

ADDRESS: 2021 SANSOM ST

Proposal: Demolish majority of existing buildings; construct five-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: San-Mor Limited Partnership

Applicant: Jason Morris, 2021 Sansom Street Development Associates LLC

History: 2021 Sansom St: 1850; converted to roofing company in 1920s; theater in the 1960s

2023 Sansom St: 1860; converted to commercial use about 1900; theater in the 1980s

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fittler Historic District, 2/8/1995

2021 Sansom St: Non-contributing

2023 Sansom St: Contributing

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

OVERVIEW: Located in the Rittenhouse Fittler Historic District on a block of two to four-story mixed-use buildings, the consolidated property known as 2021 Sansom Street includes two formerly separate buildings, at 2021 Sansom Street and 2023 Sansom Street. The one-story structure at 2021 Sansom is listed as non-contributing, while the circa 1860 three-story former rowhouse at 2023 Sansom is listed as contributing to the district. The property at 2021 Sansom was developed as courtyard houses about 1850, converted for a roofing company in the 1920s, and converted to a nightclub and then a movie theater in the 1960s. The rowhouse building at 2023 Sansom was converted from residential to commercial use around the turn of the twentieth century. The buildings were joined when 2023 Sansom Street was converted to a movie theater in the 1980s.

This application proposes to demolish the non-contributing building at 2021 Sansom, and most of the contributing building at 2023 Sansom, retaining only about the front 10 feet of the historic building. A new building would be constructed behind the remnant of 2023 Sansom. It would be five stories in height and clad in tan brick, with a cast-stone veneer at the first floor of the 2021 Sansom Street portion of the building. Four-story metal panel bays with paired windows would protrude from both the Sansom and Iconic Street facades.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish non-contributing building and most of contributing building
- Construct five-story building

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *Standard 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
 - The proposed construction removes significant amounts of historic materials and destroys the character-defining gabled roof shape, and therefore fails to satisfy Standard 2.
- *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 construction destroys the historic massing of the three-story rowhouse building, removing substantial amounts of historic material that characterizes the property, including the majority of the gabled roof, and therefore the application fails to satisfy Standard 9.

- The proposed addition is five stories in height and clad in cast stone veneer at the first floor and tan brick above, with four-story metal-panel bay windows with large casement windows on both the Sansom and Ionic Street facades. The use of masonry is generally compatible with the historic district, but the fenestration pattern and use of multi-story metal panel bay windows is out of keeping with the historic district. The application fails to comply with this Standard.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
 - The addition would require significant demolition of the rear wall and roof of the three-story rowhouse building, removing the essential form and integrity of the historic building, therefore making it irreversible. The application fails to satisfy Standard 10.
- *14-1005(6)(d) Restrictions on Demolition. No building permit shall be issued for the demolition of a historic building, structure, site, or object, or of a building, structure, site, or object located within a historic district that contributes, in the Historical Commission's opinion, to the character of the district, unless the Historical Commission finds that issuance of the building permit is necessary in the public interest, or unless the Historical Commission finds that the building, structure, site, or object cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted. In order to show that building, structure, site, or object cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted, the owner must demonstrate that the sale of the property is impracticable, that commercial rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return, and that other potential uses of the property are foreclosed.*
- *14-203(88) Demolition or Demolish. The razing or destruction, whether entirely or in significant part, of a building, structure, site, or object. Demolition includes the removal of a building, structure, site, or object from its site or the removal or destruction of the façade or surface.*
 - Section 14-1005(6)(d) prohibits the Historical Commission from approving a demolition, the razing or destruction of a building entirely or in significant part, unless it finds that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it may be reasonably adapted. The proposed work constitutes a demolition in the legal sense. The application does not demonstrate that the demolition is qualifies for the public interest or inability to reuse exception. The application must be denied.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, 10, and Section 14-1005(6)(d), the prohibition against demolition.

MAPS & FIGURES:



Figure 1: 2023 and 2021 Sansom Street in the early 20th century (left) and present day (right).

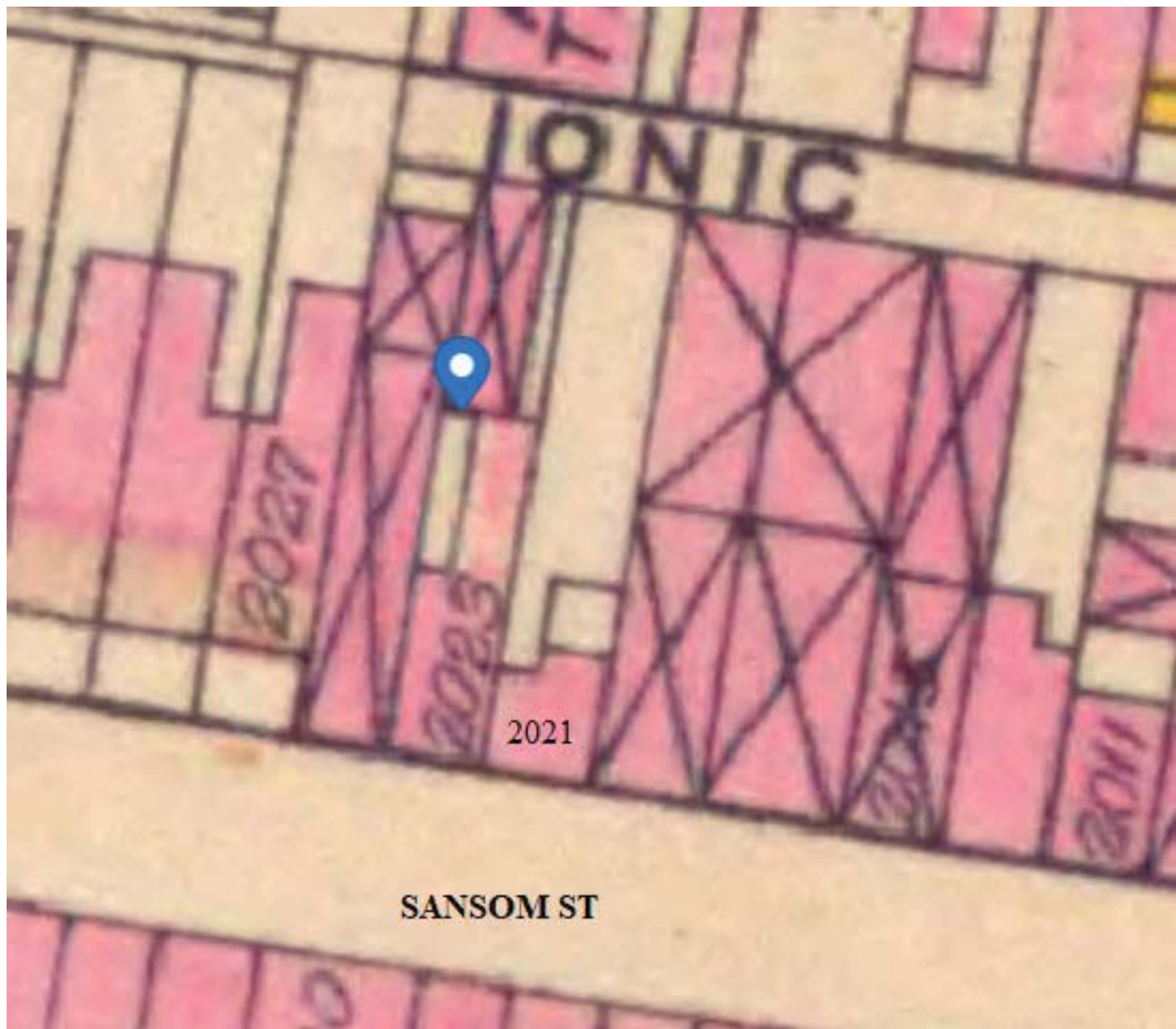


Figure 2: 1910 Bromley Atlas.

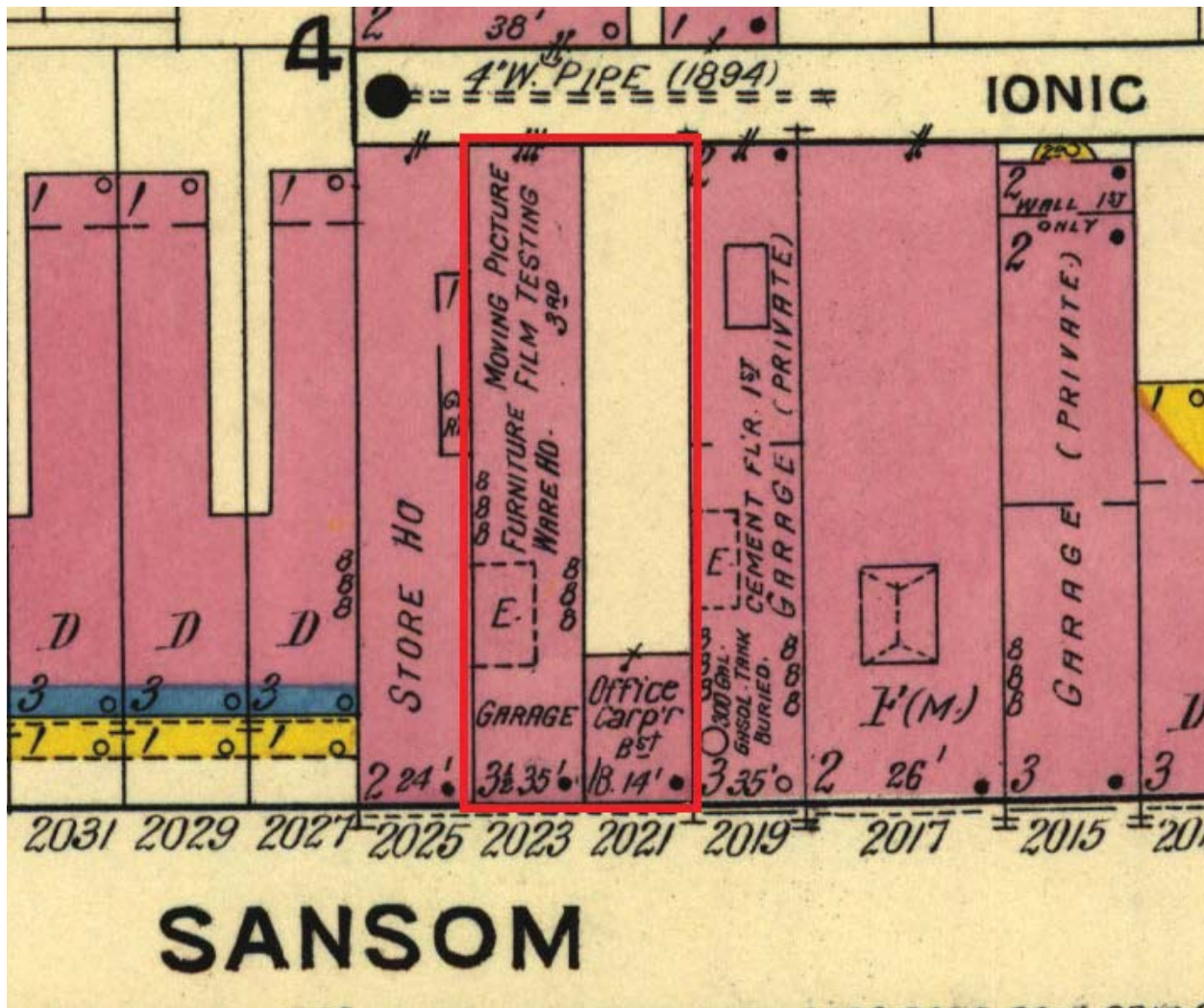


Figure 3: 1916 Sanborn map.



Figure 4: Birdseye view looking north.



Figure 5: Birdseye view looking west.



11/7/21

Dear Historic Commission Review Board;

We are submitting an application to develop the property known as the Roxy theater at 2021-2023 Sansom Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The existing property comprises of two buildings with a breeched wall on the ground floor. The Eastern building is a non-historic One story, with a small rear yard. The western three story building, 2023 Sansom Street, is a historically designated structure.

My business partner Lee Brahin & myself, Jason Morris, have developed several properties in historic areas of center city & look forward to beautifying the block with our proposed development. Our entity/applicant for this project, which will likely be called "The Roxy Lofts", is "2021 Sansom Street Development Associates LLC" with a business address of 1535 Chestnut Street, #200, Philadelphia, Pa 19102.

We plan to utilize the CMX-4 Zoning entitlements to develop "As-of-right" multiunit housing with high quality finishes for reasonably priced rent. As the two existing buildings have been heavily modified as a single use movie theater with two small screens, this use is not currently an ideal use. The Three story building at 2023 Sansom Street will be kept fully intact with limited interior selective demolition of the Eastern party wall, similar to the existing wall breaches on the first floor, to provide ingress and egress.

We are proposing that the non-historic structure of 2021 Sansom Street be demolished to grade level before new construction begins. The ground floor of the existing one-story masonry structure is currently 3 small bathrooms and one movie theater with a 10'x 15' rear yard. The historic portion also has a theater on the ground floor currently. The second floor is the HVAC equipment and ductwork for the spaces below, with altered joists throughout. The third floor has been unused and is in disrepair.

Our project goals include the removal of the sloped floor slabs and introduce a grade level ground floor for our main entrance on Sansom Street. The missing 2nd level floor joists will be replaced and the new elevator shaftway and fire stairs will be built through 2023 Sansom. Two additional floors are proposed on top of the 3 story structure. Some structural reinforcement may be required to bear the load of these new floors. The new upper floors façade will be recessed to the highest point of the existing A-frame roof; approximately 10 feet back from Sansom Street.

The new five story residential building is to be constructed: Ground floor: concrete slab on grade, wood framed with a brick veneer finish. The Façade of 2023 Sansom Street is not currently a good example of a historic property as it has been covered with a pink colored stucco and wooden sills and lintels. We propose taking measures to restore the façade similar to the archived photos of original construction.

Please reach out if there are any additional details or information that can be provided. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to make something beautiful. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JM' with a stylized flourish.

Jason Morris

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917-370-0370 c.









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consultants

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drawn by: checked by:

project name

APARTMENTS @ SANSOM STREET

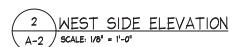
project location
**2021-2023 SANSOM STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA**

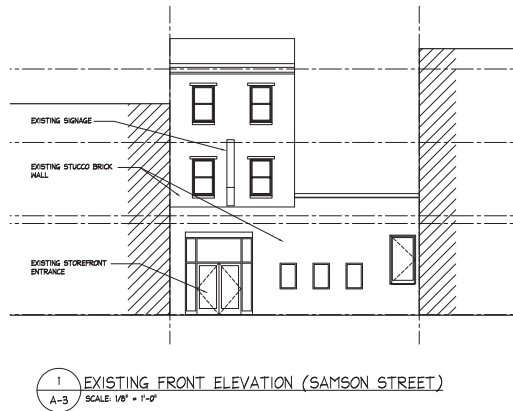
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EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

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APARTMENTS @ SANSOM STREET

project location
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PHILADELPHIA, PA**

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EXISTING PHOTOGRAPHS

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