



Vieux Carré Commission Architecture Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 12, 2024



Old Business



238-240 Royal, 634 Bienville

ADDRESS:	238-40 Royal Street, 634 Bienville Street		
OWNER:	Sissy's Royal Street Property LLC	APPLICANT:	Verges Rome Architects
ZONING:	VCC-2	SQUARE:	35
USE:	Commercial	LOT SIZE:	1860 sq. ft.

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

Main building: **Orange**, 20th century construction, post 1946.

This 1964 building was designed by August Perez and Associates, designed as a recreation of the c. 1830 modification of a c. 1790 Spanish Colonial building and another building, which before its demolition stood next to the colonial building.

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<u>DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:</u>	11/12/2024
Permit # 24-31391-VCGEN	Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to renovate building including installation of new rooftop mechanical equipment and a rooftop access hatch, per application & materials received 10/15/2024.

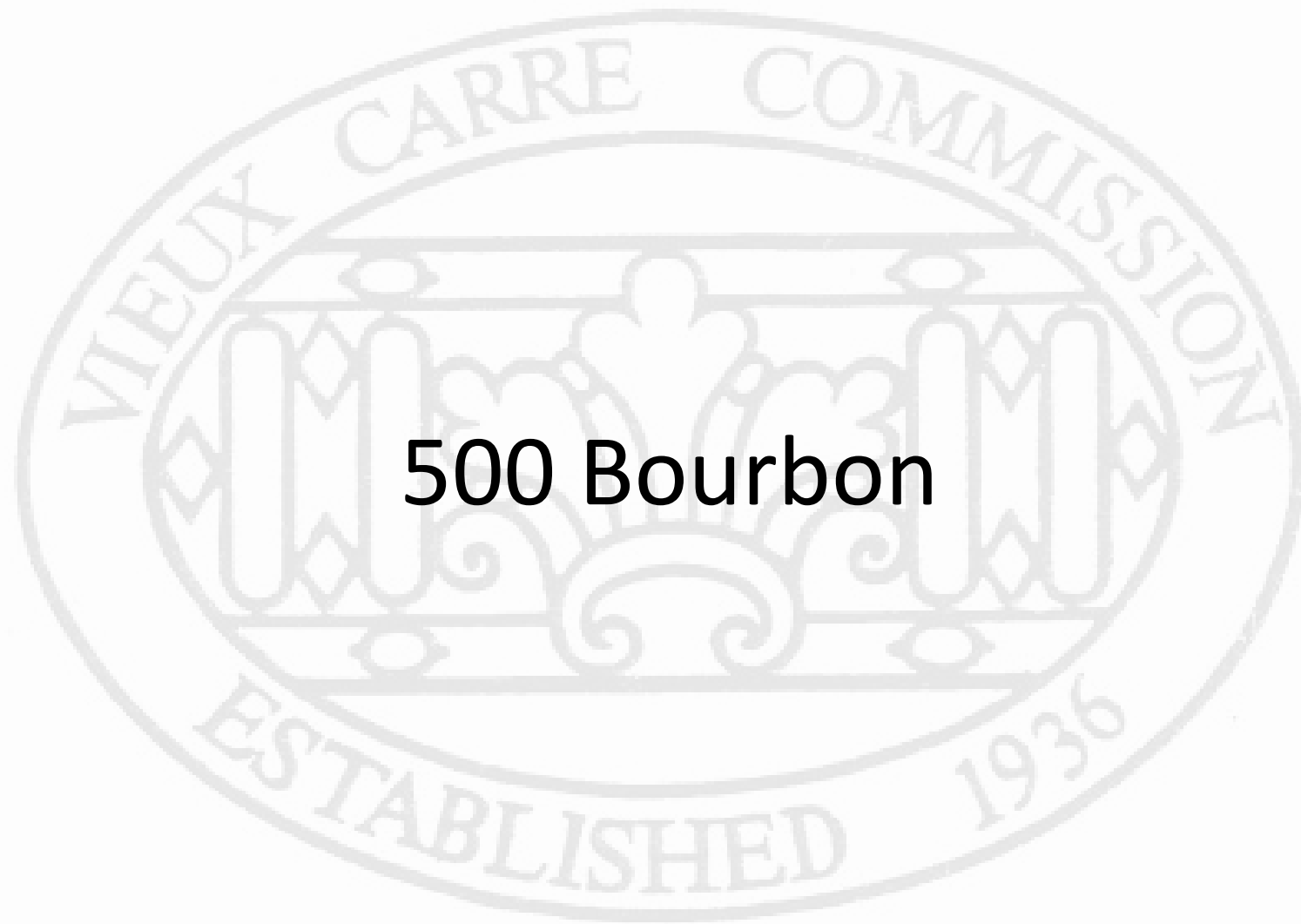
<u>STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:</u>	11/12/2024
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Work related to the ground floor millwork changes and removal of the existing ATM were approved at the 09/10/2024 Architecture Committee meeting. A new application has been filed that expands the scope of work to include new rooftop mechanical equipment and a new roof hatch. All the mechanical equipment for this building is, and will continue to be, located on the flat roof portion of the property in the Exchange Place and Iberville corner of the property. The neighboring buildings are part of the Hotel Monteleone and are considerably taller, resulting in no visibility of this equipment except from the high upper floors of nearby buildings.

The proposed work includes removing portions of existing rooftop ductwork, capping some existing defunct roof penetrations, installing new rooftop condensing unit or units, and installing a new roof access hatch. The roof hatch is shown with a permanent safety railing surrounding it on two sides, which is slightly atypical, but again given the very low visibility of this roof, staff has no objections to the safety railing. Staff notes that the mechanical plan seen on sheet M1.02 shows an additional piece of equipment not seen on the roof plan of A1.31. Staff reached out to the applicant regarding this discrepancy but did not hear back by the time of the writing of this report. Staff suspects that the plans on sheet M1.02 more accurately show the proposed work with the installation of two new mechanical units.

Staff requests additional information on the proposed rooftop equipment, specifically the exact size and noise output, but barring anything highly atypical finds the proposed rooftop equipment approvable. Staff notes that the Guidelines specifically call for Commission level review for new roof hatches such as the one proposed here so staff recommends conceptual approval of the overall proposal with the roof hatch to be forwarded to the Commission with a positive recommendation.

<u>ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:</u>	11/12/2024
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500 Bourbon

ADDRESS:	500-04 Bourbon Street		
OWNER:	GMB Properties French QTR LLC	APPLICANT:	Jeremiah Johnson
ZONING:	VCE	SQUARE:	62
USE:	Commercial	LOT SIZE:	8262 sq. ft.

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

Main Building: **Brown**, detrimental, or of no architectural and/or historic significance

Before a remodeling which included the addition of full-length balconies on the Bourbon Street facade, this three-story commercial building had nice Art Deco entrances on both street facades and only one small balcony on the Bourbon Street facade. Today the building unfortunately appears as a rather unsuccessful interpretation of a 19th-century building.

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<u>DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:</u>	11/12/2024
Permit # 24-31491-VCGEN	Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht

Proposal to renovate building including the installation of new rooftop mechanical equipment, in conjunction with a change of use from *residential/restaurant* to *standard restaurant*, per application & materials received 10/15/2024 & 1024/2024, respectively.

<u>STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:</u>	<u>11/12/2024</u>
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The Architecture Committee previously reviewed several proposals for a more extensive renovation of this property in 2023. The applicant has submitted a new application that has scaled back the currently proposed exterior work, noting that they are taking a phased approach in order to get the restaurant open as quickly as possible. As such, the proposed exterior work of this phase is limited to new exterior mechanical equipment, removal or relocation of some existing mechanical equipment, and removal of some miscellaneous courtyard items. The noted demolitions on A100.1 include existing HVAC units, a mechanical rack, a makeup air duct, a storage shed, above door canopies, and other miscellaneous items, all located in the courtyard space. Staff has no objections to the removal of any of these items from the space. All the street facing items such as canopies, signs, and awnings, are noted as remaining as-is under this phase of work.

A minor change is noted for the ground floor ironwork on Bourbon St. closest to the corner. The plans proposed to replace the relatively standard ironwork with new ironwork that matches existing examples found at other doors of the building, including the immediately adjacent door.

Moving to the proposed rooftop work, staff notes that the largest piece of equipment proposed for the roof is a new DOAS unit noted as being for the ground floor bar. This equipment is show as rising over 8’4” above the roof and is noted as only being 6’4” behind the parapet. Although a sightline study shows that this equipment would be out of view from across the street, staff is concerned that from vantage points further up Bourbon St. or St. Louis St. this equipment may be visible and it will likely be visible from the upper floors of nearby buildings.

Staff questions if this piece of equipment could be shifted or relocated to have a greater distance between the equipment and the edge of the roof. The proposed DOAS equipment is one piece of equipment proposed for a new steel frame running the width of the building which also includes more typical AC condensers and water heaters. The steel frame measures almost 2-1/2’ above the surface of the roof. As a possible alternative to relocating the DOAS unit, staff questions if this equipment could be lowered to a position closer to the surface of the existing roof. If the applicant wishes to pursue the installation of the unit as currently shown, staff suggests a mockup would be necessary to determine final visibility.

A second smaller mechanical rack is proposed for the Royal St. side of the roof to house what appears to be three additional typically sized condensing units. Staff does not believe there will be any significant visibility of this equipment location.

Overall, staff finds the proposed work largely approvable but would feel more comfortable if the DOAS equipment could be relocated closer to the center of the roof in order to reduce visibility. Staff requests commentary from the Committee and applicant regarding the proposal.

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The background of the slide features a large, faint, light-gray oval seal. The seal contains the text "VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION" along the top arc and "ESTABLISHED 1936" along the bottom arc. In the center of the seal is a heraldic crest with a central shield, a crown on top, and decorative flourishes on the sides.

Appeals and Violations



411 Bourbon

ADDRESS:	411-15 Bourbon Street		
OWNER:	Cajun 411 LLC	APPLICANT:	Michael Forster
ZONING:	VCE	SQUARE:	70
USE:	Commercial	LOT SIZE:	5,888 sq. ft.

ARCHITECTURAL / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Main building: **Yellow**, or contributory to the streetscape
Detached service building: **Green**, or of local architectural and/or historical significance.

This wide two-story masonry commercial building presents as a circa 1925 Spanish revival building. Site investigations as well as a comparison of the historical configuration of the buildings on this site confirm that a 19th-century building lies behind the facade. The original building likely was of late 18th- or early-19th century vintage like its blue-rated neighbor at 409 Bourbon. In fact, the two buildings share a long service building.

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<u>DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:</u>	11/12/2024
Permit # 24-17351-VCGEN	Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Violation Case #20-23376-VCCNOP	Inspector: Marguerite Roberts

Proposal to address violations at the main building and service building, per application & materials received 06/04/2024.

<u>STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:</u>	11/12/2024
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This application was deferred at the 10/08/2024 meeting with the Committee requesting that the applicant work with staff and the application return in two weeks. Staff met with the applicant and discussed some possible resolutions for several of the outstanding items. To date, nothing new has been submitted besides some additional discussion of lighting details.

Staff continues to recommend denial related to the proposed retention of unpermitted work at the rear building.

<u>ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:</u>	11/12/2024
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<u>Architecture Committee Meeting of</u>	<u>10/08/2024</u>
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<u>DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:</u>	10/08/2024
Permit # 24-17351-VCGEN	Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Violation Case #20-23376-VCCNOP	Inspector: Marguerite Roberts

Proposal to address violations at the main building and service building, per application & materials received 06/04/2024.

<u>STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:</u>	10/08/2024
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See Staff Analysis & Recommendations of 06/25/2024.

<u>ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:</u>	10/08/2024
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<u>Architecture Committee Meeting of</u>	<u>06/25/2024</u>
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<u>DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION:</u>	06/25/2024
Permit # 24-17351-VCGEN	Lead Staff: Nick Albrecht
Violation Case #20-23376-VCCNOP	Inspector: Marguerite Roberts

Proposal to address violations at the main building and service building, per application & materials received 06/04/2024.

<u>STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION:</u>	06/25/2024
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Issues with this property date back to the renovation and addition that was approved by City Council in 2017. The Architecture Committee has previously reviewed proposals to attempt to address these violations from two prior applicants. A new application has been filed by a third applicant that proposes some minor changes while also proposing to retain several items.

Main Building

The issues seen at the heavily modified main building are relatively minor compared to those at the rear building. Some of the work for the main building is staff approvable including replacing unpermitted k-style gutters with half round gutters and potentially some security cameras. Other work was done in deviation of the approved drawings or work was done that was not shown on the drawings.

Awning

The approved plans called for the projecting metal awning at the third floor to be supported by angled 1" diameter stainless steel suspension rods. Rather than utilizing this better material, the awning was installed with simple square metal tubing which has been bolted to the sides of the awning. Staff finds this method of suspension far less sophisticated compared to the approved detail.

Security Cameras

The applicant stated that the largest projecting security camera has been removed, however, there are still at least two other security cameras on projecting arms. As these cameras are in close proximity to the underside of the balconies, staff recommends that they be mounted to the underside of the balconies without a projecting arm, which would be a staff approvable installation.

Second Floor Balconies

The only work noted for the second-floor balconies was related to raising the height of the guardrail. Still, photographs indicate that the floor structure of the balconies is significantly thicker than the previously existing conditions. This has resulted in an atypically tall fascia board around the balconies and an overall highly atypical appearance for these original details. Previously existing trim details have also been removed and not reinstalled.

Mechanical Equipment

The mechanical equipment as installed varies dramatically from the stamped approved plans. Staff does not object to the majority of these changes but is concerned about the relocated air intake vent. The intake has been installed with a tall vertical duct which makes it the tallest piece of mechanical equipment on the roof. The duct is located near the roof edge, making it very visible to the surrounding buildings.

Conti Elevation Exterior Conduit & Water Heaters

The approved plans called for a new window and door on the Conti elevation of the main building near the courtyard. Rather than installing these openings, water heaters were installed on this wall. Metallic wrapped pipes/conduits were run on the outside walls of the building in this area. The absence of the openings may be approvable, but staff does not find the exterior lines to be approvable. These should be relocated to the interior of the building, or at a minimum painted to match the adjacent building surface.

The as-built location of electrical panels and similar equipment does not match what is seen on the approved drawings. The as-built location is actually further back on the building and staff does not object to retention of the equipment in this location.

Window Deviations

The approved plans called for the arched window on the Bourbon St. elevation to be reworked to remove the bottom panel below the window and install additional glazing. This work was not completed, and the applicant is seeking to retain the window as-is.

On the rear elevation of the main building, existing windows over panels were to be re-located to a new position on the addition. These windows were relocated but the associated panels were not included. The applicant is seeking to retain the windows without the panels.

Rear Building

The VCC staff has consistently recommended that the more historic and more highly rated rear building held to a higher standard compared to the lower rated and now highly modified main building. The majority of the issues here have been previously reviewed.

Mechanical Equipment

The approved plans for the rear building showed one wall mounted piece of mechanical equipment and the majority of the equipment installed on a courtyard rack. The as-built conditions have placed four pieces of equipment on the roof and none on either the wall mounted rack or in the courtyard. As the Guidelines recommend "*minimizing the visibility and quantity of mounted equipment on a parcel*" and "*minimizing equipment noise bleed-over to a neighboring property*" (VCC DG: 10-11) staff finds the previously approved courtyard location much preferred to the current rooftop mounted location.

Staff notes that during initial reviews of this overall project in 2016-2017, staff consistently recommended against the placement of mechanical equipment on this roof and the Committee specifically instructed that the equipment be placed in the courtyard.

The applicant proposes to retain the rooftop mechanical equipment as-built with the possibility of adding screening that matches the second floor balcony railing.

Exterior Sprinkler Lines

The applicant has indicated that the large silver piping across the front of the rear building contains sprinkler plumbing. Because this sprinkler line was installed on the exterior of the building, the applicant stated that the fire marshal required the plumbing to be insulated to protect it from freezing, and provided a letter from the fire marshal stating this. Staff can think of no other instance where sprinkler lines have been installed on the exterior of a building except when it is to protect an exterior element like a balcony or gallery. Even in those rare cases, the piping has not been insulated and is generally painted to match the adjacent building surface. These insulated sprinkler lines all run to sprinkler heads inside the building and do not appear to offer protection to any exterior elements.

An alternative to having the insulated sprinkler lines on the exterior of the building would be to run them on the interior. The applicant has stated that there is not room on the interior of the building for the sprinklers given the size of the walk-in cooler. There are many instances where it would be more convenient to run plumbing, conduit, or ducting on the exterior of buildings to maximize space or improve aesthetics or ease of installation on the interior but staff does not find this to be an acceptable reason for this kind of inappropriate installation. Again, staff notes that this is a green-rated building and that this work was likely done in this way out of convenience and because of cost savings to the owner, at the direct detriment to the historic building.

Door at Walk-in Cooler

The approved plans show the door at the walk-in cooler measuring 3'-3-1/2" wide, matching the width of the immediately adjacent window and door. No dimensions have been provided for the as-built width of this door, but the opening has clearly been widened to accommodate the new inappropriately wide door. The applicant is proposing to retain the door as-built.

Although atypical, staff finds the single leaf and out swinging nature of this door potentially approvable, provided that the door were appropriately recessed in the wall, which it currently is not. The width of the door would also need to match that of the adjacent door, as it did historically.

Summary

At the main building staff requests commentary from the Committee specifically regarding:

- The metal canopy supports
- The unpermitted changes to the balconies
- The air intake vent and other exterior equipment, and
- The window deviations

As previously noted, staff finds the green-rated rear building more important than the yellow rated and highly modified main building. Staff recommends denial of the proposed retentions related to the rear building, with the applicant to modify the proposal to be more consistent with the originally approved plans.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE ACTION:

06/25/2024

There was no one present on behalf of the application. Mr. Bergeron moved to defer the application per the applicant's request. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.