of its relationship to the historic building as well as the historic district and setting.*
 - *Not Recommended: Adding new construction that results in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the building, including its design, materials, location, or setting.*
 - The massing, size and scale of the proposed addition are compatible with but differentiated from the buildings in the historic district.
 - The use of brick cladding at the Market Street façade helps the design to fit into the context of its surroundings, as does the stone cornice.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the glass railing is changed to metal; and additional details are provided for the cast stone band, the materials proposed for the side elevations, and the patterning of the joints, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

ADDRESS: 3615-35 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Ralston House

Proposed Action: Amend boundary

Property Owner: Ralston House

Applicant: Michael Phillips, Esq., Klehr Harrison

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to amend the boundary of the designation of Ralston House at 3615-35 Chestnut Street, removing an area that includes a surface parking lot and some lawn at the western edge of the site. The property includes a U-shaped historic building that faces Chestnut and backs up to Ludlow Street, a lawn between the building and Chestnut Street, and a parking lot at the west accessed from Ludlow. Most of the land proposed for removal was not historically associated with the designated property.

The original site plan submitted by the applicant for review by the Committee on Historic Designation proposed the removal of a piece of land running from Chestnut Street to Ludlow Street, leaving a buffer of 5 feet between the westernmost edge of the historic building and the proposed boundary of the designation. A revised site plan submitted by the applicant in response to the review by the Committee on Historic Designation proposed the removal of a piece of land running from Chestnut Street to Ludlow Street, leaving a buffer of 8 feet between the westernmost edge of the historic building and the proposed boundary of the designation. The Historical Commission reviewed the revised proposal at its August 2021 meeting. At that meeting, the applicant offered to revise his request again, and proposed a new western boundary to the designation that follows the contour of the historic building at a line 20 feet west of the building. The Historical Commission decided that it needed to see the new proposed boundary drawn on a site plan and also needed additional information about the historic building and its grounds. The applicant has submitted a new site plan along with a new cover letter and several photographs, both current and older, for review at the September 2021 meeting of the Historical Commission. The staff has written a brief report on the property with historic photographs and maps for the Commission's consideration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the proposed amendment to the boundary of the designation of 3615-35 Chestnut Street, with the revised 20-foot buffer between the historic building and new boundary of the designation at the west, owing to the fact that almost all of the land to be excluded from the designation was not historically associated with Ralston House, is currently used as a surface parking lot, and has no known historical significance.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission amend the boundary of the property at 3615-35 Chestnut Street, shifting the western boundary of the designated area to the eastern edge of the paved area of the parking lot, thereby retaining a buffer between the western façade of the historic building and the western boundary line.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:39:50

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Michael Phillips and property representative Lynette Killen represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Phillips showed photographs of the area to the west of the historic building to demonstrate that the sidewalks and other features to the west of the building date to around 2010 and are therefore not historically significant. He stated that he wanted to engage in a conversation with the Historical Commission before subdividing the property. He stated that they are proposing a 20-foot buffer between the historic building and any new construction. He stated that they want flexibility in the future to redevelop the unused part of the property to support the non-profit mission and the preservation of the historic building. He said that Ms. Killen can speak to the mission of the organization.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked why they would amend the boundary without knowing how the land would be redeveloped. He also stated that the historic space is also significant.
- Mr. Thomas noted that the application proposes no redevelopment. He stated that the buffer between the historic building and the boundary of the designation should relate to the new construction. A new tall building would have an adverse impact on the historic building. He observed that the people living in the historic building would suffer with a tall building to the west. He suggested that a 40-foot buffer would be adequate, but a 20-foot buffer would not.
- Mr. Phillips noted that only the building was originally designated. Mr. Phillips offered to give the Historical Commission review-and-comment jurisdiction over any new development on any part of the loft, provided the Historical Commission accepted the 20-foot line that he is proposing.
- Ms. Killen introduced herself as the director of the Ralston Center and stated that the center is a non-profit organization that provides services to older Philadelphians. She corrected Mr. Thomas, stating that no one has lived in the building since the middle of the 1980s. The building now houses office and clinic space and the clinics are located on the first floor of the eastern portion of the building. She stated that the organization has survived for 204 years because it is forward thinking. She stated that the board of the organization has no plans to redevelop the land at this time but would like to know that it can be redeveloped so that it can plan strategically. Ms. Killen stated that she and her board would like the Historical Commission to approve their proposed boundary that would be 20 feet away from the building because the land to the west has no historic value and the main focal point of the site, the circular walk leading to the front entrance, will be maintained. She stated that the land is needed to help support the charitable mission of the organization. She stated that the organization has a fiduciary responsibility to serve its constituents. There is a greater demand for elder services in Philadelphia and the

- vacant lot would be used to fund that mission. She stated that the organization needs to take advantage of its assets to provide the best services that it can.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that this area was developed as a suburban area. Light and air are essential characteristics of the site.
 - Mr. Thomas stated that he would like to see the design for the new building before allow it to encroach within 20 feet of the building.
 - Mr. Phillips stated that the zoning code would likely only require an eight or 10-foot setback. He noted that they are suggesting 20 feet.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Mary McGettigan stated that she represents West Philly Plan and Preserve. She stated that four buildings with about 1,000 rental units are proposed on this section of Chestnut Street. She said that the Commissioners would be “appalled at the low quality of the architecture and design.” “It’s really a shame.” She stated that the Historical Commission should retain complete control over the site.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The western boundary of the original 3615 Chestnut Street property was located approximately 60 feet west of the main section of the historic building.
- The Historical Commission determined in 1990 that it did not have jurisdiction over the land associated with 3635 Chestnut Street.
- The parking lot, sidewalks, and landscape features to the west of the historic building are not original, but were added in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The western boundary recommended by the Committee on Historic Designation would establish a buffer of approximately 40 feet between the historic building and any new building constructed to the west. That buffer would be sufficient to protect the historic character of the site, which was suburban.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to adopt the Committee on Historic Designation’s recommendation and amend the boundary of the property at 3615-35 Chestnut Street, shifting the western boundary of the designated area to the eastern edge of the paved area of the parking lot, thereby retaining a buffer of approximately 40 feet between the western façade of the historic building and the western boundary line. Mr. Hartner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 3615-35 Chestnut Street

MOTION: Amend boundary

MOVED BY: Cooperman

SECONDED BY: Hartner

VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11				1

COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

ADDRESS: 231-53 CHURCH LN

Name of Resource: Germantown Fireproof Storage Warehouse

Proposed Action: Comment on National Register nomination

Property Owner: McFarland Landscape Services, Inc.

Nominator: Logan I. Ferguson, Powers & Co.

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

ADDRESS: 3111 W ALLEGHENY AVE

Name of Resource: Reyburn Manufacturing Company

Proposed Action: Comment on National Register nomination

Property Owner: Pep Boys

Nominator: Logan I. Ferguson, Powers & Co.

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:21:30

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the National Register nominations to the Historical Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jim Duffin supported the nomination for 231-53 Church Lane. He pointed out that the local designation began as a University of Pennsylvania Preservation Program student project, and it most likely contributed to this National Register nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- The Commissioners supported the nominations for listing 231-53 Church Lane and 3111 W Allegheny Avenue on the National Register of Historic Places.

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:26:50

ACTION: At 12:28 p.m., Mr. Mattioni moved to adjourn. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adjournment MOTION: Adjourn MOVED BY: Mattioni SECONDED BY: McCoubrey					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DPD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Washington	X				
Total	12				1

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.
- Application materials and staff overviews are available on the Historical Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.