

Notice of Public Meeting
Tuesday, February 23, 2021
1:00 PM, WebEx Conference Call
(504) 658-7001, Access Code: 992 806 113

NOTE: The below minutes are in draft form and are a summary of actions taken. They are not a verbatim transcription of the meeting.

Minutes of the VCC Architectural Committee meeting of Tuesday, February 23 2021 – 1:00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Rick Fifield, Toni DiMaggio, Stephen Bergeron

Staff Present: Bryan Block, Director; Renée Bourgogne, Senior Architectural Historian; Nick Albrecht, Senior Building Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Senior Plans Examiner
Marguerite Roberts, Inspector; Tony Whitfield, Inspector

Others Present: John Williams, Dixon Jelich, Corbett Scott, Nicholas Musso, Steve Finegan,

AGENDA

Prior to the start of the meeting, Dr. Bourgogne explained the process for a web conference as follows: after the presentation of the staff reports and a period for questions from the Committee members to the applicant and staff, the Committee would take a 30-minute recess to allow for the submittal of public comments via email at VCC@nola.gov. The comments would then be read to the Committee members prior to any motion or vote for each item. There would be a cap on the length of the comments to what could be read within two minutes, and the emails received have been saved as part of the public record.

Dr. Bourgogne informed the public that changes to the submittal deadline had been announced at the February 18th, 2021 Commission meeting, extending the deadline for Old Business to two weeks. She encouraged everyone to visit the VCC website for additional information.

At approximately 1:00 pm Mr. Fifield called the teleconference to order. Dr. Bourgogne called roll and all three Committee members were present, constituting a quorum.

Minutes

Old Business

617 St Ann St: 21-04698-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Valentino Investments LLC, owner;

Proposal to install new drop awnings per application & materials received 07/06/18 & 02/02/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=846423>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Williams present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that they simply wished to renew the previously approved work. Mr. Fifield asked if there would be any signage on the new proposed awnings. Mr. Williams stated no, not at this time. Ms. DiMaggio stated that the 2018 ruling of conceptual approval was based on the awnings have the capability of rolling up. She asked the applicant if these new awnings would roll up of if they would be fixed. Mr. Williams stated that they would be fixed but that they would be happy to work with staff. Mr. Fifield stated that the only signage under the gallery would be obscured by the new awnings. He asked if a change in signage would follow. Mr. Williams stated no not to his knowledge. Mr. Fifield asked if the awning at 625 would return perpendicular to the street. Mr. Williams stated yes. Mr. Fifield asked if the riverside would match. Mr. Williams stated yes. Mr. Fifield stated that the 2 awnings would align, and that B was quite large. He asked the Committee members for their thoughts. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she believed this was to give a cohesive feel. She went on to state that sheet 10 showed a scalloped edge. She asked the applicant how this would work. Mr. Fifield stated that he was more concerned with the obscured sidewalk views. Mr. Fifield asked Mr. Bergeron if he was concerned about sidewalk views. Mr. Bergeron state

that the front elevation was odd to begin with. Mr. Fifield asked the applicant if the Committee was to approve option A as fixed would the applicant be ok with installing the same at 625. Mr. Williams stated that this would be a problem. Mr. Fifield asked if the applicant would be ok with no return awning. Mr. Williams stated that that could be ok. Mr. Bergeron suggested eliminating A and only installing B but to have it align with the deck. Mr. Williams stated that this was approved in 2018 and the owner just wanted it reapproved. He went on to say that they wanted a unifying element. Mr. Block stated that there could be no brandings colors, that the fabric must be approved and that this could not be a chance for excess signage. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

625 St Ann St: 20-31029-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Valentino Investments LLC, owner;

Proposal to install new drop awnings per application & materials received 07/06/18 & 02/02/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=846423>

The discussion of the 625 St. Ann awnings was included in the discussion of 617 St. Ann.

[Mr. Block arrived during the discussion of 617 and 625 St. Ann]

937 Dumaine St: 20-50455-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 937 Dumaine Street LLC, owner; Proposal to address demolition by neglect and perform structural repairs, per application & materials received 12/29/2020 02/17/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=868679>

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Messrs. Jelich and Williams present on behalf of the Committee. Mr. Jelich stated that they simplified the structural proposal since they were hoping to start work soon, removing the helical ties. Mr. Williams stated that the building was in poor condition and they would continue to work with staff on other elements. Mr. Fifield stated that removing the more invasive repairs from the proposal fell more in line with VCC expectations for traditional repairs. With no further discussion needed, Mr. Fifield moved to the next item on the agenda.

729 Governor Nicholls: 21-00429-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Thomas N Reagan, owner;

Proposal to modify design of courtyard masonry wall and review of conceptually approved sliding gate details, per application & materials received 01/05/2021 & 01/15/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=869255>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Bardwell and Mr. Williams present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that they appreciated the consideration of the wall and that the owner wanted a more ornate gate. He went on to say that it would not be seen from the street and that they would keep and repair the existing gate at the street. Mr. Williams stated that the proposed new gate would be about 120' back and that they would be happy to present other options or work with staff. Mr. Fifield stated that none of the drawings showed the actual location. Mr. Williams stated that the proposed gate would be on the far left and would slide over the brick wall when it was opened. Ms. DiMaggio stated that her concerns aligned with the staff report and that a less ornate gate seemed more appropriate. Mr. Bergeron agreed. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

632 Esplanade Ave: 20-43915-VCGEN; Leze John, applicant; Angela C Johnson, owner;

Proposal to replace existing front marble steps and tile landing with new brick steps and landing, per application & materials received 10/16/2020 & 02/11/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=862177>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Johnson and Mr. Leze present on behalf of the application. Ms. Johnson stated that she was hoping to use bricks for financial reasons. Mr. Fifield stated that the marble stairs were part of the historic fabric. He then asked the owner and applicant if they still had the stairs. Mr. Leze stated that they had pieces, but that the stairs had completely cracked. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any comments or concerns. Mr. Bergeron stated that he would like to see the condition of the stairs before he entertained the idea of full-scale replacement or replacement in kind. Ms. DiMaggio agreed with Mr. Bergeron and then stated that the marble stair was a more polished look, but she did understand financial constraints. She

went on to question if perhaps this application should go to the full Committee. Mr. Fifield stated that the building was 150 years plus old and had been through many different economic times. He went on to state that it was their duty to maintain the historic integrity of the French Quarter. He then asked the applicant if they could work with staff. Mr. Leze stated that he could meet with staff to inspect the stairs but that he did not believe the Committee would approve them in their current condition. Mr. Fifield stated that he viewed marble steps like a slate roof, damage could be fixed. He went on to advise the applicant to request a deferral in order to allow time for an inspection. Ms. DiMaggio also advised the applicant that they could appeal to the Commission on the basis of hardship. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

327 Bourbon St: 20-46277-VCGEN; Jon Andersen, applicant; 327 Bourbon Street LLC, owner;

Proposal to stabilize failing cornice by reattaching or temporarily removing, per application & materials received 11/11/2020 & 02/10/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=864501>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Gates and Mr. Ward present on behalf of the application. Ms. DiMaggio asked if staff could clarify who the second person, they were in contact with was. She wanted to know if she should recuse herself. To avoid conflict, Ms. DiMaggio recused herself.

Mr. Fifield commended staff on getting the photos presented, specifically 99-102. Ms. Gates stated that one of the problems they had been dealing with here was the two different owners. She clarified that she and Mr. Ward were there for the Karno family. Mr. Fifield stated that this was a different scope of work. He then asked Mr. Bergeron if he had any comments. Mr. Bergeron stated that he felt this new procedure was the "best" approach. Mr. Fifield responded "EXACTLY!" He went on to say that this approach was more in line with a conservation effort with no damage to the historic fabric. He then asked the applicant for a timeframe. Mr. Ward stated that they wanted to start immediately. Mr. Fifield asked Mr. Bergeron if there was anything else. Mr. Bergeron asked staff if while up on the roof they were able to observe how the drainage was currently working and if there were any issues. He referred to slide 105. Mr. Fifield asked Mr. Ward if he knew. Mr. Ward stated that he believed the downspout was gone and the it was not leaking down the front of the building. Mr. Fifield asked if the missing downspout was supposed to drain the roof or the cornice. Mr. Ward stated that it was supposed to drain the cornice. Mr. Fifield asked if he could restore the downspout. Mr. Ward stated yes. Mr. Fifield asked Mr. Ward if he would be working with a sheet metal craftsman. Mr. Ward stated yes. Mr. Fifield asked if Mr. Ward had installed temporary wires. Mr. Ward stated yes. Mr. Fifield and Mr. Bergeron thanked Mr. Ward. With nothing left to discuss the Committee went to recess. It was approximately 2:08 PM.

510-512 Ursulines Ave: 20-50030-VCGEN; Pete Santacruz, applicant; B Jessup Living Trust Julia, owner;

Proposal to add new half round gutter and spitters to existing gallery roof, per application & materials received 12/22/2020 & 02/19/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=868450>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Santacruz present on behalf of the application. Mr. Santacruz stated that they had changed the proposal per the Committee's instructions. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any comments or concerns. Mr. Bergeron stated that his only concern was the fascia obscuring the ironwork. He went on to say that if the fascia was found the same way in other places he would be ok with it. Mr. Fifield asked staff if this was the case. Mr. Albrecht stated that the side fascia was short and that there was a gap between the cast iron element and the gallery. Mr. Fifield asked Mr. Albrecht if the fascia would fit into the gap. Mr. Albrecht stated yes. Mr. Bergeron asked Mr. Santacruz how the fascia would attach. Mr. Santacruz stated that it would only attached to the gutter as there was no soffit on this gallery. Mr. Fifield stated that he was ok with the proposal as long as Mr. Santacruz clarified with staff as he proceeded with work. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

New Business

1229 Burgundy St: 21-03098-VCGEN; Corbett Scott, applicant; Matthew Taylor, owner; Proposal to replace second floor and dormer windows, per application & materials received 02/02/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=871953>

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Mr. Scott present on behalf of the application. Mr. Scott stated that he would be happy to include shutters. He added that the HVAC would be replaced with a traditional proposal that

would be submitted for review. Mr. Fifield asked if he had considered installing casement windows; Mr. Scott stated that no other casement windows were present on the property, and he thought double-hung windows would be considered more appropriate. Mr. Bergeron stated that he had no issues with the dormer work but was wondering about the original size of the gable window openings. Mr. Fifield agreed, particularly if the head height could be maintained. Ms. DiMaggio also agreed, if casement windows were possible, but added that double-hung windows should be six-over-six. Mr. Scott stated that he did not object to installing new casement windows. Mr. Bergeron stated that he did not believe the International Existing Building Code required a larger opening, and recommended Mr. Scott check the egress requirements. With no further discussion needed, Mr. Fifield moved to the next item on the agenda.

Appeals and Violations

211 Decatur St: 21-02957-VCGEN; Bourn Sharon, applicant; 211 Dec Atur LLC, owner; Proposal to address ongoing violations, including demolition by neglect, lighting, and existing ATM, per application & materials received 02/01/2021. [Notices of Violation sent 01/16/2018 & 09/18/2019]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=871810>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report. There was no one present on behalf of the application. Mr. Block stated that the applicant had informed him prior to the meeting that he might be late. Mr. Fifield asked if the Committee should hold discussion until after the recess, so the applicant would have an opportunity to participate. Ms. DiMaggio and Mr. Bergeron agreed.

821 Governor Nicholls St: 21-03455-VCGEN; Scott Wolfe, applicant; 821 Gov Nicholls LLC, owner; Appeal to retain string lights installed in courtyard and proposal to replace concrete walkway in alley, per application & materials received 02/05/2021. [Notices of Violation sent 04/28/2017, 07/16/2019, 03/11/2020 & 11/18/2020]

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Finegan present on behalf of the application. Mr. Finegan stated that all the work was previous to his client's purchase of the property, with the exception of the alley paving. He added that the staff report was accurate. Ms. Vogt asked the applicant if there were currently any lighting on the rear porch. Mr. Finegan stated that he did not believe there was. Ms. Vogt instructed him to check beneath the soffit vents as lights were often located there, adding that installing lights in the soffit would ensure adequate, appropriate light in the courtyard that could be easily approved at staff level.

Ms. DiMaggio asked if there was sufficient width in the alley to install a trench drain, stating drainage could be decided at staff level. Mr. Fifield stated that it looked "well-watered" under the house. Mr. Finegan stated it was wide enough and that they had discussed other materials for the alley walkway, including permeable brick, which Mr. Fifield encouraged. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved to recess.

With nothing left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron made the motion for a 30-minute recess for public comment. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Committee agreed to reconvene at 2:38 PM.

At approximately 2:38 PM Mr. Block called the roll. All were present. Mr. Fifield reconvened the meeting.

Old Business

617 St Ann St: 21-04698-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Valentino Investments LLC, owner;

Proposal to install new drop awnings per application & materials received 07/06/18 & 02/02/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=846423>

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion: Mr. Bergeron asked the Committee and the applicant if they felt strongly about the solutions the Committee came up with. Mr. Fifield stated that the return was his only problem. Mr. Williams state that they could omit the return and that they could make the awning operable. Mr. Bergeron moved for the conceptual approval of the new awnings with the proviso that the awnings roll up, no return awnings and no additional signage or logos. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

625 St Ann St: 20-31029-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Valentino Investments LLC, owner; Proposal to install new drop awnings per application & materials received 07/06/18 & 02/02/2021, respectively.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=846423>

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion: The discussion and motion of the 625 St. Ann awnings was included in the discussion and motion of 617 St. Ann.

937 Dumaine St: 20-50455-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 937 Dumaine Street LLC, owner; Proposal to address demolition by neglect and perform structural repairs, per application & materials received 12/29/2020 02/17/2021, respectively.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=868679>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski

While are thankful that this long-neglected building is getting some much-needed repair we are ask that the committee require the architects of records be on site while structural repair is undertaken and that staff assess ahead of time whether shoring is needed. This firm has had previous illegal demolitions which were blamed on structural issues after the fact. The loss of historic fabric is a serious issue and can and should be avoided going forward. A property owner hires an architect to manage a project and not overseeing structural work borders or checking in regularly borders on dereliction of duty.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron asked the staff if there were any requirements for supervising work; Ms. Vogt stated that it was the architect's responsibility to oversee construction and to contact staff if the scope of work changed due to conditions in the field. She added that this could be included in the Committee's motion if they felt it was necessary. Mr. Williams agreed that overseeing construction would be his responsibility, noting his experience working in the Quarter. He added that they would be very careful undertaking the work. Mr. Fifield noted that it was not staff's responsibility to supervise all structural work in the District.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **approve** the structural repairs, as proposed. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

729 Governor Nicholls: 21-00429-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; Thomas N Reagan, owner; Proposal to modify design of courtyard masonry wall and review of conceptually approved sliding gate details, per application & materials received 01/05/2021 & 01/15/2021, respectively.
<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=869255>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski

We agree with the staff report and ask that the committee deny this overly decorative design. A simple wood gate is much more appropriate on the interior of a property. This very decorative statement gate is much more appropriate at a street entrance of a grand mansion which this property is not. Further the sheet metal backing is explicitly not allowed in design guidelines and other property owners are regularly denied the option. Additionally the masonry fence exceeds the height allowed by the CZO and should require a variance. The Design guidelines and CZO are supposed to level the playing field not be manipulated to suit individual tastes.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Williams stated that the owner would be happy to do a wood fence. Mr. Block clarified that the VCC would not approve anything not approved by the BZA or allowed by the CZO. Mr. Williams stated that the fence at the street was vertical so they thought they would simply repeat this in the rear. He went on to say that they would come up with a design and get it to staff. Mr. Bergeron asked if the Committee would need to review all gate details. Mr. Block stated that the gate would be reviewed by the Committee with the details at staff. Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the approval of the wall with details to be worked out at the staff level and the denial of the decorative gate and the return to the wood gate previously approved. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

632 Esplanade Ave: 20-43915-VCGEN; Leze John, applicant; Angela C Johnson, owner;

Proposal to replace existing front marble steps and tile landing with new brick steps and landing, per application & materials received 10/16/2020 & 02/11/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=862177>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski

We encourage the applicant to reconsider their proposal to replace the marble steps. We in New Orleans are fortunate to have a number of sources for replacement materials like stone. Perhaps even repairing the present steps is an option. As for the ceramic tile flooring we wonder if perhaps there is a trace of a previous mosaic or tile material to inform their replacement decision. There are other buildings of this style, one at 1309 Dauphine, whose historical records may be a useful guide.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for the deferral of the application in order to allow the applicant time to incorporate the original stairs or replace in kind. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

327 Bourbon St: 20-46277-VCGEN; Jon Andersen, applicant; 327 Bourbon Street LLC, owner;

Proposal to stabilize failing cornice by reattaching or temporarily removing, per application & materials received 11/11/2020 & 02/10/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=864501>

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion: Ms. DiMaggio recused herself prior to the motion.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for the conceptual approval of the application with the proviso that the cornice be installed in a timely manner with waterproofing to be taken into consideration and that the cornice be stored on site. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

510-512 Ursulines Ave: 20-50030-VCGEN; Pete Santacruz, applicant; B Jessup Living Trust Julia, owner;

Proposal to add new half round gutter and spitters to existing gallery roof, per application & materials received 12/22/2020 & 02/19/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=868450>

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio mad the motion for approval with the details to be worked out at the staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1229 Burgundy St: 21-03098-VCGEN; Corbett Scott, applicant; Matthew Taylor, owner; Proposal to replace second floor and dormer windows, per application & materials received 02/02/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=871953>

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **conceptual approval** of the dormer sashes, with final details to be worked out at staff level. She also moved to **deny** installation of larger, double-hung windows in the gables, with the existing windows to be replaced with new casements to fit the original opening size. She noted that the windows could be reviewed and approved at staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motions, which passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

211 Decatur St: 21-02957-VCGEN; Bourn Sharon, applicant; 211 Dec Atur LLC, owner; Proposal to address ongoing violations, including demolition by neglect, lighting, and existing ATM, per application & materials received 02/01/2021. [Notices of Violation sent 01/16/2018 & 09/18/2019]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=871810>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski

Please defer this application and require the many violations to be addressed. Lighting and signage have long been issues at this address.

[Note: this comment was received after the public comment period ended and was not read into the record at the hearing]

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Fifield noted that the Committee had not discussed the proposal and asked if the applicant was present. No one addressed the Committee, but Ms. Vogt noted that it appeared his line was connected to the teleconference and he was not muted by staff. Hearing no response from the applicant, Ms. DiMaggio stated that she did have questions and was willing to defer to another hearing. Mr. Fifield stated for the applicant's benefit that, in his opinion, the recommendations in the property report were likely to be upheld, particularly the appeal regarding the glazed brick. He encouraged the applicant to consider revisions to save time at future meetings.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the application to allow the applicant to be present and encouraged revisions in keeping with the property report, as presented. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

821 Governor Nicholls St: 21-03455-VCGEN; Scott Wolfe, applicant; 821 Gov Nicholls LLC, owner; Appeal to retain string lights installed in courtyard and proposal to replace concrete walkway in alley, per application & materials received 02/05/2021. [Notices of Violation sent 04/28/2017, 07/16/2019, 03/11/2020 & 11/18/2020]

There was no Public Comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron noted that the applicant was willing to work with staff and was considering alternative options, and stated that he felt comfortable leaving final decisions open if they met the Design Guidelines. Mr. Fifield agreed that they could be decided at staff level.

Mr. Bergeron moved to **deny** the light fixtures and **conceptually approve** replacement of the stamped concrete, with the applicant to submit a revised lighting plan and final paving and drainage details for review and approval at staff level. Mr. Fifield requested an amendment to the motion to include denial of the associated electrical conduits, which Mr. Bergeron accepted. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

With no items left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 3:09pm. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Bourgogne addressed the applicants and members of the public, reminding everyone to consult the website regarding changes to the submittal deadline for Committee and Commission review, which were announced at the beginning of the meeting.