

**REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2025
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
DAN MCCOUBREY, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following Committee members joined him:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Dan McCoubrey, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, Chair	X		
John Cluver, AIA, LEED AP	X		
Rudy D'Alessandro	X		
Justin Detwiler	X		
Nan Gutterman, FAIA	X		
Allison Lukachik	X		
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP	X		

The meeting was held remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner II
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II
Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner I

The following persons were present:

Andrew Biggin
Anthony Mascieri
Benjamin Estepani, Pace Architecture & Design
David Whipple, Assimilation Design Lab
Geoffrey Klein, KBA
Hal Schirmer, Esq.
Haleh Kadkhoda
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
Ian D'Elia
Jane Ahn
Jingyi Luo
Joe Serratore, Joseph Serratore & Company Architects
Joseph Horan, Kimmel Architecture

Judith L. Robinson, Continuum Architecture & Design, PC
Justino Navarro, Spring Garden Civic Association
Kerry Canal
Melissa Florkowski
Ohad Langer
Patricia Freeland, Spring Garden Civic Association
Samantha Chui
Ted Rosenberg
Todd Reeves, Overbrook School for the Blind
Yoav Shiffman

DRAFT

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 6333 MALVERN AVE

Proposal: Demolish non-historic buildings; construct dining hall, guard house, and drop-off area

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Overbrook School for the Blind

Applicant: Joseph Horan, Kimmel Architecture

History: 1900; PA Institute for the Instruction of the Blind; Cope & Stewardson, architects

Individual Designation: 5/26/1970

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Allyson.Mehley@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application seeks final approval to construct a dining hall and vehicular drop off area at the Overbrook School for the Blind. The original school was designed by the renowned firm Cope & Stewardson between 1897 and 1900. Today, the school's campus includes approximately 17 buildings constructed between 1897 and 2008. The proposed scope includes the full demolition of Wynnewood Hall (1960) and the Garage (1960) and partial demolition of the Food Services Building (1975) and Lions Hall (1954). Modifications to the facades of these buildings are intended to facilitate connections to the new dining hall building. In addition, the project includes the construction of a new guard house near the northeast vehicular gate to better control traffic flow into the campus and the widening of the east pedestrian gate into a vehicular gate to improve traffic flow. Owing to the historic wall that surrounds the Overbrook School for the Blind campus, there will be limited visibility of these changes from the public right-of-way. The new dining hall and gate house will be clad in stucco with a standing seam metal roof. The proposed colors of the exterior materials will be similar to the historic Main Building.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish two non-contributing buildings and existing parking area.
- Partially demolish two non-contributing buildings.
- Construct one-story dining hall building and "connector" to Main Building.
- Widen historic perimeter wall and construct guard house.
- Construct vehicular drop off loop and parking lot.

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 majority of the proposed changes impact non-historic buildings constructed between 1954 and 1975. The proposed demolition of Wynnewood Hall, the garage, food service building, and Lions Hall do not alter the historic integrity of the property's historic buildings; and therefore, meets Standard 9.
 - The proposed construction of a new parking area, guard house, and vehicular loop does not alter the historic integrity of the property and its environment; and therefore, meets Standard 9.

- The proposed new construction of the dining hall is compatible in massing, size, scale, and materials with the historic buildings on campus; and therefore, meets Standard 9.
- *Standard 10: New additions and 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 will be unimpaired.*
 - The proposed alterations to the Main Building's east elevation include changes to existing openings. If the school decides in the future to remove the connection between the new dining hall building and the historic Main Building, the exterior wall could be successfully restored to its historic appearance; therefore, this application could meet Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends approval, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:03:45

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Joseph Horan and Todd Reeves, executive director of the Overbrook School for the Blind, represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- The Architectural Committee members inquired about the location of the existing vehicular entrance and driveway, described by the applicant as the "rear entrance" for buses, cars, and maintenance vehicles that is a key element of the application.
 - Mr. Horan responded that the vehicular entrance is a one-way, rear service drive located off Wynwood Avenue. He noted that it is a directional drive that exits out to 64th Street on the opposite side of the campus. Mr. Horan explained that the historic main building facing Malvern Avenue housed the original main entrance that is accessed by a pedestrian walkway. He stated that the back service drive or rear entrance has become the main drop-off area for students entering the school's campus over time.
 - Mr. Cluver said he was familiar with the campus and described the school's vehicular driveway as like a residential driveway, adding that it has a narrow exit.
- Mr. Cluver inquired about the buildings proposed for demolition. He observed that Lyons Hall was built in 1954 and Wynwood Hall was built in 1975 and are considered non-historic.
 - Ms. Mehley stated that the designation focused on the oldest buildings on campus and a 2013 inventory of campus buildings confirmed that the buildings are not considered historically significant. She explained that, after reviewing this documentation, the staff concluded that none of the buildings proposed for extensive or full demolition are considered contributing to the significance of the campus.
 - Mr. Cluver agreed that the later buildings are not considered historically significant.
- Ms. Gutterman stated that she is concerned by the extent of the changes proposed in the application. She asked Mr. Horan to explain the need for the large number of parking spaces. Ms. Gutterman said that she understands the student drop-off needs but is curious about the parking area.

- Mr. Horan responded that the daily drop-off involves over 70 buses and they currently queue along Wynnewood Avenue and Malvern Avenue, creating a lot of congestion. He explained that creating the larger driveway loop would alleviate congestion by bringing more vehicles onto campus, and allow students to access their classrooms in a more efficient manner. Mr. Horan added that the planned landscaping is intended to create a more welcoming environment.
- Architectural Committee members inquired about the number of parking spaces and the identities of those using them.
- Mr. Reeves spoke about the school's parking needs. He explained that the demographics of their student population have evolved over time. Mr. Reeves noted that the current dining hall was constructed in 1975. At that time, children who were blind or visually impaired came to the school from throughout eastern Pennsylvania but that changed after 1975, when local school districts were required by the federal government to provide services for these students. He said that, after 1975, the school began serving children who were not only blind but had other challenging disabilities. Mr. Reeves noted that in 1975, the school did not have a single student who was non-ambulatory, but today 40% of their students are non-ambulatory. He continued that, in 1975, the school did not have a single student with a seizure disorder but today 30% of the school's students have seizure disorders. He added that, during that earlier period, the school did not have a single student who required tube feeding but now 25% require tube feeding to gain nourishment and that one in every 10 students has a private duty nurse. The parking is needed to accommodate the students with significant disabilities. Mr. Reeves explained that the proposed parking is especially important in the context of a crisis, whether the crisis is terrorism or an unexpected snowstorm. He said that the parking lot is a place where parents can easily pick up their children, not only into cars, but the dozens of other types of vehicles that arrive daily. Mr. Reeves continued that the proposed parking lot and drop-off loop will allow students to be moved efficiently and safely in and out of the school and create the space needed to queue up many vehicles within the campus walls.
- Mr. Cluver stated that he had previously done a study with the Overbrook School for the Blind and was familiar with the campus. He agreed that the drop-off area needs and connectivity between the main building and the dining center need to be improved.
- Mr. Detwiler observed that the proposed new construction was respectful in terms of scale, detail, and materials and would not dominate the historic building. He inquired about the proposed elevator tower. Mr. Detwiler asked if the new tower is a blank box or would replicate the existing tower. He continued that the rendering shows the new tower with no detail on the exterior.
 - Mr. Horan responded that the area proposed for the elevator is an existing stair tower that was added at some point in the school's history and they plan to enlarge it to create an accessible elevator to the second floor. He noted the goal is to match the tower on the other side of the building. Mr. Horan said they were planning on replicating it in kind including the relief panels of the other tower.
- Mr. Cluver asked about the new opening proposed for the historic campus wall, which will be visible to public view. He asked if the current vehicular entrance would be widened and added that it looked wider in the rendering when compared to the photographs.
 - Mr. Horan replied that it would not be widened.

- Mr. Cluver inquired how the width of the existing vehicular entrance compares to the proposed new opening for exiting the campus
 - Mr. Horan replied that the exit drive would be slightly wider, approximately 20 feet wide. He noted for comparison that the existing entrance drive is approximately 18 feet wide. Mr. Horan said the new exit was planned slightly wider to help with sight lines when driving out of the new exit.
 - Mr. Detwiler said the new exit does seem wider and more dominant. He asked if they could be the same width.
 - Mr. Horan said they could review and see if the opening could be made narrower but would also need to make sure any change met the Street Department's requirements. He reminded the Committee members that it was a one-way exit. He added that they are not proposing to match the historic piers and the finials that are present on the historic vehicular entrance.
- Mr. D'Alessandro asked if there would be a sidewalk in the entrance and exit areas. He asked if pedestrians entered through these openings.
 - Mr. Horan responded that pedestrians would not come in on this sidewalk and it would solely be a vehicular exit drive.
- Mr. Cluver observed that the new construction seems to have a limited impact on the primary historic building.
 - Mr. Horan stated that the connector link between the new construction and the historic building is intended to be as minimally invasive as possible, while still creating an accessible link between multiple buildings.
 - Mr. Detwiler said he appreciated that and reiterated that the scale was complementary and sensitive to the historic building.
- Mr. D'Alessandro inquired if there would be restoration done to the existing historic guardhouse.
 - Mr. Horan confirmed there was no work planned.
- Mr. D'Alessandro stated that the design of the new guardhouse is not fully developed.
 - Mr. Detwiler wondered if there should be a sidewalk area out in front of the guardhouse.
 - Mr. Horan explained that the guard would be at the window and it would be an operable window. He agreed that they could explore having a sidewalk in front of the new gatehouse.
- Mr. D'Alessandro stated his reservations about the application and said he did not feel that the extent of the documentation was sufficient for him to recommend approval of the project.
 - Other members of the Architectural Committee disagreed. They noted that most of the alterations were proposed to non-historic buildings and for spaces out of public view. They acknowledged the changing types of students served by the school and the need to provide safe, sufficient drop-off and pick-up spaces for students, many of whom have significant disabilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed dining hall and drop-off area were deferential in terms of scale, detail, and materials to the historic building.

- The evolving needs of the student population necessitate the construction of a safe drop-off area and expanded parking lot.
- The connection between the new dining hall and the historic Main Building will be limited and require minimal demolition.
- The new east elevator tower should be designed to replicate the existing elevator on the west side.
- The new opening for the vehicular exit should be narrowed to match the width of the existing vehicular entrance, if possible.
- Additional information should be provided on the design of the new guardhouse including details on the operation and how the operation informed its design.
- For the Historical Commission's review, the application should provide an overall floor plan showing how the new building, Lyons Hall, and the Main Building operate together.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application satisfies Standard 9 since most of the proposed changes impact non-historic buildings constructed between 1954 and 1975. The proposed demolition of Wynnewood Hall, the garage, food service building, and Lions Hall do not alter the integrity of the historic property. The proposed construction of a new parking area, guard house, and vehicular loop does not alter the integrity of the historic property and its environment. The new dining hall is compatible in massing, size, scale, and materials with the historic buildings on campus.
- The application satisfies Standard 10, as the proposed alterations to the Main Building's east elevation involve changes to existing openings. If the school decides in the future to remove the connection between the new dining hall building and the historic Main Building, the exterior wall could be successfully restored to its historic appearance; therefore, this application could meet Standard 10.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the issues raised by the Architectural Committee are addressed, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ITEM: 6333 Malvern Ave. MOTION: Approval MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: Gutterman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro		X			
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	6	1			

ADDRESS: 1924 AND 1940 FAIRMOUNT AVE

Proposal: Construct new three-story mixed use building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Yoav Shiffman/Rite Aid of Pennsylvania

Applicant: David Whipple, Assimilation Design Lab

History: 1984

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Spring Garden Historic District, Non-contributing, 10/11/2000

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

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes demolishing a one-story commercial building at 1924 Fairmount Ave and constructing a three-story mixed-use building across that property and the adjacent parking lot at 1940 Fairmount Avenue. The two properties sit at the southeast corner of Fairmount Avenue and N. 20th Street and extend south to North Street. A 1940 stone building sat on the site of 1924 Fairmount Avenue and was gradually rebuilt with cement block between 1971 and 1985. It is non-contributing to the Spring Garden Historic District.

The proposed three-story building would include ground-floor commercial spaces and 28 residential units on upper floors. It would include a roof deck for residential use. Much of the street-facing elevations would be constructed in red brick, with some areas clad in a dark grey cement-board siding. The application includes aluminum-clad windows in a black color, with doors, flashing, and railings to match.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish non-contributing one-story commercial building.
- Construct three-story mixed-use building.

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 scale of the proposed building is appropriate for the surrounding district, which is characterized by three-story brick rowhouses.
 - The design of the proposed differentiates itself from nearby historic buildings through its more contemporary design but, in the opinion of the staff, departs too much from the rhythms of the surrounding district. The first-floor storefronts and the brick band between the storefronts and second-floor windows establish strong horizontal lines, which make the building appear low and monolithic in contrast with the neighboring rowhouses, which are vertically oriented and have a rhythm that repeats every 15 or 20 feet. Breaking up the Fairmount Avenue elevation through the introduction of more vertical elements and perhaps material variation would make the new building more compatible with the historic district.
 - The setback areas with the dark cladding at the second and third floors break the street wall that is emphatically maintained throughout the historic district. While the setback areas do establish rowhouse-width modules, the shadowy open

areas with balconies are unlike anything in the historic district. The setbacks should be eliminated and the street wall maintained.

- Cornices at the top of the façade and above storefronts are characteristic features of the surrounding architecture. Incorporating cornice elements at the top of the building and above the storefronts may help the new building respond to the historic context.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the setback areas with balconies are eliminated, cornices are added, and the horizontality is replaced with a verticality with a rowhouse-width rhythm, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:45:03

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect David Whipple and developer Yoav Shiffman represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Gutterman suggested that adding a “lid” to the setback balconies would make them feel more part of the architectural context.
 - Ms. Stein agreed that a cornice line would help the building and suggested that making the balconies shallower would reflect more subtle variation in plane within the historic district.
- Mr. Detwiler asked for the dimension of the balcony depth.
 - Mr. Whipple provided it as 5’ 6”.
 - Mr. Detwiler agreed with Ms. Stein that reducing the depth of the balconies would address some of the concerns about the design.
- Mr. Cluver commented that the siding material on the balconies accentuates the depth and makes the brick front wall appear to be “wallpaper.” He suggested that having the brick return would reduce the visual impact of the balconies.
- Mr. Detwiler remarked that the primary elevation lacks consistent rhythm. He pointed to the first-floor commercial spaces as an example of this lack of rhythm, observing that they do not relate to the upper floors.
 - He applauded the development of the site with housing but described the proposed design as incompatible with the historic district.
- Mr. McCoubrey recommended that there be more masonry elements on the first floor to better connect it to the upper floors and give the sense of verticality mentioned in the staff recommendation.
- Mr. Detwiler directed attention to the row houses to the east of the subject property and indicated the way that the buildings all have slight differences in style, color, and height, but form an established rhythm. He expressed appreciation for variety but felt that the proposal was driven by the interior plan.
 - Mr. Detwiler further suggested that the current plan would be confusing to a pedestrian, as the various storefronts seem undifferentiated.
- Mr. D’Alessandro and Mr. Detwiler criticized the lack of architectural details including sills and a cornice, leaving the building with a sense of flatness.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Kerry Canal, a property owner on North Street, commented that she is supportive of the development but finds that this design does not feel connected to the

neighborhood. She also noted that neighbors have concerns about parking and traffic implications of this development.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed building is appropriate in scale for its context.
- The design does not respond to the architectural rhythms of the surrounding district.
- The first floor appears unconnected to the upper floors.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9, owing to its incompatibility with the surrounding historic district.

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

ITEM: 1924 and 1940 Fairmount Ave MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Cluver SECONDED BY: Gutterman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	7				

ADDRESS: 1907 GREEN ST

Proposal: Demolish rear three-story addition; construct three-story addition and roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1907 Green St LLC

Applicant: Benjamin Estepani, Pace Architecture & Design

History: 1859; stucco, 1986

Individual Designation: 4/25/1974

District Designation: Spring Garden Historic District, Contributing, 10/11/2000

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish a rear ell and rear wall at 1907 Green Street and built a larger rear ell. The building at 1907 Green Street is an 1859 three-story, five-bay structure with a shorter three-story, two-bay addition at the rear. The Historical Commission's staff asserts that the addition is original to the house, although significantly altered over time. As the building stands, the floors of the main block and rear ell do not align, and the proposed addition would remedy that as well as add one additional living unit to the building. The application also proposes a roof deck. The addition and roof deck would not be visible from Green Street, and the property is landlocked in the rear.

SCOPE OF WORK: Demolish three-story rear ell and rear wall and construct larger three-story rear ell with 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 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 rear ell has been significantly altered over time and does not characterize the property. The proposed rear ell and roof deck will not be visible from the public right-of-way.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:01:48

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Hendrickson presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Benjamin Estepani and Anthony Mascieri represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McCoubrey asked Mr. Estepani to explain the extent of demolition that was proposed.
 - Mr. Estepani explained that the proposal included removing the full extent of the rear facade parallel to Green Street. He noted that the project intended to increase the number of units from six to eight, but that the existing first-floor units are shallow, only about 32 feet deep, and that the team wanted to make the units more livable. He stated that they had explored ways to retain the rear wall but that the wall contained non-original openings and was in a compromised condition, which led them to conclude that removal would be in the best interest of the project. Mr. Estepani also described significant misalignment of the floorplates, especially in the rear three-story portion of the building. He explained that the upper floors in the rear could only be accessed indirectly through a series of stairs and landings, resulting in awkward circulation. Also, the new floor levels would not align with the existing window openings, further influencing the proposal to remove the wall and rear ell and rework the rear configuration.
- Ms. Stein expressed that in her opinion, the application did not demonstrate an attempt to work with the historic building. She found the full removal of the rear wall of the main block unacceptable, citing concerns over structural stability and the integrity of the historic fabric.
- Ms. Lukachik shared significant concerns about removal of substantial masonry, noting loss of lateral stability and replacement with lighter-framed stud walls. She noted insufficient structural detail in the plans to understand how the building would be stabilized after demolition.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that the proposal would remove more than just the rear facade, amounting to the demolition of the rear third of the building. He noted that similar buildings throughout the city have been successfully adapted without removing such

- a large amount of historic material. He added that the proposal appeared to prioritize a new floor plan over attempting to work a floorplan into the existing fabric.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked Mr. Estepani whether they had looked at an option that maintained more of the main block and then built in the rear while keeping a courtyard between the new part and the old part.
 - Mr. Estepani answered that they had looked at a few configurations and drew from the building to the east, 1905 Green Street. He explained that they tried to emulate that layout but observed that it was built before the building code required two means of egress.
 - Mr. D'Alessandro stated that the extensive demolitions appeared to be driven primarily by the desire to align all floor levels, which he viewed as incompatible with the original structure.
 - Ms. Lukachik noted that she was not against the demolition of the rear ell but was against the removal of the rear wall.
 - Ms. Stein agreed.
 - Mr. Estepani noted that they could revisit the amount of demolition for the rear wall. He acknowledged that they had yet to hire a structural engineer.
 - Mr. Cluver emphasized that for final approval, structural considerations must be addressed at the time of submission.
 - Ms. Lukachik and Mr. Detwiler added that a structural review may significantly impact the feasibility of the proposed demolition scope.
 - Mr. Mascieri asked the Architectural Committee members to discuss the massing and material choices of the proposed new construction addition itself so that any suggestions can be taken into account when revising the plans.
 - Mr. D'Alessandro and Mr. McCoubrey opined that the new construction should resemble brick masonry and not a wood-framed structure.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The rear of the property is not visible from Green Street or any public right-of-way.
- The extent of demolition proposed for the rear wall of the main block is not acceptable, owing to preservation and structural concerns.
- The proposed new construction should resemble masonry and not look like a wood-framed structure.
- A structural engineer should be engaged before the application is resubmitted.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9.

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

ITEM: 1907 Green St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Detwiler SECONDED BY: Lukachik					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	7				

ADDRESS: 4370-74 MAIN ST

Proposal: Construct two-story addition

Review: In Concept

Owner: Laurel Holdings Group

Applicant: Joseph Serratore, Joseph Serratore & Company Architects.

History: 1900, 4370 Main Street, Oliver S. Keely & Co.; 1930, 4372-74 Main Street

Individual Designation: None.

District Designation: Main Street Manayunk Historic District, 12/14/1983

Staff Contact: Josh Schroeder, joshua.schroeder@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a two-story addition, to add six residential units, to 4370-74 Main Street, a one-story commercial property. The properties at 4370 and 4372-74 Main Street have been consolidated. The building at 4370 Main Street is classified as contributing to the Main Street Manayunk National Register Historic District while the buildings at 4372-74 classified as classified as "intrusions" in the district. Two floors would be added to the one-story combined building. The application does not propose any changes to the existing front façade of 4370 Main Street. The application does not specify how the large front parapet above the storefront would be incorporated into the addition.

The combined building's rear façade faces the Schuylkill River Trail with substantial public visibility. Significant changes are proposed to the existing rear façade. The application proposes a completely new fenestration pattern to align the four window bays proposed for the second and third floors above, suggesting infill of existing windows and/or expansion of window openings.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct two-story addition on top of 4370-74 Main Street and alter front and rear façades.

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 will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - The proposal maintains the historic storefront's features, satisfying Standard 2, but the proposal lacks detail regarding how the addition interacts with the wall above the cornice on the front façade.
- *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 proposal maintains the contributing property's historic storefront and other features. The proposed massing, scale, and general appearance appear compatible with the district's character, but more detail is required for proposed materials and color.
 - Historically, the building served as commercial office space, while other properties in the Main Street Manayunk Historic District facing the river had similar or industrial appearances in the rear. The proposed alterations to the existing rear façade may detract from the historic character of the district.
- *Standard 10: New additions and 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 unimpaired.*
 - The proposed addition maintains the appearance of the front façade, though more detail on the interaction between the second-floor addition and front parapet on the contributing building is needed to determine if the application satisfies Standard 10.

The Main Street Manayunk review criteria restated in the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations include:

- *Section 6.9.b.4: Storefronts: Original existing storefronts contributing to the character of the district shall be retained and repaired. New storefronts shall be compatible with the proportion, form and materials of the original building.*
 - The application proposes no changes to the storefront on the contributing portion of the building.
- *Section 6.9.b.5: Design: Additions, alterations and new construction shall be designed so as to be compatible in scale, building materials, and texture, with contributing buildings in the historic district.*
 - The proposed massing, scale, and general appearance appear compatible with the district's character, but more detail is required for proposed materials and color.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the overall size, massing, and general design of the proposed additions, but denial based on the need for additional details about materials, colors, finishes, and the proposed alterations to the rear façade, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10, and Main Street Manayunk review criteria.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:23:08

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Schroeder presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architect Joe Serratore represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Stein and Ms. Gutterman noted that it was difficult to conceptualize with the applications materials submitted how the entire building will look with the new additions and how the new addition will relate to the front façade in particular.
 - Mr. Serratore acknowledged that the current plans were produced quickly and noted that, for the 4370 Main Street front elevation, the second-floor window sills are 30 inches above the floor to accommodate the front parapet.
- Mr. Cluver asked how the floor levels between the buildings at 4370 and 4372-74 Main Street correspond to the difference in height between the Main Street entrances. He also asked if an accessible entrance is included as it is likely going to be required with the level of proposed alteration.
 - Mr. Serratore responded there would be no change to the floors or the outside entrance but he would consider how to make the entrance accessible.
- Mr. Cluver asked Mr. Serratore about the justification for the addition, noting that the proposal probably doubled the approximate height of the building, a change that would not typically be recommended for approval by the Architectural Committee.
 - Mr. Serratore noted that the owner wants to add residential units above the commercial space. He noted that the Historical Commission's staff had advised him that the new height would not be a concern.
 - Mr. Schroeder stated that the staff considered three-story buildings to be in keeping with the Manayunk historic district's character.
- Ms. Lukachik asked about any proposed setback for the addition behind the parapet at 4370 Main Street.
 - Mr. Serratore pointed out that the setback was about one foot and a reveal was included.
- Ms. Lukachik and Mr. Detwiler stated that a one-foot setback was insufficient and the addition would still overwhelm the original building and façade. Ms. Lukachick speculated that seven or ten feet was closer to a suitable setback. Both Ms. Lukachick and Mr. Detwiler noted that the current building's "stout" appearance and oversized parapet are unique and special care is needed to avoid disrupting its defining features.
 - Mr. D'Alessandro noted that the "piers" on either end of the parapet need to stand out.
- The Architectural Committee discussed the need for side elevations, renderings, and section drawings to adequately evaluate the addition's impact on the contributing building.
 - Mr. D'Alessandro noted inconsistencies between the rear elevation drawings and the floor plans.
- Mr. Detwiler praised the proposal's sensitivity to the Main Street façade but reiterated the need for more of a setback. He also suggested a cornice along the 4372 Main Street portion for continuity with 4374 Main Street.
- Mr. Detwiler and Mr. D'Alessandro suggested the projecting bays should be a material other than stucco or metal.
- Mr. D'Alessandro suggested reviewing the proposed changes to the storefronts at 4372-74 Main Street for compliance with the Main Street Manayunk review criteria.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that the massing and design of the rear should correspond better with the front and should be simplified. He noted that the notches and projections in the rear do not reflect the proposed front. He also suggested the additional floors should not be stucco to differentiate from the original rear.

- Mr. Serratore explained that the existing, historic rear does not correspond to the historic front.
- Ms. Stein and Mr. Detwiler discussed whether the proposed three-foot projection for the rear additions was excessive. Ms. Stein suggested a bay might be a better choice so the projection comes gradually from the adjacent party wall. Both pointed out they could not make a firm recommendation without drawings or renderings of the side elevation.
- Mr. D'Alessandro asked where mechanical equipment would be located.
 - Mr. Serratore responded that it will likely be located on the roof.
- Ms. Stein expressed opposition to the proposed Juliet balconies, noting that a three foot projection with another couple of feet for the balconies was an excessive total projection and not in keeping with the district's character.
 - Mr. McCoubrey stated that he preferred the pulled-back balconies on the ends. He also suggested perhaps bays with balconies in between as an alternative to the current design.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The parapet wall over the storefront on the building at 4370 Main Street is a character-defining, historic feature.
- The rear of the building at 4370-74 Main Street, along the Schuylkill River Trailway, faces a public right-of-way and any alterations and additions need to be in keeping with the district's historic character.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- As presented, the proposed massing of the overbuild is appropriate, but a greater setback for the addition at 4370 Main Street is needed to keep the addition from overwhelming the original historic storefront.
- The application, though in-concept, requires more detail to evaluate the proposal's specifics.

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

ITEM: 4370-74 Main Street MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Lukachik SECONDED BY: D'Alessandro					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	7				

ADDRESS: 257 S 4TH ST

Proposal: Remove addition; construct wall and garage; add windows and doors

Review Requested: Final approval

Owner: M Dwell Two, LLC

Applicant: Judith Robinson and Jane Ahn

History: 1810; three-story rear addition in 1981

Individual Designation: 4/30/1957

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Significant, 3/10/1999

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

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to remove a non-historic three-story rear addition on a Federal rowhouse that is both individually designated and listed as a significant resource in the Society Hill Historic District. The newly exposed western wall will feature three large openings set with a combination of windows and French doors and Juliet balconies on the upper stories. It also proposes to construct a brick wall and live-roof garage structure on the rear yard of the property. Additionally, it proposes to add one skylight to the rear slope of the roof, add one window and one set of French doors with guardrail to the exposed north side façade of the house and add windows and doors to a small historic rear ell. The building was constructed c. 1810 and is three-and-a-half stories tall with a gable roof and brick façade. The three-story addition proposed for removal is located behind the main block of the building and dates to 1981. The current front façade, north façade, and roof were reconstructed to their current forms in 1963. Prior to 1963, the front façade had a first-floor storefront, and the north wall of the building was covered by a neighboring garage. Upon removal of that garage, the owner, in consultation with the Historical Commission and Redevelopment Authority, reconstructed that façade with a new brick veneer, added the current windows with shutters, and rebuilt the chimneys and side roofline to match the rest of the row. The newly exposed rear wall, rear roof, and north side will all be at least partially visible from some surrounding public pedestrian walkways including S. 4th Street, St. James Place and St. Joseph's Way.

The applicants presented a similar design but with an added roof deck for an in-concept review to the Architectural Committee in April 2025. At that time, the Committee was receptive to all of the changes other than the roof deck.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Remove a three-story non-historic rear addition; add windows and doors to rear wall;
- Construct a brick wall and a live-roof garage structure around the rear yard; and,
- Add a window and French door to the north façade; add windows and doors to rear ell.

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 live roof and garage structure for the rear yard satisfies Standard 9. It does not affect any historic materials and is compatible with the massing, size, and scale of the historic building.
 - The proposed addition of a window to the north wall is compatible with Standard 9. While an end wall like this one would likely not have had any windows in it if it were original, the wall as it currently stands with existing windows was reconstructed in 1963 with the approval of the Historical Commission. The addition of one more window does not further impair the architectural features of this property. However, the proposed addition of the French doors with guardrail to the north wall does not meet Standard 9 as it is too specific and distinctive a feature to be compatible with the historic design of the building.
 - The proposed addition of new windows and doors to the rear wall and rear ell may satisfy Standard 9. New openings in general are compatible with the historic features of the building, but the proposed arrangements and extent of new windows and doors may alter the appearance to too large an extent to be compatible with the historic design features of the building.
- *Standard 10: New additions and 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 unimpaired.*
 - The removal of the 1981 rear addition satisfies Standard 10. It is a non-historic addition that was reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission in 1981. Its removal will not impair the essential form or integrity of the historic building.
 - *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 new skylight satisfies the Roofs Guideline. It will be small and minimally visible from surrounding public rights-of-way.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of all aspects of the application except the addition of the French doors with guardrail to the north wall, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:58:35

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Architectural Committee.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 25 NOVEMBER 2025

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Architect Judy Robinson and owner Jane Ahn represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cluver asked if the application was for approval in concept.
 - Mr. Till responded that it was for final approval but was incorrectly noted in the staff recommendation.
- Ms. Robinson commented that the applicants are happy to answer any questions. She also addressed the proposed French doors with balcony for the north side elevation and explained that since they eliminated a proposed roof deck that would have opened on that floor from an earlier application, they wanted to find another way to introduce more light and air into the fourth-floor space.
 - Ms. Gutterman asked if they considered putting a window there instead of French doors.
 - Ms. Robinson responded that they did but liked the doors better.
 - Mr. Detwiler commented that he does not like the asymmetry created by the doors and the other newly proposed window for the north side and their proposed placement. He asked if the fourth-floor opening could be centered and if shutters could be added to the proposed second-floor window.
 - Ms. Robinson confirmed that they could add shutters and that shifting the location of the proposed fourth-floor door is also possible.
 - Mr. Detwiler also asked if they could change the doors out for a window instead.
 - Ms. Robinson confirmed that they could.
 - Mr. Cluver added that the doors also seem to be set very far back in their opening and they should be in the same plane as the other windows. He added that it is interesting that the existing windows are not placed symmetrically with regard to the chimney parapet and is unsure whether a new fourth-floor window should match the existing or should be centered.
 - Mr. McCoubrey commented that in the 1960's, when these windows were placed in the wall, they did not line up with the gable. He added that he agrees that shutters should be added on the new windows and that the doors should be a window instead and moved over to align with the rest.
- Mr. McCoubrey commented on the proposed new openings for the rear wall. While not outright opposed to the size of the openings, he suggested the units within should be three wide instead of four to preserve a bit more of the masonry.
 - Ms. Robinson pointed to included images showing the current state of the rear wall and explained that their aim is to match the width of the existing opening on the third floor. All of these openings were manipulated over the years, and the rear wall has had significant changes made to it. Overall, their aim is to get more light into the building.
 - Mr. McCoubrey agreed that the wall as it exists has been significantly manipulated.
 - Ms. Gutterman asked specifically how much the existing openings are going to be widened.
 - Ms. Robinson responded that the second and third floors are only going to be slightly widened, and the first floor will be more significantly altered. However, the first-floor opening has been altered much in the past and they are mostly removing older masonry infill. The second-floor opening will be widened by about one foot.

- Ms. Gutterman asked about the infill on the first floor and pointed to an existing lintel near the top of the wall. She asked for more information on that opening and how the new one will align.
- Ms. Robinson responded that they do not know the full history and context for all the work done on the first-floor portion of the wall and that the lintel could be from an earlier opening. It would need to be removed anyway since its wood and building codes no longer allow masonry to rest on wood like this. She asked if they would prefer having different size openings on each floor as opposed to matching them.
- Ms. Gutterman replied that she would need to see a proposal to determine that, but she wants to understand the history of that wall before approving the idea of adding large openings to it.
- Ms. Lukachik commented that she agrees and added that historically, one would not always see symmetry from floor to floor. She also added that the drawings reference other structural drawings that were not included in the application materials.
- Mr. Till clarified that the application drawings initially came from an eCLIPSE permit application and he did not include separate structural drawings in the submission.
- Mr. Detwiler commented that the proposed rear openings feel very large, partially because of the height and the large transoms that seem out of scale with the doors and windows below. In addition, a house like this would usually have a fairly substantial cornice to help balance things. If there had been large openings on this rear wall in the past, they likely would have been three units wide and not as tall to show more of the floor thickness between them. He would like to see the transoms size reduced, particularly on the first floor, unless there is evidence that they were this large historically.
- Ms. Robinson responded that the existing headers have determined the heights for the proposed new openings. Obviously, the top floor is shorter, but the first floor also has that existing lintel placed relatively high up as well which corresponds to the proposed new opening height.
- Mr. McCoubrey added that, when looking at the elevations, the amount of masonry left between floors looks too thin.
- Mr. Detwiler agreed.
- Ms. Robinson explained that on the second floor, for example, they are aligned more or less where the interior joists are located.
- Ms. Stein commented that if you compare the rear elevation to the windows on the front façade, the first floor at the rear is higher.
- Mr. Detwiler agreed and added that he would like to see the transom on the rear pulled down to be in the same line as the front façade windows.
- Ms. Gutterman commented that though she understands the desire for more light and air, the proposed openings are too large and overpower the relationship between glass and brick.
- Mr. Cluver pointed out that the proposed openings for the rear wall are also not aligned with any of the window details on the adjacent walls either. He advised that they should look at this façade along with the adjacent one on the rear ell.
- Ms. Gutterman suggested that they also look more closely at the existing masonry openings and consider how things will look if they do not all match.
- Mr. D'Alessandro commented on the north side French doors stating that historically, the building should not have doors on the upper floors and that openings should progressively get smaller the higher they are on the building.

- Mr. Detwiler questioned why the new windows proposed for the historic ell are three-over-three casements.
 - Ms. Robinson responded that they wanted to do something a bit more modern on the ell and referenced some images she included of some neighboring property's windows.
 - Mr. Detwiler and Ms. Gutterman responded that the neighboring addition is a new building, not a historic ell.
 - Ms. Robinson explained that the remaining ell is not original to the building but was enveloped when the addition they are removing was added.
 - Mr. Detwiler responded that the ell reads as historic massing and so the casements look odd next to the traditional design. They should be using windows that align with the historic character of the building overall.
- Mr. D'Alessandro suggested that the fourth-story window in the north wall could be centered below the gable and not align with the other windows in the wall and it should be scaled down to at least the same size as the floor below it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The proposed removal of a 1981 rear addition, the concept of adding windows to the north wall, rear ell, and rear wall and modifications to the rear garden and garage structure are all acceptable.
- A set of French doors is not a compatible addition to the north wall.
- All newly proposed openings need to be aligned with one another better and better reflect the historic character and proportions of the building.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The removal of the 1981 rear addition satisfies Standard 10. It is itself a non-historic addition that was reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission in 1981. Its removal will not impair the essential form or integrity of the historic building.
- The proposed addition of a window to the north wall is compatible with Standard 9, but the proposed addition of French doors is not. While an end wall like this one would likely not have had any windows in it if it were original, the wall as it currently stands with existing windows was reconstructed in 1963 with the approval of the Historical Commission. The addition of more windows does not further impair the architectural features of this property
- The proposed live roof and garage structure for the rear yard satisfies Standard 9. It does not affect any historic materials and is compatible with the massing, size, and scale of the historic building.
- The proposed skylight satisfies the Roofs Guideline. It will be small and minimally visible from surrounding public rights-of-way.
- The proposed addition of new windows and doors to the rear wall and rear ell will satisfy Standard 9 if the sizes, proportions, and arrangements of the units are revised to be more in character with the proportion and other historic features of the building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the new windows on the north wall include shutters and the fourth-floor opening is changed from French doors to a window that is appropriately scaled and

aligned, that the openings proposed for the rear east wall are reduced in scale, that a stronger relationship be made between all existing and proposed openings, and the windows proposed for the ell be double-hung units instead of casements, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9, 10, and the Roofs Guideline.

ITEM: 257 S 4th St					
MOTION: Approval with conditions					
MOVED BY: Cluver					
SECONDED BY: Detwiler					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Rudy D'Alessandro	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik	X				
Amy Stein	X				
Total	7				

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:27:10

ACTION: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

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.