

Notice of Public Meeting
Tuesday, March 9, 2021
1:00 PM, WebEx Conference Call
(504) 658-7001, Access Code: 992 484 599

NOTE: The below minutes are in draft form and are a summary of actions taken. They are not a verbatim transcription of the meeting.

Minutes of the VCC Architectural Committee meeting of Tuesday, March 9, 2021– 1:00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Rick Fifield, Toni DiMaggio, Stephen Bergeron

Staff Present: Bryan Block, Director; Renée Bourgogne, Senior Architectural Historian; Nick Albrecht, Senior Building Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Senior Plans Examiner
Marguerite Roberts, Inspector; Tony Whitfield, Inspector

Others Present: Corbett Scott, Bryce Scholl, Elias Duplantis, Myles Martin, Erin Holmes, Robert Kenny, Jonathan O’Rear, Giuseppe Dipasquale, Blake Kidder, Julia Scheuermann, Peter Trapolin, Dirk Fontenot

AGENDA

Prior to the start of the meeting, Mr. Block explained the process for a web conference as follows: after the presentation of the staff reports and a period for questions from the Committee members to the applicant and staff, the Committee would take a 30-minute recess to allow for the submittal of public comments via email at VCC@nola.gov. The comments would then be read to the Committee members prior to any motion or vote for each item. There would be a cap on the length of the comments to what could be read within two minutes, and the emails received have been saved as part of the public record.

At approximately 1:00 pm Mr. Fifield called the teleconference to order. Mr. Block called roll and all three Committee members were present, constituting a quorum.

Minutes

Old Business

1014 N Rampart St: 18-19094-VCGEN; Corbett Scott, applicant; Mohit Srivastava, owner; Proposal to convert single pedestrian gate to double gate, per application & materials received 06/08/2018 & 03/01/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=764945>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Scott present on behalf of the application. Mr. Scott stated that they would be happy to provide the 3"inch gap per staff request. Mr. Fifield asked if the opaque center band represented the lock rail and what material it would be; Mr. Scott responded yes, and that it would be solid iron. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she agreed with staff and that the lock rail height should be adjusted, asking Mr. Scott if he could work with staff. He responded that he would. Mr. Fifield stated that the locations of the rails should be adjusted, noting that the lock rail did not have to be fully opaque across the entire width if no panic hardware was to be installed. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

524 Esplanade Ave: 20-34343-VCGEN; Robert T Kenny, applicant/owner;

Proposal to install new decorative cast iron railings at front entrance stairs and, per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 03/05/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=850034>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Dr. Kenny present on behalf of the application. Dr. Kenny stated that he was glad they had all come to an agreement. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any comments. Mr. Bergeron asked if the door ironwork was original or from the 2005 porch rail renovation. Dr. Kenny stated that the doors were there prior to 2005. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she supported this minimally worked railing and was happy to see the cast iron elements had been scaled back. Mr. Fifield asked the applicant if he was happy with the design. Dr. Kenny stated yes. Mr. Fifield stated that he wanted to be absolutely sure the applicant was satisfied. Dr. Kenny again stated yes. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

828 Royal St: 21-06002-VCGEN; O'Rear Jonathan, applicant; Callipygian LLC, owner;

Proposal to install new tankless water heater on the Chartres elevation of the rear building, per application & materials received 06/16/2020 & 03/01/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=874909>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. O'Rear present on behalf of the application. Mr. O'Rear agreed with the staff report and went on to say that they looked for alternative locations, when they decided there were none, they decided to reduce the heating load and chose a heater that would make as little noise as possible. The plumber was also present. He stated that he had discussed this make and model heater with S&P and it was all ok with code. He went on to say that it would be minimally visible and very quiet. Ms. DiMaggio asked the plumber if there was a rack behind the heater or would it be mounted to the masonry. The plumber stated that it would be attached to the building with a piece of steel that would be mounted to the building. With no other questions or comments, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

New Business

1310 N Rampart St: 20-46919-VCGEN; Giuseppe Dipasquale, applicant; Esplanade Nola LLC, owner; Proposal to replace roof and install new mechanical platform and equipment, per application & materials received 11/17/2020 & 02/24/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=865029>

Ms. Vogt presented the property report with Mr. Martin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Martin stated that staff clearly recapped the situation; that they reevaluated the previously approved conventional HVAC proposal, looking for an option that was more sustainable and had less impact on the surrounding properties. They eliminated a great deal of equipment by choosing to use geothermal wells and will study the data over the next year. He added that they received approval from the BBSA to cross the property line. Mr. Fifield asked if any of the equipment could be installed at grade or on the interior; Mr. Martin answered that some of the equipment was being moved to the interior, but the equipment proposed for the roof must be located outside. Mr. Fifield asked how much exterior space was available at grade; Mr. Martin responded that the courtyard was being used by the restaurant and covered the geothermal equipment.

Mr. Fifield noted that the proposal used the billboard to screen the equipment. He asked if the billboard was prescribed, and, if so, would it expire and when? Mr. Block stated that he would inquire about the billboard's status. Mr. Bergeron asked what 1310's current use is; Mr. Martin responded that the first floor is an office, not affiliated with the adjacent restaurant, and the remaining building is residential. Mr. Fifield asked Mr. Martin to clarify the locations of the geothermal wells; Mr. Martin responded that the well field was located in the courtyard at 1310 and would be paved above.

Ms. DiMaggio stated that appreciated Mr. Fifield's comments regarding the billboard. She added that, if there were a chance the billboard would be removed in future, the equipment should be pushed further back from the front face of the building. Mr. Fifield asked how long the billboard was in lease; Mr. Martin responded that he was unsure. Mr. Fifield agreed that, if the billboard is not approved in perpetuity, the equipment should be pushed back and fully screened. With no further discussion needed, he moved on to the next item on the agenda.

931 St Louis St: 21-04654-VCGEN; William Anderson Mudd, applicant/owner;

Proposal to demolish existing wood fence and to construct new masonry fence, per application & materials received 02/18/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=873529>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Katz present on behalf of the application. Ms. Katz stated that the columns measured at 9'2". She went on to say that Robert Anderson measured them and that the last column measured to the end of the property, not to the middle of the column. Mr. Fifield asked if the Committee had any comments. Neither Ms. DiMaggio nor Mr. Bergeron had any comments. Mr. Fifield stated that he was concerned about the drilling of pilings on neighboring buildings. He also asked if a section could be provided. He then located it on slide 81. Ms. Katz stated that with regards to the neighboring buildings, their engineer thought it would be ok. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

500 St Peter St: 21-04902-VCGEN; Blake Kidder, applicant; The City Of New Orleans, owner; For Recommendation Only: Conceptual review of proposal to renovate courtyards, including restoration of exterior balconies, alteration of non-historic windows and wall materials, and repair roofs and demolition by neglect, per application & materials received 02/23/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=873778>

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Messrs. Trapolin and Kidder and Ms. Scheuermann present on behalf of the application. Mr. Trapolin stated that they had believed the balconies were enclosed during the Sizeler renovation in the 1990s which removed stucco and replaced windows, but they found photos showing the enclosure predated it, noting that they found a broken marble floor on the interior on top of the gallery structure. They estimated the work was done in the 1920s or 30s. He added the intention was to give the courtyards a more attractive, historic look while maintaining the interior connection to the apartments' kitchens. Mr. Trapolin stated that the copper roof replacement would be at the front gallery and that the roof repair portion of the application would be revised to include information requested by staff. He added that they were seeking conceptual approval of the courtyards to make them more attractive if not more authentic.

Ms. DiMaggio asked for a response to staff's concerns regarding elastomeric coating. Mr. Trapolin stated that it was only proposed at the parapets, but they would reevaluate using the material. Regarding the proposed courtyard work, Ms. DiMaggio appreciated that the renovation would reference the original volume of the building and previously existing outdoor space. Mr. Fifield agreed, noting that approximating the conditions for the period of significance was more appropriate than the existing plaster walls, adding that this work would not preclude restoring the exterior conditions in future. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she appreciated staff's recommendation for deferral for a building of this significance; Mr. Trapolin responded that they would be happy to discuss revisions with staff. With no further discussion needed, the Committee moved on to the next item on the agenda.

Appeals and Violations

528 St Louis St: 19-36579-VCGEN; Nicole Webre, applicant; L John Arbizzani, Haydee D Manual, Louis J Arbizzani, 46 Avenida Menendez Inc, Mary R Beamer, Cody Childress, Theodore W Nass, owner;

Appeal to retain doors and iron bars installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 12/09/19. **[Notice of Violation sent 10/28/19]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Redirect.aspx?SearchString=19-36579-VCGEN>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report. There was no one present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield asked if the applicant was notified of the hearing; Ms. Vogt stated that they were. Mr. Fifield stated that this was not the first time they had heard the application; Ms. Vogt responded that the Committee had requested that the item return for further discussion following a site visit, which had been conducted with the owner. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee members if they would prefer to wait to discuss the application following the public comment period, to give the applicant another opportunity to appear. Mr. Bergeron and Ms. DiMaggio agreed, and Mr. Fifield moved to the next item on the agenda.

926 Royal St: 21-04203-VCGEN; Patin Paul, applicant; Mercedes B Whitecloud, owner;

Proposal to address VCC violations including rebuilding portion of service building masonry wall and adding structural ties, per application & materials received 02/12/2021 & 02/24/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=873160>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Patin and Ms. Whitecloud present on behalf of the application. Ms. Whitecloud stated that she would like to use the color she uses on all the ironwork. Mr. Fifield asked if it would match the balconies. Ms. Whitecloud stated yes. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any comments or questions. Ms. DiMaggio asked how visible the ties would be from the other properties. Mr. Fifield stated "very." Ms. Whitecloud said that they were not visible from the street but would be visible from the parking lot. Mr. Fifield stated that this seemed extreme. He asked if the structural engineer told her why this had happened. Ms. Whitecloud stated no but that she suspected there was a patch in the wall and when the opening was infilled they did not do their due diligence with the poured concrete at the seam. She went on to say that vehicles in the parking lot often hit the wall. Mr. Bergeron asked if the V ties would remain or be replaced. Ms. Whitecloud stated that if they were still viable they would remain, but if they need to be replaced they would do so. Mr. Fifield stated that the V ties marked the site of a repair. Mr. Bergeron stated that he was inclined to leave them as is since they told the building's story. Ms. DiMaggio agreed with Mr. Bergeron. Mr. Bergeron asked if VCC staff could work with the parking lot owners to perhaps install bollards. Mr. Albrecht stated yes. Ms. Whitecloud then asked if they could do a skim coat over the entire wall. She went on to say that she would like to tint the mix with pigment so as to never paint this wall. Mr. Block stated that this would be a separate application.

With nothing left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron made the motion for a 30-minute recess for public comment at 2:08 pm. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the Committee agreed to reconvene at 2:38 pm.

At approximately 2:38 pm Mr. Block called the roll. All were present and Mr. Fifield reconvened the meeting.

Old Business

1014 N Rampart St: 18-19094-VCGEN; Corbett Scott, applicant; Mohit Srivastava, owner; Proposal to convert single pedestrian gate to double gate, per application & materials received 06/08/2018 & 03/01/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=764945>

No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval** of the double gates with provisos for the 3" airgap and rail revisions per the Committee's comments, with all details to be worked out at the staff level. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

524 Esplanade Ave: 20-34343-VCGEN; Robert T Kenny, applicant/owner;

Proposal to install new decorative cast iron railings at front entrance stairs and, per application & materials received 07/13/2020 & 03/05/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=850034>

Public Comment:

No public comment

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the approval of the new railing with details to be worked out at the staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

828 Royal St: 21-06002-VCGEN; O'Rear Jonathan, applicant; Callipygian LLC, owner;

Proposal to install new tankless water heater on the Chartres elevation of the rear building, per application & materials received 06/16/2020 & 03/01/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=874909>

Public Comment:

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Architectural Committee of the Vieux Carre Commission,

I am once again writing to ask you to deny a request by the owners of 828 Royal. They are asking that external natural gas fired tankless hot water heaters be allowed to be installed on the exterior of their building. I am the owner of the building next door (830 Royal) and see the proposed hot water heaters as being unsightly, loud and not keeping with the architectural integrity of the 828 Royal building which was built around 1810. Our courtyard is directly across from the proposed installation, and I can say with absolute certainty that the sound from those heaters (they are asking for two) will be detrimental to the enjoyment of my courtyard. The noise coming from the heater is very loud and the 828 Royal noise will be even louder as there are two units requested. The heaters appear to be mounted flush to the exterior wall versus being inset into the wall to contain some of the noise.

I humbly beseech you to deny such request (after all, that house has survived for 200 years with other sources of hot water that do not impinge upon the neighbors) to install two tankless hot water heaters. The architecture of the structure should be maintained by having typical hot water tanks installed INSIDE the house. Baring such a vote, then please make them install a noise retention sound barrier around said installation so that I do not have to hear them operate.

Thanks you very much for your time,

Harvey Mueller
General Partner
Pescador Partners, Ltd.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Fifield asked staff if there was in fact only one heater proposed. Mr. Albrecht replied yes. Mr. Bergeron stated that it was rather unsightly to simply mount this to an exterior wall. He went on to question why staff would allow this. Mr. Albrecht stated that there was a low attic space and that adding this would not be feasible. Mr. Fifield stated that the applicant had chosen a make and model with a very low decibel level, not even as loud as an HVAC unit. He went on to say that he would not want this inset into the wall. Mr. Bergeron asked why it could not be mounted to the roof rack. Mr. O'Rear stated that the neighbor had stated all of this previously and that was why the spent 8 months looking for an alternative location. He went on to say that they also looked at an electric model, but it was too big. Mr. O'Rear then went on to explain why it could not be located on the roof rack. He stated that the rack was sized for the HVAC, that there was no room for additional equipment and that it was already made and ready for installation. Mr. Fifield asked if there were any more questions. He then called for a motion. Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for approval with the details to be worked out at the staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1310 N Rampart St: 20-46919-VCGEN; Giuseppe Dipasquale, applicant; Esplanade Nola LLC, owner; Proposal to replace roof and install new mechanical platform and equipment, per application & materials received 11/17/2020 & 02/24/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=865029>

No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the proposal so the status of the billboard could be determined. Mr. Fifield asked if he would accept an amendment to the motion, noting that it was the responsibility of the applicant to determine the billboard's status. Mr. Bergeron accepted the amendment. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

931 St Louis St: 21-04654-VCGEN; William Anderson Mudd, applicant/owner;

Proposal to demolish existing wood fence and to construct new masonry fence, per application & materials received 02/18/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=873529>

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron made the motion of approval of the application with details to be worked out at the staff level. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the passed unanimously.

500 St Peter St: 21-04902-VCGEN; Blake Kidder, applicant; The City Of New Orleans, owner; For Recommendation Only: Conceptual review of proposal to renovate courtyards, including restoration of exterior balconies, alteration of non-historic windows and wall materials, and repair roofs and demolition by neglect, per application & materials received 02/23/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=873778>

No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** making a recommendation, pending revisions based on the staff report and Committee discussion. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

528 St Louis St: 19-36579-VCGEN; Nicole Webre, applicant; L John Arbizzani, Haydee D Manual, Louis J Arbizzani, 46 Avenida Menendez Inc, Mary R Beamer, Cody Childress, Theodore W Nass, owner;

Appeal to retain doors and iron bars installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 12/09/19. **[Notice of Violation sent 10/28/19]**

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No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Following the recess, Mr. Fontenot was present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fontenot stated that the doors had been there for years and asked if they could be grandfathered, adding that he would like a deferral so the owner of that unit could be present for the discussion. Ms. DiMaggio asked if the owner had specifically asked for a deferral; Mr. Fontenot responded that he did not believe the owner was aware of the hearing. Ms. Vogt clarified that public notice was given and emails had been exchanged with Mr. Fontenot and others. Mr. Fifield stated that, if the glass was installed to abate noise, there were better, alternate methods to deter unwanted sound transmission.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **deny** retention of the added glass, trim and ironwork. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Block informed the applicant that the decision could be appealed to the full Commission if written notice was provided to VCC staff within thirty days.

926 Royal St: 21-04203-VCGEN; Patin Paul, applicant; Mercedes B Whitecloud, owner;

Proposal to address VCC violations including rebuilding portion of service building masonry wall and adding structural ties, per application & materials received 02/12/2021 & 02/24/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=873160>

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the conceptual approval of the application with commentary from today's meeting to be taken into consideration with all details at the staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

With no items left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 3:04 pm.

Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion which passed unanimously.