

**ADDRESS: 2108 SANSOM ST**

Proposal: Construct rooftop addition

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Matthew Germinaro and Kate Hanlon

Applicant: Adam Zangrilli, Zangrilli Design

History: 1870

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, [theodore.maust@phila.gov](mailto:theodore.maust@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This in-concept application proposes constructing a rooftop addition on a two-story former carriage house that is classified as contributing to the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District.

The application includes preliminary floor plans and a section drawing showing a mansard roof treatment at the third-floor level and a partial fourth floor with a roof deck set back from the front elevation.

Renderings suggest the appearance of the building with the proposed addition but appear to have been produced using generative artificial intelligence and depict inconsistent proportions, window configurations, and the existing building's relationship to surrounding buildings. Given the discrepancies between these images, it is difficult to evaluate the overall visual impact of the proposed work.

In 2018, the Historical Commission approved a rooftop addition to this property proposed by a previous owner, which included a third floor set back 11 feet, 3 inches. A roof deck and pilot house on top of the addition were to be set back an additional 12 feet, 6¼ inches. That application went through various iterations with the aim of minimizing the visibility before being approved by the Historical Commission.

The Historical Commission has approved small additions and roof decks on a number of former carriage houses in this historic district. Generally, approved rooftop additions or decks have been set back from the primary façade to mitigate visibility. In one exception at 2110 Chancellor St, where the size of the lot precluded a setback, the additional third floor was designed in a contemporary style to differentiate it from the historic building.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Construct third floor, partial fourth floor, roof deck and pergola.

**STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:**

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

- *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 third floor of the addition as proposed would be highly visible and, depending on the setback of the fourth-floor elements, they may also be visible from Sansom Street. A visibility study should be included with a future application for final approval.
- *Standard 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

- The use of a mansard roof may create a false sense of historical development that does not reflect the true history of the building.
- *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 section drawing suggests the height of the proposed third floor is in scale with the existing buildings, but the quality of the other images makes this compatibility difficult to fully evaluate.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Denial, pursuant to Standards 3 and 9 and the Roofs Guideline.



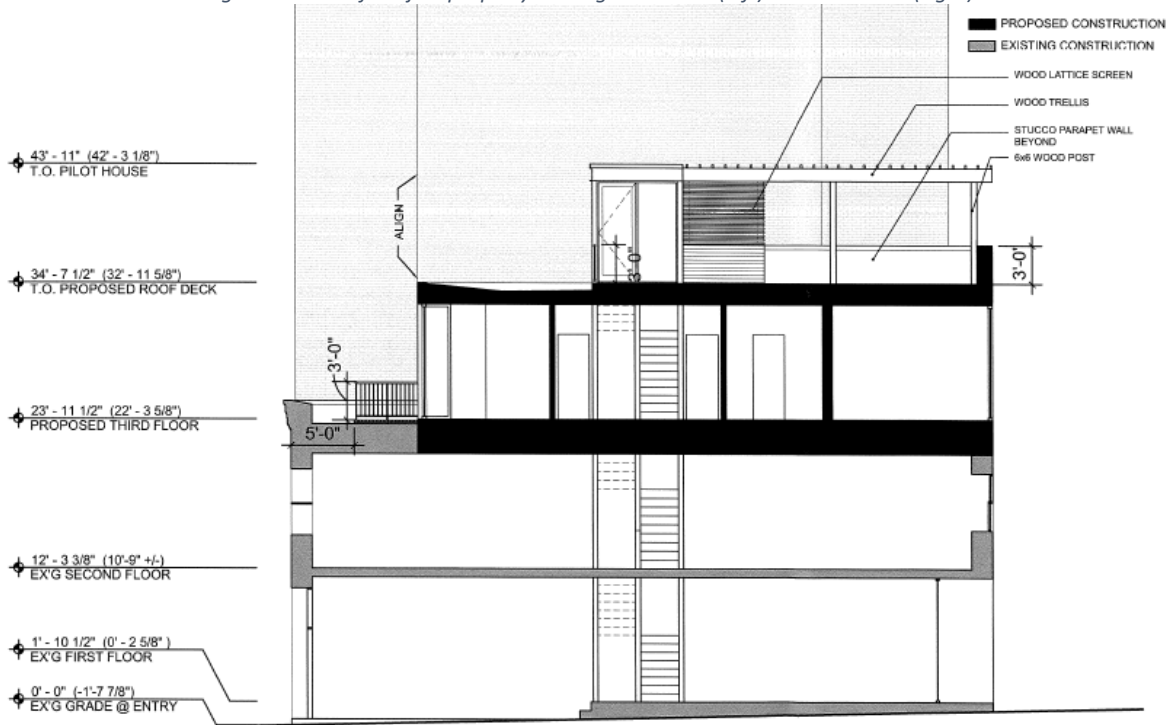
Figure 1: Location of subject property on the south side of Sansom St near S Van Pelt St.



Figure 2: Aerial view of property looking south.



Figure 3: View of subject property looking southwest (left) and southeast (right).



PROPOSED BUILDING SECTION | SCALE: 1/8" = 1-0'

Figure 4: Section drawing showing the proposed addition and roof deck which was approved by the Historical Commission in 2018.



Figure 5: Rendering of the project approved in 2018.



Figure 6: Mock-ups show the visibility of the project proposed in 2018.



*Figure 7: Rooftop additions and decks on (from left to right) 2006, 2008, and 2010-12 Chancellor St were set back to limit visibility from the primary elevation.*



*Figure 8: This addition to 2110 Chancellor St, located on a small lot at the dead end of Chancellor St west of S 21<sup>st</sup> St, featured contemporary design to differentiate it from the historic building.*

# CONTEXT STATEMENT

2108 SANSOM STREET — CONCEPTUAL REVIEW



## 1. CONTEXTUAL SUBORDINATION TO ADJACENT NON-CONTRIBUTING MASS

The immediate contextual scale of the block is significantly influenced by the adjacent non-historic cooperative structure, whose substantial massing establishes a dominant vertical presence within the streetscape. In comparison, the proposed addition represents a modest and carefully integrated vertical insertion that remains visually subordinate within the broader urban context.



## 2. ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING ECLECTIC STREETScape

The surrounding block is characterized by a heterogeneous architectural fabric consisting of mixed commercial and residential occupancies, structured parking facilities, contemporary infill townhomes, and buildings reaching four stories and above. The proposed addition is consistent with this established pattern of varied scale, massing, and architectural expression present along the corridor.



## 3. MITIGATED IMPACT ON HISTORIC CONTEXT

Given that the localized visual hierarchy has already evolved through the introduction of non-contributing structures and taller contemporary development, the proposed incremental massing functions as a contextual continuation rather than a disruption of a cohesive historic street wall. The addition is intended to assimilate respectfully into the existing urban fabric while minimizing visual impact from the public right-of-way.



## 4. PRESERVATION AND ARCHITECTURAL LEGIBILITY

The existing historic façade will remain fully preserved and visually prominent. The proposed upper-level additions are intentionally setback from the primary façade plane and differentiated through contemporary articulation and material expression, creating a clear visual distinction between historic and new construction. This approach maintains the legibility of the original structure while ensuring the addition remains secondary in perceived prominence.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT

**2108 SANSOM STREET**

PHILADELPHIA, PA

PROJECT STATUS

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

DATE

MAY 20, 2025

SHEET TITLE

**CONTEXT STATEMENT**

SHEET

**CS**

COVER SHEET



**ZANGRILLI DESIGN**

ARCHITECTURE  
& PRESERVATION

WWW.ZANGRILLIDESIGN.COM

# 2108 SANSOM STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

## PROPOSED THIRD-FLOOR ADDITION & PARTIAL FOURTH FLOOR

### DESIGN PHILOSOPHY & CONTEXT



The proposed vertical addition has been designed as a respectful continuation of the existing historic streetscape while preserving the visual prominence of the original structure.



The surrounding block already contains a varied architectural context including adjacent two-story buildings, multiple three-story structures, and significantly taller neighboring buildings. The proposal seeks to reinforce this established rhythm and scale rather than introduce a condition that is out of character with the neighborhood.



The upper levels are intentionally recessed from the primary façade to minimize visibility from the public right-of-way and maintain the pedestrian-scale presence of the historic building below.



The design approach balances historic sensitivity with contemporary restraint, allowing the addition to remain compatible with the surrounding context while clearly reading as a modern intervention.



A cohesive presentation of the proposed addition more accurately represents the intended architectural composition and contextual relationship to the streetscape. Partial visibility conditions may overemphasize individual elements, while a clean and unified expression reinforces the restrained and respectful character of the design.

### CONCEPTUAL REVIEW SUBMISSION

The enclosed renderings are intended to illustrate the overall design intent and contextual relationship of the proposed third-floor addition and partial fourth-floor expansion.

Certain architectural details and material elements may continue to evolve during design development. The primary purpose of this submission is to establish conceptual approval of the proposed massing, setbacks, visibility, and overall architectural approach.

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Conceptual Review Submission  
May 2025



# PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

2108 Sansom Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

The proposed floor plan arrangement establishes a clear vertical transition from service and public functions at the lower levels to private living spaces above.

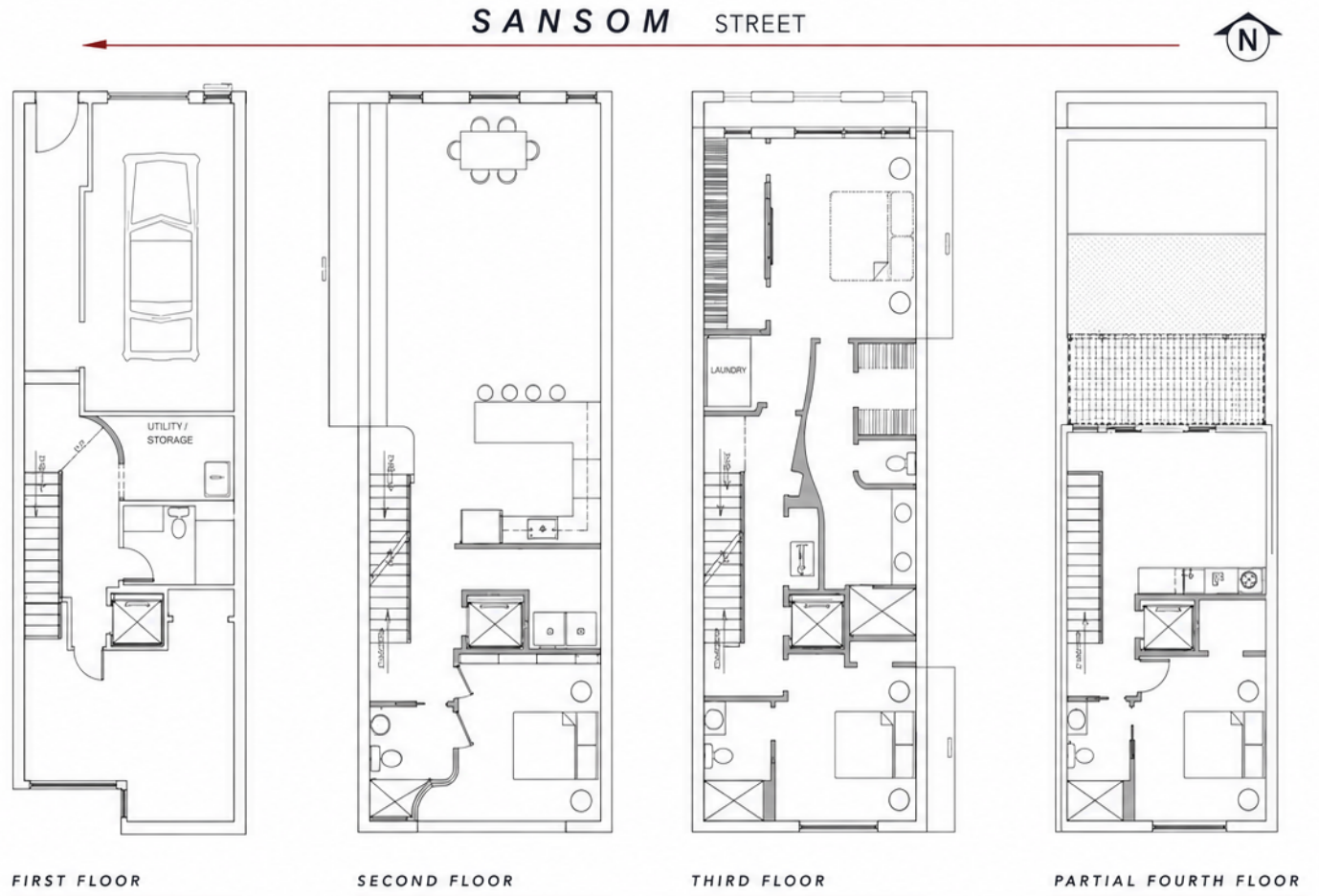
The third-floor addition and partial fourth floor are designed to maximize natural light, improve livability, and create thoughtfully scaled interior spaces while maintaining sensitivity to the historic streetscape below.

The recessed upper levels help reduce perceived mass from the public right-of-way while reinforcing the established rhythm of surrounding multi-story buildings along Sansom Street.

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Conceptual Review  
Submission



The proposed organization establishes a clear transition from public lower levels to private upper living spaces.

# BUILDING SECTION

2108 Sansom Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

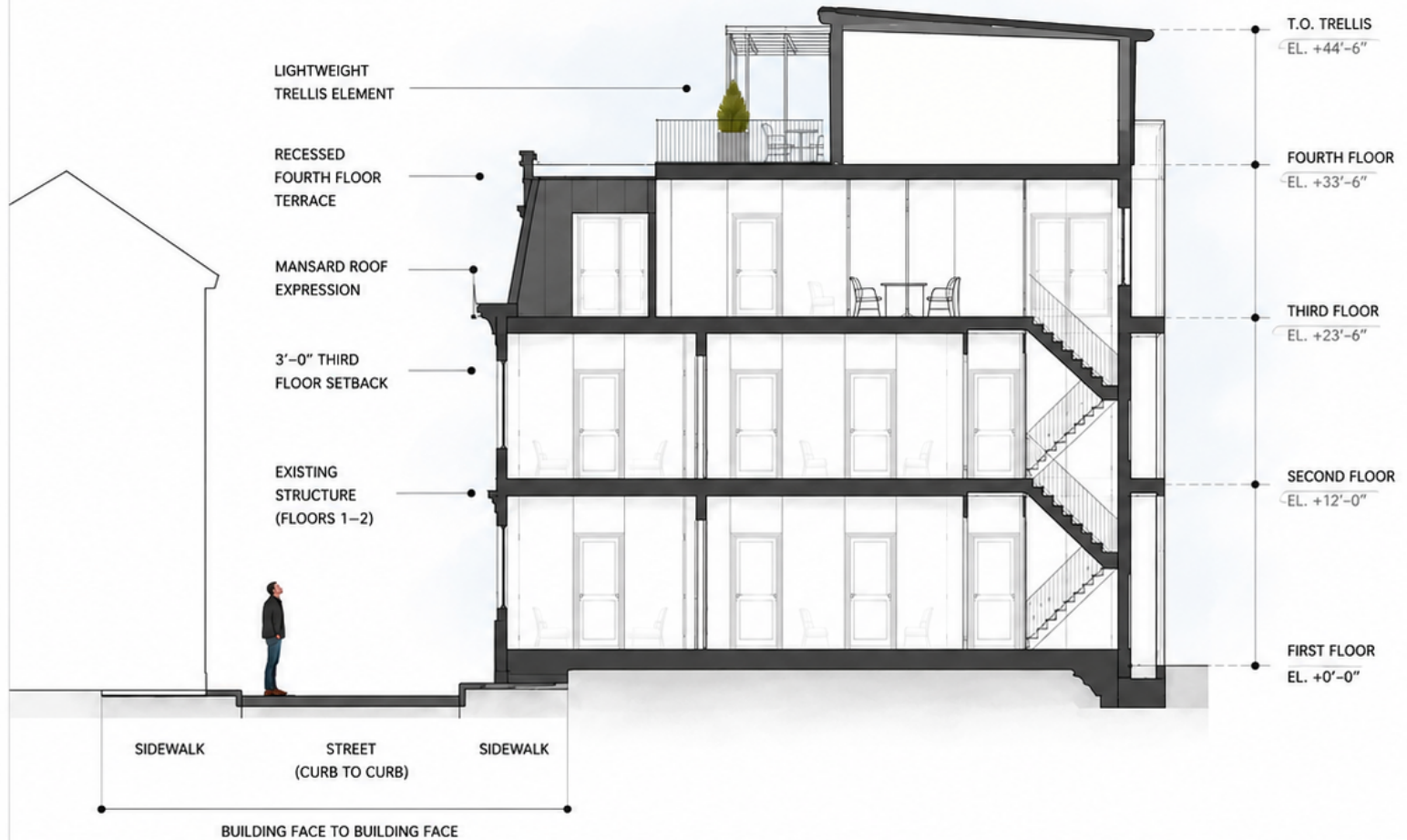
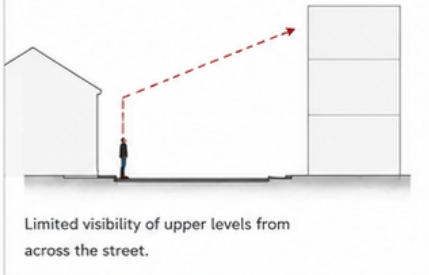
## DESIGN INTENT

The proposed section illustrates a layered transition from the historic base to a lightweight modern addition above.

The third and partial fourth floors are recessed to reduce perceived mass from the public right-of-way and maintain the pedestrian scale of Sansom Street.

This approach preserves the character of the existing streetscape while providing improved light, views, and livability for upper-level spaces.

### VISIBILITY DIAGRAM



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The section illustrates a layered transition from the historic base to a modern vertical addition, balancing proportion, light, and livability.

# EXISTING STREETSCAPE

2108 Sansom Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing streetscape along Sansom Street is characterized by a varied mix of building heights and architectural expressions. The subject property at 2108 Sansom Street is a two-story structure that sits among adjacent buildings ranging from two to many stories in height, including a tall residential building to the east.

These photographs document the current condition of the streetscape from multiple viewpoints.

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**01** VIEW LOOKING EAST  
Direct view of subject property and adjacent taller building to the east.



**02** VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST  
Oblique view showing streetscape context and building alignment.



**03** VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST  
Longer view of Sansom Street showing varied building heights.



**04** VIEW LOOKING WEST  
View toward the west showing the three-story building at the corner of the small street.

# EXISTING BUILDING WITH PROPOSED ADDITION VIEW

2108 Sansom Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The subject property at 2108 Sansom Street is a two-story structure with a traditional masonry façade and historic detailing.

These photographs illustrate the existing building from two key viewpoints: daylight conditions and dusk conditions.

The building maintains its existing scale and architectural character within a context of significantly taller neighboring buildings.

The proposed upper-level addition is set back approximately 3 feet from the existing façade in order to not compete with the existing façade, but also not to fragment the proposed addition.

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01 VIEW IN DAYLIGHT  
Existing conditions in natural daylight.



02 VIEW AT DUSK  
Existing conditions at dusk.

# PROPOSED VERTICAL EXPANSION

2108 Sansom Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A refined mansard third floor extends the building's architectural rhythm, while a recessed fourth-floor terrace introduces a lighter, contemporary layer above.

The upper-level addition is set back from the primary facade to preserve the historic streetscape and reduce visibility from the public right-of-way.

This design approach enhances outdoor living opportunities while maintaining sensitivity to the surrounding context.



## 01 FRONT ELEVATION

Proposed vertical expansion as viewed from Sansom Street.



## 02 UPPER LEVEL VIEW

Aerial perspective highlighting the recessed fourth-floor terrace and its relationship to the mansard level below.

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