

**THE MINUTES OF THE 642<sup>ND</sup> STATED MEETING OF THE  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2016  
ROOM 18-029, 1515 ARCH STREET  
SARA MERRIMAN, ACTING CHAIR**

**PRESENT**

Sara Merriman, Acting Chair, Commerce Department  
Michael Fink, Department of Licenses & Inspections  
Anuj Gupta, Esq.  
Dominique Hawkins, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP  
Rosalie Leonard, Esq., Office of City Council President  
John Mattioni, Esq.  
Thomas McDade, Department of Public Property  
R. David Schaaf, RA, Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
Robert Thomas, AIA  
Betty Turner, M.A.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Executive Director  
Kim Broadbent, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner I

**ALSO PRESENT**

Jeffrey Stocklos, Fluent Design LLC  
Matt Bremner  
Harry S. Murray, Campbell Thomas & Co.  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance  
Hal Kessler, Mt. Alto Design + Drafting  
James Bowman, Ballinger  
Joe Serratore, Jos. Serratore & Co.  
Kathy Dowdell  
David Singer  
Amy Lambert  
Grace Meloy  
Julia Griffith  
Chris Meilink  
Arielle Harris  
Carolyn Zemanian  
Barron Flood  
Charlie Dinh  
Keisan Gittens  
Susana Medeiros  
Nish Bhai  
Sanjana Muthe

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Merriman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioners Fink, Gupta, Hawkins, Leonard, Mattioni, McDade, Schaaf, Thomas, and Turner joined her.

### **MINUTES OF THE 641<sup>ST</sup> STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**ACTION:** Mr. Schaaf moved to adopt the minutes of the 641<sup>st</sup> Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 8 January 2016. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 26 JANUARY 2016**

Dominique Hawkins, Chair

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Farnham introduced the consent agenda and explained that it included applications for 1903 Spruce Street, Unit 3E and 1516 Green Street. Ms. Merriman asked if any Commissioners had comments on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Thomas noted that he would recuse from any deliberations or vote on the 1516 Green Street application, owing to his firm's involvement in the project. Ms. Merriman stated that the Commission could consider the two applications separately to allow Mr. Thomas to participate in the Spruce Street deliberations. She then asked if anyone in the audience had comments on the Consent Agenda. None were offered.

**ACTION:** Ms. Hawkins moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee for the application for 1903 Spruce Street, Unit 3E. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Thomas recused from the consideration of the application for 1516 Green Street, owing to his firm's involvement in the project.

**ACTION:** Ms. Hawkins moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee for the application for 1516 Green Street. Ms. Leonard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **AGENDA**

### **ADDRESS: 52 S 02ND ST**

Proposal: Install metal door and concrete steps

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 2nd Street Partners LLC

Applicant: Hal Kessler, Mt. Alto Design + Drafting

History: 1834; new storefront, 2000

Individual Designation: 10/7/1976

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Contributing, 12/12/2003

Staff Contact: Kim Broadbent, kim.broadbent@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 6.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to add concrete steps and relocate a metal door at the rear or Strawberry Street emergency exit of this contributing building in the Old City Historic District. The staff has already approved the restoration of the front façade of the building on S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, including the rebuilding of the front brick façade, new windows and a storefront. The staff has also approved new windows for the Strawberry Street façade.

At the rear, on Strawberry Street, a door opening would be raised several inches from its current location, owing to the raising of the interior floor level. Concrete steps would be added to access the raised door opening, encapsulating the existing stone step and landing. A new metal door like the existing metal door would be installed in the raised opening. Like the existing opening, the new door opening would not align with the transom bars in the adjacent openings.

Although an insurance survey for this building is available, it does not address the opening in question. It describes a two-leaf rear door with multiple lites, but, owing to the narrowness of this opening, it is likely the insurance survey is referring to a nearby, wider rear door opening, not this opening.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Broadbent presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Hal Kessler represented the application.

Mr. Kessler explained that the budget for the rehabilitation of this building has grown exponentially since the start of the project, and his client is attempting to minimize the cost of this aspect of the work. He explained that the kitchen floor structurally failed and needed to be rebuilt. The floor was rebuilt four inches higher than the threshold at this door. The top two floors of the building are vacant and will remain that way at this time. Mr. Kessler suggested that, when the time comes for those upper floors to be used, the rear façade of the building can then be addressed. He circulated additional drawings, and explained that the front of the building is being meticulously restored.

Ms. Hawkins stated that the Architectural Committee questioned whether the difference in rise could be corrected in the interior, in which case the exterior of the building would not be altered. Mr. Kessler responded that it would be very difficult to correct the situation in the interior, and emphasized that the egress should be made as safe as possible. He stated that significant modifications would also be required to the joists that are already in place. Ms. Hawkins responded that the problem should have been addressed when the floor was being reconstructed. She asserted that a series of choices were made outside the Historical Commission's purview that led to the current predicament and the request to modify the exterior of the building. She stated that the Commission should not lower its standards because these

choices were made. Mr. Kessler stated that it is not technically infeasible to address the problem in the interior, but it is financially infeasible. He stated that his client is asking for this concession, especially in light of the expensive restoration work at the front façade.

Mr. Kessler addressed a concern raised at the Architectural Committee meeting regarding a Streets Department approval, and noted that he has obtained the requisite approval.

Mr. Kessler stated that the existing steps are not ideal for egress, and that, even if the correction could be made on the interior, the exterior steps would still need to be replaced or encapsulated in concrete. Mr. Thomas suggested that the correction be made on the interior by means of carpentry to bring down the level of the floor. He suggested adding a step inside of the building. Mr. Kessler responded that it would not be ideal for egress because of the short step outside of the door. Mr. Thomas suggested that the stone slabs could be reset. Mr. Kessler responded that the bottom step is already crumbling concrete, not stone, and the engineer does not want to move the top step. Mr. Thomas responded that it is an opportunity to replace the bottom step with a piece of salvaged marble, since it was likely marble originally. Mr. Kessler replied that leaving the steps as they are and lowering the floor on the interior still creates a situation that is not code-compliant; however, the steps are grandfathered in. The repair of the steps is of greater concern than the lowering of the floor. Ms. Hawkins asked if the steps need to be repaired regardless of the floor-height situation. Mr. Kessler responded affirmatively. They must fix the steps whether the compensation for the floor height is made in the interior or exterior. Ms. Hawkins responded that the repair of the steps should be done in a historically appropriate manner.

Ms. Merriman asked for public comment, of which there was none.

**ACTION:** Ms. Hawkins moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and deny the application, pursuant to Standard 6. Ms. Leonard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Fink excused himself from the meeting.

**ADDRESS: 1903 SPRUCE ST, UNIT 3E**

Proposal: Construct two roof decks  
Review Requested: Final Approval  
Owner: Greg Kubicek  
Applicant: Dave Martin, Remodeling Concepts, LLC  
History: 1875  
Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995  
Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the application, provided the railings of both decks have simple black metal pickets and a mock-up demonstrates that the decks are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to construct two roof decks. The first, or lower, roof deck would be located on the western portion of the third floor of the rear ell in a notch between the main block and the five-story portion of the rear ell. The proposed lower deck would likely be invisible from the public right-of-way. The application proposes a metal spiral staircase rising from the lower deck to an upper deck on the five-story portion of the rear ell. The deck, which would be set back from the more visible, eastern edge of the roof by 2.5 feet, would measure 12 feet in width by 15 feet in length. Both the upper and lower roof decks would be constructed of pressure-treated wood.

**ACTION:** See Consent Agenda

**ADDRESS: 1229 RODMAN ST**

Proposal: Demolish one-story rear addition; construct three-story rear addition  
Review Requested: Final Approval  
Owner: Matt Bremner  
Applicant: Matt Bremner  
History: 1860  
Individual Designation: 2/3/1964  
District Designation: None  
Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided that the windows of the main block are wood or aluminum clad and match the appearance of the historic windows, and that the majority of the rear wall of the main block maintained, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to demolish an existing one-story addition and construct a larger, three-story addition at the rear of the property. The addition would extend across approximately two-thirds of the width of the building and would rise to meet the cornice of the existing three-story rear wall, and would leave approximately one-third of the rear wall of the main block intact. The addition would be clad in wheat-colored stucco and feature white vinyl windows.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Historical Commission. Property owner Matt Bremner and architect James Bowman represented the application.

Ms. Merriman asked the applicants to explain the points of disagreement between themselves

and the Architectural Committee. Mr. Bowman directed the Commission to the demolition plans for the rear wall. He noted that the project is proposing to demolish approximately eight feet of the rear wall from the foundation to the cornice. He noted that the demolition of the masonry wall would allow the connection from the existing house to the new addition. He noted that the Architectural Committee recommended retaining the entirety of the rear wall wall and cutting new openings for passage from the existing house to the addition. Since that meeting, he observed, the structural engineer on the project had expressed concerns about the structural integrity of the wall with new openings as recommended by the Committee.

Ms. Hawkins asked Mr. Bowman to clarify the engineer's concerns, noting that they are articulated in the letter he submitted. Mr. Bowman responded that the amount of demolition required would reduce the amount of masonry left in the wall to such an extent that it would have no structural integrity. Mr. Thomas noted that the engineer's letter says that the contractor expressed those concerns, but the letter does not say that the structural engineer shares those concerns. He noted that the letter suggests that the contractor expressed concerns and wished to proceed with the job in one way, and that the engineer has responded that the way the contractor proposes to do the work is acceptable. Mr. Thomas noted that the letter provides no verification that the applicants would be prohibited from doing the project a different way. Mr. Thomas noted that he would like to know whether the engineer has concerns with proceeding with the scheme recommended by the Architectural Committee. He opined that the engineer's letter does not make a case against the Architectural Committee's recommendation.

Mr. Schaaf opined that the contractor is probably expressing dismay that the demolition will need to be surgical. He suggested that the contractor may be concerned about how to tie back the remaining one-third of the rear wall. Mr. Thomas responded that the joists presumably run from party wall to party wall, and that the rear wall is likely only supported at the corners. Mr. Thomas noted that the drawings say that they are subject to an agreement between the owner and architect, and that he assumes that they are using a standard AIA document, and that there are ways to brace the wall. Mr. Schaaf opined that the contractor might be saying that it is an easier job to take the whole wall down, and questioned how one would retain a portion of the wall. Mr. Thomas responded that the remaining brick could be tied back to the joists. Mr. Thomas noted that it would be cheaper to remove the whole wall, but questioned whether that would constitute a demolition in the eyes of the ordinance and trigger a financial hardship review.

Mr. Thomas noted that the rear of the property is visible from the public right-of-way across a surface parking lot. Ms. Merriman opined that it is an anomaly that the rear is visible. Mr. Thomas noted that it is likely that a building will be constructed on the parking lot at some point in the future.

Mr. Bremner noted that much of the rear wall is not the original brick, but is instead concrete masonry units, and that the two-thirds of the wall would be encased in the addition. Mr. Thomas asked what they proposed for the visible third of the building. Mr. Bremner responded that they proposed brick, but would be amenable to Commission's suggestions.

Mr. Thomas asked Ms. Hawkins about the Architectural Committee's review, and whether she would be in favor of rebuilding the visible third of the rear wall to match the historic wall. Ms. Hawkins responded that the real concern is how much historic fabric is removed, and is that level of impact appropriate for the building. Ms. Hawkins opined that the Commission has to decide whether removing the rear wall is consistent with the Standards, and stated that, in her opinion, it is not. She noted that if there was something structurally deficient about the wall, that would be a different conversation, but nothing has been provided that shows that its removal is

for anything but convenience. Mr. Thomas opined that the rear wall appears to have been altered, and that its removal would not set a bad precedent.

Mr. Thomas questioned whether there is an alley behind the property. Mr. Bremner responded that there is a utility easement, but not a public right-of-way.

Ms. DiPasquale clarified that the Committee's concern had been with the removal of the two-thirds of the rear wall where the addition would be erected. She pointed out that the applicants had never proposed removing the visible third of the main block. She noted that the application drawings as submitted reflect the retention and rehabilitation of the visible third of the rear wall.

Ms. Merriman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

**ACTION:** Mr. Thomas moved to approve the application, provided that the windows of the main block are wood or aluminum clad and match the appearance of the historic windows, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 8 to 1. Ms. Hawkins dissented.

**ADDRESS: 1516 GREEN ST**

Proposal: Construct three-story apartment building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Michael Alhadad

Applicant: Robert Thomas, Campbell Thomas & Company Architects

History: 1886; historic building demolished, 2014

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the Alternate 2, provided that the non-brick portions of the exterior walls are covered with stucco, not EFIS, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 6.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to reconstruct a building on the site of a c. 1855 rowhouse, which was demolished in 2014. The new building will be a wood frame structure with a brick veneer façade based on the historic façade. As a six-unit building, the new structure will be required to be accessible to disabled persons. Two options have been proposed to achieve accessibility. Alternate 1 proposes a long ramp in the front yard and a doorway that is lower on the façade than the historic doorway. Alternate 2 proposes to utilize a wheelchair lift and would match the historic building in terms of locations of openings.

**ACTION:** See Consent Agenda

**ADDRESS: 1513 NORTH ST**

Proposal: Demolish rear ell; construct new rear addition with roof deck and pilot house

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Damien Breen

Applicant: Joseph Serratore, Jos. Serratore & Co. Archs

History: 1875

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9, with the following suggestions for revision:

- the rear wall of the main block should be retained, although openings to access the new addition may be punched into it;
- the existing rear ell may be demolished, and a new rear ell may be constructed, provided the existing four-foot alleyway between 1513 and 1515 North Streets is maintained;
- the deck should be limited to the roof of the rear ell; and
- the pilot house should be reduced in height and presence, potentially by modifying the proposed stair design to be a straight-run stair.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to demolish the existing two-story rear ell as well as the three-story rear wall of the main block, and to construct a three-story addition with a roof deck and pilot house. The building is located mid-block on North Street in the Spring Garden Historic District. Its rear is not visible from a public right-of-way. However, the existing rear ells of 1513 and 1515 North Street each contain a four-foot setback from the shared property line. Although the proposed addition would maintain the rear plane of the neighboring buildings, it would be constructed to the western property line, eliminating part of the setback shared with 1515 North Street.

The proposed roof deck would be set back 12 feet from the front façade and extend to the rear wall of the new addition. The rear windows of the addition would likely be aluminum clad two-over-two double-hung sash.

The application also proposes to rehabilitate the interior of the main block and to install new two-over-two wood windows and a new wood door at the front façade.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Keller presented the application to the Historical Commission. No one represented the application.

Ms. Keller explained that the applicant was unable to attend the meeting. She noted that he had revised the architectural plans to comply with the Architectural Committee's recommendation.

Ms. Hawkins concurred that the revised plans reflect the suggestions of the Architectural Committee as noted in its recommendation.

**ACTION:** Ms. Hawkins moved to approve the revised application as presented to the Historical Commission at its meeting on 12 February 2016, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.



## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **101 W GRAVERS LANE**

Nominator: Jennifer Robinson, Chestnut Hill Historical Society

Owner: 101 Gravers LLC

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 101 W. Gravers Lane as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

The nomination has not yet been reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation. It was presented to the Committee at its December 2015 meeting. At the request of various parties, the Committee recommended that the Commission table the nomination and remand it to the Committee at a subsequent meeting. At its December 2015 meeting, the Commission tabled the nomination for 60 days, to this meeting in February 2016, but did not remand it to the Committee. The staff suggests that the Commission not address the merits of the nomination, but simply remand it to the Committee on Historic Designation for its meeting on 17 March 2016.

The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C, H, I and J. The nomination argues that the single-family residence, with the main block constructed by stonemason Lewis Headman in 1867 and 1868, is a well-preserved example of a vernacular interpretation of an architect-designed dwelling. The nomination also argues that the building is significant for being a visual landmark in Chestnut Hill, owing to its location on a corner lot, and that the site may be likely to yield archaeological information, as the house sits approximately on the site of the former Union Chapel.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Farnham requested that the Historical Commission remand the application to the Committee on Historic Designation for its 17 March 2016 meeting.

**ACTION:** Ms. Hawkins moved to remand the nomination for 101 W. Gravers Lane to the Committee on Historic Designation for its meeting on 17 March 2016. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:** At 9:50 a.m., Ms. Hawkins moved to adjourn. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES**

Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinct materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

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.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials,

features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

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.

Roofs Guideline: Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

DRAFT