

VIEUX CARRE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

LaToya Cantrell  
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block  
DIRECTOR

**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, June 28, 2022– 1:00 pm.**

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

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

**Staff Absent:** Anthony Whitfield, Inspector; Marguerite Roberts, Inspector

**Others Present:** Gabriel Virdure, Jamie Saxon, Charles Zimmer, Andrea Ford, Steve Finegan, Heather Cooper, Patrick Dougherty, Nikki Szalwinski, Blake Kidder, Marcos de Souza, Zach Kupperman, Ashraf Awadalla, Heather Cooper

## Old Business

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**619 Royal St: 20-30797-VCGEN:** Trapolin Peer Architects, applicant; 619 Royal Street LLC, owner; Review of front elevation masonry work, per application & materials received 06/10/2020 and 06/23/2022, respectively. **[STOP WORK ORDER posted 06/22/2022]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=846242>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Virdure, Mr. Saxon, Ms. Ford, Mr. Kupperman and Mr. Dougherty present on behalf of the application. Ms. Virdure stated that they provided photos and confirmed the plan was to do mortar injection, and that staff had been concerned that the drilling had compromised the load bearing capacity. She added that Mr. Saxon stated that it was not, and they had also reached out to Masonry Solutions International, Inc. Mr. Saxon explained that the mortar was injected as a liquid and used a gravity method, so it had to be done from above. The small holes are closely spaced to confine the application to a limited area. He added that they used a compatible mortar and the wall had significant gaps of separation between the wythes, and that the wall was now stable and reliable. Ms. Bourgogne stated that they were familiar with the method, but it had to be brought to the Committee since it had not been reviewed by them in advance of the work. Mr. Bergeron stated that they have seen many applications with this approach, and Mr. Fifield added that the Committee has expressed concern before. He acknowledged that there were differing opinions about when and where to use this method for historic masonry, but that it was widely accepted enough to entertain here. Ms. DiMaggio asked about the mortar used; Mr. Saxon responded that it was injected as a liquid and the composition was almost identical to the VCC mix. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she was a lot less concerned if the mortar was compatible.

Ms. Szalwinski addressed the Committee. She stated that she found this method to be a shortcut, and that it was unclear where the holes should have been drilled because of the stucco on the exterior. She noted that they chose not to use this method at the rear building that was demolished, and this was at least the third time they had exceeded the scope of permit.

Ms. DiMaggio asked if the process was complete; Ms. Virdure stated that the injection was. Mr. Fifield asked if there would be any further surprises; Ms. Virdure responded no. Ms. DiMaggio asked if staff had all of the documents needed, and if a comprehensive set had been provided with all of the changes over the course of the work on site. Mr. Block asked Ms. Virdure to please provide an as-built set. Ms. Vogt stated that she needed drawings indicating where else they might plan to use this injection method, if anywhere.

Mr. Bergeron moved to acknowledge that this work had been done and presented to the Committee retroactively, and instructed the applicant to submit as-built drawings and to bring any other issues to staff in advance. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Ms. Virdure asked if it was ok to continue; Ms. Bourgogne stated “only in this area.”

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**518 Conti St: 22-08224-VCGEN**; Steven J Finegan Architects, applicant; Llmv Properties LLC, owner; Proposal to fix openings in place for installation of elevator, per application & materials received 03/18/2022 & 06/23/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=919518>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Finegan present on behalf of the application. Mr. Finegan stated that the building would have an elderly resident at the top floor, and that the elevator had to go in the front vestibule due to the first-floor retail space. He added that they didn't need to alter the openings, just shut them, and he agreed to move the mini splits off the building. Mr. Fifield asked for clarification that the openings on the right would not be operable; Ms. Vogt responded, "that half of the elevation, yes." Mr. Fifield asked what would be seen from the street; Mr. Finegan responded that they could install shutters or blinds, whatever the Committee preferred. Ms. DiMaggio asked if it would be a residential grade elevator; Mr. Finegan responded that it would be just large enough for a single person in a wheelchair. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she was not familiar with any elevator options that did not bear the shaft on all sides. Mr. Finegan stated that this elevator bears on the back and that he did not need a wall on the side, and that the windows and doors would just be closed.

Mr. Fifield asked if they had explored the existing foundation; Mr. Finegan responded that the foundation for the elevator would only be 4" deep and that they hadn't dug to see what's there, but it was a concrete slab now. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she would like to see manufacturer's info on the elevator since it sounded different from others that would cause more concern. Mr. Block agreed, saying the VCC has jurisdiction over structure. Mr. Fifield asked if it was cable driven; Mr. Finegan responded that it was not hydraulic and that there was plenty of room at the fourth floor for the mechanism.

Mr. Bergeron objected to the impact of the elevator on the elevation since half of the openings would be blocked from use. He asked if the elevator could move at all, possibly on the other side of the stairs. Mr. Finegan stated that it did not work in plan. Mr. Fifield stated that it was impacting the structure and fenestration, and Mr. Bergeron added also the function of the building's exterior. Mr. Fifield asked for more information in the window coverings if they were to be fixed in place, and Ms. DiMaggio requested the elevator specs. Mr. Block stated that the proposal was still too conceptual.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the modifications to the elevation and windows, with the applicant to provide more information as requested, and to **conceptually approve** the mechanical with provisos as noted by staff. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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## New Business

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**917-23 Conti St: 22-11881-VCGEN**; Broadmoor LLC, applicant; 917 Conti LLC, owner; Proposal to address water intrusion issues by application of various sealants on contemporary and historic materials, per application & materials received 05/16/2022 and 06/07/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=923251>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. de Souza present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield asked if Broadmoor was the original contractor on the recent renovation; Mr. de Souza answered yes. He stated that the water intrusion was largely coming from the masonry, stucco and flooring, and that they would be tying in the waterproofing systems of the stucco and flooring. He agreed that the masonry was not fully tuckpointed during the initial work and that they'd be fixing that now and applying the Prosoco sealant. He added that different areas would have different types of flashing, sometimes thru-wall, where they would remove one course of brick at the base. Ms. DiMaggio asked if 100% of the masonry would be repointed; Mr. de Souza responded that it would be as needed, but essentially yes. Mr. Fifield asked about paint; Mr. de Souza stated that it would only be applied where it already exists and they were not painting any exposed masonry. Mr. Fifield stated that this project was very controversial at the time of approval, and he was disappointed to see that it had been poorly detailed and needed such a large scope of work to correct so soon after completion.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio agreed with staff about the Prosoco sealant application, stating that she was unsure if it was necessary unless there were particular situations identified where the brick was especially porous or water intrusion was continuing. Mr. Fifield understood why staff felt overwhelmed with the complexity of the work and asked the applicant to give them the support they needed and opportunity to work with them. Mr. Block stated

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that if the Committee conceptually approved the work, staff would request access to inspect and additional diagramming to help document the work.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **conceptually approve** the proposal, with the applicant to provide regular access for staff to observe progress while the work is underway, and with the proviso that the applicant hold off on application of the Prosoco sealant until the brick could be evaluated following repointing. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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**504 Bourbon St: 22-15024-VCGEN**; Engineering & Design Quds, applicant; Chris S Owens, owner; Proposal to replace a bank of bifold doors with new sliding door panels, per application & materials received 05/19/2022 & 06/14/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=928422>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Awadalla present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield stated that the presentation was conceptual and there was not much information on the existing conditions for comparison. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she was not entirely against the proposal since the building rating is low, but she noted that the track would be very visible and the door sections would be in three different pieces in three different planes. She added that if the doors could operate in such a way where the doors were in the same plane when closed, it would be more appropriate. Mr. Awadalla asked if it would be better if the fixed panel was in front and the other slid behind; Ms. DiMaggio responded that would be a step in the right direction, but when closed they would all be in different planes. Mr. Awadalla said his priority was not having any space at the bottom or top of the doors due to rodent concerns.

Mr. Fifield asked if the transom would be replaced as well; Ms. Vogt stated that the architect had told her it would be, but that it would match. She was unsure if that included replacement of the transom bar. Mr. Bergeron stated that he found the replacement of the doors plausible and that he was open to the concept. Mr. Fifield noted that an appropriately detailed NanaWall (or similar) might be an option as well. Ms. Bourgogne stated that the track would likely be flooded with water every day and night and might have accelerated rot if it cannot adequately dry out. Mr. Fifield informed the applicant that there was unfortunately not enough information for conceptual approval as of yet.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron stated that the architect should consider exiting requirements that the State Fire Marshal might have since a sliding door might be considered a fire hazard. Mr. Awadalla stated that the door would only be closed when no one was inside. Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the proposal with the comment that it may be conceptually approvable if it is studied further, and if additional detailing is developed. She clarified that further Committee review would be required. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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**717 Orleans Ave: 22-16328-VCGEN**; Barclay Brady, applicant; DRH Bourbon Owner LLC, owner; Proposal to repair balcony and gallery including adding additional outriggers, balusters, and purlins, per application & materials received 06/01/2022 & 06/03/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=929902>

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Kidder present on behalf of the application. Mr. Kidder noted that the main issue is that the balcony is not safe and that they were told by a structural engineer not to use that space. Mr. Kidder continued that the structural engineer recommended the extra baluster to help with any movement of the railing. Mr. Block stated that the arrangement was historic, not the actual rail. Ms. Bourgogne confirmed with the historic photos. Mr. Fifield asked if the dimension of the new outriggers would match the existing. Mr. Kidder stated yes.

Ms. Szalwinski, representing French Quarter Citizens, noted that some of the new balusters would be in front of windows.

Mr. Bergeron moved for conceptual approval of the new outriggers and beam between the posts and deferral of the balusters and purlins. Ms. DiMaggio amended the motion to include painting of certain elements as per the staff report. Mr. Bergeron accepted the amendment. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the amended motion, which passed unanimously.

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## Appeals and Violations

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**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 & 05/10/2022, 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 there were a total of 18 lights on the property with 15 of the lights being refurbished and 3 new lights. Mr. Bergeron noted that a plan noting the different fixtures would be beneficial.

Nikki Szalwinski, representing French Quarter Citizens, stated that attaching lighting to common fences and walls should not be allowed as it was not good for their building. Ms. Szalwinski continued that electric lighting should be directed downward and not into people's houses.

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion to defer the application in order to allow the applicant time to submit a comprehensive lighting plan including landscape lighting as well as what fixtures were installed when, and to consider keypad and intercom alternatives. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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**928 Conti St: 22-11920-VCGEN**; Michael Winters Jr, applicant; 928 Conti LLC, owner;

Proposal to retain fishhook style bars installed above alleyway gate without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application received 04/21/2022.

Mr. Albrecht noted that there had been a change in ownership of the property and that staff would be reaching out to the new owner concerning the violations. Mr. Bergeron made the motion to defer due to a change in ownership. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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**630 Bourbon St: 22-15453-VCGEN**; 630 Bourbon St: Architects Rozas Ward, applicant; O'reilly Properties LLC, owner; Appeal to retain mechanical equipment, including hood vent, and to address work without permit and demolition by neglect violations, per application & materials received 05/27/2022 & 06/14/2022, respectively.

**[Notice of Violation sent 03/30/2016, 04/13/2016, & 07/09/2020]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=928853>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Cooper present on behalf of the application. Ms. Cooper stated that she appreciated the staff's help with addressing the extensive violations and that she hoped 632 Bourbon would be reviewed on the next agenda so the gallery could be resolved at the same time. Ms. DiMaggio asked if all applicable agencies would be reviewing the application; Ms. Vogt responded yes, all were actively involved already. Ms. Bourgogne noted that the legal department was spearheading the response and the Fire Department had shut down operation in the meantime.

Ms. Szalwinski addressed the Committee, asking why the infill was prescribed. Ms. Vogt responded that the infill was installed and discovered prior to Hurricane Katrina but was not resolved within the time period required, so the VCC could not compel restoration of the courtyard into open space. She added that the structure itself could be reviewed, but the enclosure of the courtyard was prescribed.

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **approval** of the proposed work, with the proviso that the requirements of all City departments and agencies must be met. She furthermore moved to **acknowledge** the courtyard infill structure and consider it resolved. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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**512-16 Conti St: 22-16190-VCGEN**; Baroness, applicant; 512 Conti LLC, owner; Appeal to retain fountain, string lights and planters installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application received 06/06/2022.

Ms. Vogt noted that the applicant requested a deferral prior to the hearing and had been rescheduled for 07/12/2022. Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** at the applicant's request. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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**939-41 Orleans Ave: 22-16227-VCGEN**; Loewenthal Micah, applicant; Micah Collin Loewenthal, owner; Proposal to address items completed in deviation of permit, including vehicular gate, per application & materials received 06/13/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=929633>

Ms. Vogt proceeded with presenting the staff report in Mr. Loewenthal's absence at his request prior to the hearing. Ms. DiMaggio asked for clarification on the proposed work; Ms. Vogt stated that the drawings had been approved and permits issued, but the original contractor did not follow the plans and the work was to be redone per initial approval.

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **approval** of the work, with provisos as noted by staff. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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With no business left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:47pm. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.