

**THE MINUTES OF THE 739TH STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 8 MARCH 2024, 9:00 A.M.
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 9:02 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Comment
Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair (Architectural Historian)	X		
Kimberly Washington, Esq., Vice Chair (Community Development Corporation)	X		
Donna Carney (Philadelphia City Planning Commission)	X		
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair (Historian)	X		
Erin Kindt (Department of Public Property)	X		
Sara Lepori (Commerce Department)			
John P. Lech (Department of Licenses & Inspections)	X		
John Mattioni, Esq.	X		
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Architectural Committee Chair (Architect)	X		
Stephanie Michel (Community Organization)		X	
Matthew Treat (Department of Planning and Development)	X		

The meeting was held 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 III
- Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
- Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

- Allison Weiss, SoLo/Germantown Civic Association
- Alyson Rock
- Andre Kim
- Anthony Sembello

Bill Long
Bruce Ginsburg
Chagai Bader
David Fecteau, PCPC Staff
David Traub
Dennis Carlisle
Edward Robinson, West Cheltenham Neighbors
Eric Leighton
Georgette Bartell
Gina Michaels
Glenn Blumenfeld, Tactix
Glenn Goodhart
Greg Feld
Greg Paulmier
Gregory Charnock
Hal Schirmer, Esq.
Harry Price
Harvey Ostroff
Heather Ascher
Inaara Shiraz
Jacalyn Pollock
Jaci Pollock
Janice Woodcock
Jay Ernst
Jay Farrell
J. Chang
Jenny Volbeda
Jeremy Hull
Jim Dragoni
Jim Kelly, Esq., Phila. Law Dept.
Joe Burda
Joseph Gano
Josh Broderson
Julia Feng
Kathleen Wilson
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Ken Mallin
Kevin J. O'Neill, KJO Architecture
Kimberly Haas, Hidden City Philadelphia
Kristen Gibbs
Linda Truong
L. Ostroff
Mark Travis
Mary Costello, Esq., Phila. Law Dept.
Melissa Macleod
Michael Ascher
Michael Kouvaris, MBH
Michael Phillips, Esq., Klehr Harrison
Michael Palermo, Smallville Restaurant Associates LLC
Monica Goodhart
Nancy Pontone

Neil Sklaroff, Esq., Dilworth Paxson
Nicholas Connolly
Nick Manos
Pamela Bracey
Father Paul Galetto, St. Paul's
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
Ronald Patterson, Esq.
Ryan Breen
Ryan Mulligan
Stephen Starr
Steven M. Clofine
Susan Blumenfeld
Susan Mangan
Suzanne Ponsen, WCGN
Tim Kerner
Tim Shaaban
Trish Roque
Tuomi Forrest
Wayne Pollock
Xhulio Binjaku
Yvonne Haskins, Esq.
Zhen H. Jin, Esq.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 738TH STATED MEETING, 9 FEBRUARY 2024

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:02:38

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and members of the public if they had any suggested additions or corrections to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Historical Commission, the 738th Stated Meeting, held 9 February 2024. No comments were offered.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the minutes of the 738th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 9 February 2024. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adoption of the Minutes of the 738th Stated Meeting of the PHC					
MOTION: Adopt minutes					
MOVED BY: Thomas					
SECONDED BY: Washington					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE

ADDRESS: 1424-26 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Jacob Reed’s Sons’ Store, Main Sales Floor

Review: Reconsider Designation on Remand

Property Owner: Sunny Spring LLC

Appellant: Michael Phillips, Esq., Klehr Harrison

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

OVERVIEW: The Historical Commission designated the first-floor interior of the building at 1424-26 Chestnut Street, historically known as the Main Sales Floor of the Jacob Reed’s Sons’ Store, on 13 May 2022. The owner of the property appealed the interior designation to the Court of Common Pleas, which has remanded the matter to the Historical Commission for reconsideration. The Historical Commission designated the exterior of the building in 1966.

During its review of the nomination in May 2022, the Historical Commission found that the interior satisfied Criteria C, D, E, and F. The nomination argued under Criterion E that the Main Sales Floor of the Jacob Reed’s Sons’ Store is the primary public interior space in this landmark building designed by prominent Philadelphia architect William L. Price for Alan H. Reed, successor to one of the leading menswear merchants of the nineteenth century in Philadelphia. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination contended that the store, constructed between 1904 and 1905, was the first commercial building in Philadelphia constructed of reinforced concrete, a structural system which is most expressed by the public interior space of the Main Sales Floor. The nomination also argued that the Main Sales Floor is also the only major Arts and Crafts style commercial interior in Philadelphia, serving as a significant early example of Price’s influential ideas on the appropriate expression of materials, structure, and labor. Finally, under Criterion F, the nomination asserted that the interior space features craftsmanship and artistry in the form of tilework from Henry Chapman Mercer’s Moravian Pottery and murals by local artist Gertrude Monaghan, which reflect Price’s thinking on architecture and its relationship with ornamentation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the interior main floor of 1424-26 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E and F.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the first-floor interior of the building at 1424-26 Chestnut Street, historically known as the Main Sales Floor of the Jacob Reed’s Sons’ Store, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E, and F and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:06:48

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Michael Phillips represented the property owner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to continue the review of the nomination for the interior at 1424-26 Chestnut Street to the May 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1424-26 Chestnut St					
MOTION: Continue to May 2024					
MOVED BY: Thomas					
SECONDED BY: Washington					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

ADDRESS: 1805-09 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Replace storefront; install signage and awnings

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1805 Retail Partners LP

Applicant: Michael Palermo, Smallville Restaurant Associates LLC

History: 1924; Presbyterian Ministers Fund for Life Insurance, Alison Building

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Heather Hendrickson, heather.hendrickson@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to convert the first and second-floor retail space at 1805-09 Walnut Street into a new restaurant. The building was constructed in two phases. A four-story building with a central entrance flanked by storefronts was constructed at 1805-07 Walnut Street in 1924. In 1950, the building was extended west onto the property at 1809 Walnut Street with an additional storefront and entrance. At the time, three stories were added to the top of the building. The original 1924 storefronts have been modified many times and the original central entrance was converted to a narrow storefront. Many of the storefront elements are aluminum replacements that roughly approximate the original elements. A close field inspection by the staff indicates that the only surviving original elements of the 1924 storefronts are the scalloped transom windows at the first and third bays, counting east to west. The remaining storefront elements are a patchwork of repairs and replacement pieces as well as a non-historic storefront system in the first bay.

The application proposes removing the existing storefronts and replacing them with wood and glass storefronts. Stone bases would be added to the storefronts. The new fenestration above would feature four rows of horizontally oriented glazing. The lower two rows of glass would be fluted, with clear glass above. At the top of the storefront openings, transoms would be replaced by large back-painted glass signage panels. Three retractable awnings are proposed across the three storefront openings and former entrance. Above the awnings, the application proposes a face-lit sign with individual letters mounted on a painted steel channel. At the second floor, the existing metal casement windows would be rebuilt and refurbished.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Remove existing metal and glass storefronts.
- Install wood and glass storefront.
- Install face-lit channel letter sign.
- Install retractable awnings.

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 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.*
- *Storefront Guideline: Recommended: Designing and installing a new storefront when the*

historic storefront is completely missing or has been previously replaced by one that is incompatible. It may be an accurate restoration based on documentary and physical evidence, but only when the historic storefront to be replaced coexisted with the features currently on the building. Or, it may be a new design that is compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building.

- Only two intact sections of the original storefronts remain, the scalloped transoms at the first and third bays. The rest of the storefronts are a patchwork of repair and replacement pieces. While a few grainy photographs are available, sufficient documentary and physical evidence does not exist to accurately recreate the missing storefronts. The original transoms could be removed and stored on site or documented with photographs and measured drawings. The proposed new storefronts are compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9 and Storefront Guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the two original transoms are removed and stored at the site or documented with photographs and measured drawings, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Storefront Guideline.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 5.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:10:21

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Hendrickson presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Gregory Charnock, attorney Ron Patterson, and restaurateurs Stephen Starr and Michael Palermo represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Inaara Shiraz spoke noted that the size and brightness of signage impacts Philadelphians.
- David Traub of Save our Sites suggested changing the font of the sign.
- Allison Weiss opposed the removal of the historic transoms.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society opposed the removal of the transoms, but supported the overall design.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The choice of wood for the storefront brings warmth and continuity to the façade and could be appropriate to the building.
- There are currently no internally lit signs facing Rittenhouse Square, but the proposed lights would emit 2200 kelvin, comparable to candlelight, which could be appropriate for Rittenhouse Square.
- The size of the sign letters, as revised, would seem smaller in scale in relation to the full height of the building, which is not shown on the project proposal renderings.
- The applicant proposes to salvage and integrate the historic transoms into the interior millwork of the restaurant.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The revised application satisfies Standard 9 and the Storefront Guideline.

ACTION: Mr. Mattioni moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Storefront Guideline. Ms. Carney seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 8 to 2.

ITEM: 1805-09 Walnut St					
MOTION: Approve revised design					
Moved BY: Mattioni					
SECONDED BY: Carney					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman		X			
Kindt (DPD)		X			
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	8	2			1

ADDRESS: 1617 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Replace French door, alter entranceway and install security gate, add signage

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: GAM 1617 Walnut LLC

Applicant: Michael Kouvaris, MBH Architects

History: 1921; Seeburger & Rabenold, architects

Individual Designation: 9/11/2020

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, theodore.maust@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes making alterations to the storefront and add signage to the property at 1617 Walnut Street. The original application proposed to install several different types of signage, replace historic second-floor French doors and transom, and make significant changes to the non-historic first-floor entryway. The first floor of the building has been modified several times, most recently in a style which echoes features of the second floor.

At the first floor, the application proposes to remove the existing non-historic central entry doors and install a new fully glazed door and sidelight recessed in a new metal-clad vestibule. A metal panel with illuminated signage would be installed in front of the existing transom location. The housing for a metal roll-down gate would be installed behind the panel.

At the February meeting of the Architectural Committee, members recognized that the first floor was not historic, but recommended denial of the application citing the proposed changes to the second floor.

Following the Committee meeting, the applicants revised their plans in response to the feedback they received. The revised proposal includes replacing the second-floor windows and French

doors in kind and simplifies the first-floor signage scheme. The new proposal includes a logo lit from below located in the center of the pediment above the second-floor windows.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Modify entryway and install roll-down security gate.
- Replace second-floor French doors and transoms in kind.
- Add signage.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *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 existing first-floor storefront windows and doors are not original to the building. The proposed system at the first floor does not remove historic materials that characterize the property.
 - The application proposes to remove the character-defining divided-light French door in one of three openings at the second floor. This portion of the application fails to satisfy Standard 2.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the alterations at the first floor but denial of the alterations at the second floor, pursuant to Standard 2.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 2.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:41:30

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Michael Kouvaris and Andre Kim, Director at Jordan Retail Design represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Xhulio Binjaku of the Tacony Community Development Corporation commented in opposition to the proposed security grille.
- Paul Steinke spoke in favor of the application.
- Oscar Beisert expressed opposition to the security grille portion of the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The changes made after the Architectural Committee meeting significantly improved the application.
- While security is a reasonable concern, the proposed security grille would be improved by being less opaque or by the inclusion of features more in keeping with the façade.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The revised proposal satisfies Standard 2.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 2. Ms. Kindt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 1617 Walnut St					
MOTION: Approval of revised application					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Kindt					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

ADDRESS: 3847 SPRING GARDEN ST

Proposal: Construct pilot house and roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: William Long and Mariia Alibekova

Applicant: William Long

History: 1869

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Powelton Village Historic District, Contributing, 11/10/2022

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, theodore.maust@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a pilot house and roof deck on a two-story corner property in the Powelton Village Historic District. The roof deck railing would be set back five feet from both the Spring Garden and 39th Street elevations. The pilot house would be set back 15' 1 1/4" from Spring Garden Street and 7' 5 3/8" from 39th Street. The pilot house was originally to be clad in vinyl siding and feature a bay window. At its front edge, the pilot house would be 9' 2 1/8" high from the surface of the roof.

At the February meeting of the Architectural Committee, members recommended denial of the application citing the overall size and visibility of the pilot house.

In advance of this meeting, the applicant sent in some supplemental materials including a sketch assessing visibility of the pilot house, as well as some proposals for the materials to be used on the pilot house and the railing.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct pilot house and roof deck.

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.*
- *Roofs Guideline | Not Recommended: Changing the configuration or shape of a roof by adding highly visible new features (such as dormer windows, vents, skylights, or a penthouse).*
 - The proposed pilot house, with its overall scale and bay window, would be relatively visible from the public right-of-way and out of scale with the existing building.
 - The staff suggests that a narrower pilot house with a sloped roof leading to a deck on the lower rear roof would be less conspicuous and may meet the Roofs Guideline, and that a mock-up should be conducted to demonstrate visibility.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial as proposed, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:06:30

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Property owner Bill Long represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The application was incomplete, lacking elevation drawings of the proposal and material specifics.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to deny the application, owing to incompleteness. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 3847 Spring Garden St					
MOTION: Denial					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

ADDRESS: 923 CHRISTIAN ST

Proposal: Install digital sign

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: St. Paul's Church, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Applicant: Greg Feld, KC Sign Company

History: 1847; St. Paul's Church; Reconstructed after fire, 1861

Individual Designation: 11/30/1971

District Designation: None

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

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to replace the existing wall sign and message board on the front façade of St. Paul's Church at 923 Christian Street with a 36-inch by 72-inch digital LED message board.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Remove existing sign.
- Install LED message board.

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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed features of the LED message board are not compatible with the historic church building; therefore, the application does not meet Standard 9.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:26:22

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the revised application to the Historical Commission.
- Father Paul Galetto and sign company representative Greg Feld represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert spoke in opposition to the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The revised sign is smaller than the existing sign on the church. The revised LED sign is proposed as 4'-2" x 4' and the existing message sign is 4' x 5'.
- The applicant explored the concept of a freestanding sign in front of the church and concluded that, owing to the limited space in front of the building, which includes the main entry stair with flanking statues on both sides, this would not be possible.
- Adding controls to the sign would be important for its compatibility with the building and neighborhood. Lighting levels, graphic limits, and timing controls should be considered as important components of the final installation and setup.
- The sign is not permanently affixed to the building. It can be removed from the historic church without damage or alteration of the church's historic character.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The reduced size of the LED message board and the applicants' agreement to limit use of the animation and keep sign brightness to a minimum allows for better compatibility with the historic church; therefore, the application meets Standard 9.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, with the understanding that the use of animation will be limited, and the brightness will be kept to the minimum, pursuant to Standard 9. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 923 Christian St					
MOTION: Approval of revised application					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

ADDRESS: 2112 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Construct six-story addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Bruce and Lisa Ginsberg

Applicant: Eric Leighton, cbp Architects

History: 1870

Individual Designation: None

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

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes demolishing portions of the four-story, Second Empire brownstone building at 2112 Walnut Street and to construct a six-story plus penthouse addition with setbacks. The historic building is 53 feet tall, and the addition would be approximately 94 feet tall. The proposal would remove the entire rear mansard roof and portions of the rear wall and encapsulate the rear and most of the roof of the building in the addition. The addition would be clad in glass curtain walls and panels of an undetermined material. Decks with glass railings would be located on each floor. A deck would be located on the front roof of the existing mansard, just behind the existing cornice. At the rear, a two-story brick portion of the addition with blank masonry openings topped with a one-story-tall vertical metal screen wall would provide access to the parking area from Chancellor Street.

The Architectural Committee and Historical Commission have reviewed a few iterations of additions for this property. Most recently, at its December 2023 meeting, the Historical Commission found that a proposed 11-story addition removed the same character-defining features of the rear mansard and bay window as the current proposal, and that the new construction was overly differentiated from the old and incompatible with the property and its environment. The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline on the current proposal.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct 6-story addition

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New addition, 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 project demolishes portions of the historic building, including the character-defining rear mansard and bay, destroying historic materials. The new work will be overly differentiated from the old and incompatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing, failing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. The application fails to satisfy 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.*
 - The proposed addition would be conspicuous and visible on the site and from public rights-of-way. The application fails to satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

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

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:49:49

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Neil Sklaroff, architect Eric Leighton, and developer Tim Shabaan represented the application. Current property owner Bruce Ginsberg supported the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Attorney Michael Phillips opposed the project on behalf of several neighbors.
- Architect Janice Woodcock opposed the project.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance did not oppose the project.
- David Traub opposed the project.
- Wayne Pollock opposed the project on behalf of several neighbors.
- Julia Feng opposed the project.
- Jacalyn Pollock opposed the project.
- Glenn Blumenfeld opposed the project.
- Michael Ascher opposed the project.
- Tim Kerner opposed the project.
- Harvey Ostroff opposed the project.
- Mark Travis supported the project.

- Anthony Sembello supported the project.
- Heather Ascher opposed the project.
- Susan Blumenfeld opposed the project.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The 2100 block of Chancellor Street is not a public street but is visible from 22nd Street and the properties along Chancellor Street are also designated as part of the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District.
- The extent of demolition no longer constitutes a demolition, and the height of the proposed addition have been reduced from previous schemes, but the proposal still removes character-defining features of the property, including the rear mansard and bay window.
- The proposed overbuild remains out of keeping with the character of the historic building in terms of massing and materials, particularly at the rear.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The proposed addition removes character-defining features of the property and is incompatible in scale and materials with the historic property at the rear, failing to satisfy Standard 9.
- The proposed overbuild would be conspicuous from Chancellor Street and the proposed front railing would likely be visible from Walnut Street, failing to satisfy the Roofs Guideline.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to deny the application, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 6 to 4.

ITEM: 2112 Walnut St					
MOTION: Denial					
MOVED BY: Cooperman					
SECONDED BY: Washington					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)		X			
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)		X			
Mattioni		X			
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)		X			
Total	6	4			1

ADDRESS: 26-34 CHURCH LN

Proposal: Construct five-story residential building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Olympia Holdings

Applicant: Kevin O'Neill, KJO Architecture LLC

History: vacant lot

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Germantown Urban Village Historic District, 2/9/2024

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes constructing a five-story mixed use building on a vacant lot at 26-34 Church Lane. The property is a contributing parcel to the Germantown Urban Village Historic District. The proposed building will contain commercial space on the ground floor and 33 dwelling units spread over the floors above, with a roof deck. The façade fronting Church Lane will be clad in a light-colored brick and feature a large grid of regularly spaced, narrow, rectangular windows.

The Historical Commission sent notice to all property owners in the proposed Germantown Urban Village Historic District, which includes this property, on 16 November 2023. Prior to the issuance of the district notice, the property owner had applied for a zoning permit in eCLIPSE, L&I's online permitting system, for the construction of this building. The zoning permit was issued on 28 November 2023. Section 6.9.a.10 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations, the so-called "transition rule," allows the Commission, its committees, and staff to consider development plans in place at the time of the issuance of the notice announcing the consideration of a designation, including but not limited to executed contracts, substantial design development, or other evidence of a material commitment to development in the review of applications.

Before approximately 1841, no buildings stood on the property, which was a part of a pair of larger lots owned by Caspar Wistar and Paul Kripner. Between 1841 and 1871, four stone twin houses were constructed on the lots that now make up the subject property. In 1916, those houses were demolished, and a two-story brick building with no basement was constructed in their place and used as a garage and offices. This building was demolished sometime after 2008 and the lot has sat vacant since. The historic district nomination contends that the property at 26-34 Church Lane is additionally significant under Criterion I for its potential to yield archaeological information important to history, specifically for its potential to yield information related to the Battle of Germantown in 1777 and the development of Germantown's cross streets in the nineteenth century.

An initial application for this project was considered at the Architectural Committee meeting on 23 January 2024. The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial for that application and a revised design was reviewed by the Historical Commission at its 9 February 2024 meeting. At that meeting, the Historical Commission voted to remand the application back to the Architectural Committee with the comments that the design appears to be improved but there were not enough application materials submitted to constitute a complete application. They recommended the applicant resubmit a more complete set of plans with additional information showing the context of the surrounding buildings.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a five-story mixed use building at 26-34 Church Lane.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 8: Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*
 - The proposed new construction will meet Standard 8 provided appropriate archaeological mitigation measures are undertaken.
- *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 new construction materials and design meet Standard 9. It will be differentiated from the surrounding buildings and use compatible materials and features. The proposed massing, scale, and proportions do not meet Standard 9.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, owing to the size, scale, and massing of the building relative to its context, pursuant to Standard 9.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:40:36

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Developer Chagai Bader, architect Kevin O'Neill, and attorney Zhen H. Jin represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society opposed the application.
- Inaara Shiraz opposed the application.
- Jim Dragoni, a near neighbor, read a statement by another neighbor, Gina Michaels, in opposition to the application. He also opposed the application himself.
- Suzanne Ponsen of West Central Germantown Neighbors opposed the application.
- Tuomi Forest of Historic Germantown opposed the application.
- Greg Paulmier opposed the application.
- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown opposed the application.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites recommended redesigning the building.
- Pamela Bracey opposed the application.
- Yvonne Haskins opposed the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The property is proposed for designation under Criteria I for archaeological potential, which should be taken into consideration regarding any work performed at the site.
- The property has been a vacant lot since around 2008.
- A zoning application was submitted and approved for this project prior to the historic district nomination.
- The applicants have made several positive revisions based on past reviews by the

Architectural Committee to the extent of brick on exterior and design of the first floor of the building.

- Most of the existing buildings on this block of Church Lane and in this historic district are two to three stories tall.
- A five-story building is too tall for this lot and is out of proportion with the existing buildings in the historic district.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The proposed massing, scale, and proportions of the proposed building are too large and do not meet Standard 9.
- The proposed new construction will meet Standard 8, provided appropriate archaeological mitigation measures are undertaken.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to deny the application, pursuant to Standard 9. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 26-34 Church Ln					
MOTION: Denial					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Cooperman					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL HARDSHIP, 27 FEBRUARY 2024

ADDRESS: 502-04 S JUNIPER ST

Proposal: Demolish building owing to hardship; reconstruct building with addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: James Ernst

Applicant: James Ernst

History: 1830

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes demolishing a three-story residential building at 504 S. Juniper Street and the adjacent non-historic garage at 502 S. Juniper Street. The building at 504 S. Juniper Street is a small three-story detached trinity built about 1830. The small building is freestanding and does not attach to any of the surrounding buildings. The house has been vacant for many years and is in very poor condition. The application also includes architectural plans for a new building to be constructed on the site, which are not fully developed yet, and which propose a reconstruction of the historic building with a four-story adjacent “addition.” James Ernst, the property owner who intends to reside at the reconstructed building, not a developer, submitted the application.

Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance prohibits the Historical Commission from approving the complete demolition of a historic building 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 cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted, i.e. that compelling the preservation of the building would cause the owner to suffer a “financial hardship.” In order to show that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted in order to justify a demolition, 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. This application claims that the condition of the building and the cost to repair it prohibit a sale or reuse of the building. The financial hardship application will be reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Committee on Financial Hardship as well as the Historical Commission.

In late 2017, the Historical Commission and its advisory Architectural Committee reviewed an application for this property which proposed demolition of the rear wall and roof of the historic building, demolition of the non-historic garage, and construction of a four-story addition. At that time, the Historical Commission voted to deny the application pursuant to Standards 2, 9, the Roofs Guideline, and the prohibition against demolition, Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. The Architectural Committee, which recommended denial of the application, suggested that the applicant provide a letter from a structural engineer substantiating the demolition. In late 2018, the Architectural Committee reviewed a similar proposal which included the requested structural engineering reports. At that time, the Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to the Historical Commission’s denial of October 2017 and Standards 2 and 9, the Roofs Guideline, and the prohibition against demolition, Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. That application was withdrawn prior to review by the Historical Commission. In May 2022, the Architectural Committee reviewed an application that proposed complete demolition and included several engineering reports that recommended demolition of the building owing to its condition. At that

time, the Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the demolition of the three-story building, pursuant to Standard 2 and the prohibition against demolition, Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance, but approval of demolition of the adjacent non-historic one-story garage. That application was withdrawn prior to review by the Historical Commission. The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) issued Unsafe violations for this property in 2018 but has not since upgraded the condition to Imminently Dangerous.

The application includes an affidavit by the owner, a discounted cash flow and internal rate of return analysis, and multiple supporting documents. The financial analysis looks at four scenarios: rehabilitate and rent the existing structure; leave the building in its existing uninhabitable condition; demolish the structure and sell the cleared lot; and demolish the structure and construct a larger residence that covers the full lot.

The first scenario, to rehabilitate and rent the existing structure, utilizes two different renovation costs, a seemingly high \$691 per square foot, and a more reasonable \$309 per square foot. Given the poor condition of the building, the \$691 per square foot cost may be reasonable, but even when using the lower \$309 per square foot renovation cost, the analysis predicts a negative cash flow through its first decade with a net present value of negative \$111,879. The staff questions the applicability of this scenario, however, given that other documentation in the application claims that the building is unable to be rehabilitated owing to its condition. For the second scenario, to do nothing with the current structure and leave it uninhabitable and therefore unable to rent or sell, the analysis predicts a negative cash flow through its first decade with a net present value of negative \$235,589. This scenario notes that the property has been listed for sale several times over the last few years and no offers have been received to purchase the property in its current condition. The third scenario assumes that the building can legally be demolished but with the Historical Commission disallowing new construction on the property, which results in a negative net present value. The application claims that this scenario would constitute a “taking.” This scenario does not need to be part of the consideration. The fourth scenario, to demolish the building and build a larger rentable building, proposes the project that the property owner would like to undertake. This scenario results in a net present value of \$667,886.

The application includes two engineers’ reports that conclude that the building at 504 S. Juniper Street is severely deteriorated and suffers from structural defects. The application also includes two letters from contractors that conclude that the masonry structure is unable to be repaired. The application concludes with new construction plans for the site, which show the owner’s intent to reconstruct the historic building using new materials while also constructing a four-story structure on the adjacent half of the lot in order to have a new residential property with sufficient square footage for his family.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Historical Commission:

- acknowledge that the complete demolition of the designated resource triggers the demolition prohibition in Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. For the Historical Commission to approve the complete demolition, the applicant must demonstrate that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted;
- find that the financial analysis demonstrates that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may reasonably be adapted; and,
- approve the application, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted 4 to 1 to recommend approval of the application, contingent upon a finding of financial hardship by the Committee on Financial Hardship and the Historical Commission, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance, with the understanding that a subsequent application will be required to review a final proposal for the new construction.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL HARDSHIP RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Financial Hardship voted to recommend approval of the application because the building at 504 S. Juniper Street cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted; the sale of the property is impracticable; rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return; and other potential uses of the property are foreclosed; pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:43:50

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Property owner James Ernst represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The complete demolition of the designated resource triggers the demolition prohibition in Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. For the Historical Commission to approve the complete demolition, the applicant must demonstrate that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The existing brickmould cornice should be documented and replicated as part of the new design.
- A subsequent application will be required to review a final proposal for the new construction.
- The property owner already has detailed drawings of the existing building conditions from a prior application, which can be provided to satisfy a measured drawing recordation requirement.
- The property owner can provide high-resolution digital photographs to current National Register standards to satisfy a photographic recordation requirement.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The application materials including the financial analysis sufficiently demonstrate that the building at 504 S. Juniper Street is in disrepair and the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to find that the application demonstrates that the building at 504 S. Juniper Street cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted and to approve the complete demolition, provided the building is recorded with measured drawings and photographs of the front façade, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the Philadelphia Code. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous

consent.

ITEM: 502-04 S Juniper St					
MOTION: Approval with recordation requirement					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:56:05

ACTION: At 2:33 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				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Carney (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Kindt (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Michel					X
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				1

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and its advisory committees 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.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.