

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 10, 2023 – 1:00 pm.

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

Staff Present: Bryan Block, Director; Renee Bourgoigne, Deputy Director; Nicholas Albrecht, Senior Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Senior Plans Examiner

Staff Absent: Marguerite Roberts, Inspector

Others Present: Jamie Saxon, John Williams, Morgan Conner, Liz Gallett, Ben Gauslin, Apryl Marrone, Steve Richards, Charlie Ward, Karen Glase Stein, Samantha Johnson, Hannah Hubbell, Erika Gates, Nikki Szalwinski, Brian Gille

AGENDA

Old Business

815 St Ann St: 21-21655-VCGEN; John C Williams, applicant; 815 St Ann Holdings LLC, Sandra L Sachs, Lisa P Sinderson, Sandra Sachs, owner;

Proposal to shore the St. Ann elevation of the main building, demolish the front masonry wall, construct new foundation, and reconstruct the St. Ann elevation, per application & materials received 07/27/2021 & 12/21/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=894862>

Mr. Albrecht read the report with Mr. Saxon, Mr. Williams and Ms. Conner present on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated that they would be happy to work with staff on the details. Mr. Fifield asked if staff had received an updated structural letter. Both Mr. Block and Mr. Albrecht stated no. Mr. Fifield stated that he would like an updated letter that stated why this situation was unique so as to avoid establishing precedent. Ms. Bourgoigne stated that she believed the last letter to be from 2021. Mr. Saxon agreed.

Ms. DiMaggio stated that her main item was detailed documentation of the façade and that she now felt that these drawings satisfied that requirement. Mr. Bergeron asked if the gallery was to remain in place during the rebuilding. Mr. Saxon stated yes that the gallery and roof would remain in place.

Mr. Bergeron stated that an elevation without the gallery could be helpful in order to see and document what it obscured by the gallery, noting that the gallery may extend behind the gallery roof. Mr. Block asked that the any motion please contain the wording for scheduled inspections and notification to staff if anything changed on site. Ms. DiMaggio asked if it would make sense to ask for a schedule for the demolition. Mr. Block replied that it would and with scheduled inspections of the progress.

Mr. Fifield asked what the plan was for replacing the bricks, noting that they featured a unique “shaved” condition. Mr. Williams stated they would use whole bricks. Mr. Block asked for clarification. Mr. Williams stated they would save and reuse the old bricks. Mr. Block stated that staff would make sure this was in the report and permit and staff could inspect any potential replacement bricks.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval with the application to be forwarded to the full Commission provided that the applicant provides:
a demo schedule and schedule regular inspections,

samples of mortar color and any bricks to be used for repairs,
a new updated structural letter (waiving the 2-week requirement for submittals.)

Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

616 Conti St: 22-31816-VCGEN; Terri Dreyer, applicant; Conti Street Holding LLC, owner; Proposal to perform structural repairs and reinforcement in conjunction with renovation, including millwork and roof replacement, per application & materials received 10/21/2022 & 12/20/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=949420>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Johnson and Ms. Hubbell present on behalf of the application. Ms. Johnson read the engineer's answer to the questions in the staff report, which stated that the ties would only be used for single wythe infill, most importantly around the chimney, and that there would be no grout injection. The engineer was not present and the report was provided to staff. Ms. DiMaggio stated that she really appreciated the structural engineer submitting the response for the record. Ms. Johnson stated that they were looking at this in phased process and part of the wall would require rebuilding on the interior as part of the second phase of work, but that they were trying to disrupt the party wall as little as possible. Ms. DiMaggio asked for a rough estimate as to how much of the wall needed ties. Ms. Johnson stated "less than 15%." Ms. DiMaggio stated "that makes a big difference to me." Mr. Fifield agreed and asked if the ties would be installed in the mortar beds and not the face of the bricks; Ms. Johnson replied yes.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio moved for **approval** in conjunction with the renovation, with details to be handled at the staff level. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

New Business

520 Burgundy St: 22-37831-VCGEN; Loretta Harmon, applicant; 488 Holdings LLC, owner;

Proposal to install new generator on roof of recently approved rear addition, per application & materials received 12/21/2022.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=957499>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Ms. Gallett present on behalf of the application. The applicant stated that they needed to do some research on the clearance. She went on to say that the attic hatch was fixed so she was unsure if that would still count as a door.

Public comment: Nikki Szalwinski stated that her only concern is the possible visibility and that the sound will also travel. She requested that a sound insulation section be added to the Guidelines.

Mr. Fifield stated that they would likely have to look at screening after the matter was finalized. Mr. Bergeron made the motion for conceptual approval with applicant to confirm all building code aspects in the staff report and to defer the chimney removal. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

925 St Louis St: 22-37968-VCGEN; Gauslin Benjamin, applicant; Benjamin L Gauslin, owner;

Install light fixture on street facade between door and window - "French Quarter" style by Bevolo Gas & Electric Lights: <https://bevolo.com/french-quarter/half-rodin-fq>

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Redirect.aspx?SearchString=22-37968-VCGEN>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Gauslin present on behalf of the application. Mr. Gauslin stated that he was ok with the report and working with staff. Mr. Fifield stated "so you agree?" Mr. Gauslin stated "yes."

There was no public comment.

Noting the applicant's comments, Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the denial of the application with the applicant to work with staff on the appropriate lighting. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Appeals and Violations

326-30 Chartres St: 22-12297-VCGEN; John Dauer, applicant; 326-30 Chartres St LLC, owner; Proposal to modify rooftop dormer, in conjunction with permitted renovation and violation abatement, per application & materials received 07/11/2022 & 12/13/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=923669>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Marrone and Mr. Ward present on behalf of the application. Mr. Ward stated that he understood the recommendation regarding the doors but that they requested a window since the room is used as a bedroom. He added that they would remove the hardie board from the proposal. Mr. Bergeron moved to **defer** the application to allow the applicant to work with staff on a proposal that will comply with the Design Guidelines. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

439-41 Royal St, 700 St. Louis: 22-20766-VCGEN; Gates Erika, applicant; The Tortorici Building LLC, owner; Proposal to install Simpson strong ties to address substantial masonry cracking, per application & materials received 07/12/2022 & 12/07/2022, respectively. **[Notices of Violation sent 10/12/2016, 01/16/2018, & 05/05/2022]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=934224>

Ms. Vogt read the report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated that the engineer had been unable to attend but that she would relay the report to him for a response. Ms. DiMaggio stated that the report and proposed work should be revised to address the entire scope of the masonry and cracking, not just the corner. Ms. Gates responded that the contractor had focused on the corner but that they would expand the scope. Mr. Fifield asked if the stucco would be removed before the ties were installed; Ms. Gates responded that the stucco was delaminating and they intended to remove it, or cut it in areas where needed, but would repoint the entire area. Mr. Fifield noted that the need for repointing appeared to be contributing to the current issues. Mr. Fifield asked for public comment.

Ms. Szalwinski spoke on behalf of French Quarter Citizens, offering general repointing advice and suggesting that the applicant speak with the Sewerage and Water Board or Department of Public Works, as she speculated that there could be an underground leak contributing to the issue.

Regarding the masonry, Ms. Vogt stated that whether or not grout injection was being proposed here was a crucial question. Mr. Fifield stated that a look at the foundation may be needed to evaluate the condition of the footing. He added that the underlying problem must be addressed, not just the visible result. Ms. Bourgogne noted that the issue at the corner seemed to get worse very quickly, suggesting there could be active movement.

Ms. DiMaggio moved to **defer** the proposal with the applicant to complete a comprehensive structural evaluation and propose a comprehensive approach to repairs. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Fifield added that staff could issue permits for exploratory demolition at staff level, if requested by the applicant.

601-07 Chartres St: 22-24525-VCGEN; Bob Ellis, applicant; Apasra Properties LLC, owner; Proposal to replace outrigger and repair balcony, per application & materials received 08/15/2022 & 12/28/2022, respectively.

[Notices of Violation sent 09/27/2021 and 04/28/2022]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=939036>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Gates present on behalf of the application. Ms. Gates stated that she found the proposal to be a good solution, adding that trucks hit the corner “frequently,” so they expected removing the connection at the rail would help. With no discussion needed, Mr. Bergeron moved for **conceptual approval**, with work to start within 30 days. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

601-07 Chartres St: 22-35074-VCGEN; Bob Ellis, applicant; Apasra Properties LLC, owner; Proposal to address demolition by neglect and work without permit violations, including relocation of rooftop hood vent, appeal to retain mechanical equipment, and structural work on the rear dependency, per application & materials received 11/20/2022 & 12/28/2022, respectively. **[Notices of Violation sent 07/06/2012, 11/18/2013, 05/16/2014, 10/02/2017, 11/09/2018, 06/11/2019, 08/09/2019, 09/06/2019, 12/15/2019, 12/14/2020, 06/30/2021, 09/27/2021, & 04/28/2022. STOP WORK ORDERS posted 08/09/2019 & 08/21/2019]**

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=954742>

The applicant requested deferral prior to the hearing.

1000-12 St Philip St, 941-43 Burgundy St: 22-37387-VCGEN; Brian Gille, applicant; Philip Stein, owner; Proposal to address work without permit and demolition by neglect violations, including appeal to retain millwork and light fixtures installed without benefit of VCC review and approval, per application & materials received 12/16/2022.

[Notices of Violation sent 11/13/12, 05/19/2014, & 10/08/2019. STOP WORK ORDER posted 10/08/2019]

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=957047>

Ms. Vogt read the staff report with Ms. Glaser Stein and Mr. Gille present on behalf of the application. Mr. Gille stated that they were willing to do the pipes, and if weight was an issue they would inform staff, they would handle vegetation, and remove the enclosure under the balcony. He added that they would remove the beam, lights and columns at the service ell stair. Ms. Vogt asked about the beam and column under the stair that was part of a previous application but not addressed in this proposal; Mr. Gille stated that he would look into it. He then listed the items they wished to retain, per the submitted materials. He acknowledged that the columns were not traditional but that they wished to retain them as it would be a lot of them to replace. Ms. Glaser Stein stated that estimates to replace the columns were cost prohibitive and they were in good condition currently. Mr. Block asked why the previous columns were removed; Ms. Glaser Stein stated that they were damaged. Mr. Block noted that the historic columns were appropriate in design and proportion and that he was concerned about setting a precedent, since replacement with stock items are not appropriate. Mr. Gille stated that this had been done "all over the Quarter," which Mr. Block stated was a problem, if so. Mr. Gille stated that he was unsure if the columns had needed replacement, but they did the full balcony and replaced the rail. Ms. Bourgogne noted that the rail was taller, and more columns had been installed than previously existed, so a lot had changed.

Mr. Fifield asked for public comment. Ms. Szalwinski recollected that the owner had been asked by Safety and Permits to make the rail taller because it was a rental, and that it had been in horrible condition and was not salvageable. She added that there were significant light issues in the block at the moment, and that she wanted to see the applicant's current lights stay in place until the streetlights are fixed.

Mr. Gille asked staff about the cameras; Ms. Vogt stated that she needed a spec sheet for them. Mr. Gille asked about the masonry, stating that they had a permit. Mr. Fifield stated that the work had to be completed. Mr. Bergeron stated that it sounded like a hardship argument was being made for the columns. He said the work was very unfortunate and he could not support retention from an architectural perspective, but the Commission could consider hardship. Mr. Fifield stated that the proportions of the rear building had been entirely lost. Mr. Gille asked how restoration would be done if the City required 42" railing; Mr. Fifield stated that if they had consulted the VCC before the work was done, it could have been figured out in advance. Ms. Vogt noted that a permit had been issued, but it stated all work to match existing, which it did not.

Mr. Bergeron moved to adopt the various staff recommendations for **conceptual approval** and **denial** as noted in the report, with the applicant to submit revised plans to remediate the violations. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Fifield noted that the applicant could appeal the denial to the Commission as a hardship case. Mr. Block stated that it needed to be submitted to staff in writing within thirty days.

Next AC Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Upon request, a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired will be available at the meeting. To place a request for sign language interpreter services, please call TDDY at (504) 658-2059 or 1-800-981-6652.