Vieux Carré Architecture Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 11, 2020
Old Business
ADDRESS: 630 Royal
OWNER: M.S. Rau, Inc.
ZONING: VCC-2
USE: Commercial

DENSITY
Allowed: 7 Units
Existing: 0 Units
Proposed: No change

APPLICANT: Jonathan Tate
SQUARE: 42
LOT SIZE: 4191 sq. ft.

OPEN SPACE
Required: 1257 sq. ft.
Existing: 352 sq. ft.
Proposed: No Change

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

This 2-story masonry “French Quarter” style was constructed circa 1948 for M.S. Rau to house his antique emporium. The building stands on the site of the home of James Pitot, the first mayor of the city.

The Preservation Resource Center holds a façade easement on this and the other Rau properties in this block (622-24-26 St. Peter Street and 623-25 Toulouse Street).

Rating:
Main building: Yellow, or contributory to the character of the district
Courtyard addition: Brown, or of no architectural and/or historical importance.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:
Permit # 18-39602-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Review of design development drawings of conceptually approved new mechanical intake louvers, per application & materials received 12/03/2018 & 11/03/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:
11/10/2020

Following the conceptual approval of new mechanical louvers on the Chartres elevation of the building the applicant developed the design and submitted additional details on the proposal. The proposal now shows that the existing top sash would be able to remain in place with it to be repaired and painted as part of the overall project. The mechanical louvers would only occupy the location of the bottom sash. Depth wise, the new louvers would be set in the wall at approximately the same depth as the existing bottom sash. A fur out would be built behind the top sash, similar to those at the other windows overlooking this courtyard.

Staff finds the developed design for the mechanical louvers less invasive than the previously conceptually approved design that proposed to remove both the upper and lower sashes. Staff recommends approval of the proposal with any final details to be resolved at the staff level.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:
11/10/2020

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:
Permit # 18-39602-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to temporarily remove existing storefront to allow for construction access and to replace existing window on the Chartres elevation with new mechanical intake louvers, per application & materials received 12/03/2018 & 10/20/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:
10/27/2020

Following the deferral at the 10/13/2020 meeting, the applicant submitted additional information
including details on the storefront removal, the rear windows proposed to be furred out on the interior, and specs on the products associated with that work. Staff has also had the chance to discuss the proposal with the PRC. The PRC’s primary concern is that the storefront windows be restored exactly to match existing and that those existing conditions are well documented prior to any work being done.

On the additional detail drawing, the storefront removal is shown as being limited to the actual window and the knee wall below. Again, this millwork would be replaced exactly following the construction work, a timeframe of about four months according to the applicant.

The windows on the rear elevation are now noted as being repaired and repainted and any Plexiglas covering removed as part of the work. The fur out details also notes that the interior materials will be vapor permeable to allow for any interior moisture to dry out. Staff notes that the owner will need to continue to monitor and maintain these windows into the future but staff is now much more comfortable with the proposed work.

Staff recommends approval of the application with any final details to be worked out at the staff level.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:

10/27/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Baddour present on behalf of the application. Mr. Baddour apologized for the schematic nature of the drawings at the last meeting. Ms. DiMaggio stated asked if on the louvered grill section, they expected to replace the window sashes as well. Mr. Baddour stated that they wanted to get conceptual approval and then get the details worked out. He went on to say that the mechanical engineer needed to know what type of window would be approvable before making his assessment. Mr. Fifield asked if they planned to remove the sash, frame or both. Mr. Baddour stated just sash. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any more questions. He then asked staff if they would require more detail about the storefront being removed. Mr. Albrecht stated yes, he would need sections. Mr. Baddour then asked the Committee if his team could replace the storm windows to match existing. Mr. Fifield stated that his drawings did not show this. Mr. Baddour stated that they were happy to go either way on the windows. Mr. Fifield asked staff to comment. Mr. Albrecht stated that these windows could be temporary if a storm was coming, but they could not be permanent. Mr. Baddour stated that he understood and that they were fine with permanently removing them. With nothing left to discuss, Mr. Fifield moved on to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:
No public comment.

Discussion and Motion:
Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for conceptual approval with the proposal to return to the Committee with improved design development plans. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/13/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/13/2020

Permit # 18-39602-VCGEN Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to temporarily remove existing storefront to allow for construction access and to replace existing window on the Chartres elevation with new mechanical intake louvers, per application & materials received 12/03/2018 & 09/28/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/13/2020

This application began back at the end of 2018 as strictly an interior renovation. As the plans evolved and developed, a few exterior elements joined the proposal. The first element, temporarily removing one of the storefront windows, is only being proposed to facilitate the interior renovation. Removing this storefront will allow for larger equipment and materials to be brought into the building. Once the work is nearing completion, the storefront is proposed to be rebuilt to exactly match the existing conditions.

Staff finds this element of the proposal generally approvable but questions if there is an estimate for how long the storefront would be removed.

The second aspect of the proposal occurs on the Chartres elevation where the applicant proposes to remove one existing window and install mechanical louvers in the same opening. The note for this work can be seen on sheet A011, detail 2 and the applicant has provided photographs of the window and view
out from this area. The window overlooks some existing mechanical equipment on the flat roof and it appears that visibility into this area is limited to one neighboring window a couple properties away.

In reference to building equipment the Guidelines state that “vents and/or exhausts should be installed within the building envelope and where they are minimally visible from the public right-of-way” and also that “it is recommended that original doors, windows, or other architectural features that are removed be stored on-site for use by a future owner.” (VCC DG: 13-8)

Staff finds the mechanical louver location consistent with these Guidelines. Staff requests a detail of the louvers recommending that they be recessed in the opening as much as possible. Additionally, if approved, staff recommends that the window be stored on site consistent with the recommendations of the Guidelines.

In reviewing the plans, staff noted that several other windows facing into the courtyard are proposed to be furred over on the interior side of the window. The detail provided notes a fluid applied, UV tolerant weather barrier applied to sheathing that would be attached to the existing window frame. Typically, if this type of detail is approved the VCC requires the interior material to be dark in color and non-reflective.

If this detail is approved, staff requests that the windows be properly repaired prior to the installation of the fur out and that the windows continue to be properly maintained in the future.

Finally, staff notes that there is a PRC Façade Easement on this building. Unfortunately, staff did not have a chance to discuss this proposal with the PRC prior to the preparation of this report but no permits will be issued without their full support.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/13/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Baddour present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any questions or comments. Mr. Baddour stated that the construction duration should be about 4 months. Mr. Fifield asked the applicant if he could report on any interaction with the PRC façade easement committee. Mr. Baddour stated that generally speaking they were usually in agreement with staff and SHPO, but that he had not heard any definite response as of now. Ms. DiMaggio asked the applicant if the furring out with insulation had a means for the condensation to evaporate. Mr. Baddour stated that they had gone through the same condition at least 40 times at the neighboring property and that they had worked with a water proofing specialist to come up with the detail presented. Ms. DiMaggio clarified her question by stating that she was referring to the window. Mr. Baddour stated that the fluid would be applied to a board on the inside of the window. Ms. DiMaggio questioned detail 3 on page 44. Mr. Baddour stated that she was right and that he needed to reexamine that sheet. Mr. Fifield asked what exactly the fluid was that would be applied. Mr. Baddour stated that it was a black coating. Mr. Fifield asked if it was silicone or latex. Mr. Baddour stated that he was unsure and would have to go back and check. Mr. Bergeron stated that it appeared a storm window was already installed. He asked the applicant if that window would be restored. Mr. Baddour stated that this was not currently in the plan. Mr. Bergeron asked if the storm sashes were to be removed. Mr. Baddour stated no, but that they could entertain that idea. He went on to say that they were trying to waterproof the inside only. Mr. Fifield stated that there seemed to be very little regard for the historic fabric. He went on to say that he was disturbed by the schematic nature of the drawings and that both the architect and the owner had a responsibility to the exterior and that he did not see any evidence that the owner was taking that responsibility seriously. The Committee moved to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:
Discussion and Motion:
Mr. Bergeron made the motion for a deferral in order to give the applicant time to add the necessary details asked for at today’s hearing. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
ADDRESS: 1201-23 Chartres/609 Gov. Nicholls

OWNER: Chris White et. al.

APPLICANT: Richard Earls

ZONING: VCR-2

USE: Residential

SQUARE: 51

LOT SIZE: 19,263 sq. ft.

ALLOWED: 32 Units

REQUIRED: 3,852 sq. ft.

EXISTING: 20 Units

EXISTING: Unknown

PROPOSED: No Change

PROPOSED: No Change

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

Stella Maris Maritime Center or St. Mary's Community Center, housed in a c. 1948 version of a neo-classical institutional structure, designed by architects Herbert Benson and George Riehl.

Main building – Orange

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 11/10/2020

Permit # 20-28457-VCGEN

Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to construct new steel framed balcony at the second floor of an interior facing unit (Unit 7), per application & materials received 05/18/2020 & 11/05/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 11/10/2020

This application was deferred at the 06/10/2020 Architecture Committee meeting to allow for the applicant to submit additional information and to allow for staff to perform a site visit. Staff was able to visit and photograph the site on 06/17/2020 and the applicant has submitted additional information for this meeting including a site plan and floor plans that help to locate this unit on the parcel.

The proposal itself is very similar to the one made back in June, to install a new 4-1/2’ x 14-1/2’ balcony outside of their condo unit (Unit 7). Based on comments of the Architecture Committee, the applicant has included an alternative cantilevered design but they have stated that they strongly prefer the original bolt on installation.

During the site visit staff observed several other existing doors with barriers immediately outside the doors, matching the current situation at Unit 7.

Regarding the addition of a new balcony the Guidelines state that, “in select cases, the VCC might approve the installation of a new balcony, gallery, porch, or overhang provided that:

- There is documentary evidence supporting a balcony, gallery, porch, or overhang previously existed
- The installation is appropriate for the building type
- The installation does not destroy or conceal an important architectural feature or detail
- The proposed design is compatible in size, scale, and design to the building and surrounding streetscape” (VCC DG: 08-9)

Although there is not direct evidence of a balcony previously existing in this location, the applicant has provided information from BBSA correspondence in 1996 which notes that balconies were previously proposed at “townhouse units” to provide a secondary means of egress.

Given that this is a more contemporary complex, particularly on the interior units where this unit is located, staff does not find the installation inappropriate for the building type. Additionally, staff does not find that the installation would destroy or conceal any important architectural features or details.

As this is an interior unit, visibility would be limited to within the complex only and would have no affect on the surrounding streetscape.

Overall, staff finds the concept of a new balcony in this location approvable per the Guidelines. Additionally, given the industrial nature of the complex, staff finds the proposed bolt on detailing of the balcony potentially approvable.

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the balcony and requests commentary from the Architecture Committee regarding the preferred detailing.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 11/10/2020
Proposal to construct new steel framed balcony matched to existing adjacent balcony at the second floor of an interior facing unit, per application & materials received 05/18/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 06/10/2020

The applicant proposes to install a new 4’ x 14’ balcony outside of their condo unit (Unit 7). The location is within one of the interior courtyard spaces of the complex and would only be visible from within the property itself. Currently there are doors in the location of the proposed balcony with a railing installed on the outside of the door jambs, so a balcony could be added in this location with little to no modification of the millwork. The proposed balcony design is more contemporary with simple metal and cable railings, but this matches similar existing railings located in the orange-rated building.

Staff’s one hesitation with the proposed design is the use of structural angled cables located above the balcony and anchoring into the wall approximately 8’ above the balcony deck. Additional structural elements are shown below the balcony but there is no indication that the balcony would feature cantilevered elements extending into the building. It appears the entire balcony structure would essentially be bolted to the existing building wall at four different elevations. Staff finds the use of the angled structural cable above the balcony atypical but given the more contemporary nature of this building’s detailing, the Architecture Committee may find the detail approveable.

Staff has received notice from the condo association of this property noting that they did not approve of the proposed construction. Staff consulted the City’s Legal Department who stated that “the board’s action is against the applicant and not [VCC]. They can note their objections before the commission but we can’t enforce HOA rules, only our guidelines.” If there is a disagreement between a condo owner and the HOA, that would be a civil matter worked out between those parties, but not the VCC.

Regarding the proposed balcony, staff finds the proposal conceptually approvable but requests details and possible revisions regarding the structural elements of the proposal.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 06/10/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Bodet and Mr. Trautenberg present on behalf of the application. Mr. Bodet stated that they agreed with staff and they could provide the requested numbers structurally. Mr. Fifield opened the floor to Committee comment. Mr. Bergeron stated that he found the proposal confusing and wasn’t sure where in the building the site actually was. Mr. Bodet stated that the supports were at the ends, not the middle. Mr. Fifield asked if the detailing was similar to existing rails and wire. Mr. Bodet stated yes that it was identical to adjacent construction. Mr. Fifield asked why no cantilever. Mr. Bodet stated that that would require going into the existing floor framing and that while that was an option, he would not recommend it. Mr. Trautenberg stated that the proposed balcony would sit over his private brick patio, entirely over his own property. He went on to thank the Committee for their time and tell them that he had followed VCC guidelines and would like their approval. Mr. Fifield moved to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:

James and Leslie Conway, 1201 Chartres unit 20
As owners on and of the property, and an immediate direct neighbor of Unit 7, we have the following concerns:

PRIVACY:
Currently the properties within our building are situated and were structured with privacy in mind. Offering us all our own relatively private space. The proposed balcony would overlook several neighbors courtyards. This would include our own but dramatically, directly, and broadly, several of our neighbors courtyards. In addition, the balcony would have direct views into one of our neighbors 2nd floor living space.

SOUND:
The area requested to build out a balcony would further tighten an already narrow space and walkway. Giving just a 7"7" opening between the balcony and our east facing wall. Sounds from occupants of the balcony will bounce and amplify off of our wall in the narrow space. In addition, our bedroom opens out from the eastern wall-above the proposed balcony.

Jesse Robert Paige, 1201 Chartres unit 8
My name is Jesse Paige and I am listed as an applicant for a proposed new construction of a non-conforming Juliet balcony at 1201 Chartres Street. My wife and I share the property of 1201 Chartres Street with David Trautenberg of Unit #7. We are the direct adjacent neighbors living in Unit #8 and share the exterior wall and interior walls that the proposed balcony would be built into and suspended from. We are in absolute opposition to the permitting and construction of this balcony. We are deeply
concerned for the structural integrity of our shared exterior wall that this balcony would be built upon. It is a completely wood frame wall with a stucco covering. We have no evidence that the building could withstand the weight of a non-conforming cable suspended balcony especially with the added load of occupants. There has been no stamped structural engineering report or design submitted. What has been submitted for Unit #7 is just an architect's conceptual design by Bob Bodet, the architect privately hired by David Trautenburg. Bob Bodet is not a structural engineer. No place on the entire property does a cable suspended balcony exist. The comparison submitted by Bob Bodet and David Trautenburg is attempting to deceive the VCC as there is no balcony on the property to match as proposed. What has been submitted to use as a comparison is actually of a shared common space walkway that was dictated by the State and City fire-codes at the time of the original construction of the property. The common walkway was built in by steel joists through the building as well as cantilevered anchors and is no way cable suspended or comparable to the proposed non-conforming balcony design. It should also be noted and considered that this shared exterior wall was just recently completely rebuilt, from the ground floor to the 3rd floor, due to heavy termite damage. We are also concerned about the interior damage likely to occur to our drywall and ceilings as a consequence of the balcony construction due to the fact we share interior walls with Unit 7. The proposed balcony also does not fit the aesthetics of the building. This balcony will break up the line of our shared wall and look like a singular protruding piece as it will not be continuous in front of Unit #8. It will not symmetrical to Unit #8 of the shared property wall (please note the attached picture: Unit 7 is pictured on the left as it is prepared for balcony construction and Unit 8 is pictured on the right). At 14 feet wide this balcony will also intrude over our private courtyard. We are also very concerned about privacy as this balcony will be directly intruding into our living area. We strongly oppose this balcony and request the permit request to be removed or denied. It should also be noted that our HOA for 1201 Chartres Street has denied this balcony proposal as it does not conform with the property's intentional and aesthetic privacy design or sound treatment design. David Trautenburg was presented, in writing, the opportunity to appeal and chose not to do so.

Motion and discussion:
Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the application in order to allow the applicant to provide more information to staff and to allow the staff time to conduct a site visit. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
730 Orleans
ADDRESS: 730 Orleans
OWNER: 730 Orleans Real Estate LLC
APPLICANT: Erika Gates
ZONING: VCC-2
USE: Commercial/Residential
LOT SIZE: 1,992.2 sq. ft.
SQUARE: 60
DENSITY: OPEN SPACE:
ALLOWED: 3 Units
REQUIRED: 597.7 sq. ft.
EXISTING: Unknown
EXISTING: Unknown
PROPOSED: No change
PROPOSED: No change

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:
Main building & service building: Green, of local architectural and/or historic significance.

C. 1830 typical Transitional style masonry building which has a side passageway, 3½-stories, arched openings on the ground floor, casement openings leading onto the wrought iron balcony on the second floor, and double-hung windows above solid panels on the third floor. There is a detached 2-story service building. The buildings were constructed between 1829 and 1834 for Maurice Abat.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/27/2020
Permit #20-33276-VCGEN Lead Staff: Erin Vogt

Review of millwork drawings and jamb details for conceptually approved carriageway doors, per application & materials received 07/07/2020 and 11/03/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/27/2020

On 07/28/2020, the Committee conceptually approved a proposal to remove the existing iron gates in the Royal-side passageway and install double wooden gates with raised panels, to match those seen in photographs from the 1960s. The applicant began work on millwork drawings and submitted details to staff for review and approval. Upon review, staff was not comfortable issuing a permit without review of details at the Committee level.

The existing opening and frame are out of square and have a visually apparent lean towards Bourbon Street. The applicant is proposing to maintain the thickness of the jamb at the top of the gates, widening the jamb on the Royal side and reducing it on the Bourbon side. At grade, the applicant expects the jamb to be approximately 1-1/2” thick, not counting the door stop. The transom bar and fanlight window above will remain unaltered. Staff is concerned that the thinness of the frame may not hold up to rot and use, and seeks the guidance of the Committee regarding the approvability of this detail.

The applicant has also added louvered shutters to the proposal at the passageway opening to match those in the center and Bourbon-side bays. No historic photographs of the building show shutters present in this location. Staff finds it unusual to add shutters to a passageway opening, particularly one with solid wood doors; staff requests feedback from the Committee on the historic appropriateness of the proposal.

Staff finds the panel profiles approvable, but notes that the lock rail is very high, particularly in comparison with the shutters and adjacent French doors. The 1960s photo appears to show the midpoint of the lock rail around the same height as the lock rail on the shutters. While the drawing does match the 1960s photo very closely, the Committee may wish to recommend revisions or further study. Passageway gates are often of a very different style from other doors, and the addition of the shutters in this opening may inappropriately emphasize the variation in lock rail height that otherwise would not be as noticeable.

Staff seeks the guidance of the Committee regarding the width of the right jamb, the appropriateness of installing shutters in this opening, and the lock rail height.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020
Architecture Committee Meeting of 07/28/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 07/28/2020
Permit #20-33276-VCGEN Lead Staff: Erin Vogt

Proposal to replace existing carriageway gate with new wooden door to match historic photo, per application & materials received 07/02/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 07/28/2020

The applicant is proposing to replace the cast iron gates in the Royal-side passageway, which were installed at some point between 1965 and 1975 and are of poor quality. Historic photographs and slides show several alterations to this opening over the 20th century. Undated slides prior to 1965 show that the opening was infilled with masonry and a straight lintel opening installed. By 1965, the arched masonry opening was restored and wooden double doors with four raised panels were installed.

The applicant intends to install new double doors to match those seen in the 1965 photos. Staff finds the overall appearance and proportion of the doors to be comparable to other carriageway millwork, and preferable to the existing anachronistic conditions. Staff recommends conceptual approval of the proposed door replacement, with final review of shop drawings to take place at staff level prior to permit issuance.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 07/28/2020

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated that she would work with staff on final details and approval. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she agreed with the comments in the staff report. With no further discussion necessary, Mr. Fifield moved on to the next item on the agenda.

No Public Comment

Discussion and motion:
Ms. DiMaggio moved to conceptually approve the new wooden doors, with final review to be handled at staff level prior to permit. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
524 Esplanade
ADDRESS: 524 Esplanade Ave.
OWNER: R. T. Kenny
APPLICANT: Lewis Robinson
ZONING: VCR-2
SQUARE: 17
USE: Residential
LOT SIZE: 6,144 sq. ft.
DENSITY ALLOWED: 10 Units
EXISTING: 1 Unit
EXISTING: 2,607 sq. ft.
PROPOSED: No Change

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:
Rating: Blue - of Major Architectural and/or Historical Importance.

A projecting portico with pediment, round columns, and a finely detailed entrance and cornice enhance this raised masonry residence, which was constructed in 1845. The originally detached two-story kitchen building is now connected to the main building.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 11/10/2020
Permit # 20-34343-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to install new decorative cast iron railings at front entrance stairs and, per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 11/03/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 11/10/2020

Following the deferral at the 10/13/2020 meeting, the applicant submitted a simplified design similar to the previously submitted Scheme C. This new version has removed extraneous decorative elements from the top and bottom of the “X”’s featured in the design.

Staff finds this new design has been simplified to the point that it will not draw unnecessary attention to itself and is a design that staff can support.

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the new railing design with final details to be worked out at the staff level.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 11/10/2020

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/13/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/13/2020
Permit # 20-34343-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to install new decorative cast iron railings at front entrance stairs and, per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 09/29/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/13/2020

The Commission approved the concept of removing the existing masonry sidewalls at their 09/16/2020 meeting so the applicant has returned with proposed designs for the new metal railings. The proposed railings are near identical to the three designs that were proposed at the 08/28 meeting with the one change being that the rosette of scheme “C” has been relocated to the center of the rectangles rather than between them. Option A uses a scroll design while options B and C use a more geometric oval and rectangle shape, respectively. The remainder of the rail is the same in all three options and features an elongated diamond, medallions, and other cast iron details.

Staff met with the applicant to discuss potential railing designs and there appears to be a conflict between the building owner’s desire for an ornate metal railing and the staff’s recommendation to keep the railing design simple so as not to further confuse the history of this building.

Staff requests commentary from the Architecture Committee regarding proposed railing designs.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/13/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Robinson and Dr. Kenny present on behalf of the application. Mr. Robinson stated that they were trying to keep the conversation going regarding the new rail and that the owner
preferred option A, and that one would also be the easiest to make. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any other comments. They did not. Mr. Fifield asked the applicant if he knew the carbon content of the new rail. Mr. Lewis stated that he did not know that answer yet. For clarification Mr. Fifield asked the applicant if the new rail would in fact be forged. Mr. Robinson stated that that was the plan. Mr. Fifield stated that the carbon content was very important for him as far as the ironwork tradition. Ms. DiMaggio that she too was wondering about the caste pieces, particularly the rosette, which would not be wrought iron. She went on to say that the tradition and craft of the wrought iron was a huge consideration for Commission allowing the rail. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she agreed with staff that a less ornate rail would be more appropriate. Mr. Robinson stated that the "X" railings seen all over the Quarter were all a combo of wrought and caste. Dr. Kenny stated that he had already decreased the design and that they had already compromised down. Mr. Fifield stated that the Committee had never actually discussed design and that this was the first time they had ever examined the details. Dr. Kenny stated that they had been working, no negotiating, with staff. Mr. Fifield asked if the Committee had anymore comments. Mr. Bergeron asked if the Committee was actually sure such craftsmen existed in New Orleans. Mr. Robinson stated yes and that they had previously worked on the fence. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any other questions. Mr. Bergeron stated that it appeared staff was more interested in a contemporary rail not an historic replica. Mr. Block stated that simplicity would make the rail more appropriate. Ms. Bourgogne asked the applicant if staff could get a non-decorative drawings. Mr. Robinson stated yes if Dr. Kenny was ok with that. Dr. Kenny stated that he would not pay for that. Mr. Fifield moved to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:
Dr. Kenny authorized me to release the version without any castings at all. Here is the quadrangle version fully stripped of all castings for discussion. I don't think I'd be able to complete the scroll version in time to discuss at today's meeting.

I feel the casting at the intersection in the X railing is critically important to this railing's composition. The casting at the intersection is such an integral part of this X-type railing that it looks bare and incorrect without it. I cannot think of one example of the X-type railing without having a casting at this point either historically initially in the Federal period, the transition into Grecian, or modern, and I photographed many versions of this type of railing. I understand from Ironwork Services that often in the early castings, they were original cast of lead in a form that clamped onto the already produced X, and this is also evidenced in St. Louis Cemetery #1. I saw many examples when the cemetery was in disrepair where there was lead oxide on the casting but not on the iron. Later during the 1840's these likely all became iron.
Discussion and Motion:
Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for a deferral in order to allow the applicant time to work with staff to continue development of the rail into a more acceptable design. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Following the motion Mr. Bergeron stated that staff was against the proposal all together so getting a proposal together that staff would be ok with was very important here.

Vieux Carré Commission Meeting of 09/16/20

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 09/16/20
Permit # 20-34343-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Conceptual review of the proposed removal of the existing masonry sidewalls at front entry steps and the installation of a new metal railing [with details to return to the Architecture Committee], per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 08/20/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 09/16/20

The Architecture Committee has reviewed proposals to modify the front entrance steps of this blue-rated building twice in the past two months but asked that the application be forwarded to the full Commission regarding the overall concept of removing the existing masonry sidewalls to the steps. Historic photographs appear to indicate that the existing masonry sidewalls were constructed sometime between 1901 and 1939. A ca. 1901-1902 photograph shows that prior to the masonry sidewalls there were what appears to be turned wood balusters with a wood railing. Historic references provided by the applicant include an excerpt from the original 1845 building contract which reads in part, “The outside stairs in front of the House will be built as per plan ... to be railed ... plain turned balusters with 2-1/2 inches round rail.”

Although the existing masonry sidewalls are certainly not original to the building, staff notes that they have
been in place for approximately 80-120 years. Staff questions if it is appropriate to remove the existing building fabric that has been in place for at least 80 years to install something that was never documented as being in place at this property. There is good documentation for “open” sides to these stairs, but staff is hesitant to add imagined details to such an important building. The applicant notes that besides the preferred aesthetics of a metal railing, removing the masonry sidewalls would allow for a wider stairway with handrails.

The front of this building has been modified in the past 30 years, first with the modification of the front property line fence ca. 1990 and again this year, the change of the previously existing ca. 1900 wood balustrade with the current metal railing ca. 2005, and the construction of the side bump out “sound wall” in 2017, but staff questions if these small changes should be allowed to continue to compound. Given that this is a blue-rated building, staff is concerned that this building continues to be modified in ways that may diminish its significance. Staff is concerned that further modification to suit contemporary usage could result in downgrading of the building’s rating.

The VCC did approve the installation of the ornate railing at the porch level ca. 2005 and the proposed metal railing at the steps could be considered an extension of this design. However, there is better historic documentation for an iron railing at the porch level as the original building contract noted that the front balcony was to be, “protected with a good looking iron railing between the columns.” Again, as there is not similar documentation regarding the stair rails and on the contrary the contract notes “plain turned balusters”, staff is hesitant regarding the proposed introduction of an ornate metal railing.

Staff requests commentary from the Commission regarding the overall concept of removing the existing masonry sidewalls. If found approvable, the application would return to the Architecture Committee for further review of the proposed new metal railing.

**VIEUX CARRÉ COMMISSION ACTION:** 09/16/20

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Robinson and Dr. Kenny present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gasperecz asked the applicant and owner if they had any comments or questions for staff or the Commission. Dr. Kenny asked the Commission why the concrete walls were considered as something of value to be saved. Ms. DiMaggio stated that for her when you look at preservation guidelines with regards to changes that are 50 plus years, they might be considered historic in and of themselves. She went on to state that removal of something existing to install a railing that was never there might give a false sense of history. Dr. Kenny stated that they had tried to please staff and the Committee, and the rail was not safe. Ms. DiMaggio stated that while she understood the safety concerns, she questioned whether a new handrail could be mounted on the existing walls. She went on to say that the Committee requested a plan. Ms. Bourgogne clarified that the application was forwarded to the Commission not to work out details but to decide the fundamental question of if the walls could even be removed. Mr. Block went on to say that staff was not saying the walls had architectural merit but that they had been there for 80 plus years so staff did not want to add more details that change the history. He went on to say that there were ways to address safety without confusing the architectural history. Ms. Gasperecz asked if there were any other questions or comments. Mr. Robinson stated that at the last Committee meeting the measurements inside the concrete rails were discussed. Mr. Fifield questioned the dimension between the brick buttresses. He went on to say that a rail could be installed inside the existing walls. He asked the Commission to consider the craftsmanship in the French Quarter and that this aspect should be considered. Mr. Fifield continued that he believed in this case it would be worth discussing the removal in favor of maintaining a craft tradition. Ms. Lawrence asked what the height of the existing cement rail was. Mr. Robinson stated that he would have to look that dimension up. Ms. Lawrence stated that the current condition looked unsafe and the she had no problem with the removal. Mr. Robinson stated that the current walls were 2’ 9 ¼”. Ms. Lawrence stated that she could see how coming down the steps would be very unsafe. Mr. Robinson responded yes and that the rail would have to be on top, so very visible. Satisfied, Ms. Gasperecz moved on to the next agenda item.

**No Public Comment**

**Discussion and Motion**

Ms. Lawrence moved to allow the existing masonry railing to be removed with the new railing details to be reviewed by the Architecture Committee and the full Commission. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Architecture Committee Meeting of:** 08/28/2020

**DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:** 08/28/2020

Permit # 20-34343-VCGEN

Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to remove existing masonry stair sidewalls at front entrance stairs and to install new decorative cast iron railings, per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 08/20/2020, respectively.
STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:
08/28/2020

The applicant has submitted three new slightly more simplified railing designs to go along with the proposed removal of the masonry sidewalls. The differences between the three submitted options are limited to the metal between the medallions near the top of the railing. Option A uses a scroll design while options B and C use a more geometric oval and rectangle shape, respectively. The remainder of the rail is the same in all three options and features an elongated diamond, medallions, and other cast iron details.

Staff appreciates the more simplified designs but questions if these have been simplified enough to approach something approvable. Further, staff still questions if it is appropriate to remove the existing building fabric that has been in place for at least 80 years to install something that was never documented as being in place at this property. There is good documentation for “open” sides to these stairs, but staff is hesitant to add imagined details to such an important building. Although the front of this building has been modified in the past 30 years, first with the modification of the front property line fence ca. 1990 and again this year, and the change of the previously existing ca. 1900 wood balustrade with the current metal railing ca. 2005, staff questions if these small changes should be allowed to continue to compound. Given that this is a blue-rated building, staff is concerned that this building continues to be modified in ways that may diminish its significance.

During the 08/11/2020 meeting, the applicant mentioned that part of the inspiration for the proposal was to increase the safety of the front steps and that installing an inside rail to the existing sidewalks would not be feasible as the resulting width would be too small. Staff requests a dimensioned drawing documenting this problem as well as any other justification to making the proposed change, other than simply aesthetics.

Staff requests commentary from the Architecture Committee regarding the current proposal as well as if the continued exploration of the overall concept of removing the existing masonry sidewalls is worthwhile.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:
08/28/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Robinson present on behalf of the application. Following the reading of the staff report, Mr. Fifield asked the applicant if he had any response. Mr. Robinson stated that he had worked with staff, both Nick and Renee, and between the three of them had come up with the designs presented. The owner however, wanted the inclusion of the curly Q and the rosettes to match the porch fence, so he had worked those features in to get a compromise. He went on to say that one of his biggest concerns, he did a lot of research, was that if the rail was too simple it would no longer be period appropriate. Mr. Fifield asked what material would be used. Mr. Robinson stated that both cast and wrought iron would be used. Mr. Fifield asked if Mr. Robinson had a craftsman lined up for the job. Mr. Robinson stated yes. Mr. Fifield stated that he liked the idea of using wrought iron as it was preserving the craft tradition of the French Quarter. Ms. DiMaggio agreed, but went on to say that she was still concerned about this idea of “period appropriate.” She explained that something might be period appropriate, this was not a restoration and therefore felt fake. Ms. DiMaggio went on to say that that was why she would entertain the design of a simpler rail regardless of the material. Mr. Block asked for the interior dimension that would not allow for an interior rail. Mr. Robinson stated, 2’ 11”.

Ms. DiMaggio state that they would only need the rail on one side. Mr. Robinson stated yes only on one side of continuous however, you would want to people to be able to pass side by side. Mr. Fifield stated that they were not trying to impose a non-code compliant feature. He went on to say that in his opinion they were talking about changing something that had been changed 3 times already, so not an original condition, and that the existing condition did nothing to add to the building. Mr. Albrecht stated that while not original, the existing condition had been there for 80 years. Mr. Block stated that currently the stair was not noticeable whereas if the rail was altered it would be quite noticeable. Mr. Fifield moved to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:
Motion and Discussion:
Ms. DiMaggio made the motion to forward the application to the full Commission for the CONCEPTUAL review of the proposed removal of the existing masonry wall and the installation of a new metal railing [with details to return to the AC]. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Architecture Committee Meeting of
08/11/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:
08/11/2020
Permit # 20-34343-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to remove existing masonry stair sidewalks at front entrance stairs and to install new decorative cast iron railings, per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 07/16/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:
08/11/2020

Historic photographs appear to indicate that the existing masonry sidewalks were constructed sometime between 1901 and 1939. A ca. 1901-1902 photograph shows that prior to the masonry sidewalks there were what appears to be turned wood balusters with a wood railing. Historic references provided by the applicant include an excerpt from the original 1845 building contract which reads in part, “The outside stairs in front of the House will be built as per plan ... to be railed ... plain turned balusters with 2-1/2 inches round rail.”

The proposed cast iron railing is based on existing ironwork seen on other balconies in the district. Specifically,
the balcony railings at 730 St. Peter and 327 Bourbon and the entrance stair railing at 828 St. Louis. Although well designed and compatible with the iron railing around the porch which was approved and installed in 2005, staff is concerned that there is no indication that such an ornate stair railing ever existed on this property. Although the existing masonry sidewalls are certainly not original to the building, staff notes that they have been in place for approximately 80-120 years. Staff questions the appropriateness of removing what could now be considered historic building fabric in order to install a fantasized version of an entrance railing.

On the other hand, the VCC did approve the installation of the ornate railing at the porch level and the proposed railing could be considered an extension of this design. However, there is better historic documentation for a iron railing at the porch level as the original building contract noted that the front balcony was to be, “protected with a good looking iron railing between the columns.” Again, as there is not similar documentation regarding the stair rails and on the contrary the contract notes “plain turned balusters”, staff is hesitant regarding the current proposal. Staff questions if an alternate proposal that included the removal of the masonry sidewalls and the installation of “plain turned balusters” would be more approvable.

Staff requests commentary from the Architecture Committee regarding the proposed removal of the masonry sidewalls and installation of a new railing.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 08/11/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Robinson present on behalf of the application. Mr. Robinson explained that he had spoken to Mr. Albrecht early on regarding these changes and Mr. Albrecht though it might be ok. He went on to say that he walked the district and examined numerous rails in order to get a feeling for what would be right. He stated that the challenge here was trying to find a stair rail that would be compatible with the porch rail. Both Mr. Fifield and Ms. DiMaggio thanked the applicant for his due diligence. Ms. DiMaggio went on to say this proposal would be a fantasized condition as there is no documentation for the stair railing.

Mr. Robinson stated that it was not the original stair and in fact was a third version. Mr. DiMaggio stated that while it was not the original, it had been there for a significant amount of time to have possibly gained significance and that an iron rail would be an historic change that would be inappropriate. Mr. Robinson stated that they were trying to return to an open sided stair which was closer to what was there originally. Mr. Fifield asked what the material of the riser and run were currently. Mr. Robinson stated that the material was brick with a stucco covering. He went on to say that the change would also provide safety as currently there was no “grip.” Mr. Fifield asked if they had explored an inside rail. Mr. Robinson stated that the space was too small and that once the wall was removed there would be an extra 6”. Mr. Fifield stated that he though the rail was simply more ornate than it needed to be. Mr. Fifield went on to say that the rail had changed so many times that there was no longer any historic fabric. He questioned how to deal with this situation.

No Public Comment

Discussion & Motion:
Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the proposal in order to allow the applicant more time to develop an alternative proposal based on the conversation and commentary in today’s meeting. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
729 Governor Nicholls
ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

The buildings at this address are situated on a L-shaped lot which has existed in the present configuration since the early 1900s. A c. 1900 2-bay frame shotgun fronts on Gov. Nicholls; brown-rated construction is located behind the cottage. New construction, begun illegally and inappropriately designed, stands on the portion of the lot extending at a right angle at the back of the lot.

Main Building – Green
Previous Additions Demolished 2020, New Addition: Unrated

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:
Permit # 19-37797-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to modify and expand on previously approved plans including new proposed millwork, changes to courtyard fencing, and roofing material change, per application & materials received 10/15/2020 & 11/04/2020, respectively.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:

Staff noted four areas in need of review at the 10/27/2020 Architecture Committee meeting. Those were the main building millwork, the main building lighting, the shed addition, and the courtyard fencing and paving. The applicant has submitted revised drawings reflecting many of the recommendations of staff and the Architecture Committee.

Main Building Millwork
The submitted plans now include detail drawings for the new doors. The front door (Door 01) is now shown as having a rectangular six lite upper portion with a split transom window above. Staff finds this door style much closer to something that could be approved but questions the divisions of lites at the door and transom. Millwork from this c. 1900 time period typically featured single lites at front doors and transoms. Staff also questions if the slight arch seen at the transom should also be featured at the door.

The other three doors (Doors 02, 08, and 09) are proposed at the two door openings onto the side porch and the back door. The drawing for these doors now shows a single lite over double panel door with a single lite transom above. Staff finds this door type appropriate for the locations shown but still questions if exploratory demolition may provide additional clues to the previously existing arrangements.

Main Building Lighting
The previously shown decorative fixtures have been eliminated in favor of recessed can lights. Staff finds this aspect of the proposal approvable.

Shed Addition
The window proposed for the shed addition was previously proposed to be a short eyebrow type window but has been revised to a six over six window matching the size of the existing adjacent window on the building. Staff finds this aspect of the proposal approvable.

Courtyard Fencing and Paving
The paving material has again been revised and is now shown as steel-troweled concrete. Notably, the paving is limited to the driveway adjacent to the building and the small area immediately behind the building. A secondary parking area at the end of the driveway is now noted as open green space on the proposed site plan but still shows vehicles in this area on other sheets. Staff seeks clarification of this area of the property.

Regarding the proposed concrete paving, the Guidelines state that “the VCC encourages minimizing the use of new paving and using traditional paving materials in new installations whenever possible. When using nontraditional paving, like concrete at a new construction project, the VCC recommends landscaping to minimize its visual impact. As the character and context of every property is unique, each application for a nontraditional paving material is taken on a case by case basis.” If concrete is used, “the VCC recommends using a simple, steel-troweled concrete finish.” (VCC DG: 10-8)
Staff requests commentary from the Architecture Committee regarding the proposed concrete paving but finds the other aspects of the proposal approvable.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:**

11/10/2020

---

**Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020**

**DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:**

10/27/2020

Proposed to modify and expand on previously approved plans including new proposed millwork, changes to courtyard fencing, and roofing material change, per application & materials received 10/15/2020.

**STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:**

10/27/2020

This property was extensively reviewed in the first half of 2020 for plans that included the reconstruction of the rear shed addition and restoration of various elements of the main building. The permit for that work was issued 08/05/2020. The applicant has been in touch with staff and has submitted materials for today’s meeting to make some changes and expand upon the previously approved plans. The items in need of review include millwork details for the main building, lighting at the main building, changes to the rear shed addition, and changes to the courtyard fencing and paving.

**Main Building Millwork**

The applicant has provided photographs from the interior showing that the existing front door is substantially shorter than the opening. The arched transom window above has been boarded over. It is unclear if any glazing remains in this opening. The applicant proposes to install a new door with or without a transom. The submitted door examples all show square top transoms. Staff recommends that the existing transom frame be salvaged and reused with an arch top transom. A single lite over a single panel door as shown in the example may be approvable but staff finds the submitted example of this door type has atypical ratios. Specifically, the lite is too tall pushing the lock rail too low on the door. There are many examples of this building type and age in this part of the district and certainly in other historic districts in the city. Staff recommends looking to these for inspiration for a restored front door and transom.

New doors and transoms are also called for at the side porch (Doors 02 and 10). An interior photograph of door 02 shows an atypically short opening in this location with a door and no transom. Staff is in full agreement that the millwork in this opening should match the existing exterior opening and shutter height. The proposed door for these openings again has atypical ratios with an atypically tall door lite, a low lock rail, and a very short transom window. As the existing side door appears to have significant age, staff recommends some exploratory demolition above this door to see if the framing provides clues to this opening, such as the previous existence of a transom window. Staff also notes that there is an existing side door (Door 05) that may serve as a model for these other door openings.

**Main Building Lighting**

The second aspect of the proposal for the main building is the installation of four decorative fixtures above the side porch. These are shown centered on each of the four side porch bays. As the Guidelines recommend limiting the number of decorative fixtures and locating them near a focal point (VCC DG: 11-7) staff suggests that only one decorative fixture located in the bay closest to Gov. Nicholls would be more in line with the Guidelines. The remaining bays could receive recessed or simple lights to provide consistent lighting.

**Shed Addition**

The approved plans called for the roof of the rebuilt shed addition to be a standing seam metal roof. The applicant proposes to upgrade this material to a standing seam copper. Gutters and downspouts throughout the property would also be upgraded to copper. Staff has no objection to this change.

The applicant also proposes to add a window to the rebuilt structure. The window is proposed for the Royal St. elevation of the rear shed addition and is shown as 3’ wide by 1’-6” tall. As this rear portion is being completely rebuilt, staff finds the Guidelines for additions to be the most appropriate reference in this instance. The Guidelines state that, “windows and doors on additions should be of similar size, shape, design, proportion, spacing, and placement to those in the existing building. Windows should be proportionally and functionally similar, and have comparable muntin or grid patterns as the existing windows.” (VCC DG: 14-14) Staff questions if the proposed window meets these Guidelines.

At the landing at the rear door of the addition the applicant now proposes to add wood rails on both sides of the previously shown open landing. It appears these rails would match the existing rails at the side porch. Staff has no objection to this change.
Courtyard Fencing and Paving
The final aspect of the proposal in need of review is proposed changes to the fencing and paving. The fence behind the addition was approved to be a new CMU wall. The applicant now proposes this to be a seven-board fence. The previously proposed sliding gate separating the driveway and the smaller parking area has been eliminated in favor of a 10’ wide opening. Staff has no objection to these changes.

In an email the applicant mentioned adding structural pilasters to the rear CMU wall but these details do not appear to be in the current set. Still, provided they are consistent with typical details, staff does not object to the introduction of pilasters at the wall.

Finally, the applicant proposes to change the paving material from the previously approved brick set in sand to a combination of permeable, stamped concrete at the driveway and smaller parking area and pea gravel at the larger parking area. Regarding paving the Guidelines state that, “the VCC recommends minimizing the amount of paving on a site; using traditional stone or brick at an area of new paving; avoiding the installation of gravel or other loose, small-scale paving that can become airborne in the event of a wind storm;” and “the VCC does not allow installing stamped concrete paving or concrete pavers except with possible exception of new construction.” (VCC DG: 10-8)

Staff does not find either the proposed stamped concrete or pea gravel paving details approvable as submitted.

Summary
Staff recommends deferral of the overall application based on the items noted in need of revisions at the various areas of the property and requests commentary from the Committee regarding the questions noted in the report.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Bardwell present on behalf of the application. Ms. Bardwell stated that they would like to use the existing door framing arched top in front. She went on to say that they would be happy to submit doors with better proportions and that they would be happy to work with staff with regards to the decorative lantern, gravel, and stamped concrete. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she was focused on the decorative lighting on the side porch and the higher window - how to resolve both. Mr. Fifield asked what the purpose of the window was. He went on to ask if this was a closet. Ms. Bardwell stated not that it was a bathroom and that the clients wanted light, but not a skylight. Mr. Fifield concluded that he believed the window could be lowered. Mr. DiMaggio agreed and stated that this would make sense in order to align with the guidelines. With nothing left to discuss the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:
Nikki Szalwinski, French Quarter Citizens
We support the staff report and ask that the original door and transom be explored and that additional openings follow that which is there. We also support the use of traditional pavers rather than cheaper alternatives of pea gravel or stamped concrete. As a side-note a sheet-metal rather than copper roof was more appropriate to when this home was built. It was considered modern at the time and seems more period correct.

Discussion and Motion:
Mr. Bergeron made the motion for deferral in order to allow the applicant more time to work with staff in light of today’s discussion. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
New Business
500 Bourbon
ADDRESS: 500-504 Bourbon Street
OWNER: Chris S Owens
APPLICANT: Marc Banner
ZONING: VCE
USE: Commercial
SQUARE: 62
LOT SIZE: 8262 sq. ft.

DENSITY
Allowed: 13 Units
Existing: 6 Units
Proposed: No Change

OPEN SPACE
Required: 1652 sq. ft.
Existing: 1100 sq. ft.
Proposed: No Change

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Main Building: Brown, detrimental, or of no architectural and/or historic significance

Before a remodeling which included the addition of full-length balconies on the Bourbon Street facade, this three-story commercial building had nice Art Deco entrances on both street facades and only one small balcony on the Bourbon Street facade. Today the building unfortunately appears as a rather unsuccessful interpretation of a 19th-century building.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/27/2020
Permit #20-21185-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Erin Vogt

Proposal to install Aeratis synthetic decking, per application & materials received 03/12/2020 and 10/09/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/27/2020

As part of a larger application to address Demolition by Neglect and Work without Permit violations, the applicant is requesting to replace the wooden decking on the Bourbon-side balconies with Aeratis synthetic decking. The installation of synthetic decking requires Committee review and has primarily been approved for buildings that are Yellow rated or lower. Given the building’s Brown rating, staff does not object to the proposed work and recommends approval, with provisos that the stringer spacing must not exceed 16” o.c. and the decking must be painted per typical paint guidelines.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020
1018 Royal
ADDRESS: 1018-20 Royal Street
APPLICANT: Daniel Taylor
SQUARE: 49
LOT SIZE: 29'3"x127'11"=3744 sq.ft.
DENSITY-
ALLOWED: 6 residential units
EXISTING: 9 residential units
PROPOSED: No change
OPEN SPACE-
REQUIRED: 1123.2 sq.ft.
EXISTING: 636 (approx.)
PROPOSED: No change

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:
Rating: Green - of Local Architectural or Historical Importance.

This circa 1840 three-story masonry porte-cochère townhouse has two brick service buildings in the rear yard, i.e., a two-story structure situated horizontally at the rear, Chartres Street side of the lot, and a three story attached service ell perpendicular from the main building. A wooden portion of the three story service ell extends over the two-story kitchen. It seems likely that the three-story service ell was constructed around the same time as was the main building and that the 2-story service building perhaps predates the other buildings.

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 05/09/17
Permit Number: 17-15841
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Proposal to rearrange and add mechanical equipment and to add mechanical safety rail, all on connecting structure between main building & service building, per materials submitted 05/04/17.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION: 05/09/17

In 1988, the Architectural Committee approved “the installation of three (3) air conditioning compressor units on a platform on the shed roof between the main structure and service building” as part of a larger renovation of this property. The number of air conditioning compressors has evidently grown over the years as this platform now features nine (9) units.

The applicant proposes to rearrange the units to be more orderly and provide adequate space for ventilation and service. The applicant also proposes to add a mechanical safety rail constructed from 2” x 2” stainless steel rails and posts with ½” stainless steel rods to replace a rail assembled from 2x4s.

Staff notes that photographs from 2015 show a large, inappropriate cap flashing on one of the parapets of the rear service ell. This cap flashing was removed and the brick corbel was rebuilt to match the previous condition.

Staff recommends approval of the application with all details to be worked out at the staff level.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 05/09/17

Mr. Taylor recused himself from consideration of the application, as he was the applicant.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Taylor present on behalf of the application. Mr. Taylor stated that in order to meet code the units need to be 3’ apart and that they need a skinny stainless steel rail to meet code.

Mr. Fifield moved to accept the staff recommendation of approval. Mr. Musso seconded the motion, which passed with positive votes from Messrs. Fifield and Musso. [Mr. Taylor recused]
621 Barracks
ADDRESS: 621-25 Barracks
OWNER: Vinmar Properties, LLC
APPLICANT: Vincent DiLeo, Jr.
ZONING: VCR-1
USE: Residential
SQUARE: 52
LOT SIZE: 3,174 sq. ft.
DENSITY-OPEN SPACE:
ALLOWED: 3 Units
REQUIRED: 952 sq. ft.
EXISTING: 1 Unit
EXISTING: 958 sq. ft. approx.
PROPOSED: No Change
PROPOSED: 932 sq. ft. approx.

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY
Rating: Yellow, or contributory to the streetscape.
This ca. 1910 Edwardian bungalow, which is one in a row of similar vernacular cottages of the same vintage, incorporates influences of the colonial revival style.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 11/10/2020
Permit # 20-44202-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Proposal to install new copper awnings on both sides and the rear elevation, per materials received 10/19/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 11/10/2020
The applicant proposes to install a total of three new copper awnings with one located on the rear elevation and one on each of the two side elevations. The awnings vary in width from an 8’ wide awning on one side elevation, a 9’ wide awning on the other side elevation, and on the rear elevation the proposed awning is just over 13’ wide. All awnings are noted as 3’ deep and supported by scroll brackets.

Regarding residential awnings, the Guidelines state that, “a residential awning should have open sides and be retractable.” However, staff notes that a fixed copper awning is also shown as an approvable example in the Guidelines and similar awnings to the ones proposed have been approved in other instances.

Staff does not believe that the awnings will be visible from the street, however they will be visible to the immediate neighbors on either side of the building. Although all awnings will be installed below existing gutters, given the narrow side alleys of this building, staff questions if the installation of the side awnings will result in rainwater being projected over the two side property lines. Staff also questions the use of the scroll brackets as opposed to simple wrought iron brackets.

Staff requests commentary from the Architecture Committee regarding the three proposed copper awnings.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 11/10/2020
912-16 St Philip
ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

Main building & service building: Green, of local architectural and/or historic significance.

This is a c. 1830 4-bay Creole cottage, weatherboard sheathed brick-between-posts with late Victorian additions, such as front façade shiplap siding, brackets and heavy window cornices.

**Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020**

**DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:** 10/27/2020

Proposal to modify openings on rear outbuilding and install mechanical equipment, per application & materials received 10/26/2020 & 11/05/2020, respectively.

**STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:** 10/27/2020

While researching the building, staff found slides from the 1960s and 70s in the Vieux Carré Virtual Library which show that the type and configuration of doors and windows on the rear outbuilding have been altered and/or replaced multiple times. It appears that none of the original millwork remains. The applicant is proposing the following alterations to the millwork:

**St. Philip elevation:**
The first floor appears to be four sets of French doors with board and batten shutters. However, the outer openings are blind, with faux trim and shutters applied to the exterior. The center openings have ten-lite French doors with double panels and were installed in 1975. The applicant is proposing to leave the Dauphine-side blind opening unaltered and install new French doors on the Burgundy side.

On the second floor, the applicant proposes to relocate the Dauphine and Burgundy-side windows, centering them on the openings below. Photos indicate that while the millwork is not historic, they have been in these locations since at least 1969. Board and batten shutters will be added to all four windows.

**Dauphine elevation:**
The applicant is proposing to relocate the second-floor six-over-six double hung window, centering it on the roof ridge. It appears in this location in a slide from 1969.

**Burgundy elevation:**
The existing window will be removed and replaced with a 3'-0" x 5'-0" double-hung egress window, centered on the roof ridge. On the first floor, they propose to add two sets of four-lite clerestory windows.

The VCC Design Guidelines state that “the arrangement, size and proportions of window and/or door openings are key components of a building’s style and character. As a result, the modification or addition of a window or door opening is discouraged, particularly on a more prominent building façade. This includes the infill of all or part of an opening to make it smaller or to remove it. It also includes increasing the size of a door opening to provide a larger opening for a display window, garage, or other use.” (VCC DG: 07-20) Installing a door or window in a new opening or modified opening in a green rated building requires review by the full Commission. Staff has no objection to removal of the blind opening on the first floor, St. Philip elevation. However, the relocation of windows should be carefully considered. The clerestory windows, while located on a side elevation mostly hidden from view, are an inappropriate opening type of a building of this age and use. Additionally, the larger egress window may not be required from a fire safety standpoint, depending on the size and operation of the existing window. Staff requests additional information from the applicant, and recommends deferral of the proposed millwork alterations, pending comment and suggestions for revision from the Committee.

The application also includes the installation of gas sconces on the first floor, St. Philip elevation, a water heater on the Dauphine elevation, and the replacement of two window units with mini-splits, shown on
the Burgundy side of the building in the site plan. Decorative gas sconces are typically not approved in courtyard or alleyway locations and should only be installed at focal points, such as the front entry. Manufacturer’s specifications were submitted for the water heater but not for the mini-splits, and it is unclear if they will be mounted to the building or installed at grade. Staff requests additional information on these elements for further review at the Committee level.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020
ADDRESS: 932 Bourbon
OWNER: 932 Bourbon St. LLC
APPLICANT: Archetype LLC
ZONING: VCR-1
SQUARE: 57
USE: Residential
LOT SIZE: 2,323 sq. ft.
DENSITY-
ALLOWED: 1 Unit
EXISTING: 1 Unit
PROPOSED: No Change
REQUIRED: 697 sq. ft.
EXISTING: 490 sq. ft.
PROPOSED: No Change

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

This narrow (3-bay) c. 1830 2½-story masonry townhouse has millwork additions that date from the late 19th century.

Rating: Green, of local architectural and/or historical significance.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 11/10/2020
Permit # 20-44886-VCGEN
Violation Case #19-10034-DBNVCC
Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Inspector: Marguerite Roberts

Proposal to renovate building and correct VCC violations including proposal to remove non-original Victorian woodwork, per application & materials received 10/27/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 11/10/2020

Staff cited this property for several areas in need of repairs back in October 2019. The applicant then contacted staff a few weeks ago to discuss the concept of removing the Victorian elements from the building as part of the work to correct violations. The removal would include the overhang, brackets, and gutters above the second-floor balcony, the brackets, fascia, and soffit at the balcony, the casings above the first-floor windows, and the wood steps and stoops to be replaced with a masonry stoop. A stucco cornice would be created where the overhang was removed to match the existing cornice on the neighboring rear building of 940 Bourbon St.

Staff informed the applicant that this could be argued as either a restoration of the building to something more similar to its original appearance or that the Victorian elements, in place now for over 120 years could have gained their own significance. Staff suggests that if such a restoration were approved the work would likely need to be much more extensive in order to completely and accurately restore to a different period of significance. Staff requests commentary from the Architecture Committee if the concept of removing the Victorian elements would be something worth exploring further.

The proposal also includes the proposed removal of the window unit from the center transom on the second floor and the installation of a new mini split unit mounted to the wall 10’ back from the front wall. Although staff finds the removal of the transom AC unit hugely positive, staff does not find the wall mounted mini split location consistent with the Guidelines. Staff recommends researching a more discrete location for a new mini split.

The other work besides the proposed Victorian element removal and AC work is repair/replacement to match existing and generally approvable.
Staff recommends deferral of the application but requests commentary from the Committee as noted above.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:** 11/10/2020
Appeals and Violations
1129-1131 Decatur
ADDRESS: 1129-31 Decatur Street
OWNER: French Quarter Enterprises
APPLICANT: French Quarter Enterprises
ZONING: VC-1
USE: Mixed Use
SQUARE: 19
LOT SIZE: 3250 sq. ft.

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Main building and attached service building: Blue, or of major significance
Rear shed: Brown, or of no significance

This is one in the block-long row of three-story houses constructed c. 1830-31 by the prominent architects Gurlie and Guillot as rental property for the Ursulines Nuns after this religious house moved to its new quarters on Dauphine Street. Originally constructed in the typical Creole style, with arched ground floor openings (including a side passageway), balconies and upper level French doors, the buildings received a number of individual modifications in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/20
DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 11/10/20
Permit # 19-06321-VCGEN
Violation Case #18-11707-VCCNOP

Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Inspector: Marguerite Roberts

Proposal to retain keypad entry hardware, per application & materials received 02/26/19. [Notice of Violation sent 11/16/17]

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:

11/10/20

This application was deferred for one year at the 04/23/2019 Architecture Committee meeting to allow for additional time to formulate recommendations for this type of hardware and to see how the technology progressed. As the one-year mark fell in April, 2020 when the Committee was only hearing urgent matters as a result of the ongoing pandemic, staff elected to defer this matter an additional six months to today’s meeting.

As a reminder, a visible keypad door handle has been installed on the residential entrance to this building since 2015. The owner has stated that the reason for the keypad is because he was tired of changing the front door lock every time a tenant moved out of the building. Given that the report notes only four units in this building and staff assumes each unit features its own door with lock, staff questions the necessity and frequency that the front door lock would need to be changed.

Regardless, the technology for keyless entry doors has really gone in the direction of Bluetooth and Wi-Fi connected locks. In order to use these locks an individual would simply have a permanent or temporary “key” on their phone to unlock the door. When staff recommended this type of alternative to the applicant he stated that “requiring a phone is overkill. I have an old man tenant that can't even send photos on his phone. this would be challenging to him.”

A second alternative recommended by staff was the “SmartKey” line from Kwikset or something similar. These locks come in a variety of styles with the only difference being a small slot next to where the key is inserted. A special tool that comes with the lock can be inserted in the slot by the owner and the lock re-keyed to a new key in less than a minute without the need to remove the lock. Many of the options from Kwikset are available for less than $30 and staff believes that this type of lock would solve the problems faced by the owner without requiring the tenants to be familiar with technology or require a smart phone.

Staff recommends denial of the retention of the current unpermitted keypad hardware with the applicant to work with staff on an approvable alternative.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 11/10/20
Proposal to retain keypad entry hardware, per application & materials received 02/26/19. [Notice of Violation sent 11/16/17]

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 04/23/19

This application was deferred at the 03/26/19 meeting to allow staff to research additional alternatives and for possible discussion to occur regarding possible changes to the design guidelines. Staff located some additional alternatives, particularly in the biometric category, which would meet the described needs of the applicant while being far more discreet than the currently installed hardware. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a perfect choice as the alternatives tend to have a much more modern appearance.

Still of the options found, staff finds the Ultraloq and the MOK smart lock to potentially be approvable alternatives. The Ultraloq can be opened by saved fingerprints, by a key fob, or by Bluetooth or Wi-Fi devices. The MOK smart lock features a thumbprint scanner lock and small discreet keypad backup. Some of the other alternatives may also be approvable and staff notes that this technology continues to develop and should be becoming more discreet and approvable in the near future.

Staff recommends conceptual approval of one of the alternatives that feature discreet or no visible keypads with the standard caveat that any approvals will be contingent on no future short term rental violations.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 04/23/19

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Farshad present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield stated that he was inclined to allow the hardware to remain until the guidelines were revised. He moved to defer the matter for one year in order for the new guidelines to be revised and approved. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Proposal to retain keypad entry hardware, per application & materials received 02/26/19.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 03/26/19

See Staff Analysis & Recommendation of 03/12/19.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 03/26/19

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Farshad present on behalf of the application. Mr. Farshad stated that the reason for the keypad hardware was because there were several apartments in the building and he was tired with tenants losings keys and having to replace the locks and redistribute keys. Mr. Fifield stated that the current hardware was too shiny and large for the door.

Mr. Musso moved to defer the application for 30 days in order for additional work to be completed by staff and the guidelines committee. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Proposal to retain keypad entry hardware, per application & materials received 02/26/19.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 03/12/19

See Staff Analysis & Recommendation of 03/12/19.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 03/12/19

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Farshad present on behalf of the application. Mr. Farshad stated that the reason for the keypad hardware was because there were several apartments in the building and he was tired with tenants losings keys and having to replace the locks and redistribute keys. Mr. Fifield stated that the current hardware was too shiny and large for the door.

Mr. Musso moved to defer the application for 30 days in order for additional work to be completed by staff and the guidelines committee. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
Proposal to retain keypad entry hardware, per application & materials received 02/26/19.

**STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:** 03/12/19

The applicant proposes to retain the keypad door hardware, which photographs indicate was installed sometime after March, 2015. Staff has recommended to the applicant some other keyless entry options that are far more discreet than the current keypad. The applicant stated that the current hardware is a latch that locks the door behind anyone who enters or leaves. Most options that have been found to be approvable are deadbolts rather than door latches. Staff has been unable to locate a system that uses a door knob or thumb latch and features a keypad. However, this technology continues to develop and staff imagines that one may be available now or in the near future that would meet the requirements of the guidelines.

Staff notes that these systems are often associated with short term rentals and suggests that if any alternative keyless option were to be approved that the approval be contingent on the property never being found guilty of operating an illegal short term rental.

As staff does not find the current door hardware to be appropriate, staff recommends denial of its retention with the applicant to install appropriate hardware or apply for an alternative, more discreet, keyless option.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:** 03/12/19

The application was deferred as there was no one present on behalf of the application.
725-37 Dauphine
ADDRESS: 735-41 Dauphin
OWNER: Joann B Popplewell Rev Trust
APPLICANT: Joann Popplewell
ZONING: VCR-1
USE: Residential
SQUARE: 87
LOT SIZE: 1932 sq. ft.
DENSITY
ALLOWED: 2 units
EXISTING: Unknown
PROPOSED: No change
REQUIRED: 386.4 sq. ft. (20%)
EXISTING: 553 sq. ft.
PROPOSED: No change

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:
A C. 1922 nondescript Spanish Revival apartment building, the scale of which is incompatible with the neighboring cottages.

Main building – Brown, detrimental or of no architectural and/or historic significance.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/27/2020
Permit #19-03943-VCGEN
Violation Case #18-11282-DBNVCC
Lead Staff: Erin Vogt
Inspector: Anthony Whitfield

Proposal to replace keypad hardware installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 05/20/2019 and 10/28/2020, respectively. [Notice of Violation sent 11/02/2018]

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/27/2020

On 11/02/18, staff inspected the property and cited new shiny brass keypads with integrated lever handles, installed without benefit of VCC review and approval. The keypads do not meet current hardware guidelines, which prohibit shiny brass finishes and lever handles. The applicant proposes to replace the keypads with new “Array by Hampton” fixtures, which have a black touchpad, bronze finish, and integrated deadbolt lock. The handles will be replaced with Brinks “Rhodes” handlesets, which are contemporary in profile. Staff finds the keypads to be approvable but the handlesets are incompatible with the Spanish Revival style of the 1922 building. Staff recommends that the Committee conceptually approve the keypads, with the applicant to work with staff to select an approvable handleset.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020
ADDRESS: 1015-17 Gov. Nicholls
APPLICANT: Patrick M Gambel
ZONING: VCR-1
USE: Residential
SQUARE: 107
LOT SIZE: 3260 sq. ft. (approx.)
DENSITY: Residential
ALLOWED: 3 units
REQUIRED: 978 sq. ft. (approx.)
EXISTING: Unknown
EXISTING: Unknown
PROPOSED: No change
PROPOSED: No change

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:
Main building & service building: Green, of local architectural and/or historic significance.

A c. 1901-1902 double, 6-bay, frame, camelback cottage with a frame balustrade with spindles on the front porch and front gables, which are transitional between the Queen Anne and Classical Revival styles.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/27/2020
Permit #20-41614-VCGEN
Lead Staff: Erin Vogt

Appeal to retain mechanical equipment installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 09/25/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/27/2020

On 10/15/2020, the applicant contacted staff seeking approval for a mini split unit, which had already been installed below the house, accessible from the Burgundy side alley. Staff was unsure if the Mechanical Division would find the location approvable and requested that they inspect the work prior to VCC review. The mini split is mounted to the bottom of the raised house, discharges to the side, and has several inches of clearance between the unit and ground below. The work was found approvable for retention by the Mechanical Inspector. Staff requests that the applicant submit a manufacturer’s cut sheet for VCC review, specifying the make and model of the unit.

Assuming the mini split is not atypical in dBA output, staff finds this location to be discreet and approvable within the VCC Design Guidelines. Staff recommends approval of the appeal to retain the equipment.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020
823 St Philip
ADDRESS: 823-25 St. Philip  
OWNER: Jay H. Floyd, Jr.  
APPLICANT: New Orleans Custom Cabinetry  
ZONING: VCR-I  
SQUARE: 77  
USE: Residential  
LOT SIZE: 2489 sq. ft.  
DENSITY: 
ALLOwed: 2 units  
EXISTING: 1 unit  
PROPOSED: No change  
OPEN SPACE:
REQUIRED: 746.7 sq. ft.  
EXISTING: 1194 sq. ft.  
PROPOSED: No change

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

Main building: Blue, of major architectural and/or historic significance.

Although 823-25 and 827-29 St. Philip Street figure today as a separated pair of early 19th-century Creole cottages, originally the cottages shared a common wall and roof. An 1827 inventory of the estate of the cottages’ owner, Jean Phillippon, who was financially connected with the Orleans Theatre and Ballroom, stated that the cottages had a flat tile roof and the brick kitchen had round tiles. The adjoined pair of detached one-story kitchens was allowed to deteriorate in the 1950s by the owners (the Matassa Family) and subsequently was demolished.

Architecture Committee Meeting of 10/27/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 10/27/2020

Permit #20-41742-VCGEN  
Lead Staff: Erin Vogt

Appeal to retain gas sconces installed on side elevation of main building and metal backing installed on alley gates, per application & materials received 10/07/2020 & 10/23/2020, respectively. [Notice of Violation sent 09/21/2020]

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 10/27/2020

On 09/21/2020, staff issued a violation notice for gas sconces installed on the Bourbon elevation of the main building. The fixtures are 21” Bevolo “French Quarter” sconces with “Café du Monde” brackets. VCC Design Guidelines state that “decorative lighting fixture types should be: compatible with the building in terms of its style, type and period of construction; located near a focal point of the building, such as the primary entrance door; installed in a manner that is harmonious with the building’s design, such as evenly spaced on a balcony, gallery, or porch bay, or centered on or around an element such as a door, carriageway, or window.” (VCC DG: 11-07) [Note: The gas pendants installed on front elevation were approved by Committee on 06/23/2020 and are not in violation.]

In keeping with the Design Guidelines, gas sconces are generally not permitted in alleys or courtyards. Staff also notes that these fixtures are installed much higher above grade than is typical and are visible above the alley gate headers. There is no direct relationship between the fixtures and openings on this elevation, and the style of the “Café du Monde” bracket does not fit the age and style of the building. Staff recommends denial of the appeal to retain the fixtures, with the applicant to work with staff on non-decorative alternatives that can provide adequate lighting levels in the alley.

Staff also cited metal backing installed on the iron alley gates. The VCC Design Guidelines state that “the VCC does not allow glass, plastic or Plexiglas applied to a fence or gate” (VCC DG: 10-7) and metal backing is rarely found approvable by the Architectural Committee. Staff notes that the vast majority of metal backed gates in the District are prescribed or have been cited as a violation. Staff understands the desire for the privacy and security provided by a solid gate, and notes that historic photos of the property show wooden gates with headers instead of the iron gates in place now. The applicant is appealing to retain the gates as is, but has indicated willingness to replace the existing gates with wood as shown in the submitted drawings. Full detail drawings for the wooden gates must be submitted for final review and approval prior to permit, but staff finds the wooden gates to be significantly more appropriate than the non-historic iron gates in place now. Staff recommends denial of the appeal to retain the metal backed iron gates and conceptual approval of the wooden gates, with final review and approval to be handled at staff level.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 10/27/2020
410-420 N Rampart; 1025-1029 Conti
ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

This parking lot is the site of an early 20th-century 2-story masonry commercial building, the demolition of which was approved by the Vieux Carre Commission in 1986 for surface parking.

No Rating

Architecture Committee Meeting of 11/10/2020

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION: 11/10/2020

Proposal to retain pole mounted automatic license plate readers and LED fixtures, per application & materials received 10/13/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 11/10/2020

Staff observed the installation of a new aluminum pole outside the Conti St. entrance to this parking lot back on 09/14/2020 and posted a Stop Work Order. Photographs from the applicant show that work eventually continued with the installation of new equipment on the aluminum pole. The equipment includes two automatic license plate readers, which look similar to large security cameras, two LED light fixtures, and two plastic boxes housing supporting equipment. The equipment is arranged to monitor and document vehicles as they enter or exit this entrance to the parking lot. This includes an arm off of the center pole which projects out over the sidewalk.

Staff notes that this parking lot covers multiple properties to form the large lot with entrances on Conti, N. Rampart, and St. Louis St. Staff inspected the other entrances last Friday and observed an additional license plate scanner and light installed to an existing masonry column adjacent to the N. Rampart entrance.

Staff has many concerns regarding the proposal:

- The arm on Conti St. extends over the sidewalk, likely requiring review and approval from the Department of Public Works if retained
- The LED fixtures appear to remain illuminated at all times and cast light at an atypical angle
- Given the number of parking lots throughout the district, many with multiple street frontages, this could set a dangerous precedent if similar installations are sought
- The equipment is large and highly visible

Although this technology may be approvable, the installation would need to be significantly more discreet than the current unpermitted installation. Staff recommends that the applicant refers to the security and lighting section of the Guidelines in revising their proposal.

Staff recommends denial of the current proposal and encourages the applicant to submit a more comprehensive plan that address all entrances and is much more discreet.
520 Esplanade
ADDRESS: 518-22 Esplanade Avenue
OWNER: J & R Rental Properties LLC
APPLICANT: Katherine Harmon (2020)
Erika Gates (2018)
ZONING: VCR-2
USE: Residential
SQUARE: 17
LOT SIZE: 5,632 sq. ft.

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:
This c. 1901 version of the raised cottage type has a scale and classical simplicity which make it compatible with other Esplanade Avenue structures. The front gallery unfortunately was inappropriately filled in, thus detracting from the original appearance of the building.

Main building – Green

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION
Permit # 20-44798-VCGEN
Violation Case #16-11181-DBNVCC
Proposal to enclose screened in porch with new wood fixed shutter panels, per application & materials received 10/26/2020.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION
The space on the first floor of the Barracks elevation of this building was historically a screened in porch space. Currently, the space has been crudely weatherproofed with the addition of what appears to be insulated panels in the locations of the previously existing screens. The front porch on this property was enclosed ca. 1950 so staff notes that the applicant is now proposing to enclose the second originally open-air space on this building. The guidelines state that, “The VCC does not allow the enclosure of any balcony, gallery, or porch.” (VCC DG: 08-12)

This property was last reviewed in December 2018, when a different applicant proposed to remove the existing crude enclosure at this rear porch space and install new weatherboards and new windows. Neither staff nor the Architecture Committee was in favor of that proposal but the Architecture Committee did appear open to “a proactive and creative solution to the problem of the illegal enclosure.”

A new applicant has submitted the current proposal which features fixed shutter panels replacing the existing haphazard enclosure. It is not clear from the submittal but staff believes the space behind the shutters will not be open air but is proposed to remain as captured interior space. Staff finds the current proposal a vast improvement over the previous proposal as this one would at least give a fairly clear indication of the previously existing use of the space and would be somewhat easily reversible to open air porch space in the future if desired.

Still, bound by Guidelines, staff cannot recommend for the approval of the enclosure of this space and requests commentary from the Committee regarding the proposal.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION
11/10/2020

Architecture Committee Meeting of
12/18/2018

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION
Permit # 18-35739-VCGEN
Violation Case #16-11181-DBNVCC
Proposal to enclose screened in porch with new wood weatherboards and featuring three new windows, per application & materials received 10/29/18 & 12/11/18, respectively.
STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 12/18/18

This application was deferred at the 11/13/18 Architecture Committee meeting after the Committee recommended that the proposal better respond to the building and requested that the interior floorplan be provided. The applicant has submitted a revised proposal and has provided the requested floorplan.

The revised proposal features trim boards indicating the outline of the porch space. The proposal now also features three, six over one windows, matched to other existing windows on the building. Two of the three windows are vertically aligned with existing basement windows with the third window located in the center of the building.

Looking at the provided floorplan, this porch space is indicated as featuring laundry machines, storage space, and a small closet. The wall that historically was the rear exterior wall is shown as existing with doorways into a kitchen, the center hall, and a bedroom. Staff suggests that this space could continue to function in these ways regardless of whether or not the walls surrounding were enclosed or featured screening. Staff does not see a convincing reason to enclose this historic screened in porch space. The guidelines state that, “The VCC does not allow the enclosure of any balcony, gallery, or porch.” (VCC DG: 08-12)

As noted at the previous meeting, staff suggests that if any proposal were to be approved to enclose this space and make it conditioned that is should maintain the appearance and feel of the open air and highly transparent, screened in porch.

As staff does not see a convincing reason to enclose this porch space and finds the current proposal far off from anything that could be considered, staff recommends denial of the current proposal.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 12/18/18

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that the porch area could be screened by any number of systems with some kind of lattice or louvers being two possibilities. Mr. Fifield inquired if the client was willing to work to come up with a solution. Ms. Gates stated that they were coming with incremental proposals.

Mr. Fifield moved for a deferral in order for the applicant to return with a proactive and creative solution to the problem of the illegal enclosure. Mr. Musso seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 11/13/18

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that the porch area could be screened by any number of systems with some kind of lattice or louvers being two possibilities. Mr. Fifield inquired if the client was willing to work to come up with a solution. Ms. Gates stated that they were coming with incremental proposals.

Mr. Fifield moved for a deferral in order for the applicant to return with a proactive and creative solution to the problem of the illegal enclosure. Mr. Musso seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION: 11/13/18

The space on the first floor of the Barracks elevation of this building was historically a screened in porch space. Currently, the space has been crudely weatherproofed with the addition of what appears to be insulated panels in the locations of the previously existing screens. The front porch on this property was enclosed ca. 1950 so staff notes that the applicant is now proposing to enclose the second originally open air space on this building. The guidelines state that, “The VCC does not allow the enclosure of any balcony, gallery, or porch.” (VCC DG: 08-12)

The submitted plans simply propose to, “Install new wood siding to match the existing wood siding with wood corner trim.” Where the proposed new siding would meet the existing siding, the plans indicate that the boards would simply be butted together rather than feathering the boards together or utilizing a trim board to indicate the previous condition. Additionally, no fenestration is shown for the space. Staff notes that currently a door exists on the Barracks elevation of this screened in porch space, although the associated stairs or landing have been missing for some time.

Staff suggests that there may be alternatives available that would allow for this to become conditioned space, while still maintaining the appearance and feel of the open air and highly transparent, screened in porch. Staff notes that although the front porch on this building was previously enclosed, it was done in such a way that it maintained a high level of transparency and the feeling of the previously existing front porch. Staff suggests that a more contemporary approach along these same line may be much more successful than the current proposal. Additionally, staff requests that a floorplan be submitted with the proposal so that there is a clearer understanding for the proposed use of this space and how it relates to the rest of the building.

Staff recommends deferral of the application to allow the applicant to revise the proposal and submit the additional information.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION: 11/13/18
Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates noted that the owner requested beginning with the current proposal. Mr. Fifield stated that more design energy was necessary and that more than likely the proposal should conform to the building.

Mr. Block moved for deferral of the application noting the comments of the Committee. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.