

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, December 10, 2024– 1:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Stephen Bergeron, Rick Fifield, Cynthia Steward (arrived during reading of 617 Dauphine staff report)

Committee Members Absent:

Staff Present: Renee Bourgogne, Deputy Director; Joseph Newman, Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent: Nick Albrecht, Principal Plans Examiner; Bryan Block, Director; Marguerite Roberts, Senior Inspector; Erin Vogt, Principal Plans Examiner; Noah Epstein, Inspector

Others Present: Kelly Johnson, Betsy Fifield, Robby Cangelosi, Jr., Jeff Barbin, Myles Martin, Daniel Winkert, Nikki Szalwinski, Erin Holmes,

At the Tuesday, December 10, 2024, meeting, the following items may be discussed.

Minutes

New Business

617 Dauphine St: 24-04876-VCGEN; Lyz Perez, applicant; Grissom & Thompson LLP, owner;
Proposal to renovate balconies including proposed use of synthetic balcony decking and proposed restructuring of a separate balcony, per application & materials received 02/22/2024 & 11/19/2024, respectively.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=PFMTP6#>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Ms. Johnson present on behalf of the application. Ms. Johnson commented about being brought into the project after the contractor had already started communications and her being asked to consolidate information into a set as a starting point knowing that some revisions were to come. Ms. Johnson commented on the beam replacement and being unsure of the extent of the overall work needed. Ms. Johnson noted she did inform them the conduit would be an issue as well as stating her belief that the composite decking was a suggestion by the contractor later noting she doesn’t think getting rid of this aspect of the proposal would be an issue. Ms. Johnson noted the rotten areas of the soffits would be replaced with the same material and/or repainted where needed. Ms. Johnson noted that regarding the railings they were starting at the baseline of replacing what is there in-kind so making the railings to code is not an issue either.

Mr. Bergeron asked staff about the recommendation regarding front elevation conduits and lighting with Ms. Bourgogne commenting she was unsure due to it being Mr. Albrecht’s project but stated she knew he’d been waiting a long time for drawing to come in and knows the fixtures are not approvable. Mr. Fifield noted his belief the whole thing needs to be studied and various lighting aspects to think about. He also noted his concern about the “exploratory” aspect with regards to cantilevered balconies and noting his belief that the Committee needs to see what they’re actually proposing rather than accepting the Simpson Ties as well as his agreement with staff.

Ms. Johnson noted she did tell them they would probably be best to get a structural engineer involved with Mr. Fifield stating he would recommend that. Ms. Bourgogne commented that her belief that Mr. Albrecht was recommending deferral because it was his first time going through the proposal. Ms. Bourgogne asked Ms. Johnson if she knew if there had been a site visit with staff and Ms. Johnson said she did not noting she is now added to the application and that she only found out about today’s meeting very shortly beforehand. Mr. Fifield raised the issue of the guard rails in terms of detail with Ms. Johnson noting the plan is to replace them with wood. Mr. Fifield noted more survey information could be helpful like which sections specifically were rotten

later commenting it might be useful to arrange a site visit as well so staff can also see what's going on with rear balconies.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to defer to allow applicant to work with staff and others to make revisions to the plans per today's discussion. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

810 Esplanade Ave: 24-26624-VCGEN; Fifield Betsy, applicant; Ibu and Bapak LLC, owner;

Proposal to make masonry repairs to the building including the installation of new helical ties, per application & materials received 09/03/2024 & 11/20/2024, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=V6LF5U#>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Ms. Fifield present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield confirmed that he and Ms. Fifield are not related. The contractor for the project was not present but Ms. Fifield noted his availability to talk via speakerphone if the Committee would like. Mr. Bergeron noted that it does seem consistent with previous approvals. Mr. Fifield asked if they have had a structural engineer look at this and if they know why the cracks are forming with Ms. Fifield noting the previous major renovation work that had been done. Ms. Fifield stated the contractor has assured her he is doing things consistent with what has already been approved in the French Quarter. Mr. Fifield noted the concern regarding the cracks forming now since they just did such extensive work and so the real question is why are they forming, not how to fix them.

Mr. Fifield noted the intensity of what is being proposed and alternate options that might be possible. Ms. Fifield stated they submitted photos for the front of the building and those are the ones they really are concerned about. Mr. Fifield stated they don't have those.

There was public comment from Ms. Szalwinski in attendance. Ms. Szalwinski noted her thoughts about if a header is failing and maybe if that's what the problem is as well as alternative methods for repair.

Following public comment Ms. Fifield placed the contractor on speakerphone and based on the various items he listed; the Committee and staff expressed their strong belief that the proposal is incomplete with Ms. Bourgogne noting deferral is needed and that the contractor needs to be present at the next meeting as well as a full proposal. Mr. Fifield noted maybe working with staff to investigate the cause/extent of the cracks more fully. Mr. Bergeron noted that Mr. Fifield makes a good point that the cracks in photos available are so small it's unclear that helical ties will fix that problem.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to defer the application to allow the applicant time to work with staff and contractor to develop a full proposal that includes all work planned. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

1113 Chartres St: 24-34311-VCCAM; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Foundation Keyes, owner;

Proposal to install new security features including a security camera, keypad door hardware, and a hedgehog device, per application & materials received 11/11/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=1UV4UV#>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Mr. Cangelosi present on behalf of the application. Mr. Cangelosi noted he designed the hedgehog with the company Metropolitan to address this security issue. Mr. Cangelosi noted the various ongoing security issues at the property. Mr. Cangelosi noted he didn't think the keypad was permitted at all and when speaking with staff they informed him that it would depend on the type and location.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to conceptually approve the approval with any final details to be worked out at staff level. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

639 Barracks St: 24-35027-VCPNT; Barbin Jeff, applicant; Jeffrey M Barbin, owner;

Proposal to paint previously unpainted stucco, per application received 11/18/2024.

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Mr. Barbin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Barbin noted having owned the house for about 4 years going on to note there being significant moisture issues and the various locations where they are seeing/experiencing those issues. Mr. Barbin further noted that with the house they are next to he has observed significant water damage on that other home. Mr. Barbin stated they're hoping to clean it up and went on to note various repairs they have made and work they've done. Mr. Barbin stated they are not asking for a color that is outside the guidelines of the age of the building. Ms. Steward asked if they have had anyone look at the roof transition and possible flashing issues with Mr. Barbin noting work they had done in that area.

Ms. Bourgogne restated that paint will not help with water intrusion and went on to note the building is scored, has never been painted, and the uniqueness of the façade related to the scoring technique. Ms. Bourgogne raised the possibility of there being Portland cement with Mr. Fifield echoing the sentiment of there maybe being other mortar types used. Mr. Fifield noted his appreciation for the care of the house and reiterating how a coat of paint isn't going to keep water out of the building suggesting solving the water/moisture issues first. Mr. Fifield commented maybe separate issues/questions into first the waterproofing and then the superficial treatment of the building. Mr. Bergeron commented that it appears there is a deep gallery and where is the water coming from with Mr. Barbin noting areas getting wet. Mr. Barbin expressed again trying to solve all the water issues.

Mr. Fifield asked who the waterproofing contactor is with and Ms. Bourgogne noting the name given by Mr. Barbin is a painter. Ms. Bourgogne asked about the entry space and back loggia with Mr. Barbin confirming the former alley is a hallway still and the loggia is enclosed. Mr. Fifield noted his recommendations of talking to a waterproofing specialist and with that specialist look at things like flashing and other places where water can get into a building going on to note paint won't address their principal issue if water is their principle issue. Ms. Bourgogne noted staff can go out can meet and Mr. Barbin. Mr. Fifield, noting they don't know as well as they should what the problem is now so trying to understand the reason for the proposal.

There was public comment from Ms. Szalwinski in attendance. Ms. Szalwinski noted her appreciation that they didn't break it into condos noted possible reasons for water intrusion and the cost of painting as well as reiterating not to use latex paint.

Following public comment, Ms. Steward noted she thinks they need to hire an expert in waterproofing who can look at the entire system of their building. Mr. Fifield noted at the moment it seems there are too many variables for the Committee to consider paint as the simple solution to the problem presented. Mr. Barbin noted he feels extremely frustrated, like they have their hands tied and not getting support the way they should be getting. Mr. Fifield noted he can appreciate a certain level of frustration, but they are trying to understand the issue being presented and thinks a solution will become available, it just may not be painting the building. Mr. Bergeron noted an area in need of further investigation based on one of the old photos where there was a door where there is now a window and what kind of stucco is present commenting it could have been that in the 1980's someone put Portland cement stucco on their building and the water's not evaporating out of the wall because of it. Mr. Fifield commented they need to know what kind of stucco is on all those surfaces and that can give the Committee guidance as to what an appropriate response to the proposal is, reiterating latex paint isn't going to solve their water problem.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to defer the item to allow the applicant time to engage with a waterproofing contractor and/or investigate the material of stucco that's been applied to these surfaces proposed to be painted. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

525 Dauphine St: 24-35756-VCGEN; Brian Anderson, applicant; M J Falgoust Inc, owner;

Proposal to make repairs to fire damaged building including proposal to remove existing window opening, per application & materials received 11/25/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=FYUHQF#>

This application was heard at the end of the meeting. Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report. There was no one present on behalf of the application. Ms. Bourgogne noted not knowing why/if (lack of windows, sheathing note?) was an insurance request or if something else was behind it. Mr. Fifield noted the architect should trace

back what’s going on with ventilation in the attic because if they eliminate that vent there may not be enough ventilation in terms of building health also stating elimination of the atypical window doesn’t seem to be an issue. Mr. Fifield also commented on being unsure about the note saying 2 hours required by code and his belief that the detail they’re providing meets the 2-hour standard anyway also saying this is kind of between the architect and the owner of the house.

There was public comment from Ms. Szalwinski in attendance. Ms. Szalwinski commented on nailing through the gypsum board and use of mineral wool.

Following public comment Mr. Bergeron asked if there is scope on the other side of the building and Ms. Bourgogne commented that from what she can tell from the property report Mr. Albrecht was ok with everything else except for the side the Committee had been discussing.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to conceptually approve the proposed work with any final details to be worked out at staff level. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

740 Royal St: 24-34621-VCGEN; Myles Martin, applicant; St Ann/Royal LLC, owner;

Proposal to retain copper flashing cap in location of previously existing terra cotta tiles, per application & materials received 11/25/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=S65082#>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Mr. Martin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Martin relayed a message from the contactor stating the flashing was used to create a watertight system; that the terra cotta ridge cap could not cover the ridge at this location and the flashing eliminated water intrusion. Mr. Martin stated the deviation was done by the contractor and roofing contractor without submittal with Mr. Martin requesting deferral to come back with more information.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to defer per the applicant’s request. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

828 Toulouse St: 24-35783-VCGEN; Winkert Daniel, applicant; 828 Toulouse Street LLC, owner;

Proposal to remove previously denied balconies and to construct one new balcony, per application & materials received 11/25/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=YBE01V#>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Mr. Winkert present on behalf of the application. Mr. Winkert noted his belief that “that one small balcony” on the side overlooking the pool helped to unify an otherwise large, massive wall that faces that side stating they hope to retain the one balcony. There was a discussion trying to clarify the proposed work and what was done previously as well as what was granted/approved.

There was public comment from Ms. Holmes of VCPORA in attendance. Ms. Holmes commented on following this application previously regarding the 6 balconies and her belief that the Commission and the Architecture Committee made a good compromise with the owners by allowing 3 of them to be retained and the 3 on the blue rated structure needing to come down. Ms. Holmes stated her agreement with staff in recommending denial of rebuilding the proposed balcony on the blue rated structure.

Following the public comment, Ms. Bourgogne noted the previous week’s decision at adjudication of a 90-day deferral of this violation. Mr. Bergeron noted the staff report indicates compromise situation where the door remains and a guard rail is put in front of it stating “I don’t think I’m averse to that”. Mr. Fifield asked if the door itself is in violation Ms. Bourgogne noting she didn’t know but would assume they put the door in when they put on the balcony.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to deny the balcony as proposed but that staff’s recommendation to retain the existing door with a guardrail in front of it would be acceptable. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Next AC Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025

At approximately 2:15 PM Ms. Steward made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.