

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, March 14, 2023 – 1:00 pm.

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

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

Others Present: Robert Cangelosi, Will Henry, Andrew Stephens, Thai Nguyen, Erika Gates, Dixon Jelich, Sara Beaman, Mary Pappas, Jean Lansou, Nicholas Volker, Cody Ellis

MINUTES

Old Business

915-17 St Ann St: 22-23537-VCGEN; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Victor F III Trahan, owner; Proposal to infill non-historic window openings in detached service buildings, per application & materials received 08/08/2022 & 03/03/2023, respectively.

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Cangelosi present on behalf of the application. Mr. Cangelosi stated that the 4 windows on the side walls of the dependencies were not original, and they were infilled for structural reasons due to the poor condition of the walls. He confirmed that the masonry had been toothed in and had not left a cold joint, and explained that the lintels had been removed at some point, which had caused the structural issues. He also noted that some parts of the walls were only one wythe thick and they had encountered movement while repointing.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio asked about the stucco band on the front elevation; Mr. Cangelosi answered that the band was typical but the question was whether it had been stuccoed previously, since this was done during the Frank Masson renovation. He stated that he did not know why it had been allowed to be done, and he would have left it as it was.

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **approval** of the proposal to infill the windows. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Fifield noted again for the record that the windows removed had been non-historic.

New Business

1231 Bourbon St: 23-01334-VCGEN; Brian J O'reilly Jr, applicant; Lauricella Bourbon Properties LLC, 1231 Bourbon Owner LLC, Bourbon Maison LLC, owner; Proposal to install new swimming pool in courtyard, per application & materials received 01/20/2023 & 02/28/2023, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=959591>

The item was moved to the end of the meeting to allow the applicant time to attend. When no applicant was present at the end of the agenda, Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the application to give the applicant an opportunity to attend the hearing to represent their proposal. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

528 Bienville St: 23-04131-VCGEN; thrasher thrasher, applicant; Condo Master, Borca Dynasty Trust, Travis C Wright, Joann A Holcomb, John & Sherry Dotson Living Trust, Harald Meier, Paul Skrmetta, Roland Hummel, owner; Proposal to install water repellent on masonry, per application & materials received 02/13/2023 & 02/22/2023, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=962289>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Henry present on behalf of the application. Ms. DiMaggio asked if it would be 100% repointed, and what was the reasoning for using the repellent; Mr. Henry responded that the repointing would be as needed, with some walls being 100% while others would be spot treated. Mr. Henry stated that several areas at the top floors had efflorescence through a three wythe wall, and this was happening in areas with good mortar, so they thought they might try the sealant. He added that they understood it was not a long-term solution. Ms. DiMaggio asked if there was any infiltration from above. Mr. Henry replied, not from above but from the vertical face of the brick, in splashes at the upper and mid-levels, with lots of salt found on the interior.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio stated that she fine with the proposed sealant due to the rating of the building and the fact that NPS accepted this product. Mr. Fifield asked if it would be applied to all facades; Mr. Henry responded that it would be used on 3 walls including the front. Ms. DiMaggio requested a test patch in a location where staff could inspect it prior to widespread application, and Mr. Henry agreed.

Mr. Bergeron moved for **approval** with the applicant to apply a test patch of the sealant on the front facade for staff review prior to widespread application. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

229 Royal St: 23-04463-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 229 Royal Street LLC, owner;

Proposal to construct new one-story gallery and convert existing second floor windows to doors, per application & materials received 02/14/2023.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=962511>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Jelich and Ms. Beaman present on behalf of the application. Mr. Jelich stated that they are here to get the owner some sort of gallery and wanted to begin the discussion with the Art Deco gallery. Mr. Jelich continued that they are open to restoration of the building to match the sister buildings. He stated he was not sure if the tax credits are still being used and that they are also open to something new that everyone knows is not historic.

Ms. DiMaggio stated that she agreed with the staff report and that a gallery addition needed to follow the approach of a full renovation. Ms. DiMaggio continued that if that path was pursued there would need to be a conversation of doing an entire building restoration or just the façade. Finally, she stated that she was not sold on the removal of this façade. Ms. Bourgogne asked the ARC to keep in mind that the building had numerous violations that should be addressed in the meantime. Mr. Bergeron asked where the floor line was in relation to the proposed openings. Mr. Jelich stated that the floor line was right under the dental line. Mr. Bourgogne asked about the existing fire escape. Mr. Jelich stated that it would be removed. Ms. Bourgogne asked if they had spoken to the neighboring property yet. Mr. Jelich stated no. Mr. Block asked about the plate glass window and the doors with modifications. Mr. Fifield stated that there was something very interesting about the 1940s alterations- art deco is VERY rare in the French Quarter. Ms. DiMaggio asked the applicant if they were sure this should be a gallery and not a balcony. Mr. Jelich stated that some of their research did show it extended. He then asked "what is the path of least resistance? Keep the art deco or restore?" Ms. DiMaggio stated that if they were to recreate, they would need more information as reconstruction requires very specific documentation.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion to deny the proposal as presented. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

726 St Peter St: 23-05542-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 726 St Peter LLC, owner; Proposal to install new mechanical equipment, modify rear dependency millwork, and install gates in courtyard wall shared with 730 St. Peter, per application & materials received 02/28/2023 & 03/08/2023, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=963563>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Stephens and Mr. Nguyen present on behalf of the application. Mr. Stephens stated that the HVAC was the most significant work, but their intent was to minimize their impact and that they would try to use smaller units if possible. He continued that they would be addressing the violations as part of this scope of work, as well as installing new lighting. He added that the cross easement would allow them to use the properties together and provide egress for each other. Mr. Block stated that he was concerned about the installation of new mechanical equipment for the first time at a Blue rated building that had never been conditioned. He asked the applicant if they had considered the impact on the masonry; Mr. Stephens stated that they were working with engineer Damien Serauskas to figure out the size and pressure needed, noting that there is currently no vapor barrier in the building, and that they intended to be cautious with moisture issues and keep both the VCC and SHPO updated on those plans. Mr. Block stated that these plans would be important to include in future submittals, and that the VCC would be happy to review any onsite conditions as well.

Mr. Bergeron asked about the windows mentioned in the staff report. Mr. Stephens responded that they needed to resurvey the windows to refine the scope. He noted that the window at the far end of the rear dependency appeared to be covered and that they would look at it to determine if it could be used for HVAC access, and what level of restoration might be needed. Mr. Fifield asked about staff's inquiry regarding lowering the HVAC equipment; Mr. Stephens stated that they would look into what might be feasible with the structure, and that they were looking into smaller units with the same performance standards, but that they were open to exploring the suggestion. He concluded that their intent was for minimal modifications for this important historic and cultural site.

Mr. Bergeron noted that the application would have to return to the Committee regardless of the motion, and moved for conceptual approval consistent with staff recommendation, requiring the applicant to submit design development drawings, spec sheets, etc. as requested for further review as the project progresses. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

533 Toulouse St: 21-26935-VCGEN; 533 Toulouse St: Gates Erika, applicant; 533 Toulouse LLC, owner; Appeal to retain HVAC equipment, modify HVAC platform, and install roof deck rail, per application & materials received 09/27/2021 & 02/07/2023, respectively. [Notices of Violation sent 04/11/2014, 12/04/2014, 02/13/2015, 03/29/2016, 12/02/16, 02/28/2019, 01/21/2022 & 07/29/2022. STOP WORK ORDER posted 03/04/2014]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=900177>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated that she agreed with staff's recommendation and would have the drawings revised, particularly to add the roof details. Mr. Fifield asked if this comprehensively addressed the violations, and that, if they performed all of the work within this scope, would it resolve the violations? Ms. Gates responded, "that's the goal." Mr. Fifield asked when the deck had been approved; Ms. Vogt responded that the VCC had denied it but retention had been approved via City Council appeal. Ms. DiMaggio moved for **conceptual approval** with final review to be handled at staff level unless further Committee review is found necessary by staff. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

434 Dauphine St: 22-14716-VCGEN; Christian Garris, applicant; Christian J Garris, owner;

Proposal to retain keypad entry hardware installed on alleyway gate without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application and materials received 05/23/2022 & 02/28/2023, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=928549>

There was no one present on behalf of the application.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved to defer the application to allow an applicant to be present at the next meeting. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the application, which passed unanimously.

810 Conti St: 22-20111-VCSGN; Olano Pamela, applicant; VCP Properties LLC, owner;

Proposal to retain sign and decorative bracket installed without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application & materials received 09/16/2022 & 03/03/2023, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=934285>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Pappas present on behalf of the application. Ms. Pathos noted that there was nothing fancy about the building and that they hoped to be able to keep it. Mr. Fifield noted that the sign bracket was installed across banding on the building. Ms. DiMaggio noted that the one ornamental feature of the building was marred by the installation when there is a lot of open space available.

Public Comment: Nikki Szalwinski stated that she agreed with the staff that the bracket serves as an extension of the sign and that a similar issue occurred at House of Blues. She continued that she also agreed with the comments about the installation location and that a more industrial bracket would make more sense.

Mr. Bergeron stated that he agreed with staff that this may set a precedent. Mr. Fifield stated that it was a simple building with a decorative bracket and that his real objection was with the location of the bracket. Mr. Bergeron commented that it sounded like the Committee was open to the proposal provided that the other elements are met.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to defer the application with the intent of allowing the applicant to revise the proposal based on the discussion today and to propose an alternative that may include retention of the bracket in the next 30 days. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

227 N Peters St, 233 N. Peters St.: 23-03791-VCGEN; Nicholas Volker, applicant; Rice Building LLC, owner;

Proposal to repair masonry and review of requested engineer's report, per application & materials received 02/08/2023. [Notice of Violation sent 06/17/2022]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=961789>

Ms. Vogt read the report with Mr. Volker present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield stated that he found it unusual that the engineer failed to notice that the façade was cast iron and not stucco, then explained that the cast iron was load bearing and holding the building up. He stated that he was concerned that if the engineer did not notice the separation of the cast iron, there were serious issues with the report. Mr. Bergeron added that it was his understanding that the cast iron transferred the load down, while the brick pier behind offered some lateral support. Mr. Volker stated that there was no interior telegraphing or indicators of movement, and that he thought the masonry was sloughing and eroding away from the column. He said the other side was washed out, and there was no substantial movement on the right, and that he understood the Committee's concern but thought there would be other indications elsewhere. Mr. Fifield explained that cast iron fails catastrophically, which is why the engineer needed to recognize that it was cast iron, not stucco. Mr. Bergeron added that cast iron can hold a pose, and then snap suddenly. Ms. Bourgogne stated that it would be helpful to have the engineer present. Mr. Volker said they were open to that but had not seen this as an issue. Ms. Bourgogne stated that staff had requested engineer's reports from this building and all buildings to the right of it that had received violations.

Ms. Szalwinski addressed the Committee on behalf of French Quarter Citizens, echoing their concerns and saying that this was a particular concern with pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Volker asked how this would be fixed, with steel? Mr. Fifield explained that the Committee does not design for applicants, but it would be important to assess the foundation and brick infill, stating that different causes and different material failures would require different solutions, and that issues below ground were common. Ms. Bourgogne stated that "something was going on," because staff had recently completed a site visit at the property next door, where they were also very concerned about the front elevation and were surprised to see no immediate concerns on the interior. Mr. Fifield stated that the buildings might be moving or might be stable. Mr. Volker stated that he would reach out to the engineer and get them to reevaluate, and that they were willing to consult another engineer if needed. Ms. DiMaggio added that the report needed to include a statement or calculations for the load being put onto the cast iron.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the application for thirty (30) days, with the engineer to reassess and provide an updated report on the existing conditions, cause, whether the building is static or dynamic, and proposed remedies. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

813 Toulouse St: 23-01714-VCGEN; Jean Lansou, applicant; Team McLoughlin LLC, owner;

Proposal to relocate unpermitted AC condensing units from the side walls of the main building to the rear of the building, per application & materials received 02/09/2023 & 03/08/2023, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=961993>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Lansou present on behalf of the application. Mr. Lansou stated that he agreed with the analysis and recommendations of the staff but did ask about raising the units slightly. Ms. Bourgogne noted that the details could be worked out with the staff.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to approve the approval with any details to be worked out at the staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

622 Conti St: 23-05526-VCGEN; Cody Ellis, applicant; Lewis C Jr Ramel, owner; Proposal to remove awning installed without benefit of VCC review and approval and install new awning, per application & materials received 02/28/2023. **[Notices of Violation sent 08/23/2018 & 10/21/2022]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=963546>

[Mr. Fifield recused himself prior to the presentation of the report.]

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Ellis present on behalf of the application. Mr. Ellis stated that the roof material would be copper and that they were happy to change the shape of the outrigger. Mr. Bergeron asked staff what they wanted to see; Ms. Vogt responded that in the absence of a fascia, outriggers typically have a forged "tooth" at the end to keep the last stringer in place. Ms. DiMaggio asked if this application involved any changes to the drainage; Mr. Ellis responded that the previous drainage would be reinstalled but not altered. She asked if there was sufficient clearance around the bracket supporting the awning; Ms. Bourgogne stated that staff had had the same concern, but concluded there was. Mr. Ellis agreed.

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval** consistent with the staff recommendation, with final review of details to be handled at staff level. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

[Mr. Fifield rejoined the meeting following the motion.]

Next AC Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Bergeron moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 2:25pm. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.