

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, May 28, 2024– 1:00 PM.

- Committee Members Present:

Rick Fifield, Cynthia Steward
- Committee Members Absent:

Stephen Bergeron
- Staff Present:

Bryan Block, Director; Renee Bourgogne, Deputy Director; Nick Albrecht, Principal Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Principal Plans Examiner (arrived late)
- Staff Absent:

Marguerite Roberts, Senior Inspector; Noah Epstein, Inspector
- Others Present:

Jay Costa, Steve Finegan, Carter Rownd, Patrick Rownd, Myles Martin, Bill Wood, Robert Cangelosi, Allen Kelly, Gretchen Byers, Erika Gates, Bruce Blew, Samantha Johnson, Kristina Jones, Katherine Harmon, Julia Hodgins, Margitta Rogers

Minutes

Old Business

317-19 Chartres St, 316-18 Exchange Place: 21-24905-VCGEN; 319 Chartres St: Steven J Finegan Architects, applicant; SA Mintz LLC, owner; Proposal to revise construction documents to add roof access, and review of mechanical equipment, per application & materials received 08/25/2021 & 05/01/2024, respectively.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=6YJ1P0>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Finegan and Mr. Costa present on behalf of the application. Mr. Finegan stated that four issues had come up. The two AC units would be for walk-in coolers and the hood must be located at least 10’ from the property line per the State Fire Marshal. The door was being added for easy access to the roof and would be a flush hollow metal painted the same as the wall to minimize visibility. He stated that they removed the second-floor courtyard infill roof, making it one story, and that the remnant of the neighboring roof was dilapidated, so they were proposing to lower it and cap it. He added that the neighbor was fine with this work being done.

Following Mr. Finegan’s remarks, a discussion clarifying the applicant’s intentions with the neighboring masonry wall took place. There was much concern regarding ownership and proper permitting. Mr. Fifield asked what the address next door was. Mr. Costa responded that he was unsure.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fifield moved for **conceptual approval** of the additional HVAC, the hood relocation, the new door, and the treatment of the exposed courtyard wall on both sides so that the neighboring property would not have to return to the Committee. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

740 Royal St: 24-06975-VCGEN; 740 Royal St: Myles Martin, applicant; St Ann/Royal LLC, owner; Proposal to correct violations and renovate building including modifications to courtyard facing balconies, per application & materials received 03/11/2024 & 05/20/2024, respectively.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=XCMVNZ#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Gates, Mr. Martin, Mr. Patrick Rownd and Mr. Carter Rownd all present on behalf of the application. Mr. Martin noted that they were obtaining a letter from the structural

engineer and that they would be happy to chamfer the columns. Mr. Fifield asked if the guardrails would span from column to column. Mr. Block replied that they would.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward moved to approve the proposal with any final details to be handled at the staff level. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

924 Bienville St: 23-33443-VCGEN; Allen Kelly, applicant; M J Falgoust Inc, owner;

Proposal to retain 4x4 posts installed as extra supports under balcony until such time as pending litigation with the neighboring property is resolved, per application & materials received 05/09/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=RF0DNU#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Kelly present on behalf of the application. Mr. Kelly noted that they had finally gained some traction with the neighboring ownership. Mr. Kelly continued that one of the scuppers had been temporarily closed but that they want a permanent solution. Mr. Kelly noted they are waiting on their architect to finish drawings and for the pending litigation to be resolved. Mr. Fifield asked if all eventual repairs would be to match existing. Mr. Kelly stated yes. For clarification, Mr. Block stated that the VCC did not permit the water to drain from the neighboring property. Ms. Steward asked how many supports were currently there. Mr. Kelly stated between 6 and 8.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward made the motion to accept the retention until such time as the litigation was resolved, setting no precedent. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

215-25 Decatur St: 24-09168-VCCAM; Toledano Properties, applicant; 215-225 Decatur LLC, owner; Proposal to replace security cameras and access panel, per application & materials received 04/03/2024 & 05/14/2024, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=3Q04ED>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Wood and Ms. Jones present on behalf of the application. Ms. Bourgogne explained that the proposed screen was like nothing that had been approved elsewhere and that she had concerns about vandalism, and that there was quite a bit of information left out of the application and that is what Ms. Vogt would need prior to permitting. Ms. Bourgogne asked how bright it was, if the screen would stay on when not in use, and if it would be flush or recessed mounted. Mr. Fifield asked how the camera would be mounted. Mr. Wood responded that the wire would run through the window trim and come around the brick, mounted with 4 screws into the mortar joint. Mr. Fifield asked about the access panel and how it deviated from the Guidelines. Mr. Block stated that it was not like anything that had been reviewed before and that more information was needed, perhaps a mockup. Ms. Bourgogne expressed concern with the condition of the brick behind the existing intercom. Mr. Fifield stated that he did not find it to be objectionable, but reiterated that staff needed a more complete submittal that addressed all of the questions asked.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fifield noted that this equipment was replacing bulky, outdated technology. Ms. Steward moved for **conceptual approval** with additional materials to be submitted for review at staff level. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1218 Decatur St: 24-12308-VCGEN; Bruce Blew, applicant; Dao Decatur Enterprises LLC, owner;

Proposal to replace existing gallery and balcony decking with new Aeratis synthetic decking including the addition of new metal supports at the gallery level and synthetic purlins, per application & materials received 04/25/2024 & 05/21/2024, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=6ZVSNJ#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Blew present on behalf of the application. Mr. Blew stated that synthetic purlins were not available so that was no longer part of the proposal. Mr. Fifield clarified that the metal supports would be intermediate between the existing wood purlins. Mr. Blew confirmed they would be.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward made the motion to accept the new metal supports, the synthetic decking and the replacement purlins to match. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

630 Saint Ann St: 24-12505-VCGEN; Jimena Urrutia, applicant; Pescador Partners LTD, owner;

Proposal to install new mini split condensing unit in courtyard, per application and materials received 04/28/2024 & 05/22/2024, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=U63Z0E#>

There was no one present on behalf of the application.

Ms. Steward made the motion to defer in order for the applicant to be present. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

917 Saint Ann St: 24-13434-VCGEN; 917 Saint Ann St: Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; Victor F III Trahan, owner;

Proposal for overall restoration, including installation of dependency stairs & reconstruction of chimneys, per application & materials received 05/06/2024.

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

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Cangelosi present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield asked what kind of paint would be used; Mr. Cangelosi responded that it would be a dipped limewash. Mr. Fifield asked if they had done paint analysis. Mr. Cangelosi responded on the woodwork, yes, but not on the brick. He stated that the stucco applied to the front elevation had caused more problems and that VCC records were not clear on why that had been allowed, since the underlying conditions did not indicate the brick had been stuccoed previously. Mr. Fifield stated that the Committee appreciated his thorough analysis and the depth of scholarship going into the restoration.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward moved for **conceptual approval** consistent with the staff recommendation. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

908 Saint Peter St: 24-14724-VCGEN; Louis J. Hoffman, Jr., applicant; Jeanne M Broom, owner;

Proposal to install two new tankless water heaters on the rear elevation of the main building, per application & materials received 05/14/2024.

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

There was no one present on behalf of the application.

Ms. Steward made the motion to defer in order for the applicant to be present. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

416 Chartres St: 24-14791-VCGEN; Hodgins Julia, applicant; And Leila Williams Foundation Kemper, owner;

Proposal to renovate building, including millwork replacement and a new opening connecting to 410 Chartres, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *cultural facility*, per application & materials received 05/14/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=SKNG1J>

[Mr. Fifield recused himself prior to presentation of the Staff report. Mr. Block then stepped in for Mr. Fifield.]

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Ms. Hodgins and Ms. Rogers present on behalf of the application. Ms. Rogers noted that they were still finalizing the location for the door in the party wall, asking if that could be handled at staff level since they were hoping to align the opening with one at the adjacent building. She also asked if early conceptual approval of the HVAC equipment would be possible; Ms. Bourgogne responded that staff would need to review spec sheets and a complete roof plan. Mr. Block agreed, stating that the locations would be minimally visible. Ms. Rogers stated that it was set back and concealed by the neighboring building, and that their client wanted the equipment to be discrete as well. Ms. Bourgogne stated that the situation would be less equipment, cleaner, and less noise than it had been when it was a restaurant. Ms. Steward agreed.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward moved for the **conceptual approval** with the understanding that the mechanical plan needed further development at staff level, and for a **positive recommendation** for the **change of use** to be forwarded to the full Commission. Mr. Block seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

[Mr. Fifield returned to the hearing following the motion.]

Appeals and Violations

616 Conti St: 24-09814-VCGEN; Terri Dreyer, applicant; Conti Street Holding LLC, owner; Proposal to address demolition by neglect and work without permit violations, including structural repair of roof and masonry courtyard work, per application & materials received 04/05/2024 & 04/30/2024, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=2Y6VAP>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Ms. Johnson present on behalf of the application. Ms. Johnson stated that they were still working on future development and that this scope would be limited to the roof and masonry repair, focusing on stabilization and addressing the demolition by neglect regardless of future redevelopment. She added that the owner was currently trying to decide on a path forward for development. Mr. Fifield asked what the time frame would be; Ms. Johnson responded that they had a contractor ready to go.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fifield noted that this was a re-review of a previously proposed scope of work to repair the building's demolition by neglect issues. Ms. Steward moved to **conceptually approve** the proposal per the staff recommendation. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

508-16 Bourbon St: 24-07347-VCGEN; Loretta Harmon, applicant; Anglade 508-16 Bourbon LLC, owner; Proposal to demolish and build new stage structure in courtyard, per application & materials received 03/14/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=M0DQJV>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Ms. Harmon and Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated that they had had issues with previous tenants, so they were just trying to make this better for the current use of the courtyard space, and less intrusive. Mr. Fifield asked if it would be free standing; Ms. Harmon responded yes, it would not touch any historic fabric. Mr. Fifield then asked for confirmation the old one would be demolished; Ms. Harmon responded yes. Ms. Bourgogne asked if the intention was for live music. Ms. Harmon responded that she was not sure. Mr. Fifield stated that approval should be contingent on Zoning verification. Ms. Harmon stated that this would be determined during the building permit review. Ms. Harmon added that they would provide framing plans for the next review.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward moved for **conceptual approval** of the application with the understanding that prior Zoning approval will be required, and the existing gazebo structure would be demolished. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

541 Decatur St: 24-08335-VCGEN; Gates Erika, applicant; Decatur Acquisition LLC, owner; Proposal to address violations and appeal to retain and modify fourth floor wall reconstructed without permit following hurricane damage, per application & materials received 03/21/2024 & 05/09/2024, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=NEUA6Z>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Ms. Harmon and Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates responded that, with regards to the wall, they believed they could not get emergency permits following the storm. She had told them it was done incorrectly, since they did not know the chimneys had been in place and now they wanted to reconstruct it as it would have appeared previously. Regarding the windows, she stated that they had windows they currently intend to repair, but if the VCC would prefer more historically appropriate windows, that is an option since the windows they currently had were in poor condition. Regarding the Aeratis, she stated the neighboring building with the same rating and exposure had received approval for it. Regarding stringer spacing, the Toulouse side was 16", but the Decatur side was about 2' so they would need another stringer.

Mr. Fifield asked about the chimney. Ms. Harmon stated that they had probably been brick before collapse, but she felt like it was excessive to make the restored chimneys brick instead of veneer, and that they would look as they did previously. She thought it was a good idea to use metal stud framing, with one layer of brick as stucco substrate, noting that they would not be functional. Ms. Steward asked staff's opinion on this; Ms. Bourgogne stated that she felt it was a false sense of history. Ms. Gates stated that they would do what the VCC wanted to make the situation right, and that they had not known the chimneys had been there when they reconstructed the wall. She stated that they did add the window as a design choice. Mr. Fifield stated that the masonry came up through the roof and clearly had an expression at the roof level. It should have been physically present as its own masonry structure. He did not know why you wouldn't just rebuild it to match previous conditions; Ms. Harmon responded that they had structural concerns with it being on the fourth floor. Mr. Fifield asked if it had been removed below; Ms. Harmon stated it was just a flush brick wall, so there were issues with transferring the load to the foundation. Mr. Fifield asked if staff had visited; Ms. Bourgogne stated, "no, they have denied us access." Ms. Gates stated that they were working on access, including to the HVAC equipment. Mr. Block stated that since it was an act of God that brought the chimneys down, "you could ask for retention instead of building false ones." Ms. Bourgogne agreed. Mr. Fifield asked if they would be willing to add a step in the parapets to indicate where they would have been. Ms. Steward and Ms. Harmon agreed.

Regarding the Aeratis decking, Mr. Fifield suggested the addition of a metal purlin, as we had previously heard at 1218 Decatur, that way they wouldn't have to adjust the purlin. Ms. Gates agreed. Mr. Fifield then asked about the stucco finish on the masonry wall. Ms. Gates stated that she was unsure and that she had seen stucco on this façade in the satellite images, and needed to discuss with staff. Mr. Block suggested that if research showed the gable was originally brick, then not allow retention, but if it had, it would be retainable. Mr. Fifield stated that he thought deferral was more appropriate. He asked about the windows; Ms. Gates stated that the openings with plywood would be replaced with new millwork if staff preferred. Mr. Fifield asked if the gable window would be removed; she stated it would. Mr. Fifield stated that the HVAC needed to be worked through with DSP.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fifield moved to **defer**, with the applicant to submit revisions including: details for the Aeratis decking; revisions showing marking of the chimneys at the parapet, as discussed; to clarify whether the masonry was stuccoed or masonry prior to hurricane Ida; to provide full drawings for replacement of the windows, and; to clarify mechanical placement and equipment, and complete an inspection with Safety and Permits and VCC staff. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

536-40 Chartres St, 540 Toulouse St: 24-11003-VCGEN: Gates Erika, applicant; K & L Investments I L C, owner; Proposal to address work without permit and demolition by neglect violations, including but not limited to appeals to retain mechanical equipment and unpermitted courtyard service ell enclosure, per application & materials received 04/15/2024 & 05/01/2024. **[Notices of Violation sent 08/05/2002, 08/27/2002, 06/30/2003, 03/05/2008, 07/15/2016, 10/02/2017, 12/21/2018, 04/22/2019, 08/30/2019, 07/01/2021, and 07/07/2023.]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=4ANVZl>

[Ms. Vogt arrived during the presentation of the staff report]

Mr. Block read the staff report with Ms. Gates and Mr. Harris present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated that the previous engineering report was done by the owner but now the tenant had hired their own structural engineer, who was present today. Mr. Harris stated that he wrote the original report in 2017 and his most recent evaluation was that the building was not moving, as the conditions looked similar. However, he added that he had not completed a site visit since he had been rehired. Mr. Fifield asked if the wall had been monitored. Mr. Harris stated that he had not but that he recommended every six months to the previous tenant. Mr. Fifield stated “so no one has been taking responsibility? This has just been handed off to different engineers? I would like to see a proposal for monitoring.” Ms. Gates stated that their plan was to remove delaminated stucco and observe from there, long term. Mr. Fifield stated that it was important to have a base line for comparison so any other tenants or engineers could reference that data. Mr. Harris stated that it would be very hard to monitor with a survey instrument, and suggested use of piano wire. He added that a crack monitor would not show the entire wall. Ms. Bourgogne stated that a structural engineer should look at the mounted HVAC equipment, too. Mr. Fifield stated “we need a proposal. This building needs someone to take care of it. I think we need to defer so you can give us a complete proposal. And Ms. Gates, you need to involve design professionals.” Ms. Gates asked for feedback on the HVAC, noting that it was a very small courtyard. Mr. Fifield stated that he did not find retention appropriate and that deferral would allow time to produce an actual proposal. Ms. Gates noted that the balcony was not accessible, and that they were considering either an interior installation or using the third bay of the courtyard. Mr. Fifield stated that there were too many issues for a direction at this point, and that a full proposal was needed for them to respond to, rather than expecting the Committee to give advice. He repeated that retention was not ok and that a future proposal needed to include plans for monitoring the structure.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fifield stated that design professionals were needed, with a comprehensive submittal, not a spreadsheet. Ms. Steward moved to **defer** the application for 30 days. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

327 Bourbon St: 24-12164-VCPNT; Gates Erika, applicant; Karno 327 Bourbon Real Estate LLC, owner; Review of masonry conditions following the unpermitted removal of all paint from the Bourbon St. elevation, per materials received 05/14/2024.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=ZOD6VF#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated the following: the contractor stripped the paint. The bricks are in good condition, and he was set on leaving them unpainted. I think a lime wash won't work, not enough coverage, as well as the maintenance issue. I think a lime paint might work better.

Mr. Fifield asked if they had done any paint analysis. Ms. Gates stated, “visual but not chemical.” Mr. Fifield recommended a paint that was kind to the brick and provided good adhesion. Mr. Fifield stated that they needed to do a chemical paint analysis.

There was no public comments.

Ms. Steward made the motion to defer the application for 30 days for additional paint and mortar analysis. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

927-29 Saint Ann St: 24-13436-VCGEN; Cangelosi, Jr Robert, applicant; The Noble Jones Trust, owner; Proposal to address longstanding demolition by neglect violations, including structural repairs to the service ell balcony, per application & materials received 05/05/2024.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=NEUA6Z>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Cangelosi present on behalf of the application. Mr. Cangelosi stated that engineer Ashton Avegno had inspected the property and had provided the outrigger detail. He stated that he that he was only doing exterior work and had not been asked to do the interior, but that it did need it. He stated that the exterior of the building had not been visible until the vegetation had been removed. Ms. Vogt noted that photos of the site seemed to indicate that the property had power, which she was concerned was a risk. Mr. Cangelosi stated that the front building did have power, but not the back.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Steward moved to **approve** the proposal as submitted. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Next AC Date: Tuesday, June 11, 2024

At approximately 3:04 PM Ms. Steward made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.