

ADDRESS: 1601 MOUNT VERNON ST

Proposal: Amend approval of façade materials

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Mt. Vernon Commons LLC

Applicant: Naché Patior

History: 1859; Robert Purvis House; storefront, 1920

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, daniel.shachar-krasnoff@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application calls for amending the Historical Commission's July 2023 approval for the rehabilitation of the Robert Purvis house. The developer seeks approval to substitute cast stone for marble on the front façade's stoop and door surround, owing to the high cost of marble. The applicant is determining the viability of cast stone for the water table.

The property at 1601 Mount Vernon Street is significant in the Spring Garden Historic District, owing to its association with Robert Purvis, a Black anti-slavery activist, writer, and lecturer who resided at the property for the final years of his life—ca.1875 to 1898. Over the last few decades, the property languished and was subject to multiple violations, proposed but unimplemented projects, and court orders, culminating in an Act 135 conservatorship. The City demolished the rear ell to abate a dangerous condition in 2012. After years of deterioration and legal proceedings, the property is being rehabilitated.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Amend approval of façade materials

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
 - o The only remaining portion of the original building, the main block, had a storefront installed c. 1920. That intervention removed the original entryway and marble stoop. Two large openings for storefront windows were cut into the masonry on the front façade and side wall at the first story, and a new corner entrance was constructed.
 - o The application proposes to substitute the approved marble of the stoop and door surround with cast stone, owing to the high cost of the marble. They are unsure if they will propose cast stone or brick at the water table. While suboptimal, the staff sees the use of cast stone as the best solution to complete construction of the residential front. If cast stone is used for all marble elements on the front façade, the work complies with Standard 6.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, if the water table, as well as the surround and stoop are built with cast stone, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 6.



Figure 1: Current South (primary) façade and east façade under rehabilitation.



Figure 2: Current first floor restoration under construction.



Figure 3: Mt. Vernon and 16th Streets, 2023. Source: Google.



Figure 4: The rear of 1601 Mt. Vernon Street, 2023. Source: Google.

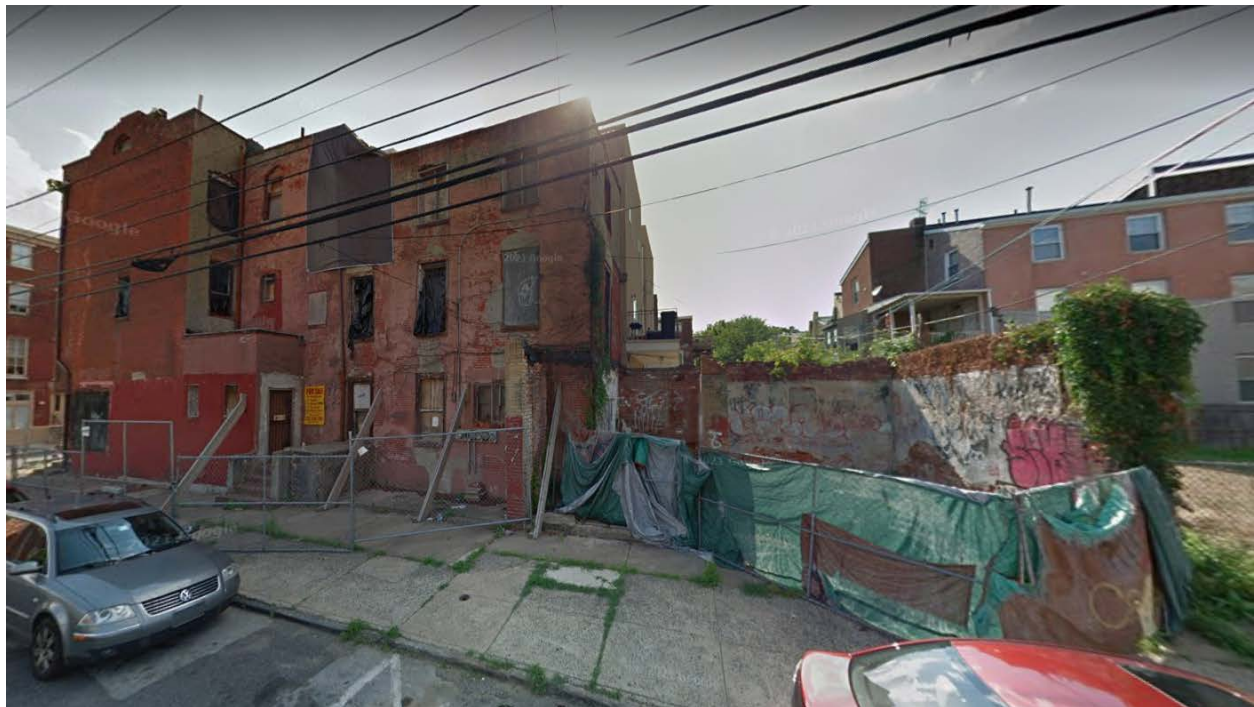


Figure 5: The dilapidated rear ell of 1601 Mt. Vernon Street just prior to demolition, 2012. Source: Google Streetview.

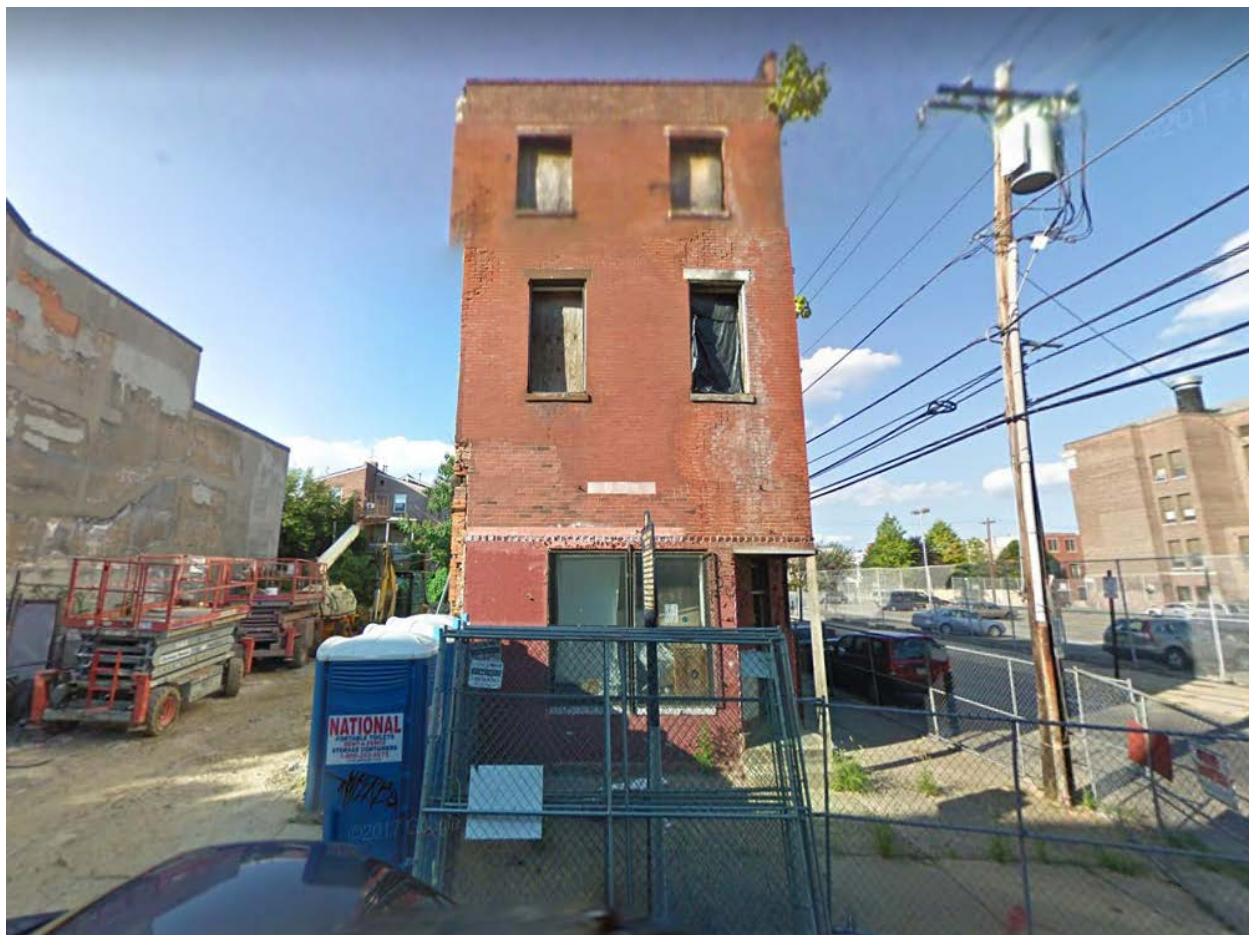
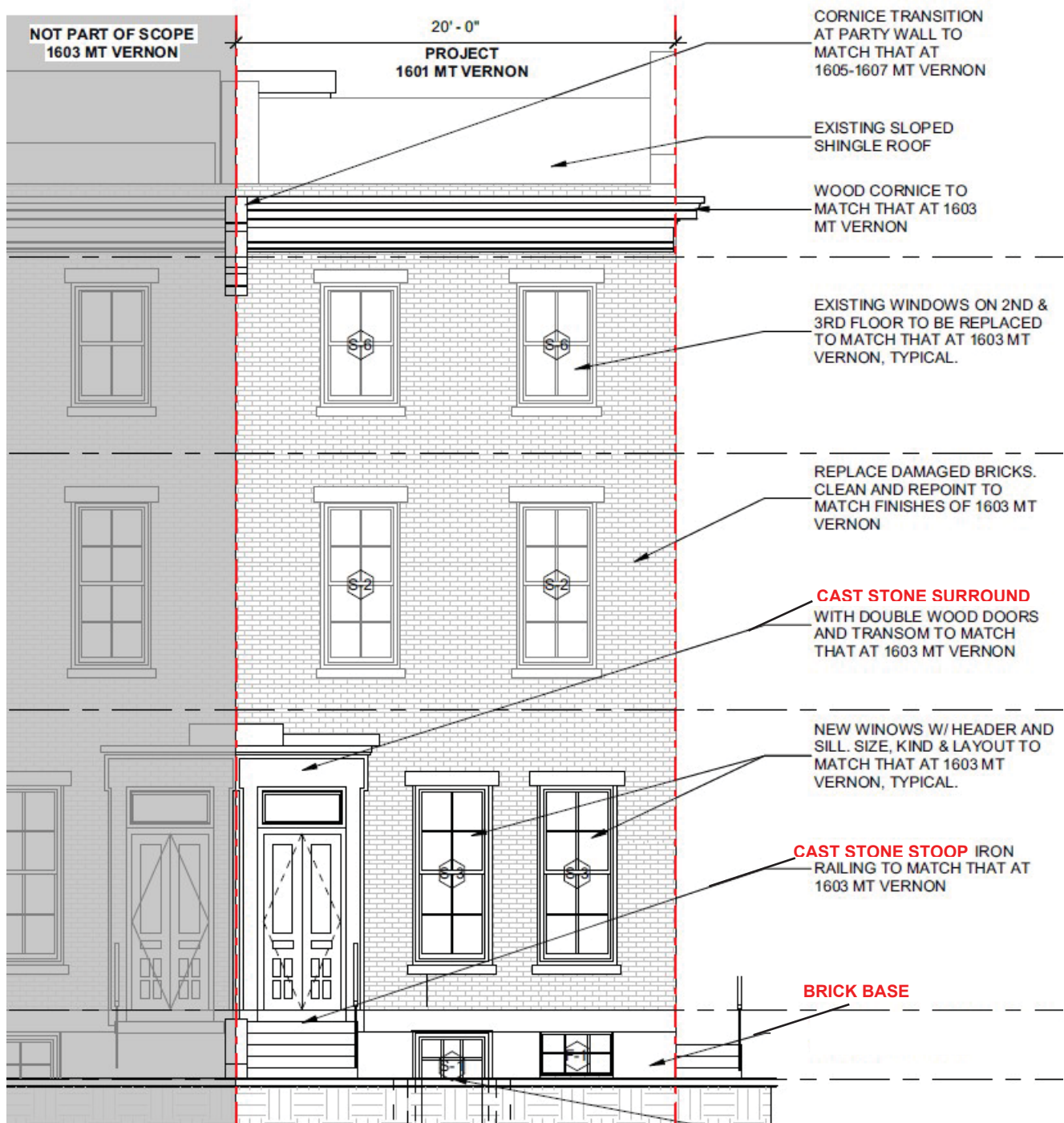


Figure 6: The front facade of 1601 Mt. Vernon Street in 2009. Source: Google Streetview.



Mt. Vernon Commons, LLC
1601 Mount Vernon St
Philadelphia, PA 19130
mvcphilly@gmail.com

Applicant:
Nache Patoir, Esq.
Property Owner
mvcphilly@gmail.com

Project Address:
1601 Mt. Vernon Street, Philadelphia PA
Submitted To:
Philadelphia Historical Commission

The property at 1601 Mount Vernon Street is currently a vacant 3-story building on a corner lot. The rear portion along N. 16th Street was demolished in 2012 and remained empty. The previously approved scope of work includes rehabilitation, restoration, and new construction on the rear.

The proposed building will be used as multi-family dwellings for a total of 5 units. Two entry points were approved: one on the existing building at Mount Vernon Street and another on the newly constructed addition to the building on N 16th Street.

In the 1920's, the façade on Mount Vernon Street was changed with a corner entryway with a storefront. We have begun the restoration of the lost residential features, to restore it to match closely match the original building. The approved façade and entryway requires a design that matches the adjacent building of 1603 Mount Vernon Street. We now seek an amendment to the original approval allowing the use of more cost-effective materials to construct the façade and entryway.

During material sourcing it was concluded that the Danby marble material required by the current historic commission approval is cost prohibitive. The price of the required Danby Marble is so exorbitant that the cost of reconstructing the façade and entryway would be equivalent to over 20% of the project's entire construction budget. Requiring this material for this project would put such a financial strain on this project that there would not be enough funds to complete the interior construction.

We have surveyed similar properties in the same historic zip code and have found that use of alternative material was permitted in the construction of the façade, these properties include: (1) 2000 Spring Garden Street; (2) 604 – 608 16th Street (properties adjacent to the 16th Street side of the project address); (3) 614 A 16th Street; and (4) 614 B 16th Street. These are all properties similarly situated with the current property in under review, with building permits approved in

the last 10 years, located within less than a 10 block radius of the property under review. Seemingly, this board approved these newer constructions with the use of limestone in place of Danby marble, and we are seeking a similar approval.

The property has a lengthy track record of violations, reviews, and permit approvals by the City of Philadelphia but unfortunately, nothing was ever finalized to complete the property. We have made significant progress in restoring this historic building and look forward to completing the restoration in the next few months. We further believe that our amended proposal is still a compatible approach for the property and the Spring Garden Historic District.

Should you require more information about this project, please contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Naché Patoir', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Naché Patoir, Owner
Mt Vernon Commons, LLC

Enclosures



2000 Spring Garden Street



2000 Spring Garden Street



604 16th Street -

The image shows the front entrance of a two-story red brick building. The entrance features a dark-colored door with a transom window and side windows, set within a light-colored stone or concrete frame. A small black lantern-style light fixture hangs above the door. To the right of the door, the address number '608' is mounted on the brick wall. Below the address is a black mailbox. A small window is located to the right of the mailbox. The building has a concrete foundation and a concrete sidewalk in the foreground. A fire alarm pull station is visible on the left wall. The text '608 16th Street' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

608 16th Street



604-608 16th Street



614 A & B 16th Street



614 A & B 16th Street

Daniel,

Per our last conversation, I am writing to inform you of the quote we have received to install the window lintels, marble stairs, door entry way, and base trim on the Mount Vernon side of 1601 Mount Vernon St. I am forwarding the table received by our mason.

We understand that we must bear the cost of the marble lintels(headers and sills), which cost \$ 10,950, because all other windows already have headers and sills; but we are seeking to change the material of all other components as the cost is too high. We were forced to reallocate a significant portion of our budget to windows, as the specific material and dimensions required special order. Unfortunately, due to other increased costs, we do not have additional reserves to allocate for 90k worth of marble. To further put this in perspective, the cost of the marble is approximately 18% of our total construction budget.

Quantity	Unit	Unit Price		Total Price
1.00	Head	\$ 6,500.00		\$ 6,500.00
4.00	Jamb	\$ 4,000.00		\$ 16,000.00
2.00	Plinth	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
4.00	Step	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 20,000.00
2.00	Lintel	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 3,000.00
3.00	Sill	\$ 2,650.00		\$ 7,950.00
1.00	Wainscot/Base	\$ 23,000.00		\$ 23,000.00
1.00	Moulding	\$ 12,000.00		\$ 12,000.00
1.00	Moulding	\$ 7,000.00		\$ 7,000.00
TOTAL				\$ 99,450.00

Please advise on other alternatives that the board would be amenable to.

Best,

Naché