

VIEUX CARRE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

LaToya Cantrell
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

Notice of Public Meeting

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

1:00 PM, WebEx Conference Call

(504) 658-7001, Access Code: 993 360 153

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, April 27, 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; Marguerite Roberts, Inspector; Tony Whitfield, Inspector

Staff Absent: Erin Vogt, Senior Plans Examiner

Others Present: John Williams, Juan Lara, Calla Bardwell, Micah Loewenthal, Christine Smith, Merlin Decorte,

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 1:01 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

808 Royal St: 16-02803-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; N I C E Investments LLC, owner;

Proposal to construct new four-story building on site of previously collapsed three-story building, per application & materials received 06/09/15 & 03/30/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=573243>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Mr. Lara present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that they could not proceed until the neighboring building corrected their demolition by neglect issues. Mr. Block stated that this was untrue.

Mr. Williams stated the following: In 2016 the building was bought. They dealt with the zoning and had gone through a lot of work over two years to get a design approved in 2018. In 2018 they received conceptual approval with the go ahead to draft construction documents. Currently there are 63 pages with only three items outstanding for VCC- the hatch, the door, and the upper roof. We have had everything ok'd with zoning. We thought the Commission would go ahead and recommend approval consistent with the staff recommendation. The permit application was accepted and in order to get a foundation permit we need VCC approval. We have been working on this for years now.

Mr. Lara stated that the only things outstanding were the garage door, which was in progress. Mr. Williams stated that staff had requested approval, but the Commission said no. He went on to say that they need the foundation permit and the neighbor needed to address the demolition by neglect. Mr. Fifield stated that Mr.

Williams was not addressing the Commission's concerns. Mr. Block stated this was a procedural aspect of review. Mr. Williams stated that they had conceptual approval from 4/18. Mr. Block stated that that approval had since expired. Mr. Block explained that during the lag time between submittals the conceptual approval had expired and now the makeup of the Commission was completely different. He went on to state that when reviewed at the last Commission hearing one commissioner had grave concerns regarding the massing, so he sent it back to the ARC. Mr. Block stated that this hearing was to address the reconsideration of massing, not the demolition by neglect of the neighboring building. Mr. Fifield agreed that the makeup of the Commission was completely different and that they were only discussing the matter as a deferral because some members had managed to avoid an all-out denial. He went on to state that there was no reason to believe that approval would be automatic, and the new Commission was simply not ok with it. He then asked Mr. Williams if he was prepared to discuss the design and massing as this meeting was not about the adjacent building. Mr. Williams then asked staff for a transcript. He went on to say that they were meticulous and had tried to respond to the ARC. He went on to say that he would rather deal with the ARC, but if need be they would take it to Council. Mr. Fifield stated that there was no defense of the proportions and that they believed that perhaps there was an assumption that this would be an automatic approval. Mr. Fifield then asked if the commissioners had any comment or questions. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she was the lone opposing vote and that she did not have a problem with the massing. She went on to say that she was hoping to be useful with the Commission to get the application to a good/ acceptable place where everyone could be comfortable. Mr. Bergeron stated that he understood the Commission's concerns and that when they (ARC) had reviewed the proposal a few weeks back, he too was hesitant to bring the massing up, but that now he wanted to satisfy the Commission. Mr. Fifield stated that he seconded the motion for deferral so as to avoid a denial. He went on to say that the proposal had good merit but he thought that the applicant really need to demonstrate this to the Commission. He further explained that some Commission members did not have as much experience with architecture, so they might need more guidance. Mr. Williams thanked Mr. Fifield and state that they would come to the next meeting with a presentation to show how far they had come with the design and how they had responded to ARC comments. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

729 Governor Nicholls St: 21-08898-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; Thomas N Reagan, owner;

Proposal to modify design of courtyard masonry walls including adding an additional wythe of CMU and review of conceptually approved sliding gate details, per application & materials received 01/05/2021 & 01/15/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=878835>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Ms. Bardwell present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that the jog back on the wall would allow for more maneuverability in the space and that the paving would now be brick over concrete. He went on to say that the rear wall belonged to 729 Dauphine but that his client wanted a cleaner wall so they decided to build in front of it that way it would match the two block walls across the back. Finally, Mr. Williams stated that his team would like to work with staff to devise a brick and grass area. Mr. Fifield asked if there were any questions. Ms. DiMaggio asked if it was the intent to have the new wall to have three sides with the finished wall so that they did not have to finish the wall of the neighbor's building. Mr. Williams stated yes. Mr. Bergeron asked staff if the neighboring building was supposed to be plastered. Mr. Albrecht stated that he was unsure and that they needed to investigate the matter. Mr. Block asked if Mr. Williams had spoken to zoning about permeable paving. Mr. Williams stated no. Mr. Block instructed Mr. Williams to check with zoning because VCC might not be able to approve brick over concrete. Mr. Williams stated that he would confer with zoning. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

New Business

939-41 Orleans Ave: 21-07380-VCGEN; Loewenthal Micah, applicant; Micah Collin Loewenthal, owner; Proposal to install new pool in courtyard, per application & materials received 03/15/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=877294>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Loewenthal, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Decorte present on behalf of the application. Mr. Loewenthal stated that they had sent the cross section, gunite sample, and details on the pool equipment earlier in the day. He went on to say that as for the violations, they wanted to do this now and deal with the paint and violations after. Mr. Fifield instructed Mr. Loewenthal that submissions should be made well in advance of the meeting in order for the Committee to have access to the materials. Mr. Bergeron stated that the pool would have to be excavated wider than the actual pool width and that this would likely be a problem. Mr. Fifield agreed. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she shared this concern and a structural engineer should be consulted

to determine whether or not that 2' distance would even be doable. Mr. Fifield stated that they needed additional information. Mr. Decorte stated that the piers were directly under the house. He asked the Committee if they believed the piers "spread." All three members replied "yes" in unison. Mr. Decorte then asked if this were the case could they not go 3' from the property line. Mr. Fifield stated they could not give an opinion for another agency. He went on to say that the foundation concerns were very real. Mr. Loewenthal stated that they would prefer to move the pool further towards the fence. He went on to say that he would get a structural engineer's report and be ready for the next meeting. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

200 Bourbon St: 21-09736-VCGEN; Kris Shull, applicant; 200 Bourbon LLC, owner; Proposal to install new hood vent and intake air, per application & materials received

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=879684>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Terrell present on behalf of the application. Mr. Terrell stated that they had read the staff report that morning and were currently looking for alternative locations. He then asked if the Committee would approve any roof penetrations as they could go with an inline fan. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any questions or concerns. Ms. DiMaggio expressed concerns over the possible addition of a safety rail. She asked the client to please make sure there would be no code requirements for a rail. Mr. Terrell stated that there would not be and that they had sent Ms. Vogt a sketch for how to deal with the "nastiness" on the visible platform on Bourbon. Mr. Bergeron stated that this seemed like a good opportunity to take a holistic approach. Mr. Fifield reiterated that this was a blue rated building and the less invasive approach the better. Mr. Terrell explained that he would still have to go up. Mr. Fifield stated that he would be happy to look at an actual proposal but that he was not following the verbal details Mr. Terrell was explaining. Mr. Block stated that they had discussed screening in the past, but that they had never received an actual proposal. He went on to say that conceptually this might work. Mr. Terrell stated that they needed to go higher. Mr. Block stated that he believed they could make it work on the brown rated building. Mr. Fifield concluded by stating that the current proposal was unacceptable and that the brown rated bundling was a better choice. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

615 Ursulines Ave: 21-10616-VCGEN; Maurice L. Robert LLC, applicant; Maurice L Robert LLC, owner; Proposal to install new metal gate at front of entrance alcove, per materials received 04/12/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=881702>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report. There was no one present on behalf of the application. With no one present on behalf of the application, the Committee elected to move on to the next agenda item.

1132 Royal St: 21-10565-VCGEN; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Gallier House Inc, owner;

Proposal to replace two existing fiberglass gallery columns with new cast iron columns, per application & materials received 04/14/2021.

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Taylor and Mr. Cangelosi present on behalf of the application. Mr. Cangelosi stated that the staff report was perfect and that each new column was going to cost approximately \$20,000 each. Mr. Fifield stated that he wanted to document that this was a case of allowing a substitute material that ultimately failed. Ms. DiMaggio asked if Mr. Cangelosi know where the fiberglass columns had been made. Mr. Cangelosi stated that his office had done this a very long time ago and that the formula had not been perfected so it ultimately failed. Mr. Fifield stated that he was very happy the museum could afford to invest in historic materials. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

Appeals and Violations

923 Dumaine St: 21-10130-VCGEN; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Catherine L Oberholtzer, owner; Proposal to address demolition by neglect violations begun without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 04/12/2021. [STOP WORK ORDERS posted 02/18/2021 and 03/25/2021]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Redirect.aspx?SearchString=21-10130-VCGEN>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Taylor present on behalf of the application. Mr. Taylor stated that they

believed the location of the mini split was good so it wouldn't impede the courtyard and the neighbors wouldn't see it. He then stated that the siding for mounting was very strong at this location. He went on to say that for the stucco that it would be a wire lath and stucco system and they would bring the reveal out. Mr. Taylor then explained that the light fixture was existing, but they would be happy to come up with another fixture. Mr. Fifield asked if there were any other comments or questions from the Committee.

Ms. DiMaggio asked if the mini split was to be installed above the masonry wall. She went on to say that if it was, it would be visible, but it would allow more courtyard access. Mr. Taylor stated that he would like more study on this as water heaters could also be mounted. He went on to say that the courtyards were more important and should be preserved. He added that, if this unit were installed at grade, it would be located right where people would sit. Ms. DiMaggio stated that to her it made a difference if the unit was mounted to a masonry wall versus a wood clad wall. Mr. Bergeron stated that he would like the applicant to look at other options for the mini split. He went on to say that while he appreciated the courtyard ambience, he thought a different solution could be reached. Mr. Fifield stated that the efficiency of running the condensation lines would likely disrupt historic fabric and would be visible. Mr. Taylor stated that the lines would be behind the units and would go into the crawl space and one unit mounted where there was one currently. He added that the units would require no drainage and that they would sit on two brackets.

Mr. Bergeron asked if stucco was to be applied to the entire rear wall; Mr. Taylor responded yes. Mr. Bergeron asked why the stucco over the brick; Mr. Taylor asked why would they leave it exposed. Mr. Bergeron stated that he was inclined to have the brick remain exposed to tell the story and the history of the building. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

812-14 St Philip St: 20-39570-VCGEN; 814 St Philip St: Sidney Lapuyade, IV, applicant; A Brooks Living Trust Debra, owner; Appeal to retain gas fixtures and service lines installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 09/11/2020 & 04/01/2021, respectively.

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Bringaze present on behalf of the application. Mr. Bringaze stated that they were just looking for a way to attach the pendants, so he walked around the French Quarter and submitted a photo of one he had seen. He went on to say that he did not believe the photo to be all that attractive and that he preferred the sistered boards. Mr. Fifield asked if he had considered a custom U-shaped bracket. Mr. Bringaze that he had asked Bevolo but that they could not find an example. Mr. Fifield stated that it would have to be custom bracket, so Bevolo would not just have it on site. Mr. Bergeron stated that the most common detail was a 2x6 blocking between the outriggers where the bracket could attach. Ms. DiMaggio asked if this would be acceptable to staff. Mr. Block stated that he thought either of these solutions could work, but that they needed to look at it at a more granular level. Mr. Bringaze stated that staff was never available to meet on site. Mr. Fifield asked if Mr. Block could arrange this; Mr. Block responded yes. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee went into a 30-minute recess for public comment.

With nothing left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron made the motion for a 30-minute recess for public comment. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the Committee agreed to reconvene at 3:14 PM.

At approximately 3:14 PM Mr. Block called the roll. All were present. Mr. Fifield reconvened the meeting.

Old Business

808 Royal St: 16-02803-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; N I C E Investments LLC, owner;

Proposal to construct new four-story building on site of previously collapsed three-story building, per application & materials received 06/09/15 & 03/30/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=573243>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski

FQ Citizens

I am a homeowner residing on the 800 block of Orleans in which my property endured foundation cracks from

street repairs conducted by the city on the 800 block of St. Ann street, only two blocks from the proposed application near St. Ann and Royal. I am now considering re-leveling my home to accommodate soil shifting as a consequence of the deep excavation into St. Ann which affected some houses on this block. This proposed application suggests a 4 story building with a pool atop, that will be heavily weighted, and more likely require piles driven deep into soil that has a high water table. I see no application exhibit of an engineer's report of the effects drilling into this type of soil, nor how much stress this will place on foundations of nearby buildings. There also doesn't seem to be a traffic study of how pedestrian and traffic will be affected by the applicant's desire to have a parking garage entrance, cut into a heavily traversed, pedestrian sidewalk. Nor, does there seem to be much consideration to establish the fire department's approval of such a building's egress by occupants, given its dimensions to all sides of the property. Surely, business interruption on Royal Street will occur during any pile driving. Until the applicant provides more documentation and information to this committee of these important issues, I believe the Committee should table or deny this application as presented. Thank you. Chad Pellerin, 819 Orleans Avenue.

We agree with the staff report that massing and form have not been addressed today and ask that the application should be deferred to address these concerns. The project as it is is far too large for this site. The height and overall size will dominate the area rather than blend in and complement. We have continued concerns about the lack of open space.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the proposal in order for the applicant to obtain the Commission transcript and address the Commission's comments in order to move forward. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

729 Governor Nicholls St: 21-08898-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; Thomas N Reagan, owner;

Proposal to modify design of courtyard masonry walls including adding an additional wythe of CMU and review of conceptually approved sliding gate details, per application & materials received 01/05/2021 & 01/15/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=878835>

Public Comment:

Bridget Balentine, French Quarter Resident

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the VCC officers and members of the Vieux Carre property owner Tom Reagan.

Tom Reagan purchased 721 & 723 Gov. Nicholls in 1976. For 45 years this man has upheld these blue and green rated buildings in the highest esteem. Mr. Reagan's historical passion for the residences is always in the fore front for all restoration and maintenance. Mr. Reagan hires the highest skilled historical architects, contractors and designers at his own expense. The VCC should acknowledge the rare gift a custodian bestowed on The Thierry House by Latour & Henry B. Latrobe that was built in 1814 and the Nineteenth century firehouse. Mr. Reagan's stewardship is extraordinaire.

Mr. & Mrs. Reagan have now purchased the old Ferrara Fish market at 729 Governor Nicholls. The Ferrara family seemingly were unable to maintain structures on property prior to sale. Why would there be any doubt as to the proper restoration to the present state of this historic property by the Reagans? The VCC should recognize it's fellow homeowners that fully adhere to all rules and compliance for restoration. I kindly ask you not to dwell on motives non relevant. I urge the VCC to enable and lessen the mental anguish. Lessen the financial burden on this project. You are fortunate to have a lifelong member engaged in such an endeavor. Please support the work and move forward before the project becomes unattainable and too cumbersome. Do not allow other personal non-qualified opinions cloud the enjoyment of historic work

It is in your power to say yes, we need this building and property restored for future before it is lost. I implore you to Trust this guardian and his historically proven team.

I speak on behalf because I had the honor of residing at said property 1982 – 1989.

Nikki Szalwinski, French Quarter Citizens

The additional wythe of CMU raises concerns about maintenance for neighboring property similar to what has happened at 928 St Ann. Why not avoid future issues before it is built. I remain confused as to why the height of the CMU fence was allowed as well as the extension on the existing brick fence.

Design Guidelines state:

The VCC does not allow a vertical extension of an existing gate and/or fence.

CZO article 21.6.N.1.a. states: a fence or wall may be located in any yard but may not exceed eight (8) feet in height, except within national historic districts, where a fence or wall may not exceed seven (7) feet in height. Other property owners have been held to these rules and granting an exemption when no variances have been obtained is uneven application of these regulations.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for the approval of the relocated brick fence, the paving and the gate with details

at the staff level with the proviso that the double CMU wall only to be allowed if stucco was not originally approved for the rear of the building on Dauphine. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

939-41 Orleans Ave: 21-07380-VCGEN; Loewenthal Micah, applicant; Micah Collin Loewenthal, owner; Proposal to install new pool in courtyard, per application & materials received 03/15/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=877294>

No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the application to allow time for the applicant to consult a structural engineer and to submit an application and scope of work to address the ongoing violations. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

200 Bourbon St: 21-09736-VCGEN; Kris Shull, applicant; 200 Bourbon LLC, owner; Proposal to install new hood vent and intake air, per application & materials received

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=879684>

No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the application in order to allow time for the applicant to revise the proposal based on Committee and staff recommendations. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

615 Ursulines Ave: 21-10616-VCGEN; Maurice L. Robert LLC, applicant; Maurice L Robert LLC, owner; Proposal to install new metal gate at front of entrance alcove, per materials received 04/12/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=881702>

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the application in order for the applicant to be present. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

1132 Royal St: 21-10565-VCGEN; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Gallier House Inc, owner;

Proposal to replace two existing fiberglass gallery columns with new cast iron columns, per application & materials received 04/14/2021.

Public Comment:

Discussion and Motion:

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

Appeals and Violations

923 Dumaine St: 21-10130-VCGEN; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Catherine L Oberholtzer, owner; Proposal to address demolition by neglect violations begun without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 04/12/2021. **[STOP WORK ORDERS posted 02/18/2021 and 03/25/2021]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Redirect.aspx?SearchString=21-10130-VCGEN>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski
1011 St. Philip

I am very familiar with this property and truly appreciate that the applicant is being so sensitive to the courtyard.

This home as been loved and enjoyed as it is and my hope is that the courtyard and provenance of this property continue be respected. The home is basically unchanged since the 1950s. When I asked Catherine years ago what she had updated on the property she responded “not a thing!!!” I agree with Commissioner Bergeron that the rear elevation should not be stuccoed and instead reflect its history. I am relieved the applicant is amenable. This home is a rare unmolested jewel and I am so very grateful the architect is sensitive to this.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval** of the proposed work, with **deferral** of the wall-mounted mini split and light fixture, and **approval** of the stucco on the clay tile. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

812-14 St Philip St: 20-39570-VCGEN; 814 St Philip St: Sidney Lapuyade, IV, applicant; A Brooks Living Trust Debra, owner; Appeal to retain gas fixtures and service lines installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 09/11/2020 & 04/01/2021, respectively.

No Public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the application for the applicant to work with staff based on today’s comments, only returning to the ARC if a resolution could not be reached. 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 3:35 pm. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.