

ADDRESS: 1910 CHESTNUT ST

Proposal: Remove marquee and vestibule walls; install storefront

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 19R Chestnut Partners LP

Applicant: Reed Slogoff, Chestnut Square Associates LP

History: 1928; Boyd Theater, Sameric Theater; Hoffman & Henon, architects

Individual Designation: 8/9/2008

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove the theater marquee and vestibule walls, and add a storefront system at the headhouse of the Boyd Theater at 1910 Chestnut Street. The Boyd Theater was an Art Deco movie palace constructed in 1928. The Historical Commission first designated the Boyd Theater in April 1987. In response, the property owner appealed the designation and submitted a financial hardship application proposing complete demolition. The Historical Commission denied the hardship application, owing to incompleteness. The appeal of the designation wound its way through the courts and, eventually, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court vacated the designation in July 1991. The Supreme Court reconsidered the case in November 1993 and upheld the vacating of the designation. The Boyd Theater was nominated a second time in August 2001; the Historical Commission rejected the nomination in April 2002, refusing to designate the theater. The theater ceased showing movies in 2002. The Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a demolition permit for the theater in June 2002, but the demolition was not undertaken. The Preservation Alliance nominated the theater a third time in May 2008; the Historical Commission designated it in August 2008. The owner of the theater submitted a financial hardship application proposing to demolish the theater in September 2013. In March 2014, the Historical Commission found that the Boyd Theater could not be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted and approved its demolition. After the demolition was approved, the property was sold to the current owner, who demolished the auditorium section of the theater but retained the headhouse or entranceway section on Chestnut Street. In June 2015, the Historical Commission approved a redevelopment project for the site that included the construction of a tower along Sansom Street, where the auditorium had been located, and the rehabilitation of the theater headhouse along Chestnut Street including the reconstruction of the 1950s-era theater marquee and installation of a glass storefront system at the open outer lobby. The work to the Boyd Theater headhouse was eventually undertaken for a sports bar called Bankroll, which opened in 2023, but then closed after just five months of operation. The space has been vacant since that time. The application proposes to remove the theater marquee, which is not original. The marquee structure dates to a 1950s replacement; the cladding and lighting was installed in 2018. Stone panels to match the façade would be added to cover the scars where the marquee attaches to the façade. The application also proposes adding a storefront system at the plane of the front façade and installing light fixtures. The vestibule walls, which would then be interior, would be removed. The application asserts that the vacant commercial space cannot be leased in its current form and that the removal of the marquee and vestibule walls, and installation of the storefront, will make the space more desirable to potential tenants.

SCOPE OF WORK: Remove marquee and vestibule walls; install storefront.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

1910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia Historical Commission
May/June 2026

- *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 removal of the 1950s-era marquee and vestibule walls does not comply with a strict reading of Standard 9, but allowing for these alterations will help to ensure that the important historic building is repurposed and self-sustaining.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the vestibule walls are documented prior to removal, with the staff to review details including stone panel samples.



Figure 1. Boyd Theater, 1928.

THE **BOYD**
 CHESTNUT ST. WEST OF 19TH ST.
 A Perfect Gem of Architecture
 MODERN ~ MAJESTIC ~ MARVELOUS
THE APEX OF THE ARTISTIC
 EXQUISITELY ADORNED, ELABORATELY
 FURNISHED GORGEOUSLY COMFORTABLE
 MANY NEW IDEAS

OPENS XMAS DAY
 AT 2 O'CLOCK
 CONTINUOUS UNTIL 11 P.M.

PRESENTING
 FOR THE FIRST
 TIME HERE
 PARAMOUNT'S
**ALL-TALKING
 PICTURE TRIUMPH**
 A MELODRAMA
 OF THE
 UPPERWORLD

INTERFERENCE

FROM THE ENTHRALLING
 STAGE DRAMA OF THE
 SAME NAME

DISTINGUISHED CAST OF PLAYERS
 with Stage Trained Voices
 EVELYN BRENT CLIVE BROOK
 DORIS KENYON WILLIAM POWELL
 AND
 THREE SENSATIONAL TALKING
 AND SINGING SPECIALTIES

EDDIE CANTOR Song and Fun with the World's Most Popular Comedian ... Assisted by Winsome Bobbie Arnot.	RUTH ETTING Adorable Ziegfeld Favorite Singing Two New and Popular Song Hits Every- where is Humming These Days!
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ALSO
"ONE WORD," an Efficiency Comedy by Joseph Santley
 NOTE PRICES—BEGINNING DECEMBER 24
 Performance continues 11 A. M. to 11 P. M.
 Matinees—Balcony, 35c; Orchestra and Balcony Legs, 50c;
 De Luxe Chairs, 75c
 Evenings—Balcony, 50c; Orchestra and Balcony Legs, 75c;
 De Luxe Chairs, \$1.00
 Saturdays and Holidays—75c; De Luxe Chairs, \$1.00



Figure 2. Boyd Theater, 1928.



Figure 3. Boyd Theater, 1959.



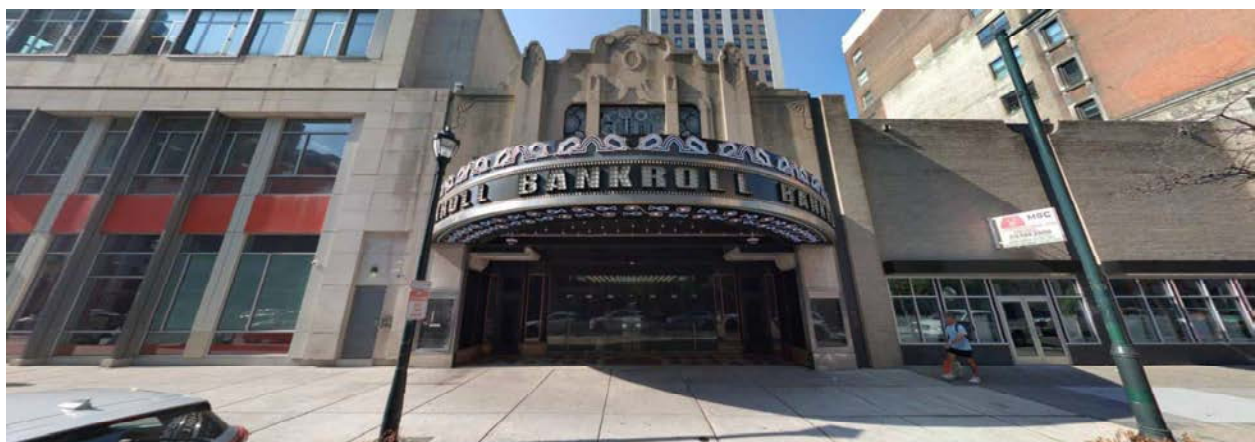
Figure 4. Boyd Theater, 1969.



Figure 5. Boyd Theater, 1980.



Figure 6. Boyd Theater, 2008.





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Construction Permit Application

Use this application to obtain permits for a residential or commercial construction proposal and/or excavation projects.
Mechanical / Fuel Gas, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire Suppression trade details are found on page 2.

Property Information

Identify the location of work for the permit(s).

If the activity will take place in a specific building, tenant space, floor level, or suite, note that detail in the 'Specific Location' field. If applicable, list PR#.

1

Parcel Address: 1910 Chestnut Street

Specific Location: Exterior

☐ Check box if this application is part of a project and provide the project number: PR-20 - _____

Applicant Information

Identify how you are associated with the property.

Licensed professionals include design professionals, attorneys, and expeditors. A tradesperson must have an active Philadelphia license for their trade or hold a PA Home Improvement Contractor Registration.

2

I am the: ☒ Property Owner ☐ Tenant ☐ Equitable Owner ☐ Licensed Professional or Tradesperson

Name: Reed J. Slogoff Company: Chestnut Square Associates LP

Address: c/o Pearl Properties, 110 S. 19th Street, Suite 300, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Email: rjs@pearl-properties.com Phone No.: (610) 529 4670

Property owner Information

Identify the deeded property owner.

If there was a recent change of ownership, documentation such as a deed or settlement sheet is required.

*If the property owner is a 'company', identify the contact information for any natural person with more than 49% equity interest in the property. If no individual has such an interest, provide contact information of at least two (2) natural persons with the largest equity interest in the property.

3

The property owner is a/an: ☐ Individual ☒ Company*

Owner (1)

Name: Reed J. Slogoff ☐ Check box if new owner is being listed

Address: c/o Pearl Properties, 110 S. 19th Street, Suite 300, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Owner (2)

Name: James R. Pearlstein

Address: c/o Pearl Properties, 110 S. 19th Street, Suite 300, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Design Professional in Responsible Charge

Identify the PA-licensed design professional who is legally responsible.

4

Name: Rich Villa Firm: Ambit

PA License No.: _____ Phila. Commercial Activity License No.: _____

Email: rich@ambitarchitecture.com Phone No.: (267) 519 3709

Project Scope

Use this section to provide project details; all fields are mandatory.

(a) Choose the proposed occupancy of the entire building. If not one-or-two-family, provide a description of group(s) per code.

(b) Identify if the project will be new construction, an addition, interior/exterior alterations, excavation or shell.

(c) List the site area that will be disturbed by construction, if any. Enter 'zero' if no disturbance.

(d) Note the new floor area created, including basements, cellars, and occupiable roofs. Where existing areas will be altered, list those areas separately.

(e) State the number of new or affected stories.

(f) Provide a detailed description of the work proposed (use separate sheet if needed).

(g) Select all conditions that apply to this project (if any).

* Provide the associated Streets Review number if "Project Impacts Streets / Right-of-Way" is selected.

** If 'Yes' is selected, an Owners' Acknowledgement of Receipt form must be provided for each affected property.

5

(a) Occupancy ☐ Single-Family ☐ Two-Family ☒ Other, please describe: Commercial

(b) Scope of Work ☐ New Construction ☐ Excavation ☒ Addition / Alteration ☐ Shell (No Fit Out) - Option for Commercial Permits Only

(c) Earth Disturbance Area of Earth Disturbance: _____ (Sq. Ft.)

(d) Building Floor Areas New Floor Area: _____ (Sq. Ft.) Existing Altered Area: _____ (Sq. Ft.)

(e) Number of Stories _____

(f) Description of Work Removal of existing non-original marquee, related modifications to exterior and installation of new storefront

(g) Project Conditions

☐ New High Rise ☐ Green Roof Included ☐ Initial Fit-out of Newly Constructed Space
☐ Modular Construction ☒ Façade Work ☐ Project Impacts Streets/Right-of-Way*
☐ Project Impacts Adjacent Property**

* Provide the associated Streets Review number for this project, if applicable: SR-20 N/A

** This project includes work described below: ☐ Yes ☒ No

- Excavation work more than 5 feet below adjacent grade and within 10 feet of an adjacent building or structure.
- Excavation or construction work where historic structure is within 90 feet on the same or adjacent parcel.
- Structural alterations of a historic structure (excluding one-or-two family dwelling).
- Modifications to a party wall, including joist replacement, and additions.
- Severing of structural roof or wall covering spanning properties.



Department of
Licenses and Inspections
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DO NOT MAIL THIS APPLICATION

Job Number: (for office use only)

**Project Details, Other Permits
& Contractor Information**

Use this section to provide project details, pre-requisite approvals and applicable contractor information.

(a) Choose all disciplines of work for which permits are being requested.

- If 'Building' is not requested, provide the number of the associated permit that was previously issued (where applicable).
- If a Zoning Permit was issued for this work, provide the related Zoning Permit number.

(b) Identify the general contractor and estimated cost of building construction.

(c) Identify the licensed excavation contractor and estimated cost of excavation work.

(d) Identify the mechanical contractor, estimated cost of mechanical work, equipment type, and quantity as:

- Number of registers/diffusers (separate new / relocated)
- Number of appliances
- Number of Type I / Type II kitchen hoods

Where fuel gas work is included, note the estimated cost of fuel gas work.

(e) Identify the licensed electrical contractor, estimated cost of electrical work, and a registered third-party electrical inspection agency.

(f) Identify the registered master plumber, estimated cost of plumbing work, number of fixtures, and check location of work as:

- Interior
- Exterior Drainage and/or Water Distribution

(g) Identify the licensed fire suppression contractor, estimated cost of fire suppression work, and number of devices:

- Sprinkler Heads (separate new / relocated quantities)
- Standpipes
- Fire Pumps
- Stand-alone Backflow Prevention Devices
- Kitchen Extinguishing Systems
- Hydrants

***ROUGH-IN NOTICE:** If you are seeking a rough-in permit, an application for plan review must be submitted already.

(h) Provide the total improvement cost for residential (including multi-family) alterations and additions. Check the box if your project is excluded from real estate tax exemption and exempt from Development Impact Tax.

(a) Check all that apply:

☒ Building ☐ Excavation ☐ Mechanical & Fuel Gas ☐ Electrical ☐ Plumbing ☐ Fire Suppression

Provide the associated Construction Permit number, if applicable: **RP or CP - 20** _____

Provide the associated Zoning Permit number for this construction, if applicable: **ZP - 20** _____

Note: Trades listed below (d, e, f, and g) are mandatory for all residential new construction jobs.

(b) General Building Construction Contractor Information

Name: JAZ Construction Cost of Building Work: \$ 25,000.00

License Number: 0990595 Phone: (610) 529 4670

(c) Excavation Work & Contractor Information

Name: _____ Cost of Excavation Work: \$ _____

License Number: _____ Phone: _____

(d) Mechanical / Fuel Gas Work & Contractor Information

Name: _____ Cost of Mechanical Work: \$ _____

License Number: _____ Cost of Fuel Gas Work: \$ _____

Equipment Types: ☐ Registers / Diffusers ☐ Appliances ☐ Hoods Phone: _____

Equipment Details & Quantities: _____

(e) Electrical Work & Contractor Information ☐ New Installation ☐ Alteration ☐ *Rough-In

Name: _____ Cost of Electrical Work: \$ _____

License Number: _____ Phone: _____

Third Party Inspection Agency Name: _____

(f) Plumbing Work & Contractor Information ☐ New Installation ☐ Alteration ☐ *Rough-In

Name: _____ Cost of Plumbing Work: \$ _____

License Number: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Fixtures: _____

Check one: ☐ Interior Work ☐ Exterior Building Drainage ☐ Exterior Water Distribution:
line size: _____ (in.)

(g) Fire Suppression Work & Contractor Information ☐ New Installation ☐ Alteration ☐ *Rough-In

Name: _____ Cost of Fire Supp. Work: \$ _____

License Number: _____ Phone: _____

Sprinkler Heads: _____ Standpipes: _____ Fire Pumps: _____

Commercial Kitchen Systems: _____ Backflow Devices: _____ Hydrants: _____

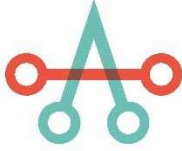
(h) Total Improvement Cost: \$ 25,000.00 (The total improvement cost must also include the cost of all electrical, plumbing, mechanical, fire suppression systems work, and interior finishes)

☐ Check box if your project is excluded from real estate tax exemption and exempt from Development Impact Tax (Review OPA's website for tax abatement information at: <https://www.phila.gov/services/property-lots-housing/property-taxes/get-real-estate-tax-relief/get-a-property-tax-abatement/>)

Declaration & Signature

All provisions of the Philadelphia Code and other City ordinances will be complied with, whether specified herein or not. Plans approved by the Department form a part of this application. I hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further certify that I am authorized by the owner to make the foregoing application, and that, before I accept my permit for which this application is made, the owner shall be made aware of all conditions of the permit. I understand that if I knowingly make any false statements herein, I am subject to such penalties as may be prescribed by law or ordinance, inclusive of the penalties contained in 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: 05 / 11 / 2026



AMBIT ARCHITECTURE

12 S. Letitia St, Unit 102

Philadelphia, PA 19106

May 11, 2026

Via Email (Jon.Farnham@phila.gov)

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Philadelphia Historical Commission

One Parkway, 13th Floor

1515 Arch Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: **1910 Chestnut Street (Property)**
Chestnut Square Associates, LP (Owner)

Dear Dr. Farnham:

On behalf of the Owner of the above Property, I am providing this letter with enclosures in connection with our application for formal review of certain exterior alterations to be made to the existing building on the Property. Specifically, the removal of the existing non-original marquee, installation of new stonework and a new storefront at the front façade.

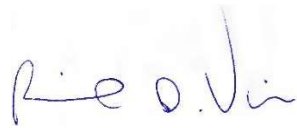
The Property is comprised of a two (2) story vacant commercial building which was formerly the entrance to the Boyd Theater (the balance of which was demolished in 2014 following a finding of financial hardship by the Commission). At that time, the Commission found no feasible re-use of the former theater.

Although not required to do so, in connection with the 2014 approval, the Owner offered to retain an existing non-original marquee. Since that time, despite significant efforts and substantial financial investment, the building has remained dormant for more than twelve (12) years (but for a short lived restaurant which occupied the space). In fact, the building, has proven unleaseable due to the existing marquee, and approval of the proposed exterior alterations will make it marketable to retail users. This will further contribute to the vibrancy of the immediate neighborhood rather than continuing to be a symbol of blight.

The subject application seeks final approval.

cc: *Reed J. Slogoff, Pearl Properties*
James R. Pearlstein, Pearl Properties

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rich Villa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rich" and last name "Villa" clearly distinguishable.

Rich Villa, Partner, Ambit Architecture



Historical Facade Marquee Condition

Proposed Removal of Current non Original Marquee



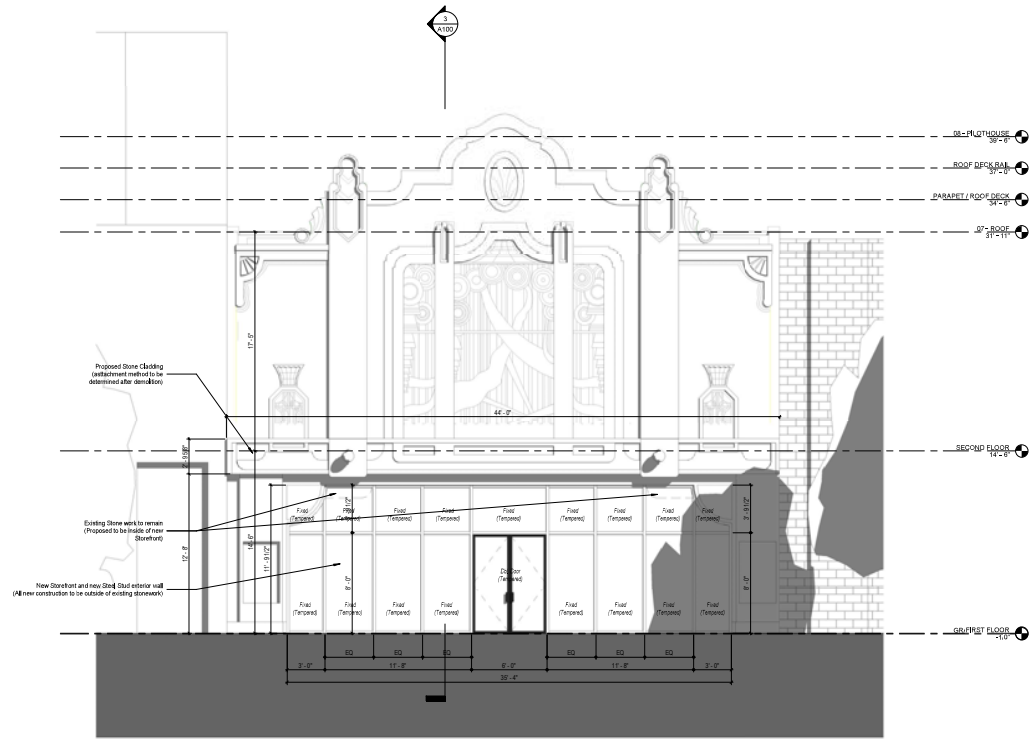
Recent Facade Marquee Condition



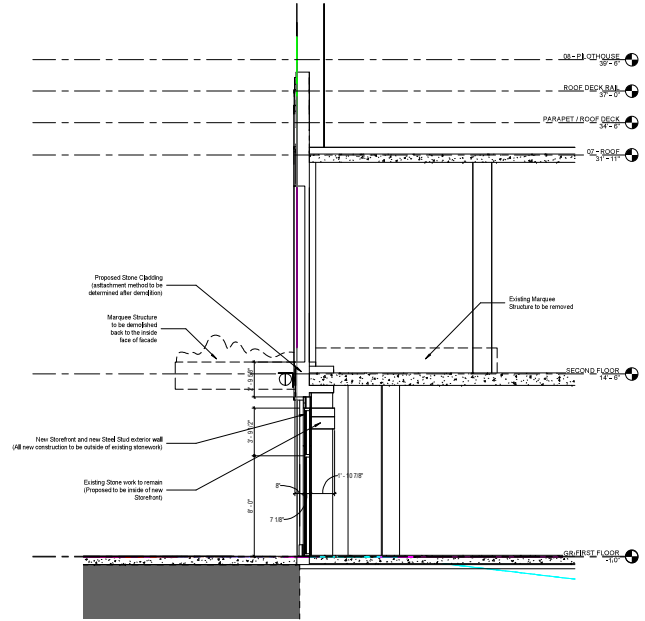
Proposed Elevation Rendering



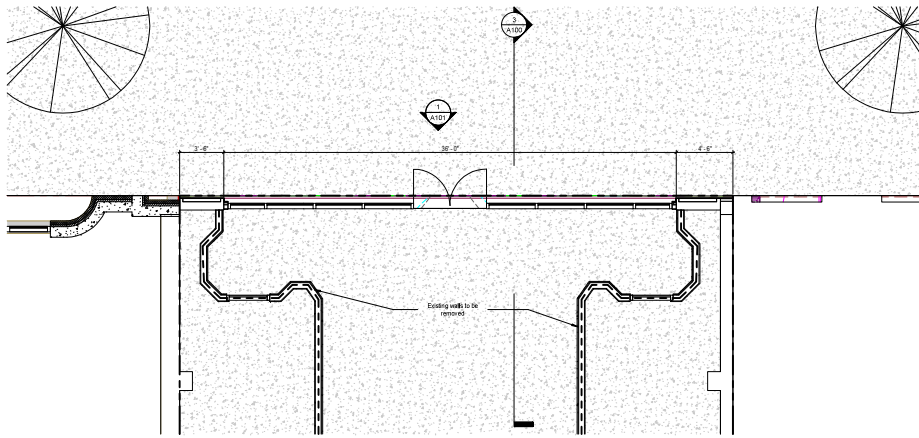
Proposed Facade without Marquee



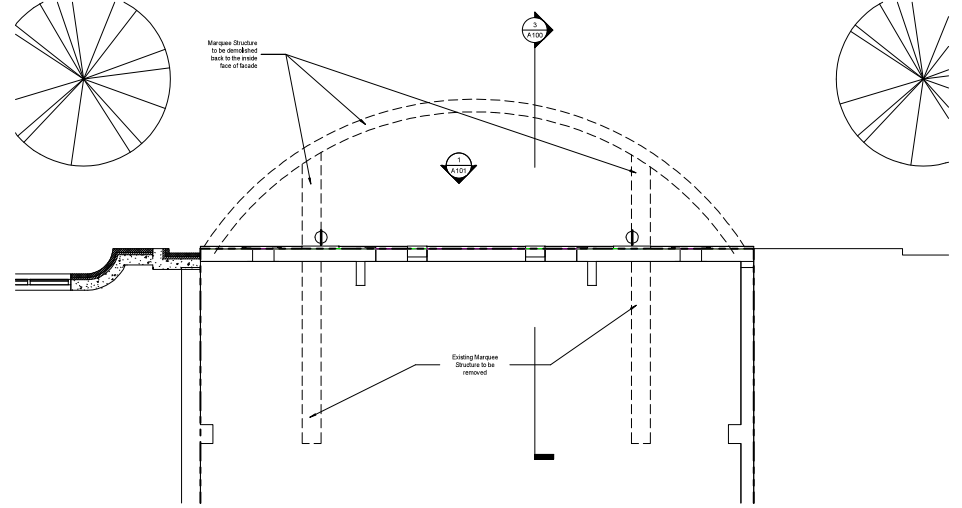
1 North (Chestnut Street) Elevation
A100 1/4" = 1'-0"



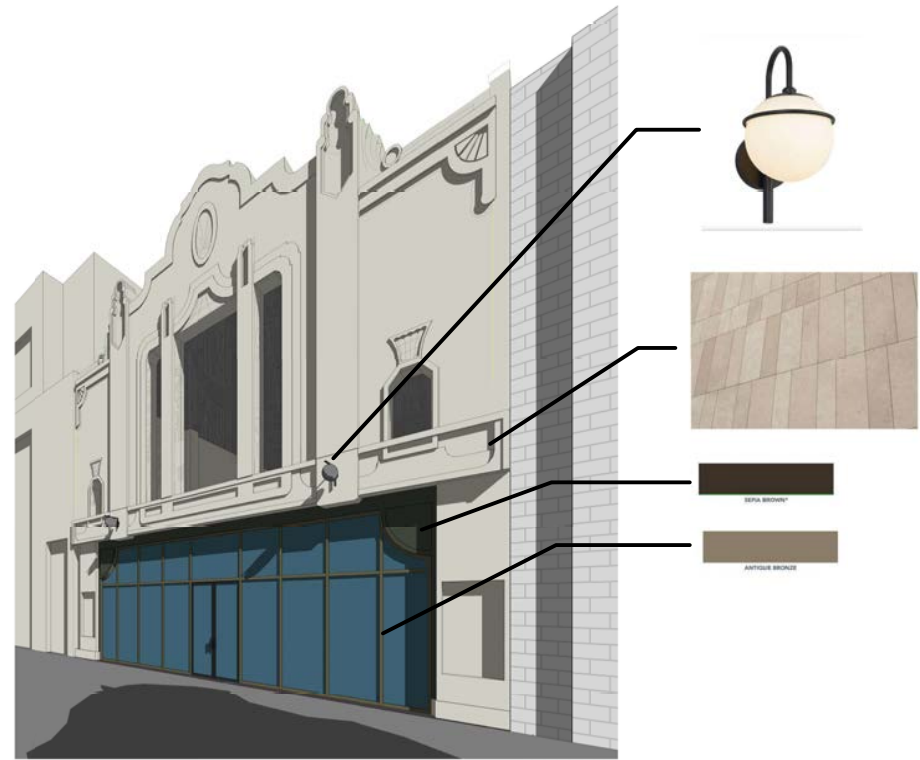
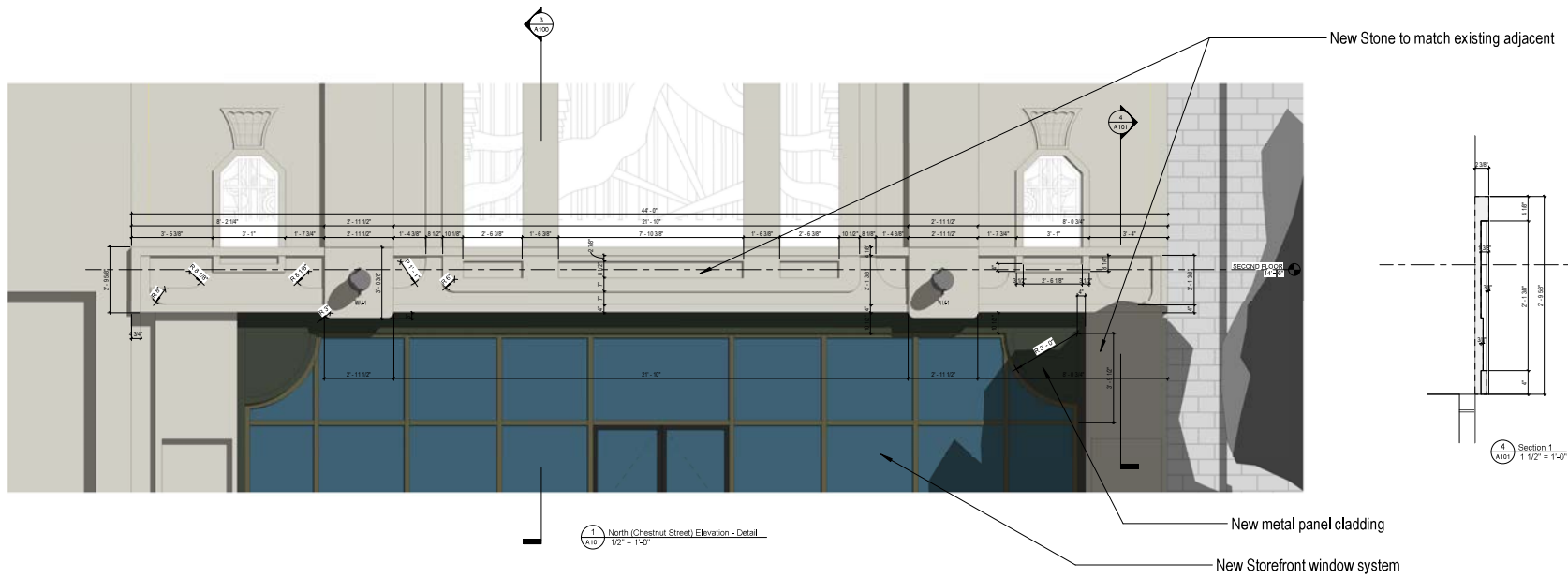
3 Section 2
A100 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
A100 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 SECOND FLOOR PLAN
A100 1/4" = 1'-0"



412 SOUTH 2ND STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19147
215.581.1111
WWW.AMBITARCHITECTURE.COM



AMBIT
ARCHITECTURE



Building Facade Renovation:
1910 Chestnut Street

A101

P·E·A·R·L

P R O P E R T I E S

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kim Chantry – Philadelphia Historical Commission
FROM: Reed J. Slogoff
James R. Pearlstein
CC: Richard Villa
RE: 1910 Chestnut (“Property”)
DATE: May 18, 2026

Please accept this memorandum as a supplement to our application for review of certain exterior modifications to the above Property. We thought it would be helpful and important to provide additional background information as to the on-going challenges we have experienced in our leasing efforts over the past 10+ years.

Background

Our firm, Pearl Properties, is based in Center City, Philadelphia, and we have been an active investor and developer for more than 25 years. During this time, we have assembled a portfolio of holdings which includes a number of retail, commercial and residential properties the bulk of which are located within the Rittenhouse sub-market where the Property is located. Our holdings include both non-historic properties, new construction, properties located within the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District and several properties on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (including this Property). As a substantial owner of retail and commercial spaces, including a number of prominent properties, we are adept at revitalizing and activating retail spaces. In this endeavor, we work closely with the most active local retail brokerage firms.

To wit, in 2016 after completing construction of the alterations to the Property as approved by the Historical Commission, we signed an exclusive listing agreement with MSC Retail in 2016. MSC is a local retail expert with numerous listings of retail spaces in the Rittenhouse sub-market. As our representative, MSC has marketed the Property for lease since 2016 with efforts including the posting of signage at the Property and dissemination of marketing materials on a wide national basis. MSC continues to act as our representative today.

In their role as our leasing representative, MSC has conducted countless meetings, site tours and initiated a multitude of conversations and email transmissions with hundreds of prospective tenants for the Property. Below is a list of prospective tenants to whom the Property has been presented for lease and rejected:

P·E·A·R·L

P R O P E R T I E S

21 st Amendment	Ainsworth	Alamo Draft House
America's Tap House	American Brass	Anthro Brands
Atlas Restaurant Group	B Social Hospitality	Barcelona
Bat Box	Boka Restaurant Group	Bond Street Social
Boston Beer Co	Bounce	Brezza
Brooklyn Brewery	Brooklyn Chop House	Brooklyn Winery
Cescaphe Events Group	Chickie and Petes	Chima
China Grill Management	City Winery	City Works Restaurant
Clyde's	CookNSolo	Cote Korean Steakhouse
Court 16	Darden Restaurants	Dave & Busters
Davio Restaurant	Defined Hospitality	Delfrisco's
Devon	Dogfish Brewery	DSW
Eddie V's	Electric Shuffle	Emporium (Chicago)
Estiatorio Milos	F1	Fabrika
Fanatics	FCM Hospitality	Fig & Olive
Finley Catering	Flemings	Gamehaus
Gibsons	Goddard Schools	Gordon Ramsay
Guinness Brewery	Guy Fieri Restaurants	Hampton Social
Harpoon Taphouse	Hillstone Restaurants	Indigo Restaurant
Iron Hill Brewery	Jose Andres Restaurants	Kellari Greek
KinderCare	La Grande Boucherie	Lady Blue
Landrys Restaurants	Legal Seafood	Level 99
Live Nation Events	Longshot Hospitality	Mastro's Restaurants
Mina Restaurant Group	Momofuku	Mortons
Mott 32	Mr. Chow	Museum of Ice Cream
Muzumi	Nobu	North Italia
Osteria Morini	Other Half Brewery	Patagonia
Pinstripes	PiNS	PJ Clarke's
PJ Whelihans	Planta	Punchbowl Social
REI	Restoration Hardware	Rosa Mexicana
Ross Stores	Royal Palms	Sam Fox Restaurants
Schlow Restaurants	Ship Bottom Brewing	Smith & Wollensky
Starr Restaurant Group	STK	Stone Brewing
Tao Restaurant Group	Teddy Sourias	The Smith
The Stinger	Tin Roof	Tired Hands Brewery
Tood Birnbaum	True Food Kitchen	Trulucks
Two Birds	Uchi	Urban Hawker
Volpe	Water Grill	Wayfair
West Elm	William Sonoma Brands	WineLair
Wonderspaces	Wolfgang's Steakhouse	Yard House

P·E·A·R·L

P R O P E R T I E S

The general feedback from prospective tenants is that while the location on Chestnut Street is prominent, the marquee and recessed storefront burden the space and create a non-retail experience. Specifically, commentary centers on the fact that the entrance feels like a movie theater, traditional signage, storefront and lighting are not available and there is a general lack of visibility. With the substantial investment required and associated financial risk, prospective users have routinely passed on the space. Many of these users have migrated to other retail spaces in Center City further highlighting the unique challenges that existing conditions at the Property present.

In addition to the above commentary, it is critical to note that in the 10+ years since the Property has been available for lease only one tenant has been willing to invest in a potential tenancy (Bankroll), which failed in a matter of months. Prospective users are quick to point to these failures in passing on consideration of the subject space. To date, ownership has invested in excess of \$2 Million in connection with improvements to the Property in the hopes of leasing it. As described above, the alterations requested will allow the Property to be visible and leasable.

Architectural Committee minutes
May 26, 2026

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

**TUESDAY, 26 MAY 2026
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		
Justin Detwiler	X		
Nan Gutterman, FAIA	X		
Allison Lukachik		X	
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP	X		
Sam Weiner	X		

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

The following staff members were present:

Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner I
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons were present:

Alex Balloon
Andy Molholt
Cloud Gehshan Design
Debra McCarty
Dilworth Paxson
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
Howard Haas
James Pearlstein, Pearl Properties
Jay Farrell
Jenine Sanzari
Jessica Senker
Kathy Dowdell
Matthew Wolfe
Nancy Pontone
Paul Schwedelson

Reed Slogoff, Pearl Properties
Rich Villa, Ambit Architecture
Ross Melnick
Rustin Ohler, Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture
Ryan Solimeo, Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture
Stephanie Rumer, Permex Permit Expediting
Steven Peitzman
Todd Werner, Baltimore Signsmiths
Yuhua Wang
Zachary Slogoff

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 4238-40 CHESTER AVE

Proposal: Construct eight duplexes
Review Requested: Review and Comment
Owner: SHRW Clark Park LLC
Applicant: Brett Harman, Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture
History: Undeveloped land
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Southeast Spruce Hill Historic District, Non-contributing, 7/12/2024
Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct eight duplex houses at 4238-40 Chester Avenue in the Southeast Spruce Hill Historic District. The site is currently an open lot that is classified as non-contributing in the historic district. Therefore, the Historical Commission's jurisdiction over the undeveloped site is review-and-comment only, meaning that the Historical Commission and its advisory Architectural Committee may offer non-binding comments on the application at public meetings, but may not approve or deny it.

Each of the proposed duplexes will be four stories tall with a garage entrance on the first floor and a tall mansard roof on the fourth. They will be primarily clad with charcoal colored Hardie plank siding and composite metal panels, with a small amount of brick around each entryway. Each building will also feature a roof deck with pilot house. Mansard roofs are plentiful on other buildings in the historic district, but the proposed mansards are much taller. The new buildings will be located on the boundary of the historic district though there are views of the sides and rear from within the district.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct eight duplexes.

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.*
 - o The new structures will be compatible with the overall size and scale of the historic district.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 26 MAY 2026

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

ADDRESS: 1910 CHESTNUT ST

Proposal: Remove marquee; install storefront

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 19R Chestnut Partners LP

Applicant: Reed Slogoff, Chestnut Square Associates LP

History: 1928; Boyd Theater, Sameric Theater; Hoffman & Henon, architects

Individual Designation: 8/9/2008

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove the theater marquee and vestibule walls, and add a storefront system at the headhouse of the Boyd Theater at 1910 Chestnut Street. The Boyd Theater was an Art Deco movie palace constructed in 1928. The Historical Commission first designated the Boyd Theater in April 1987. In response, the property owner appealed the designation and submitted a financial hardship application proposing complete demolition. The Historical Commission denied the hardship application, owing to incompleteness. The appeal of the designation wound its way through the courts and, eventually, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court vacated the designation in July 1991. The Supreme Court reconsidered the case in November 1993 and upheld the vacating of the designation. The Boyd Theater was nominated a second time in August 2001; the Historical Commission rejected the nomination in April 2002, refusing to designate the theater. The theater ceased showing movies in 2002. The Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a demolition permit for the theater in June 2002, but the demolition was not undertaken. The Preservation Alliance nominated the theater a third time in May 2008; the Historical Commission designated it in August 2008. The owner of the theater submitted a financial hardship application proposing to demolish the theater in September 2013. In March 2014, the Historical Commission found that the Boyd Theater could not be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted and approved its demolition. After the demolition was approved, the property was sold to the current owner, who demolished the auditorium section of the theater but retained the headhouse or entranceway section on Chestnut Street. In June 2015, the Historical Commission approved a redevelopment project for the site that included the construction of a tower along Sansom Street, where the auditorium had been located, and the rehabilitation of the theater headhouse along Chestnut Street including the reconstruction of the 1950s-era theater marquee and installation of a glass storefront system at the open outer lobby. The work to the Boyd Theater headhouse was eventually undertaken for a sports bar called Bankroll, which opened in 2023, but then closed after just five months of operation. The space has been vacant since that time. The application proposes to remove the theater marquee, which is not original. The marquee structure dates to a 1950s replacement; the cladding and lighting was installed in 2018. Stone panels to match the façade would be added to cover the scars where the marquee attaches to the façade. The application also proposes adding a storefront system at the plane of the front façade and installing light fixtures. The vestibule walls, which would then be interior, would be removed. The application asserts that the vacant commercial space cannot be leased in its current form and that the removal of the marquee and vestibule walls, and installation of the storefront, will make the space more desirable to potential tenants.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Remove marquee and vestibule walls; install storefront.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 26 MAY 2026

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- *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.*
 - o The removal of the 1950s-era marquee and vestibule walls does not comply with a strict reading of Standard 9, but allowing for these alterations will help to ensure that the important historic building is repurposed and self-sustaining.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the vestibule walls are documented prior to removal, with the staff to review details including stone panel samples.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:35:10

RECUSAL:

- Leonard Reuter announced that he will likely need to recuse owing to his representation of the Preservation Alliance in 2013 and 2014, when he was in private practice, related to litigation surrounding the demolition approval.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Property owner Reed Slogoff and architect Rich Villa represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McCoubrey stated that the removal of the marquee is a significant change, and that a marquee of any kind would be preferable to what is shown in the applicant's rendering. He opined that the building without its marquee no longer reads as a movie theater.
- Mr. Cluver commented that the request to remove the marquee because it is interfering with advertising is odd, because advertising is the job of the marquee. He noted that applicants are typically looking to add signage, not remove it. He observed that the rendering is missing any form of signage whatsoever for a new tenant, and that any application that involves removing the marquee should include information on how new signage will be added.
- Ms. Gutterman questioned the removal of the marquee when it would be ideal signage for a new tenant.
 - o Mr. Slogoff responded that it does not work that way. He noted that his company has years of experience with this property, and it is simply not marketable. He stated that the marquee changes the entire experience, and more than 120 prospective tenants have provided commentary that the marquee as signage is not of value to them.
- Ms. Gutterman asked if a new tenant would want to put signage on the front of the building.
 - o Mr. Slogoff responded that they would, and it would be governed by the zoning code.
 - o Ms. Gutterman stated that it would also be governed by the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission.
- Mr. Detwiler observed that this is one of several applications reviewed by the Architectural Committee in recent years that is seeking permission to alter a historically designated building for a potential tenant, but with no specific tenant or plan in place. He stated that the Architectural Committee is governed by the

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which speaks to character-defining features of a building. He referred to the marquee as character-defining, and said that the Committee is being asked to evaluate the stripping of the building of its character-defining feature without a tenant-specific proposal for new signage.

- Mr. Detwiler asked about the proposed changes to the vestibule area. He questioned the design, given that it only adds a few additional feet of depth to the interior.
 - o Mr. Slogoff confirmed that the flooring is proposed for removal. He explained that the recessed vestibule is currently very dark, being overshadowed by the marquee, and has become an area where unhoused and other people congregate because it is removed from the sidewalk. He stated that it cannot be solved with lighting, it is already a difficult market for retailers, and the feedback he has received is that this is an extremely different condition than what is typical for retailers to be able to operate successfully, which is why the space has not been leased.
- Mr. Weiner agreed that a marquee is an important feature, but questioned if the feature has already been lost given that the original long vertical sign was removed long ago, and the existing marquee is a cartoonish version of the historic design. He stated that he agrees with the staff's recommendation of approval for the removal of the existing marquee. He commented that Pearl Properties has done many great projects in Center City and he expects that whatever goes into this space will be of the same quality.
 - o Ms. Gutterman questioned if the existing marquee only looks cartoonish because of the Bankroll graphics and not because of its size or shape.
- Mr. Detwiler asked for clarification on the date of the existing marquee.
 - o Ms. Chantry responded that the marquee structure itself dates to the 1950s, and the cladding and lighting date to 2018.
- Ms. Gutterman suggested altering the graphics of the marquee rather than removing it entirely.
- Mr. McCoubrey suggesting altering the marquee to make it a little less imposing.
- Ms. Gutterman expressed frustration at being asked to review an application for a "what-if" scenario of being able to then lease the space once the historic fabric has been removed.
- Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the new storefront could be shifted to be behind the historic brackets rather than in front of them.
 - o Mr. Villa clarified that the brackets will not be removed, but confirmed that the proposal is to place the storefront on the street side of the brackets.
 - o Ms. Gutterman responded that this changes the entire understanding of the building as a movie theater, by removing the marquee and moving the storefront out to the street. She stated that she understands the need for security and future signage, but without knowing who the tenant is and therefore what that would look like, she cannot support this application.
- Mr. Cluver stated that the marquee is so character-defining and its removal would completely change the nature of the building. He stated that the storefront, however, is more of a gray area. He noted that the current location of the storefront is already a compromised location, given that the entrance doors were historically set back even further from the street. He stated that the request to bring the storefront out to the sidewalk is less of a stretch in terms of approval compared to the removal of the marquee.

- o Ms. Gutterman argued that the issue is not just bringing the storefront out to the sidewalk, but also the removal of the finishes that remain from the theater.
- o Mr. Cluver responded that it could be part of a discussion related to an approval for moving the storefront out.
- Mr. Detwiler stated that this building has suffered a thousand cuts and what survives is a compromise. He stated that the flooring, low masonry curves, and windows are historic, and he does not understand how six feet of depth is going to lease a building.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Matthew Wolfe commented that the marquee offers a marketing advantage. He opposed the application.
- Ross Melnick, co-founder of Cinema Treasures and professor of film media studies, commented in opposition to the application. He commented that the marquee can be seen from multiple corners and positions on the street, which provides prominence for tenant signage.
- Kathy Dowdell commented that the nomination calls out both the marquee and inset entrance as character-defining features of the building, which is what the Committee should focus its review on. She urged the Committee to recommend denial of the application.
- Howard Haas, representing Friends of the Boyd, commented in opposition to the application. He referred to several nearby former theaters where current retail tenants are utilizing marquees for signage. He noted that many Friends of the Boyd supporters emailed letters of opposition to the Commission staff, which were made available to the Committee and the public.
- Hanna Stark, representing the Preservation Alliance, commented in opposition to the application. She stated that the 2015 redevelopment approval specifically included restoration of the marquee and the Commission made it clear that the vestibule remained under its jurisdiction despite the addition of the storefront. She commented that the proposal does not meet Standard 9 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Architectural Committee found that:

- The building at 1910 Chestnut Street has always had a marquee, which is a character-defining feature of a movie theater. The current marquee structure dates to a 1950s replacement; the cladding and lighting were installed in 2018.
- The vestibule walls proposed for removal are original to the theater entrance.
- Any new retail tenant would require new signage.

The Architectural Committee concluded that:

- The application fails to satisfy Standard 9. The removal of the 1950s-era marquee and the installation of a storefront at the sidewalk destroys historic materials that characterize the property.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted 5 to 1 to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

ITEM: 1910 Chestnut St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: Gutterman SECONDED BY: Cluver					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Dan McCoubrey	X				
John Cluver	X				
Justin Detwiler	X				
Nan Gutterman	X				
Allison Lukachik					X
Amy Stein	X				
Sam Weiner		X			
Total	5	1			1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:11:42

ACTION: The Architectural Committee adjourned at 11:19 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.