

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, January 28, 2025– 1:00 PM**

- Committee Members Present:** Stephen Bergeron, Rick Fifield, Cynthia Steward
- Committee Members Absent:**
- Staff Present:** Renee Bourgogne, Deputy Director; Joseph Newman, Administrative Assistant; Nick Albrecht, Principal Plans Examiner; Bryan Block, Director
- Staff Absent:** Marguerite Roberts, Senior Inspector; Erin Vogt, Principal Plans Examiner; Noah Epstein, Inspector
- Others Present:** Kelly Johnson, Margitta Rogers, Matthew Buyer, Erin Holmes, John Rupley, C. Lynn Kirby, Lisa Hardouin, Jeffrey Domangue, Brad Daigle, Gary Hollander, Gretchen Byers, Myles Martin, Bob Ellis, Jake Garofalo

At the Tuesday, January 28, 2025 meeting, the following items may be discussed.

**AGENDA**

**Old Business**

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- 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 & 01/13/2025, respectively.  
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=PFMTP6#>
- Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Johnson present on behalf of application.
- There was no public comment.
- Ms. Johnson noted she did not have anything to add and that she believed everything was covered on the onsite meeting and the report.
- Mr. Bergeron made the motion to conceptually approve the proposed work with any final details to be worked out at the staff level. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
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- 533 Royal St: 24-22083-VCGEN;** Margitta Rogers, applicant; & Leila Williams Foundation, owner; Review of design development drawings of conceptually approved proposal to renovate buildings including a courtyard enclosure and a new rear building, per application & materials received 07/18/2024 & 12/24/2024, respectively.  
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=AZBSDM#>
- Mr. Fifield recused himself for this item. Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Rogers and Mr. Buyer present on behalf of application. Ms. Rogers noted that they were looking for approval of the design as presented. Mr. Bergeron stated that he thought this was an interesting use of materials, referring to the new construction wall cladding.
- There was public comment from Ms. Holmes of VCPORA. Ms. Holmes noted the association also working with the architects and owners voicing full support of the overall project. Ms. Holmes continued in regards to the new construction in the courtyard, stating the association found that the massing of that upper floor was a little too heavy looking. Ms. Holmes quoted from the Secretary of the Interior’s standards related to new additions. Ms.
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Holmes noted the association's belief of a sense of starkness in terms of the verticality of the terra cotta tiles but also commented on the desire to continue working with the architects on the proposal, noting she would be curious to see examples.

Ms. Rogers noted their close work with the staff throughout the process and being closely aligned on the direction they are going also commenting that what they are looking for is approval of what's been presented to-date with the details to be refined and reviewed at the staff level. Ms. Rogers also commented that she believes the report speaks for itself. Ms. Steward noted her belief that this is a nice evolution of this project and seems like a "graceful addition". Mr. Bergeron noted that he shares the staff sentiment and commented on his interest in how the terra cotta is going to wear over time and belief that it's an interesting use of a material that is common in the district but using it differently. Following the public comment Mr. Bergeron noted that it might be helpful to see images of the product that has been used elsewhere. Ms. Rogers noted the renderings in the room do feel darker than what they're envisioning for it and saying there's a lightness in the courtyard that they're anticipating carrying on through the structure. Ms. Rogers noted in terms of the comment about being subordinate and fitting in, that they've studied it extensively and they feel comfortable they're meeting the intent of historic guidelines. Mr. Block commented his belief that it might be helpful to send staff photographs of places where the product has been used and also considering the comment/s in the color selection process.

Ms. Steward asked about the level of the head of the curtain wall and Ms. Rogers stated there is an alignment with the building across from it. Ms. Bourgogne noted to keep in mind that things like the generator and other mechanical equipment are behind there with Ms. Rogers also noting the life safety systems for the entire campus being located there and that this avoids further disturbing historic fabric and the screening aspect of the construction will shield all of this from view. Ms. Rogers commented about the work of an acoustical engineer and that the proposed equipment would be much quieter compared to the existing. Mr. Bergeron asked if there is something special about the construction of the parapet wall that attenuates sound or is it just the parapet wall itself. Ms. Rogers commented that it's just that it's a parapet wall itself that they haven't studied the acoustics of what adding additional acoustic materials might do.

Ms. Steward made the motion for conceptual approval for the submitted design to return for final review of construction documents. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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**229 Royal St: 24-28525-VCGEN;** John Rupley, applicant; 229 Royal Street LLC, owner;

Proposal to renovate building including the installation of a new first floor storefront, per application & materials received 09/18/2024 & 01/13/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=4BA0WT#>

Mr. Fifield rejoined the meeting at the start of the hearing of this item. Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Rupley present on behalf of application. Mr. Rupley noted the client hasn't bought the building yet but they're exploring what they can do with this first floor façade renewal and that the new storefronts essentially match the neighboring building at 233 Royal also noting this is where he got the offset measurement. Mr. Rupley commented columns to be cast iron clad on 3 sides and looking for 3 operational doors for flexibility of the future tenant. Mr. Rupley noted not included in report the desire for a new tpo roof and removal of the existing torch down roof. Ms. Bourgogne noting that can be handled at the staff level with a separate permit. Ms. Steward repeated again like last time they will need a lot of information about proportions and details etc. Mr. Bergeron noted the typical condition possibly not this case but usually of dealing with out-of-plumb columns. Ms. Bourgogne commented on the belief that the gap at the building referenced is not a historic condition. Mr. Fifield asked about the difficulty revising the detail so millwork ends up flush behind the cast iron column with Mr. Rupley saying it should not be difficult but he would let them know if he runs into any difficulties.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Block put the question to the Committee about if doing cast iron pilaster like this is rather expensive today or somewhat common noting his belief it's a great concept cast iron pilasters but cautious about something that is speculative that gets approved based on an important architectural historic feature that then gets value engineered out and if applicant has investigated the cost of this. Mr. Fifield noted that because they didn't have a discussion about the integrity of the art deco 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and how the restoration of the ground floor might appear to be in conflict his belief that the integrity of the proposal rests on the ability to actually reproduce the columns in cast iron. Mr. Rupley noted his belief that the client understands this is not going to be cheap. Mr. Bergeron asked if they've been on the other side of this façade with Mr. Rupley stating he has not since he hasn't had access to the building since it's still under different ownership and Mr. Bergeron noting this could be another expense to the whole thing.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval with revisions to be made per today's discussion to the millwork and additional details to be submitted as requested by staff noting the stipulation of cast iron columns being key to the design concept for restoring the ground floor as discussed today. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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## New Business

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**921 Burgundy St: 24-35876-VCGEN**; Earl Hardouin, applicant; Cheryl Lynn Kirby, owner;

Proposal to install new in-ground swimming pool, per application & materials received 11/26/2024 & 01/06/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=VR62T1#>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Ms. Hardouin and Ms. Kirby present on behalf of the application.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Bourgogne reiterated the staff's request for updated site plan with further information called out in it. Mr. Fifield asked if the pool contractor is controlling construction of the cabinet that will enclose the equipment with Ms. Hardouin saying they will. Mr. Fifield had asked about symmetry of an enclosure feature and there was clarification that this element is existing and housing the AC units. Ms. Bourgogne asked about the depth of the pool with Ms. Hardouin noting it is 4ft continuous across. Mr. Bergeron asked for clarification that the fountain itself has walls above grade and asking if those walls were coming down so that the pool would be at-grade. Ms. Hardouin saying yes and noting a reuse of the existing materials where possible.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval of proposed work with any final details to be worked out at staff level. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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## Appeals and Violations

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**205 Bourbon St: 24-26315-VCGEN**; Jeffrey Michael Domangue, Sr., applicant; Maitre Holdings LLC, owner;

Proposal to retain two mini-split condensing units and mechanical platform installed on rear roof without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application & materials received 08/26/2024 & 01/13/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=0YW2EJ#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Domangue and Mr. Daigle present on behalf of the application. Mr. Domangue noted his belief that he had taken the proper steps to acquire the mechanical permit which he thought was approved by the Mechanical Department and thought they had the green light to proceed, He continued stating the VCC portion on One Stop said review was completed so he thought he was approved to move forward. Mr. Domangue commented about performing a pre-inspection with a mechanical inspector and Ms. Steward asked if the mechanical inspector was from the City and Mr. Domangue noted 3<sup>rd</sup> party. Mr. Block noted that language does confuse people and that they are not the first ones to misunderstand that. Ms. Bourgogne also noted the payment aspect has been a problem but thinks it doesn't work that way anymore.

Mr. Fifield asked if it is possible to move the wall mounted mini-split with Mr. Domangue indicating it should be possible and Mr. Fifield commenting about this kind of move decreasing the visibility and probably bringing it into line with the Guidelines. There was brief discussion of the satellite dish with staff noting that if its defunct and not used then it should be removed. Mr. Bergeron questioned the volume of building behind the mechanical units, noting it was atypical. Mr. Fifield noted that's not what is being talked about today. Mr. Bergeron asked if staff wants to see a drawing of what this is going to look like with staff noting they would.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval with the applicant to send a plan drawing to the staff for review and approval prior to completing the work to relocate that equipment per today's discussion and also contingent upon removal of the satellite dish. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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**1238 Dauphine St: 24-27984-VCGEN**; Prometheus Development Inc, applicant; Earl Gerard Schmit, owner;

Appeal to retain rooftop mounted HVAC equipment, per application & materials received 09/11/2024 & 10/14/2024. **[Notices of Violation sent 02/17/2010, 08/01/2014, 07/19/2017, 12/17/2020]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Redirect.aspx?SearchString=24-27984-VCGEN>

Ms. Bourgogne read the staff report with Mr. Sherman present on behalf of the application.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Sherman expressed confusion the first step being going to mechanical division or coming to committee/VCC

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first and noting “they will follow that step” with Ms. Bourgogne noting a return to ARC then full commission. Ms. Bourgogne commented on not being able to approve something commission wouldn’t approve so just needing that confirmation and if need something/to do something to make it compliant needing to see drawings of that too. Mr. Fifield commented about if the committee has any difficulty with the general sense of installation now is the time to voice that stating that once mechanical division makes its opinion they may be locked into this position. Mr. Bergeron questioned about whether the guidelines don’t require that it be mounted at the ground with Mr. Block saying no but “visually unobtrusive” and Ms. Bourgogne commenting that the property report does say that there is limited visibility of it and saying the same thing herself. Mr. Sherman stated his belief that it can’t be seen from street level at any point. Mr. Fifield asked about the platform in relation to the slope of the roof and it was noted it didn’t alter the shape of the roof at all. Ms. Bourgogne noted this is a project of Ms. Vogt’s that’s been ongoing for a while so not sure of what documents she has about the actual construction of the platform or anything like that just wanting to get this in front of the committee. Mr. Bergeron expressed his thoughts that if mechanical does agree that’s what there existing is ok then he would want the applicant to be able to take it straight to the full commission.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval as currently constructed on the platform as it exists contingent upon approval of the mechanical department and should any modifications be necessary to this platform including but not limited to a guard rail the application should return to this committee. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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**1240 Dauphine St: 24-27986-VCGEN**; Prometheus Development Inc, applicant; American Health Care Systems Inc, owner;

Appeal to retain unpermitted HVAC equipment, roof modifications, plumbing, and door crossing the property line to 1238 Dauphine, per application & materials received 09/11/2024. **[Notices of Violation sent 02/18/2010, 11/03/2011, 08/01/2014, 07/19/2017, & 12/17/2020]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Redirect.aspx?SearchString=24-27986-VCGEN>

Mr. Block read the staff report with Mr. Sherman present on behalf of the application.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Sherman commented about his belief regarding air conditioning not being visible at all and not understanding the comment about “Barracks right of way you could see them” and from his visual and photographic inspection it could not be seen at all from the street. Mr. Fifield asked if staff took a picture of the visibility noting his opinion that he doesn’t find it to be obtrusive in any way. Mr. Sherman commented they are constantly battling with tenants who try to put plants out there and other things noting it is written into the lease that they are not authorized to put anything up there also stating his belief that there isn’t a single plant up there now as well as ongoing efforts to/in dealing with that. Mr. Sherman noted that the owner is insistent that nothing be up there because it is a safety factor and stating it has been a constant battle with tenants to stop them from putting things out there. Ms. Steward asked why do tenants have access to that door with Mr. Sherman saying that’s the way the buildings are constructed Ms. Steward specifying why isn’t there a lock on the door and Mr. Fifield commenting it might be egress. Ms. Steward commented about her experience with this kind of installation in the French Quarter in terms of BZA with Mr. Fifield stating his belief that won’t be the case here due to the length of time the situation has been in place. Mr. Fifield noted the staff and Mr. Sherman being aligned in the idea that this rooftop shouldn’t be used for recreational purposes and Mr. Sherman commented absolutely. Mr. Sherman commented that Mr. Schmidt who is disabled parks in the garage and walks through noting his original attempt to get a handicap parking space and the quickest way for him to get inside is through that doorway. Mr. Sherman commented that it is a separate “legal” ownership but it is still controlled by Mr. Schmidt he ultimately has both properties and the difference in terms of distance between through the doorway vs all the way around the corner. Mr. Fifield asked if Mr. Sherman would be willing to seek a property line easement with Mr. Sherman asking is that necessary while it’s common ownership and Mr. Block noting this is outside their jurisdiction and Mr. Fifield saying it’s more a building code kind of issue. Mr. Bergeron commented that it’s not technically the same ownership with Mr. Block noting they can talk to Mr. Sherman after and it would be through the city planning commission saying the staff/VCC would support it. Mr. Sherman noted regarding the item of the gutters having previously been to an administrative hearing and a misunderstanding with little piece at the top commenting he doesn’t know the material. Mr. Block noted apologies for not having more information clarifying this was something Mr. Whitfield’s had cited and this being Ms. Vogt’s project so other staff playing catch up as well. Ms. Bourgogne noted the intention for this to be scheduled to go but scheduling conflict and Ms. Vogt being the one to write the report.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval with all final details to be worked out at the staff level and the proviso that the door that crosses the property line get a cross-easement from the relevant authority. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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**327 Bourbon St: 24-38522-VCGEN**; Myles Martin, applicant; Karno 327 Bourbon Real Estate LLC, owner;

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Proposal to retain items completed in deviation of approved plans including synthetic cornice and fiber cement board siding, per application & materials received 12/29/2024.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=JT0PPN#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Ellis, Mr. Garofalo, and Mr. Martin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Ellis noted the eviction of the previous tenant due to failure to maintain the building and commented the VCC staff has been working with them further noting COVID related difficulties getting materials. Mr. Ellis noted numerous extensions of permits and nearing completion going on to note being made aware of the issue so took up the appeal and that the VCC staff expedited the item. Mr. Garofalo stated he made the fiberglass cornice change because items above are copper stating the original was galvanized saying “the galvanized and copper don’t work well together” and the galvanized was all “blind riveted” noting his belief it hadn’t been there that long saying maybe from the 50’s. The Committee noted there may have been repairs in the 50’s but that this was an original building element in terms of the configuration of the cornice. Mr. Garofalo commented again the combination of the 2 metals being the factor in his decision and commenting on the lifespan/construction of the installed element as well as it matching the original element.

Mr. Martin noted the application for retention shop drawings and components used were included with the submittal. Ms. Bourgogne noted it being frustrating that they have those drawings and work was done but there had not been a return to the VCC before the work started. Mr. Garofalo commented on his belief it was because of concerns over the timeline with Ms. Bourgogne noting the push to get them on the agendas as quickly as possible. Ms. Bourgogne asked Mr. Garofalo if they were the one to install the roof and he confirmed they were and knew the copper was being used saying the priority was getting a new roof to stop major water related issue/s. Mr. Garofalo commented his belief it was the “common sense” thing and if matching exactly what would be the difference. Mr. Ellis began to comment on a previous timeline of events regarding the back portion and Mr. Block noted the matter at hand being the material itself that had been installed. Ms. Bourgogne asked why plans were not followed for the material with Mr. Garofalo saying he believed it was a bad selection. Mr. Fifield asked if there is any notation on approved drawings about substitution of materials or change of/to the design with Mr. Block noting regarding them not being allowed he didn’t know but reiterating it is noted that it’s supposed to be wood.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fifield commented on them being put in a difficult position where the discussion could have been had beforehand noting routinely denying Hardie-plank on all but the most “invisible” elevations and noting the prominence of the elevation with Mr. Block noting the blue rating of the building. Mr. Block noted specifically for the record the group connected to this building has worked with the VCC for years on this building so there is no way they don’t know what the jurisdiction of the VCC is about and the idea of someone unilaterally deciding a choice and to simply proceed is an affront to the Commission also noting they could have come to the Commission with explanations further noting its very disrespectful to the Commission. Ms. Bourgogne adding disrespectful to staff who have been working on it as well. Mr. Block noted the Commission exists to retain as much historic fabric as possible adding these are staff and volunteers extremely qualified to make these kinds of decisions.

Mr. Fifield noted the project coming up during his time on both the Committee and Commission further noting his amazement at unilateral decisions being made and having much preferred to have those discussions before the fact. Mr. Bergeron commented on not being aware of the material the cornice was made of and if he had been aware that the material selection would have been different. Mr. Garofalo replied that there was nothing they could have saved and Mr. Bergeron commenting on the staff report and old photos showing otherwise. Mr. Bergeron further noted his belief that wholesale replacement on a blue rated building is really inappropriate commenting on the importance of not replicating things. Mr. Fifield noted the Commission being removed from the discussion by the unilateral decision made with Mr. Bergeron commenting that “it’s a faithful reproduction but it is a reproduction” and not original. Committee members noted the visual and detailing differences between fiber cement siding and real wood siding. Ms. Bourgogne asked if the stair has been installed with Mr. Garofalo stating the stair is but not the railing and Mr. Martin commenting on the balcony areas being excluded from occupancy because of not meeting the 4” sphere gap requirement. Ms. Bourgogne suggested if still planning to use tax credits she suggested getting in touch with the SHPO about the changes asap.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to deny retention per the staff report. Ms. Steward seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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Next AC Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2025

At approximately 2:30 PM Mr. Bergeron made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.