ADDRESS: 2340 CECIL B MOORE AVE
Proposal: Construct addition
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: Beech Community Services
Applicant: Thomas Holloman, TMH Associates Inc.
History: 1895; Dox Thrash House; Harold Godwin
Individual Designation: 6/14/2013
District Designation: None
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:
This application seeks final approval for a three-story addition with roof deck and pilot house at
2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue. Originally constructed in 1895, the building was owned and
occupied by distinguished Black artist Dox Thrash from 1944 to 1959. In recent decades the
building has been neglected, and in 2016 the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I)
issued a violation for a collapsed roof, party walls, and rear wall. It is currently deemed unsafe
by L&I.

The applicant is proposing to restore the front façade and rehabilitate the building for future use
with commercial space on the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors. In
addition to the structural work required, the side walls will be extended, and a new rear wall
constructed. A new roof will be added and will include a roof deck and pilot house to house
mechanical units and trash receptacles. The side wall and rear wall will be clad in stucco to
match the existing party wall. The rear bay window will be clad in cement board.

SCOPE OF WORK:
• Restore front façade.
• Rehabilitate interior for commercial and residential space.
• Construct three-story addition with roof deck and pilot house.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:
The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines
include:
• Standard 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of
craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
  o The applicant plans to preserve and restore the existing features of the historic front
    façade, satisfying Standard 5.
• 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.
  o Most of the roof, large sections of the side walls, and all of the rear walls are no
    longer extant. The new walls and roof are compatible in terms of massing, size,
    scale, and architectural features. Therefore, the proposed new construction meets
    Standard 9.
• Roofs Guideline | Recommended: Designing rooftop additions, elevator or stair towers,
decks or terraces, dormers, or skylights when required by a new or continuing use
so that they are inconspicuous and minimally visible on the site and from the public right-
of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining historic features.
If the applicant reduces the height of the pilot house to the minimum allowed by code, the roof additions will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way and will meet the Roof Guidelines.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends approval, provided the height of the pilot house is reduced, with staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 5, 9, and Roof Guidelines.
IMAGES:

Figure 1: View of the existing rear condition of 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue. Pictometry, 2020.

Figure 2: View looking east at the collapsed west elevation of 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue. The photo shows missing roof, side walls, and rear wall.
September 12, 2022
Ms. Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Subject: Dox Thrash House - 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

Dear Ms. Mehley,

The Beech Companies (Beech Interplex, Inc. and Beech Community Services) has 32 years of community development experience. Our mission is to strengthen and sustain a healthy community while enhancing the quality of life for residents in lower North Philadelphia. In addition to focus on the need to improve the economic stimulus which will help to stabilize the communities’ economic growing power? The initiative entails getting residents, community leaders, organizations, and business owners to be involved.

The Beech Companies overall mission is to provide the community with direct services that includes commercial and economic development, neighborhood revitalization, program and project support, small business loans, educational and organizational grant programs, media, broadcasting, and community venture endeavors.

Beech Interplex has been involved with several projects in and around Cecil B. Moore Community since its foundation in 1990. These projects have focused on improving the community and its surrounding neighborhoods to facilitate positive change for the residents.
A key component is real estate development and revitalization. Beech recognizes the importance to redevelop the "Dox Thrash House". Given the location of the property along Cecil B. Moore and its proximity to other neighborhood assets such as the library and recreation center, the site is poised to become an anchor for the community.

The renaissance of the Cecil B. Moore Ave economic corridor depends on historic anchors, architectural as well as cultural, to insure that contextual value is at the forefront of future development and planning.

Beech Interplex, Inc redevelopment forecast includes a commercial space on the first floor and lower level (basement). The 2nd & 3rd floor will be residential lofts studios / living space. The goal is to redevelop the structure because of its historical value to the community: both affordable residential housing and cultural/artist work environment.

As stated in the Dox Thrash House Preservation Report; (see attached report)
Dox Thrash was a distinguished African American artist, long associated with Philadelphia, and an important figure in the history of print making. Dox Thrash purchased 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue (formerly Columbia Avenue) in 1944, remaining there until 1959.

The historic structure at 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue was designed by architect Harold Godwin and was built in 1895. It is individually listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The historic designation is associated with the Criteria A and J:

Criteria A: The building at 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue has significant value for its association with famed African American printmaker Dox Thrash, who resided here from 1944 to 1959.

And

Criteria J: The Dox Thrash House reflects the cultural, economic and historical heritage of North Philadelphia as a Center of African American culture in the early and middle twentieth century.

The subject historic structure features tawny Roman brick with terra cotta details on its primary north facade. The historic structure is three stories with a gabled wall dormer and mansard roof with a two story rear addition (Now partially demolished).

The preservation scope includes, two primary phases of preservation. The first phase involves an n existing condition assessment and documentation of the exploratory/ selective demolition followed by an n immediate stabilization/ rehabilitation of the historic structure.
The Dox Thrash House is individually listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and has an established period of significance ranging from 1895–1959 (Dox Thrash purchased in 1944).

Specifically, the primary façade is historically significant and is required to be preserved and restored to the era coinciding with the established period of significance.

To date Beech has purchased both 2340 and 2342 Cecil B. Moore Avenue. The immediate task is to complete the redevelopment of 2340 Cecil B. Moore Avenue as proposed, the next task will be to developed the project program, design and funding for 2342 Cecil B. Moore Avenue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Bernard Savage
Director of Projects and Real Estate
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Criteria J: The Dox Thrash House reflects the cultural, economic and historical heritage of North Philadelphia as a center of African American culture in the early and middle twentieth century.
The subject historic structure features tawny Roman brick with terra cotta details on its primary north facade. The historic structure is three stories with a gabled wall dormer and mansard roof with a two story rear ell (now partially demolished).

The preservation scope includes, two primary phases of preservation. The first phase involves an existing condition assessment and documentation of the exploratory/selective demolition followed by an immediate stabilization/rehabilitation of the historic structure. Specifically, the Contractor will be required to perform exploratory/selective demolition under the direction of the Historical Architect in order for the project scope to be fully determined.

The exploratory/selective demolition includes the temporary removal of the materials currently concealing the original storefront, recessed entranceway offset to the west side of the façade and all other original elements currently concealed at the property. Further inspections are required at the exterior and interior.
The original storefront is composed of fifteen fixed lite set in three rows of five, separated by painted wood muntins. Each lite is backed by a simple decorative security screen of wrought metal half-ovals curving inward from each window's four corners. Some of the storefront panes are currently missing, but the entire window assembly is secured with plywood from behind the frames. Two leaded glass transom panels span the wood-framed storefront windows, which rest on a low base of green-veined marble. Above the storefront is a wood fascia extending the entire width of the façade. Originally intended for storefront signage, the fascia is currently painted white.
The original storefront returns at an obtuse angle to form the side wall of the recessed entranceway vestibule, where the same multi-lite storefront configuration with marble base and leaded glass transom is continued. The vestibule includes two doors: one along the back vestibule wall that accesses a stairway to the upper stories, and one along the vestibules side wall that accesses the ground-floor storefront space. The former is currently secured with plywood. The vestibule floor is a white ceramic tile mosaic and sits two steps above sidewalk level. A metal security door and dome-roofed cage have been mounted to the exterior of the vestibule. This type of metalwork is common to many other properties in the immediate vicinity.

A low metal railing with simple posts runs tight across the face of the building along the property line.
Above the sign fascia a terra cotta sill course runs across the entire width of the façade and separates the first and second story. The sill courses three-part design is consistent across all the surviving rowhouse units on the block. The three parts include a lower striated band, a frieze with dentils egg and dart detailing, and an ogee crown molding. The sill course curves outward to form the base of the projecting bow window directly above it. The underside of the bow features a terra cotta or molded tin ornament. The design is of two griffins that are floating upon a floral filigree pattern and facing each other with a circular shape in the center.
The second story bow window (Oriel) is three bays wide, each featuring a double-hung vinyl sash window. Set between each of the vinyl windows are geometrically patterned ornaments painted in white. A frieze of classical festoons is set above the windows, followed by a projecting cornice at the top of the bow window.
A pedimented dormer framed by narrow segments of a mansard roof dominates the third story of the north façade. The dormer is two bays wide and features a pair of one-over-one, double hung windows set within painted wood brick molding. Jack-arched lintels feature an ogee-shaped chamfer along their bottom edges. The dormer is topped by gable parapet with a terra cotta cavetto cornice and decorative terra cotta pediment panel. The panels design is of two griffins facing each other and flanking a fleur-de-lis crest within a filigree background.

The mansard is clad in green asphalt shingles set in a fishscale pattern.
The Dox Thrash House is individually listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and has an established period of significance ranging from 1895 – 1959 (Dox Thrash purchased in 1944).

Specifically, the primary façade is historically significant and is required to be preserved and restored to the era coinciding with the established period of significance. Additionally, the interior of the original historic structure is historically significant and is required to be rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment to Historic Properties.

Following the exploratory/selective demolition an Restoration Contractor will be required to perform the immediate stabilization which will involve structural shoring, underpinning, repointing where required, repair to cornice, wood trim and restoration of the original wood window sash and frame; restoration of original doors, frame and hardware, replacement in-kind of any broken glass to match original, preservation of original hardwood flooring, removal of existing interior non-historic walls, features, doors, plumbing fixtures and accessories.

The existing exterior paint finishes are flaking, loose and peeling and is in poor condition. The Contractor will be required to scrape, sand and apply a coat of oil primer to all exterior wood surfaces. All exterior wood surfaces to receive (2) finish coats of latex top coat by a nationally recognized manufacturer such as Benjamin Moore, Sherwin Williams, Pratt & Lambert or Pittsburgh paints. Historic Paint Finishes to be restored to the 1944 period of significance.
The full historic rehabilitation of The Dox Thrash House exterior and interior will be required to conform to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation.

Specifically, the interior work will be required to include:
- Restoration of historic plaster walls and ceiling (or replacement in-kind with gypsum wall board throughout),
- Repair and/or replacement in-kind of period lighting fixtures,
- Restoration of historic hardwood floors and ceramic floors,
- Restoration of historic architectural interior woodwork,
- Restoration of historic interior wood doors, frame and hardware,
- Reconstruction of partially remaining stair,
- Construction of new bathrooms, kitchen and closets,
- Provision and installation of appliances and fixtures,
- Provision and Installation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning system in accordance with National Parks Service preservation brief #24 and
- Restoration of interior historic paint finishes to the 1944 period of significance as defined by Architect.
Specifically, the exterior work will be required to include:

- Restoration of exterior historic paint finishes to the 1944 period of significance as defined by Architect,
- Restoration of the original storefront,
- Replacement in-kind of any missing or broken glazing to match original,
- Repointing of masonry surfaces where required,
- Cleaning of original marble surfaces,
- Restoration of terra cotta surfaces,
- Restoration of metal security door at storefront,
- Restore and/or replace in-kind wood exterior doors and paint,
- Restore and/or replace in-kind wood windows and paint,
- Restoration of original oriel (second story bow window),
- Restore wood cornices, trim and paint,
- Replace in-kind where required shingles at mansard roof,
- Install copper flashing,
- Install galvanized aluminum gutters, downspouts.

All above work as mentioned will comply with all local, state and national building codes and will undergo regulatory review at the Philadelphia Historical Commission, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (State Historic Tax Credit division) and conform to the Secretary of Interiors Standards for treatment to Historic Properties.
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The Dox Thrash House is a designated historic structure individually listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

As a result, the preservation scope is required, however the preservation scope can be leveraged as Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures and are eligible for funding through the 25 – 30% State Historic Tax Credit (up to $500,000.00) from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), in addition to a 20% Federal Historic Tax Credit from the National Parks Service (NPS) (no cap).

The project will be required to complete Historic Tax Credit applications and carefully document and submit project expenses (itemized) with each request for payment.

No construction work can commence until an official authorization to proceed is issued from (PHMC) and the (NPS).

SULTON CAMPBELL BRITT & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
Architecture * Historic Preservation * Planning * LEED™ Consulting