

VIEUX CARRE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

LaToya Cantrell
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

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

Minutes of the VCC Architectural Committee meeting of Tuesday, October 25, 2022– 12:30 pm.

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

Staff Present: Bryan Block, Director; Renee Bourgogne, Deputy Director; Nicholas Albrecht, Senior Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Senior Plans Examiner; Marguerite Roberts, Inspector

Others Present: Jonathan Marcantel, Peter Trapolin, Moses Smith, Katherine Harmon, Erin Holmes, John Williams, Sam Levinson, Charles Zimmer, Sal Sunseri, Michael Forster, Vincent Marcello, Marita Jager, Kristine Kobilá, Samantha Johnson, Terri Dreyer, Nikki Szalwinski

Minutes

Old Business

1130 Chartres St: 21-33567-VCGEN; Sarah Nickelotte, applicant; Soniat Holdings LLC, owner;

Proposal to renovate buildings including review of proposed details for lighting, the carriageway gate, new window, and window and door hardware, per application & materials received 12/07/2021 & 10/13/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=909114>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Marcantel present on behalf of the application. Mr. Marcantel stated that on the carriageway door that it would require a small wall infill so that opening would get smaller to align. Mr. Fifield asked if this was a resubmission of the same idea for the carriageway. Mr. Marcantel stated that they had decided not to pursue the change but then ownership changed their minds. Mr. Fifield stated that there was a square head in the old photo and that he was also concerned about not allowing the public view from the street. He then stated, "so you want it both ways?" Commissioner Bergeron stated, "I think this is plausible." Commissioner DiMaggio stated, "it is a meshing of the different conditions that I find problematic." She went on to say that they should "stick to what they have evidence of." Mr. Marcantel stated that he believed between the two, ownership would rather have the solid door. Mr. Fifield pointed out that they were copying a non-historic condition across the street. He then moved on to the hardware, window and lighting- stating "those seem ok."

Commissioner Bergeron asked about the balcony bracket on the front wall and how that would affect the lighting. Mr. Marcantel stated that it would likely go in front. Commissioner DiMaggio suggested that this instance may call for the use of directional lighting. Commissioner Bergeron stated that he was inclined to adopt staff's recommendation for the lighting to be centered on the openings.

Public Comment: Erin Holmes, representing VCPORA, spoke in opposition of the gate, noting that the existing condition offers glimpses of the courtyard that add to the toute ensemble and streetscape.

Mr. Fifield directed the conversation to the pavers. Mr. Marcantel stated that the blue matched and that the thickness also matched, so they were pleased with that. Ms. DiMaggio stated that interspersing and blending would be a better approach.

Commissioner DiMaggio made the motion to defer the front gate but to conceptually approve all other items with the details to be worked out at the staff level. Commissioner Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

1133-1137 Chartres St: 22-22631-VCGEN; Jonathan G Marcantel, applicant; Soniat Holdings LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate buildings including review of proposed details for lighting, courtyard paving, and window and door hardware, per application & materials received 07/26/2022 & 10/13/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=937110>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Marcantel present on behalf of the application. Mr. Marcantel stated that currently they were not using any panic hardware and that the alley was for back of the house as a passageway for housekeeping. Commissioner DiMaggio stated that the lighting went against guidelines but in this case it did make sense. Mr. Fifield agreed as this was a deeper gallery. Mr. Marcantel stated that they were trying not to add too much light.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Bergeron made the motion for the conceptual approval of the lighting, ceiling fans, pedestrian gate, pavers with existing historic to be reset, courtyard door modifications and hardware, with all details to be handled at the staff level. Commissioner DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

1301 Chartres St: 22-28345-VCGEN; Broadway Eddy, applicant; Melody S Douglas, Palo Inc, Rachel D Perkoff, Eddy D Broadway, Carolyn C Looper, Jeanne M Taylor, Geoffrey Kleine-Deters, owner;

Proposal to structurally reinforce balcony on the rear elevation of the main building including the addition of new metal plates at each existing wood outrigger, per application & materials received 09/19/2022 and 09/27/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=944116>

The applicant requested a deferral of this item prior to the meeting. Commissioner DiMaggio made the motion to defer. Commissioner Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

940 Royal St: 22-28660-VCCAM; John Crouch, applicant; Michael J Maimone, James G Caridi, 93640 LLC, Kurt Michael Heyman, Jennifer E Hale, Michael J Maimone, Michael J Maimone, Ernest Jr Dominguez, Jeffrey A Kraft, owner;

Proposal to install decorative hanging electric light fixtures at the first, second, and third floors, per application & materials received 09/21/2022 & 10/13/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=944213>

There was no one present on behalf this application. Commissioner Bergeron made the motion to defer the proposal. Commissioner DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

400-10 Chartres St, 535-541 Conti St: 22-28878-VCGEN; Moses Engineers, applicant; Kemper & Leila Williams Foundation dba The Historic New Orleans Collection, owner; Proposal to install rooftop mechanical equipment and pipe enclosure suspended over alley, per application & materials received 09/23/2022 and 10/21/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=944434>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Trapolin and Mr. Smith present on behalf of the application. Mr. Trapolin stated that the geothermal piping had broken, and that this would tie-in to an existing rooftop mechanical farm. He stated that this would enter at the rear of the building where there was already existing equipment. Mr. Bergeron asked if there was no way to salvage the existing geothermal equipment; Mr. Trapolin responded that the past problem was that some was in the courtyard, some was under the building, and that the corner building was not really in use, so this could be an issue in the future since the equipment would be very difficult to access. Mr. Smith stated that this would bypass the geothermal completely. Ms. Vogt requested a drawing showing how the enclosure would go around the architectural features on this elevation, such as the pilasters.

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval**, with the applicant to provide details and drawings as requested by staff, for final review and approval at staff level. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1123 Burgundy St: 22-29861-VCGEN; David Oreilly, applicant; 518 South Rampart LLC, owner; Proposal to modify rear courtyard paving, per application & materials received 10/05/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=947528>

There was no applicant present on behalf of the application. Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** until the applicant could attend. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

610-12, 614-18 Chartres St: 22-29907-VCGEN; 610 Chartres St: Reliable Foundations LLC, applicant; 610-618 Chartres LLC, owner; Proposal to modify courtyard drainage and regrade pavers, per application & materials received 10/03/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=947475>

There was no applicant present on behalf of the application. Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** until the applicant could attend. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

724 St Philip St: 22-29984-VCGEN; Mabile Barbara, applicant; Minacore Investments LLC, owner; Proposal to install metal spikes at property line fence and gates, per application & materials received 10/04/2022 & 10/05/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=947553>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Marcello present on behalf of the application. Mr. Marcello stated that he did not care what type of spikes were used and was happy to find another style. He stated that the fence and gate had been jumped. Mr. Fifield asked how the installation would be handled at the lights; Mr. Marcello responded the spikes would be installed at the sides and behind. Mr. Fifield stated that he would not object if the applicant wished to reconsider this lighting.

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **conceptual approval**, with final placement to be decided at staff level prior to installation. She noted that they should be continuous and aligned. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

520 Burgundy St: 22-30480-VCGEN; Loretta Harmon, applicant; 488 Holdings LLC, owner;

Proposal to demolish existing open-air lean-to and to construct new enclosed addition, per application & materials received 10/07/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=948293>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Harmon present on behalf of the application. Ms. Harmon stated that she had only seen photos of the chimney and that it was completely covered in vegetation. Ms. Harmon continued that the pool design was underway.

Mr. Fifield asked where the AC condensers were now. Ms. Harmon replied that there were no condensers before.

Commissioner Bergeron moved to conceptually approve the new small structure and to defer the chimney removal. Commissioner DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

237 Bourbon St: 22-31927-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 235 Holdings LLC, owner;

Proposal to renovate building (in conjunction with 239-241 Bourbon St.) including a proposed change of use on the third floor from vacant to short term rental, per application & materials received 10/11/2022 & 10/19/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=948295>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Mr. Levison present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that the buildings had been acting as one for over 50 years and that they intend to use them as one building. Regarding the mechanical equipment, Mr. Levinson noted that the new rack would include the existing mechanical equipment from the Bienville side of the property plus three new units. Mr. Bergeron asked if new roofs would be put on the building. Mr. Levinson stated that a structural engineer had reviewed the roofs and stated that new roofs were not needed.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner DiMaggio moved for conceptual approval of the proposal with additional information to be submitted to staff and to forward a positive recommendation for the change of use. Commissioner Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

241 Bourbon St: 22-30621-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 241 Holdings LLC, et al, owner;

Proposal to renovate building (in conjunction with 235-237 Bourbon St.) including a proposed change of use on the third floor from vacant to short term rental, per application & materials received 10/11/2022 & 10/19/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=948295>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Mr. Levison present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams noted the intention to have the override blend into the building and noted its appearance in the rendering. Mr. Levison noted that they may propose a canopy over the entrance to the rental units and that the elevator required a 13' override above the last stop. Mr. Fifield inquired why the doors to the short term rentals were so wide and squat. Mr. Williams stated they could go narrower and taller.

Mr. Fifield asked if the elevator would be a hydraulic elevator. Mr. Levinson stated it would be a MRL (Machine Room-Less) elevator and that it would need to open on both sides with five stops. Mr. Block asked the Committee what their opinion was regarding the proposed paired French doors.

Erin Holmes, representing VCPOA, noted an objection to the proposed conversion of windows to French doors on the ground floor. Ms. Holmes also objected to widening of the doors at the STR entrance and spoke in favor of maintaining the original configuration of openings.

Nikki Szalwinski, representing French Quarter Citizens, reiterated Ms. Holmes comments and recommended keeping the historic conditions.

Mr. Bergeron expressed concern regarding a note that a chimney would be removed. Mr. Fifield stated that the applicants were using a relatively heavy hand with the conversion of the third floor and that perhaps the impact was too great. Ms. DiMaggio stated that there may be an issue with using the upper floors, that the applicants had to do a lot of juggling but there may be some leeway since the buildings are interconnected.

Mr. Bergeron moved to defer the application with the applicant to revise the proposal based on today's conversation. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

723-25 St. Peter Street: 22-30724-VCGEN; Emily Flagler, Architect, LLC, applicant; FQ Voodoo LLC, owner;

Proposal to modify alley gate and install light fixtures in conjunction with a **change of use** from *retail* to *restaurant (standard)*, per application & materials received 10/11/22.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=948307>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Jager present on behalf of the application. Ms. Flagler was ill and unable to attend in person but was able to answer questions via Ms. Jager's phone, on speaker. Ms. DiMaggio noted that the change of use did not include mechanical equipment or a hood vent and asked if they were not going to be used at all or if they had not gotten to that yet. Ms. Jager stated that they were not needed and would not be installed in future. Mr. Bergeron asked what kind of restaurant had no hood vent; Ms. Flagler stated that it would be an electric, ventless hood that would not affect the exterior.

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **conceptual approval** per staff recommendations, with the change of use to be forwarded to the Commission with a **positive recommendation**, with a proviso that the change of use would have to be revisited if mechanical equipment were to be added at a later date. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

616 Conti St: 22-31816-VCGEN; Terri Dreyer, applicant; Conti Street Holding LLC, owner; Proposal to reconstruct

rear additions and renovate building in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *restaurant (standard)*, per application & materials received 10/21/2022 & 09/20/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=949420>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Kobilá, Ms. Johnson, and Ms. Dreyer present on behalf of the application. Ms. Johnson read a prepared statement in response. Mr. Bergeron asked for a response from staff, stating that his perception of the application had not included demolition. Ms. Vogt responded that hers had not either, stating that the initial engineer's report had called for reinforcement of the existing framing due to the change in building use from residential to restaurant. Mr. Block stated that it had not been conveyed to staff that the building needed to come down, and that staff should have been notified. Mr. Fifield questioned whether or not the infill could be rebuilt. Ms. Kobilá stated that it had been a long process with a very complicated situation and that the contractor had found problems, but they had not been communicated to staff. Ms. Bourgoigne noted that staff wanted this work to proceed, and Mr. Block stated that no one was accusing anyone of working in bad faith. Ms. Dreyer stated that the timeline had been affected by covid and the job had been put on hold for some time, but that they were now in a position to move forward and she hoped the VCC could work with them to make it happen.

Ms. Szalwinski addressed the Committee on behalf of French Quarter Citizens, stating that she sympathized with the construction issues, but that staff had been available for communications all throughout the pandemic. She stated that it was an unfortunate, fortunate mishap, as it allowed the courtyard to become open space again. She asked for the Committee to defer.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the building was protected; Ms. Kobilá stated that they would close it up while under review. She asked about a new roof; Ms. Vogt stated that they had a current permit allowing a new roof and that it was a huge priority for the VCC given current conditions. Ms. DiMaggio stated that it seemed like the Committee could not approve the proposal until determinations were made by other agencies. She added that there was an argument to be made for the age of the infill structure that the third floor addition did not have. Mr. Fifield stated that there was a lot going on, and that the new submittal needed more information on all of the exterior work needed, and that the whole scope needed to be considered so the Committee could see the balance of what was being asked.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the application, with the applicants to work with BZA to determine if a variance was needed for open space requirements. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

625 Dauphine St: 21-33678-VCGEN; Kirk Garrett, applicant; 625 Dauphine Street LLC, owner;

Proposal to retain gas lights and other lighting installed without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application & materials received 12/09/2021 & 10/05/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=909250>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Zimmer present on behalf of the application. Mr. Zimmer stated that it sounded like staff and the owners were on the same page regarding the functional landscape lighting, that information regarding the cap flashing is still with the engineer with a report still coming, and that he was at a loss on alternatives for the intercom system. Mr. Fifield noted that they had previously discussed the decorative character of the fixtures and the fact that there were so many decorative fixtures. Ms. DiMaggio commented that decorative lights on the front of buildings are always a concern. Ms. DiMaggio continued that a single light over the main entry may be possible.

Mr. Fifield questioned the numerous stop work orders that had been placed on the property. Mr. Zimmer stated that the owners did not understand the requirements of living in the historic district.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to deny the retention of the decorative fixtures that were documented as new installations including the three decorative fixtures on the front elevation of the main building and to defer action on the cap flashing and keypad pending additional information. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1030 Toulouse St: 22-11563-VCGEN; Sal Sunseri, applicant; R Alfred Sunseri, owner;

Proposal to retain cement board siding installed on the rear elevation of the main building without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application & materials received 05/25/2022 & 09/29/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=928554>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Sunseri present on behalf of the application. Mr. Sunseri gave a history of the building and its historical uses and noted that the contractor that did their new roof also installed the cement board siding. Mr. Fifield thanked the applicant and then gestured towards the slideshow where a photo of the signed permit stated, "wood weatherboards." Mr. Bergeron noted that the Architecture Committee does not consider hardships, only the architecture and that if this was a hardship, it would need to go to the full Commission. He went on to suggest that Mr. Sunseri may have a possible claim against the contractor for both not following the permit and for the poor quality of the installation. Mr. Fifield stated that the installation was wavy with excessive butt joints, and he questioned if the wall was properly sheathed.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to deny the retention of the cement board siding. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

411 Bourbon St: 22-12877-VCGEN; Webre Consulting, applicant; Cajun 411 LLC, owner;

Proposal to address VCC violations including proposed retention of mechanical equipment installed in deviation of approved plans and exterior sprinkler lines, per application & materials received 05/11/2022 & 07/28/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=926674>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Forster present on behalf of the application. Mr. Forster stated that he was the contractor engaged to investigate and try to remedy the situation. Mr. Forster continued that initially they attempted to relocate the HVAC to a platform attached to the building, but Caruba Engineering determined that the wall could not hold the weight of four or five units. He then stated that as for the door in question, there seemed to be a discrepancy between the elevation and the door schedule. Mr. Fifield then asked, "so you wish to retain?" He then stated that he was unclear because there didn't seem to be a proposal here. Mr. Forster stated that the HVAC didn't fit in the courtyard and would have to be elevated on a platform that you would then walk under. Mr. Fifield then asked, "why does it have to be up in the air?" he then told the applicant again "we need a proactive plan." Mr. Fifield then asked about the exposed sprinkler line. Mr. Forster stated that it couldn't go inside with the freezer as the line would freeze.

Public Comment- Nikki Szalwinski, representing French Quarter Citizen, stated that the sprinkler system is horrible, I've never seen anything like this. This is one of the problems with expanding businesses in historic buildings. Where does all the mechanical go?

Mr. Fifield then asked again, "so no proposal?" Mr. Forster stated "no, we thought we would ask to retain." Mr. Bergeron then stated, "I do believe solutions exist and I ask that they be explored."

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion to deny the proposed retention with the applicant to renovate the rear building to match the previously approved plans. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Architectural Committee voted to **deny** the application. All decisions of the Architectural Committee may be appealed to the Vieux Carré Commission. If you wish to appeal this decision to the Vieux Carré Commission please submit a written request within 30 days of the postmark of this letter.

With no business left to discuss, Ms. DiMaggio moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 3:01pm. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Ms. DiMaggio noted the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 11/9 due to City Hall closure for Election Day.