

VIEUX CARRE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

LaToya Cantrell
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

Notice of Public Meeting
Tuesday, March 23, 2021
1:00 PM, WebEx Conference Call
(504) 658-7001, Access Code: 996 566 889

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, March 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: Giuseppe DiPasquale, Myles Martin, Sharon Bourn, Calla Bardwell, Elizabeth Mire, John Williams, Neil Anderson, Robert Bell, Nikki Szalwinski, Bill Reeves, Nick Musso, Erin Holmes

AGENDA

Prior to the start of the meeting, Mr. Block 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.

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

Minutes

Old Business

1310 N Rampart St: 20-46919-VCGEN; Giuseppe Dipasquale, applicant; Esplanade Nola LLC, owner; Proposal to replace roof and install new mechanical platform and equipment, per application & materials received 11/17/2020 & 03/16/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=865029>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Martin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Martin thanked the Committee for hearing their proposal, adding that their legal team found no indication that removal of the billboard would be required at any point. He agreed to the provisos recommended in the report. With no comments or questions, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

New Business

715-721 Chartres St (Saint Louis Cathedral): 21-05684-VCGEN; Saint Louis Cathedral, applicant; Project Lazarus Homes, owner;

Proposal to remove two existing electric light fixtures and to install two new hanging copper electric fixtures, per application & materials received 03/04/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=874676>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Gordy Hyde present on behalf of the application. The applicant stated that they had Bevolo making the fixtures and they recommended the size. He went on to say that the current

fixtures did not work, but that they wanted to keep and reuse the existing bracket. Mr. Fifield asked the applicant for clarification if the proposed bracket was correct. Mr. Hyde stated that the proposed bracket was a backup plan in case the existing bracket was rusted through. Ms. DiMaggio stated if the existing bracket were to remain, a smaller fixture would be more appropriate.

Mr. Fifield stated that the Committee needed to see elevations. Mr. Hyde stated that he did not think it would be a problem to produce elevations. Mr. Fifield went on to say that the Committee needed elevations to scale showing the fixture over the opening. Mr. Fifield stated that it would be helpful to know the size of the existing fixture. Ms. DiMaggio asked the Committee if they had any thoughts on the finish, black vs. copper? She went on to say that she thought the black would be better to match the bracket. The applicant stated that he would have to ask Bevolo if this would be possible. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

615 Toulouse St: 21-06765-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; 615 Toulouse Owner LLC, owner; Proposal to install new rear door and install mechanical equipment, in conjunction with renovation, per application & materials received 03/09/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=875672>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Ms. Mire present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that the planters would be altered and that they intended to paint the door to match the wall to minimize visibility, so it does not impact the adjacent historic courtyard. He added that it would serve purely as a fire exit, with all hardware on the inside. Regarding the mechanical equipment and roof, he stated that they would be replacing two units in kind and adding a mini-split for the green room. Mr. Fifield asked the Committee if they had any questions; they did not. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

813 Barracks St: 21-06790-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; Richard M Wilkinson, owner; Proposal to add new window to rear elevation, per application & materials received 03/09/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=875698>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Mr. Williams and Ms. Bardwell present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that the kitchen was located behind the blank wall as shown in photos and they would match the size and profiles of existing windows. He stated that the proposed window location was centered on an interior door but they did not object to revising the location as suggested by staff, so it is centered on the porch bay and the shutters fit. He also thought that there may have originally been a window in this location and, if interior framing indicates this, agreed to place the window in that spot. He stated that the owner had not yet closed on the house so interior demolition had not been performed.

Ms. DiMaggio and Mr. Fifield agreed with staff that the window should be centered on the porch bay. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

740 Dauphine St: 21-06778-VCGEN; Patrick Tucker, applicant; 740 Dauphine LLC, owner;

Conceptual review of proposed new roof over existing gallery, per application & materials received 03/09/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=875731>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Tucker present on behalf of the application. Mr. Tucker stated that they were here strictly for a preliminary review to see if the project was worth developing further. He went on to state that the owners wanted to do this so that the corner business could have a covered area for patrons. Ms. DiMaggio stated that if this had gone to Commission under previous guidelines, this probably would have been approved. Mr. Bergeron stated that the rafter tails would be obscured. He went on to say that the architectural changes to the building over time were quite sad. Mr. Fifield asked the applicant "we would be giving you permission to investigate?" Mr. Tucker states that he too was concerned about how to connect the proposed roof to the exterior rafter tails. He went on to say that they were 10' above the deck, so they would need to investigate how to attach the existing roof to the proposed roof. Mr. Fifield stated that the Committee need to make a defensible decision. He went on to say that the roof needed to have a good slope and that it should be a well-integrated addition. For clarification Mr. Fifield added that he did not want the rafter tails to generate an addition that was not well integrated. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

906 Toulouse St: 21-07180-VCGEN; Jessica Borne, applicant; Zoma LLC, owner;

Proposal to replace deteriorated decking of two interior facing balconies with new Aeratis synthetic decking and to make any needed repairs to underlying support structures, per application & materials received 03/12/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=877270>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Borne present on behalf of the application. Ms. Borne stated they were looking for longevity with regards to maintenance. Ms. DiMaggio thanked the applicant for providing the pictures of the purlins as this was very helpful. She went on to say that this could be easily reversible. Mr. Fifield stated that there would be a motion after the recess. With no other questions or comments, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

Appeals and Violations

939 Toulouse St: 21-00715-VCGEN; Jane Anderson, applicant; Catherine L Arnold, owner;

Proposal to renovate parking lot space including replacing existing gate, repairing existing brick paving and adding new permeable paving, new lighting, and new signage, per application & materials received 01/11/2021 & 03/15/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=869803>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Anderson present on behalf of the application. Mr. Anderson stated with regards to the gates that they did not have a problem with a supporting metal bracket. He went on to say that they likewise did not have a problem with installing cameras. Mr. Fifield asked if the gates would always be open. Mr. Anderson stated yes. Mr. Fifield again asked, "open all the time?" He then asked if the lot was a lease lot or could anyone park there. Mr. Anderson stated that anyone could park there. Mr. Fifield asked what hours the gates would be open. Mr. Anderson stated, "not sure." Mr. Fifield questioned the addition of the 26 small lights. He asked Mr. Anderson if there had been a lighting study. Mr. Anderson stated no. Mr. Fifield addressed the Committee and asked if the number of fixtures was excessive or adequate. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she found the lampposts in each corner to be awkward. Mr. Anderson stated that they were trying to address the concern over criminal activity in the corners. Mr. Fifield stated that the fixtures might cast light on to the adjacent property or street. Ms. DiMaggio stated that perhaps they should incorporate downlight only in the corners, which might reduce the number all together. Mr. Fifield stated that he was concerned with the fact that the gates would never be closed. He went on to say that the business plan seemed faulty. Mr. Anderson stated that the paving issue was a major concern, and they were ready to address that. Mr. Bergeron stated that he assumed, sine the kiosk was omitted, that the lot would have an attendant. Mr. Anderson asked if this was even under VCC purview. Mr. Fifield asked staff. Mr. Block stated yes, as it effects the tout ensemble. For clarification Mr. Fifield stated the items under review as follows: lighting, gates, 24-hour open gates, and business model. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

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 & 03/12/2021. **[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 with Mr. Musso present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso stated that he received no inquiry about product data but would provide it. He went on to say that they needed to replace about 75 bricks and that they did not need to be totally replaced since the bricks were largely in good condition except for delamination of the glazing. He added that he had not received emails or notes from the last meeting. Ms. Vogt stated that she had been emailing Ms. Bourn, as she was the applicant in the system. Mr. Musso stated that they hoped to proceed with addressing some of the violations right away. He went on to say that the coating was not an epoxy and that there was also a ceramic option, so he would submit specs for both brick coatings. He added that they were very similar in appearance, and that his client only had a year and a half left on the lease. He asked staff for information for the supplier of glazed bricks next door at House of Blues.

Mr. Fifield stated that the Committee did not need to comment on the staff approvable items and asked if the Committee if they had any questions or comments. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she was unsure if a phenolic coating would be approvable but that she would like to review spec sheets and consult with other agencies, adding that

they could review a mockup and consider a case study if it was only 50-100 bricks. Mr. Fifield stated that he was also interested as it would be a less destructive option that would leave historic fabric in place, but that he was concerned about the longevity of the product and other concerns noted in the staff report. Mr. Musso asked if they could proceed with the staff level items; Mr. Block responded that the VCC needed to see that all violations were being addressed and the masonry was the most existential. Mr. Fifield stated that there were a lot of failing bricks and that he was concerned about the cause, asking Mr. Musso to address why the bricks were failing. Mr. Block stated that the historic photos indicated that the brick face was not original. Ms. Vogt clarified that he was looking at the wrong building and 211 Decatur was constructed with glazed brick at the same time as 215-225 Decatur, noting that the glazed brick there failed around the same time and in the same manner. She added that she was also concerned with the violations at rear of the property, including broken windows, vegetation and water intrusion. Mr. Fifield agreed that the back must be addressed in the application. Mr. Musso stated that his biggest concern was that the bricks were isolated, not grouped, so he worried that every time they removed one, it would damage surrounding bricks. Mr. Fifield agreed with using an approach that would do the least harm, noting that the applicant and staff should consult with SHPO and NCPTT. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee moved on to the next item on the agenda.

325 Bourbon St: 21-05727-VCGEN; Bourn Sharon, applicant; Holdingsllc Quarter, owner;

Proposal to remove existing vitrine window and existing front doors and to install two new sets of French doors in the respective bays and to address VCC violations, per application & materials received 03/01/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=874672>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Bourn present on behalf of the application. Ms. Bourn stated that she did not have access to the earlier proposal. Ms. DiMaggio as if there was a chance for her to access it during the recess. Ms. Bourn state that she was loading the meeting documents. Mr. Albrecht stated that slide 194 showed the 1940s millwork that the 2002 proposal was based off of. Mr. Bergeron asked if this was something they would prefer. Mr. Fifield directed the question to the Committee. Ms. DiMaggio stated that is the goal was to unify the front elevation, having the center doors move back to the same plane would make sense. Mr. Bergeron agreed. With nothing left to discuss, the Committee went to a 30-minute recess.

With nothing left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron made the motion for a 30-minute recess for public comment. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the Committee agreed to reconvene at 2:50 PM.

At approximately 2:50 PM Mr. Block called the roll. All were present and Mr. Fifield reconvened the meeting.

Old Business

1310 N Rampart St: 20-46919-VCGEN; Giuseppe Dipasquale, applicant; Esplanade Nola LLC, owner; Proposal to replace roof and install new mechanical platform and equipment, per application & materials received 11/17/2020 & 03/16/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=865029>

Public Comment:

Sue Klein, French Quarter resident and Co-President of the North Rampart Main Street

There has been much controversy regarding the adaptive use changes of the property at 1031 N. Rampart. I was told and verified that the taxes on this property are unpaid, along with any fines or penalties. I would request that any property or property owner that has unpaid debt to the City of New Orleans should not be allowed to proceed with any changes to a property, unless that property owner pays all debts to the City at the public hearing or request for permits, whichever comes first. Please defer the hearing on this property until the current debt is paid. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Rene' Fransen, FASLA, Founder and Senior Designer Fransen Mills LLC.

It is admirable that the owner of 1036-40 Esplanade Avenue is attempting to mitigate the visual impact that this equipment would have on the roof of 103) Esplanade Avenue.

Why can this equipment be located on top of the canopy of 1040 Esplanade Avenue and not have to cross a property line?

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio asked if the Committee was allowed to take back taxes into consideration; Mr. Fifield stated that it was outside of VCC jurisdiction. Mr. Block stated that, while the Committee could not consider it, the City might require that they be paid before permits are issued. Mr. Bergeron noted that installing the equipment on the canopy roof at 1040 Esplanade would be a very obviously visible and unsightly location, which Mr. Fifield agreed with.

Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval** of the proposal with all details to be handled at the staff level and including all provisos noted in the staff analysis and recommendation. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

New Business

715-721 Chartres St (Saint Louis Cathedral): 21-05684-VCGEN; Saint Louis Cathedral, applicant; Project Lazarus Homes, owner;

Proposal to remove two existing electric light fixtures and to install two new hanging copper electric fixtures, per application & materials received 03/04/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=874676>

Public Comment:

No public Comment

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for deferral of the application to the next meeting in order for the applicant to provide elevations, size and color. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

615 Toulouse St: 21-06765-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; 615 Toulouse Owner LLC, owner; Proposal to install new rear door and install mechanical equipment, in conjunction with renovation, per application & materials received 03/09/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=875672>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski, FQ Citizens

We request that the committee require quieter HVAC units given that these units will be most used at night when residents in nearby building are sleeping. The rooftop location means these units are closest to upper floor residential space and are most likely to affect upper floors on surrounding buildings as far as noise and view. While we recognize the need for mechanical equipment its placement should be undertaken in a way that does not affect neighbors. Excessive noise makes residential viability of buildings difficult and in turns lead to their decay when maintenance is deferred.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron asked if they should be concerned about the sound output and if the dBA was compliant with the Design Guidelines. Ms. Vogt responded that the new equipment was replacing existing units and the Guidelines did not have any hard and fast rules, as HVAC needs and appropriateness vary depending on the location of the units, property use, etc. Ms. Bourgoigne added that the building was a music club/venue and the impact of mechanical equipment would be minimal. Mr. Fifield agreed.

Mr. Bergeron moved to conceptually approve the proposed work, with all additional materials to be submitted as requested by staff. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

813 Barracks St: 21-06790-VCGEN; C Williams John, applicant; Richard M Wilkinson, owner; Proposal to add new window to rear elevation, per application & materials received 03/09/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=875698>

No Public Comment**Discussion and Motion:**

Ms. DiMaggio moved to forward a **positive recommendation** to the full Commission with the new window to be

centered on the porch bay. Mr. Fifield requested an amendment that all details must match existing millwork, and Mr. Bergeron asked Ms. DiMaggio to include “if rough framing found during demo, locate new window in previously existing location.” Ms. DiMaggio agreed to both amendments. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

740 Dauphine St: 21-06778-VCGEN; Patrick Tucker, applicant; 740 Dauphine LLC, owner;

Conceptual review of proposed new roof over existing gallery, per application & materials received 03/09/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=875731>

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski, FQ Citizens

While we understand why and sympathize with the applicant wanting a covered gallery, we are concerned about further altering an already heavily modified building, particularly when the staff report indicates the gallery addition in the 80s was to differentiate between the new and old. We ask that the applicant instead consider a less permanent solution such as umbrellas or a removable awning rather than further building alterations that confuses its eras.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the application in order for the applicant to provide drawings and to address any violations as noted. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

906 Toulouse St: 21-07180-VCGEN; Jessica Borne, applicant; Zoma LLC, owner;

Proposal to replace deteriorated decking of two interior facing balconies with new Aeratis synthetic decking and to make any needed repairs to underlying support structures, per application & materials received 03/12/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=877270>

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron stated that he was not ok with the synthetic decking on the covered green rated portion. Mr. Fifield stated that they had approved this in the past. He went on to say that there are more alternatives out there now for future applications. Mr. Bergeron made the motion for the approval of the synthetic decking on the orange and green rated buildings but that the decking must be painted. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

939 Toulouse St: 21-00715-VCGEN; Jane Anderson, applicant; Catherine L Arnold, owner;

Proposal to renovate parking lot space including replacing existing gate, repairing existing brick paving and adding new permeable paving, new lighting, and new signage, per application & materials received 01/11/2021 & 03/15/2021, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=869803>

Public Comment:

Sue Klein

I'm delighted this parcel is getting a much needed facelift. This was a private neighborhood parking lot for years. Then it was approved as public parking. I don't know of any unattended public lots that are gated. We are having a problem with gate hoppers squatting in courtyards at night. To enhance public safety if there must be a gate, can it be an iron one as shown (page 5, 2nd pic) in the OneStop document ? A wooden gate provides more cover for anyone hiding on the inside.

Nikki Szalwinski

FQ Citizens

We ask that the committee consider the security, privacy and quality of life of neighboring residents in any approvals on this project. Open gates are an open invitation to crime, loitering and inappropriate acts. Besides open gates We are concerned about excessive light spilling over into neighboring lots and bringing a 7-11 effect to the block. While we recognize the difficulties with operating a public parking lot in this location it unfortunately comes with location. This iteration of the proposal unfortunately does not fit into the neighborhood and tout ensemble.

Robert Bell, neighbor

The VCC is absolutely correct in focusing on the usage of the gate (and in extension, the business model). Staff brought up in the meeting the need to preserve a "solid street front." It goes to reason, If the gate is open 24 hours a day, there will never be a "solid street front." If the gate is open during business hours, then there will hardly ever be a "solid street front" ...only late at night and in the wee hours of the morning. It seems that a reasonable "solid street front" can only be achieved if the gate remains closed except for the momentary opening and closing for the immediate passage of vehicles. That's the architectural concern. But the ramifications go much deeper and are far more dangerous. For the last four years the gate has been open and the drug and illicit sex acts that have been going on in that small lot have been off the charts. This isn't speculation about what will happen if the gates are open; pictures and documentation are readily available. An open gate has been inviting all sorts of crime, and if this gate is allowed to continue to be open this will not stop. Attractive lighting won't stop it—this happens in the light of day; cameras may record it but so what—the junkies who walk in and out freely will barely notice and not care. If you like, I have photos to submit.

Discussion and Motion: Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the gate and lighting and clarification on the gate operation. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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 & 03/12/2021. **[Notices of Violation sent 01/16/2018 & 09/18/2019]**

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

Public Comment:

Nikki Szalwinski FQ Citizens

We ask that the committee carefully consider any approvals at this address given the longstanding violations and issues that remain unaddressed. The tenant has long done as they wish rather than following the design guidelines and CZO.

Discussion and Motion:

Mr. Bergeron asked if the neon signage was still in place; Ms. Vogt responded that it had been set back further from the front windows and was no longer considered a violation. She added that the sign would need a separate application and the current scope was not sufficient to avoid adjudication since it did not include the rear of the building.

Mr. Bergeron moved to defer the masonry and directed the applicant to submit a separate application to address all staff level items as recommended by the Committee on 02/23. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

325 Bourbon St: 21-05727-VCGEN; Bourn Sharon, applicant; Holdingsllc Quarter, owner;

Proposal to remove existing vitrine window and existing front doors and to install two new sets of French doors in the respective bays and to address VCC violations, per application & materials received 03/01/2021.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=874672>

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Discussion and Motion:

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral of the application in order for the applicant to have the opportunity to work with staff. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

With no items left to discuss, Mr. Bergeron moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 3:26 pm. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.