

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, July 15, 2025– 1:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Cynthia Steward, Rick Fifield, Stephen Bergeron

Staff Present: Erin Vogt, Principal Plans Examiner; Joseph Newman, Administrative Assistant; Nick Albrecht, Principal Plans Examiner; Bryan Block, Director (arrived late); Renee Bourgogne, Deputy Director (arrived late)

Staff Absent: Marguerite Roberts, Senior Inspector; Noah Epstein, Inspector

Others Present: John Williams, Jennifer Morales, Richard Choate, Stephanie Mears, Blake Bergeron, Briana Baldwin, Adam Werling, Brennan Fournerat, Alejandro Tefel, Matthew Savage, Richard Norman, Nazha Abdul-Hadi, Larry Weaver, Patrick Abry, Greg Flattmann, Alex Lawlor, Laurie Lawlor, Ed Jones, John Ripley, Katherine Harmon

AGENDA

Old Business

1039 Burgundy St: 22-15634-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Michael Katzenstein, owner; Proposal to security hardware including cameras and keypads, per applications & materials received 05/27/2022 & 06/18/2025, respectively.

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

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Ms. Morales present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that they would be happy to work with staff. Mr. Bergeron responded that a resubmittal was needed as outlined in the report.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval** with final review at staff level following submittal of requested materials. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

525 Saint Ann St: 24-12586-VCGEN; Blake Bergeron, applicant; Louisiana State Museum, owner;

FOR RECOMMENDATION ONLY: Proposal to modify previously approved plans including proposed addition into courtyard space, per application & materials received 04/29/2024 & 07/01/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=MD8VVX#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Blake Bergeron and Ms. Baldwin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Blake Bergeron noted that he had toured the site with Mr. Block to discuss the situation and problem. Mr. Blake Bergeron noted that explored alternative design would create a pinch point within the building envelope whereas the preferred solution creates a vestibule independent of the circulation pathway. Ms. Steward commented that she did not feel ok with doing this to a national registered building. Mr. Block noted that there is an existing anomalous bump out on the second floor and this proposal would bring that to the ground floor and not eliminate any precious material. Ms. Steward noted that it would still involve the removal of the rear wall of the building. Mr. Block commented that the staff recommendation would be to retain the existing exterior wall and convert the existing wall opening to a door, which differed from the proposal under review. Mr. Blake

Bergeron noted that could be explored but might be difficult to create an accessible opening through that opening. Mr. Fifield noted that a solution that does not involve the removal of the masonry wall is one that the Committee could entertain.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Stephen Bergeron clarified the intended location of people to queue for the restroom and pointed out that it was likely that people would still queue in the corridor space, making the functionality of this proposal not any different compare to the explored alternative with no addition. Mr. Blake Bergeron responded that the idea was that people would be out of the pathway of wait staff coming and going to and from the rear kitchen. Mr. Block asked if two ADA restrooms would be required. Mr. Blake Bergeron responded that when providing two unisex restrooms, both are required to be ADA compliant.

Mr. Stephen Bergeron made the motion to forward a negative recommendation to the full Commission for consideration based on the fact that the proposal would add square footage by taking away from the courtyard and would remove a significant portion of an original masonry wall. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

227 Chartres St: 25-08786-VCGEN; Richard Choate, applicant; NEW HOTEL MONTELEONE, owner; Proposal to relocate Hotel Monteleone cooling tower from 624 Bienville/200 Royal to the roof of the building at 227 Chartres, per application & materials received 03/20/2025 & 07/01/2025.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=R1FS1B>

614 Bienville St: 25-19872-VCGEN; Richard Choate, applicant; NEW HOTEL MONTELEONE, owner; Proposal to install lines in conjunction with cooling tower proposal at 227 Chartres, per application & materials received 07/01/2025.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=3JR1HG>

200 Royal St: 25-19877-VCGEN; Richard Choate, applicant; New Hotel Monteleone Inc, owner; Proposal to install lines in conjunction with cooling tower proposal at 227 Chartres, per application & materials received 07/01/2025.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=GNFBS8>

Ms. Vogt read the report with Ms. Mears and Mr. Choate present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield asked if they could split the unit into two smaller towers; Mr. Choate responded that he wasn't sure that wouldn't be just as visible, as the size was determined by the water load needed, and even if it were broken up, the piping would be more complicated. Ms. Mears added that it would likely be more prominent, as well. Mr. Fifield asked if the garage was considered as a possible location; Mr. Choate responded that it did not work.

Ms. Steward asked the applicant to confirm that the large unit could not be split into multiple smaller units. Mr. Choate responded that there were no views of the equipment from the alley, only from the one location above the gable roof at the corner. Mr. Block asked what the acoustical impact was; Mr. Choate responded that it was very loud and they would be using muffler kits. Mr. Block stated that future submittals needed to include specific information about the decibels, since this was not an industrial area. Ms. Steward stated that more information was needed from the mechanical engineer.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the application with the applicant to provide more information regarding the acoustical impact and an evaluation regarding whether smaller units could be an option. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

New Business

1016 Saint Louis St: 25-07471-VCGEN; Werling Kurt, applicant; Mercier Realty and Invst Co, owner;

Proposal to install single leaf simulated French doors in four separate locations, per application & materials received 03/12/2025 & 07/04/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=0M4HCH#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Werling present on behalf of the application. Mr. Werling noted that the openings were chosen for modification in anticipation of future interior renovations and to provide both emergency egress and general ease of moving through the opening compared to traditional French doors. Mr. Fifield asked to confirm that there was no existing millwork in these openings. Mr. Werling confirmed there was no existing millwork. Discussion shifted to door opening 68, shown as a second fused door for the ground floor space. Mr. Fifield asked if this was or would be a sprinklered building. Mr. Werling responded that at present it was not, and he was not sure if it would be as the final use of the property had not been determined.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron questioned whether there were existing frames in these openings. Mr. Werling commented that anything that was there was not solid.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to adopt the staff report and staff recommendation of conceptual approval with all details to be finalized at the staff level. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

1015 Burgundy St: 25-09754-VCGEN; Marvin L Weaver Drywall, Inc., applicant; Alan M Claghorn, Colleen Calhoun Fuller, Walter Blake Costello, Bryan J Watson, Nancy G Moragas, Colleen C Fuller, owner; Proposal to install Aeratis decking and modify stringers on front gallery, per application & materials received 06/30/2025 & 07/02/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=N6E6XB>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. and Ms. Fuller present on behalf of the application. Following the report, Ms. Vogt added that staff had significant concerns that the rot and rust seen in photos of the gallery was accelerated due to frequent watering of plants. Mr. Fuller stated that they would be replacing all of the wood, and that it had had been plywood with a waterproofing coating and a metal edge. Ms. Vogt asked why the stringers would not be installed at 16" o.c. if the intent was to replace all of the wood; Mr. Fuller responded that they would. Mr. Bergeron asked if there were still plants on the gallery being watered every day; Mr. Fuller responded yes. Mr. Bergeron stated that he agreed with staff that the decking needed to be replaced, but that this proposal did not meet the standards for synthetic decking approval. Ms. Bourgogne voiced concern that removing the wood would reveal significant problems with the ironwork, due to the extensive rust.

Mr. Fifield stated that the information presented did not provide an obvious reason to approve the proposal in spite of the Guidelines, but that it could be appealed to the Commission as a hardship. He added that he did not see an architectural reason for the Architecture Committee to make an exception; Ms. Steward agreed. Mr. Fifield added that the applicants could present additional information to the Commission for their consideration.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **deny** the proposal to install Aeratis decking, consistent with the staff recommendation. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

518 Governor Nicholls St: 25-13021-VCGEN; Brennan Fournerat, applicant; 801 Patterson Owner LLC, owner; Proposal to remove existing water feature and to install new inground swimming pool, per application & materials received 05/08/2025 & 06/23/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=XP57T6#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Fournerat present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield noted the main question was in regards to screening the equipment and asked if there was a plan for screening. Mr. Fournerat responded that he could very easily install whatever was recommended for screening. Ms. Bourgogne suggested that a site plan may be needed that shows both the pool equipment and the HVAC equipment. Mr. Bergeron agreed that coordination of all equipment in the courtyard may be needed.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to adopt the staff recommendation for the conceptual approval of the pool with

all details to be handled at staff with applicant to submit a full site plan showing all equipment in this courtyard and any necessary screening. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

320 Decatur St: 25-16623-VCGEN; Duvernay Leo, applicant; The New Hotel Monteleone Inc, The New Hotel Monteleone Inc, owner; Proposal to replace and reinforce structural elements on gallery, per application & materials received 06/02/2025.

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

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Messrs. Abry and Flattmann present on behalf of the application. Ms. Vogt asked the Committee if the horizontal bars in the vertical cast iron panels should be painted to match the wall to minimize visibility; they agreed. Mr. Abry stated that they needed to add rigidity and the new bars would blend in. Mr. Fifield noted that this part of the building was orange rated and more structural reinforcement could be added if necessary.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval** of the proposal with all details and revisions to be handled at staff level. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1218 Burgundy St: 25-18002-VCPNT; John Reed, applicant; John W Reed, owner; Proposal to install National Register plaque, per application & materials received 06/12/2025.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=2JJOR4>

Prior to the meeting the applicant requested a deferral. Ms. Steward moved for deferral per the applicant's request. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

235 Chartres St: 25-16932-VCGEN; Kirk Fabacher, applicant; Latas Family Investments LLC, owner; Proposal to install mechanical equipment, platform, and hood vent in conjunction with **change of use** from *retail* to *restaurant*, per application & materials received 06/30/2025.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=X73J2Z>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Rupley present on behalf of the application. Mr. Rupley stated that unpermitted interior work was outside the VCC's jurisdiction. He added that the survey was forthcoming, and they would be requesting an easement with 608 Bienville if necessary, which he stated would be mutually beneficial. He added that the area was minimally visible from the neighboring courtyard and that going through the Brown rated roof was less obtrusive. Ms. Bourgogne added that she had instructed the applicant to provide a survey and seek an easement, and that she agreed that exterior installation was best in this case given the existing conditions. Mr. Fifield stated that interior work being completed without a permit was absolutely relevant in this case. Mr. Rupley stated that they wanted to proceed to Commission without delay since the VCC did not seem to be requesting additional information. Ms. Vogt stated that the staff report listed a significant amount of information still needed for review that had not yet been provided, including specs for the mechanical equipment and documentation for the additions and platform built without permit. Mr. Block added that DSP would be interested in reviewing this information as well.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the application to allow the applicant time to provide the additional information and materials requested in the staff report. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

525 Governor Nicholls St: 25-18910-VCPNT; E Tefel Alejandro, applicant; Guy Dennis Nabors, Welsh Properties Gov Nicholls LLC, Frank R Burnside, David P Falcon, Albert A Palumbo, Peter F Weller, Charles W Hilton, Hilton Charles Winston, Andry John Cletus III, owner;

Proposal to install Aeratis synthetic decking at the second-floor gallery and third-floor balcony, per application & materials received 06/22/2025.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=1KE2CE#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Tefel present on behalf of the application. Mr. Tefel stated that the

only question was whether to center the third-floor purlin or leave it in its existing location. Ms. Steward stated that relocating the purlin was appropriate. Mr. Bergeron agreed.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion to conceptually approve the application with all details to be worked out at the staff level and for the center purlin on the 3rd floor to be centered. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

1017 Orleans Ave: 25-10463-VCGEN; Gunzburg William, applicant; Abdul-Hadi Nazha Allah, owner; Proposal to install pool in rear courtyard, per application & materials received 04/23/2025 & 06/16/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=8YVG5C>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Abdul-Hadi and Mr. Gunzberg present on behalf of the application. Mr. Gunzberg stated that there would be no gas installed. Mr. Fifield stated that the proximity to the rear structure was a significant concern. Mr. Gunzberg asked if the pool could shift; Ms. Steward noted the proximity to the dependency stairs. Mr. Fifield stated that the pool should be narrower so it was at least 3' from all buildings. Ms. Abdul-Hadi stated that they would reduce the size. Mr. Gunzberg added that they would be digging the pool by hand so they could avoid the foundation. Ms. Steward agreed with staff regarding the curve; Ms Abdul-Hadi stated they were open to any suggestions.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the pool application, with the applicant to work with staff. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1017 Orleans Ave: 25-18827-VCGEN; Abdul-Hadi Nazha, applicant; Abdul-Hadi Nazha Allah, owner; Appeal to retain PVC plumbing installed on exterior of property without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 06/20/2025.

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Abdul-Hadi present on behalf of the application. She stated that she had had the VCC inspect the property before her purchase and that she had known this would have to be addressed at some point. She noted that it was quoted at over \$30,000 dollars due to interior demo that would be necessary. She added that she was willing to correct the millwork violations that had also been cited by VCC staff. Ms. Vogt added that she had been working with the applicant on a proposal.

Mr. Bergeron noted that this was against Guidelines but could be appealed to the Commission based on hardship. Ms. Steward stated that she appreciated the applicant working with staff had having an inspection prior to purchase, noting that all potential buyers should do the same.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **deny** the appeal, suggesting that the applicant appeal to the Commission based on hardship. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

622 Pirate's Aly: 23-34899-VCGEN; Loretta Harmon, applicant; Rumberos LLC, owner; Proposal to rebuild unpermitted rooftop deck, per application & materials received 12/21/2023 & 09/24/2024, respectively. **[Notices of Violation sent 12/05/2011, 03/05/2014, 01/16/2015, 08/24/2017, 06/27/2019 & 11/9/2021]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=5LZ40Z>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Harmon, Mr. Jones and Mr. & Mrs. Lawlor present on behalf of the application. Ms. Lawlor stated that her in-laws had bought the property in 2009 and they had inherited it in 2023, at which point they had started the process to correct the violations and were leading the condo association to do so for the whole property. Mr. Fifield asked if this was allowable use per the City; Ms. Vogt responded that she was unsure. Mr. Jones stated that it had been condos since the '90s. Mr. Fifield noted that if the State Fire Marshall had approved the stair as a means of egress, that would be a boon to determine its status as legitimate. Ms. Harmon stated that they would have to go to the SFM for approval and might need a variance. Ms. Steward noted that the stair was clearly needed for life safety. Mr. Fifield asked if the owners would agree to remove the

cantilever, since that changed the nature from a code required landing to a recreational roof deck. Ms. Lawlor stated that that was why they were proposing to reduce it, and that they had taken down the collapsing part. She emphasized that the priority was the building, but that yes, they wanted the additional exterior space. She added that they did not expect to keep it as-is but hoped there could be a compromise.

Mr. Fifield stated that, looking at the section, the way the deck had been built had prevented maintenance of the roof, so that was a concern. Mr. Block stated that roof decks were precluded on this type of roof for that exact reason, but that there was evidence this particular deck had been there for some time. Ms. Vogt explained the history of VCC observation and citation of the roof deck. Mr. Fifield asked if it was listed in the condo documents; Ms. Harmon stated yes. Ms. Lawlor added that the condo association was established in 1990. Mr. Block stated that none of this was an issue for decision with the Committee and that their purview was limited to architecture, egress, life safety, etc.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron stated that this stair was a fire escape that should be designed as a fire escape. Ms. Vogt stated that the staff recommendation was for the landing to align with the wall below, while the applicant was proposing another 4'-0" cantilever beyond that. Mr. Bergeron noted that the staff and Committee are bound by the Guidelines and that extenuating circumstances should be discussed at the full Commission. He stated that he felt the recommendation forwarded to the Commission should be only for a fire escape, with the landing aligned with the wall below.

Mr. Bergeron moved to forward the appeal to the full Commission with a **negative recommendation** for rebuilding the roof deck as proposed, noting that the Guidelines prohibit a roof deck under these circumstances but acknowledging that the commission could consider hardship. Ms. Steward seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Fifield encouraged the applicant to develop a hardship application for Commission review.

733 Toulouse St: 24-18798-VCGEN; Karen Bordes, applicant; Bourbon 2Louse LLC, owner; Appeal to retain work without permit, including millwork, metal cap flashing and HVAC equipment, and proposal to modify millwork, fence, and hardware, per application & materials received 06/18/2024 & 06/27/2025, respectively. **[Notices of Violation sent 12/26/2018 & 08/19/2019]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=C481DW>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Bettencourt present on behalf of the application. Mr. Bettencourt stated that he needed clarification on what he was allowed to do; Ms. Vogt responded that much of the work could be handled at staff level. Mr. Fifield asked what his position was on the metal cap; Mr. Bettencourt stated that it was all together, caulked, not rusting, in good shape, and was not letting water in. Ms. Steward voiced her concern that it was a bad job and had been poorly executed. Mr. Fifield stated that the appeals to retain were extensive and that the application needed to include some corrections staff found approvable. He stated that it was the applicant's responsibility to propose corrections and solutions and instructed Mr. Bettencourt to work with staff.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron moved for deferral to allow the applicant time to work with staff and return to the Committee with a revised proposal. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

823 Saint Peter St: 25-16591-VCGEN; Matthew Savage, applicant; McAllister Alexander, owner;

Proposal to retain alley gate and gas lights installed without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application & materials received 06/01/2025 & 06/22/2025, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/PrmtView.aspx?ref=JNZWH3#>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Savage and Mr. Norman present on behalf of the application. Mr. Fifield brought attention to slide 295 of the proposal. Mr. Albrecht clarified that those fixtures were not part of the proposal under review today. Mr. Norman stated they did not install the items under review but that they were originally hired for painting only and the owner provided a list of violations and asked them to address

them. Mr. Norman stated that the owner was agreeable to correcting the violations.

There was no public comment.

Noting that the applicant was amenable to the staff report, Mr. Bergeron made the motion to adopt the staff recommendations. Ms. Steward seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

At approximately 2:55 PM Ms. Steward moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.