

Heather Hendrickson

From: Heather Ascher <ascherheather@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 16, 2024 2:58 PM
To: preservation
Subject: 2112 Walnut Street-Architectural Committee: Feb. 20

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Typo corrected.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Heather Ascher <ascherheather@gmail.com>
Date: February 16, 2024 at 1:36:57 PM EST
To: preservation <preservation@phila.gov>
Cc: Heather Ascher <ascherheather@gmail.com>, Michael Ascher <ham.ascher@gmail.com>
Subject: 2112 Walnut Street-Architectural Committee: Feb. 20

My husband and I have lived in English Village since 1988 acquiring the property for \$200,000. Over the years, as stewards of a historic property, we have spent well over double that to maintain this hundred year old property situate in what had been described by Pennsylvania Horticultural Society as "an urban oasis" upon awarding first place in garden contest category of "Greene Country Towne".

Property renovations were made in accordance with City codes and regulations. For example, our slate roof was the first to be replaced in its entirety. We welcomed direction from the Historical Commission as to materials and handling including the hand chiseling of edges to avoid a patchwork quilt effect. More significantly, we engaged an architect to lead us through a project that added a small third story deck that faced Chancellor, and moved an outdoor Chancellor Street garden indoors.

Similarly, the Woerhides have ownership interest in two Carriage House properties on Chancellor (2116 and 2122) and one English Village home (2130 Saint James). They were prohibited from adding a story onto their Carriage House because of a change in skyline and overhang.

Even though these were relatively small projects, owners were nevertheless required to proceed through multiple levels of approvals including Center City Residents Association and the City (Architectural Review, Zoning Board of Adjustment, L & I and Historical Commission.).

Having experienced this level of care about minor repairs and improvements that fell within the property's existing footprint and skyline, all engineering aspects aside, it shocks my conscience to think that a developer's plans to perch a multi-story tower on top of an occupied historic Georgian brownstone would somehow be granted approval thereby emboldening other property owners of 2100 block of Walnut to likewise expand the height and depth of their properties and destroying the aesthetic nature of historic Chancellor Street.

This is the second round of drawings proposed for this roof tower initiative that would be visible from my home and courtyard. A thousand more drawings could be submitted by this developer or others for that matter and my opinion would not change. Fine historic homes should not be used as foundations

for roof towers and wasted on a neighborhood where not needed, wanted or appreciated. Approval of such would make me lose all sense of place and time and adversely impact our quality of life here.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Ascher

English Village Mayor 2000-2020

2137 Saint James Street



PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

February 16, 2024

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

I am writing to urge careful consideration of the 2112 Walnut St application. The Architecture Committee and Historical Commission have reviewed many iterations of this design, with the current application being far better than the original.

The two-story overbuild setbacks effectively reduce the visibility from Walnut Street, a drastic improvement from earlier proposals. The plans to restore the façade and mansard of the original townhouse mansion will also enhance this portion of Walnut.

The majority of the visible changes occur on the Chancellor Street elevation. While we lament the loss of some historic fabric here, we believe this is less harmful due to the previous alterations and modifications. This scheme better addresses the scale and materiality of Chancellor Street by constructing a two-story brick portion at the western and southern rear elevations topped with a one-story-tall vertical metal screen wall.

The overbuild and rear addition materials are better articulated than the existing 2110 building party wall, which serves as the eastern backdrop for this proposal.

While the Commission does not regulate the interior, we commend the applicant for their effort to preserve significant elements, such as stairs and fireplaces.

Overall, this proposal will not impact the public's perception of the Rittenhouse Filter Historic District. We believe the architect's willingness to respond to community feedback and the Architectural Committee and Commission's comments can result in a scheme satisfactory to all parties.

Sincerely,

Paul Steinke
Executive Director