

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

Department of Housing, Economic Development & Commerce  
Division of City Planning



## Interdepartmental Memorandum

DATE: 6/10/2021  
TO: Historic Preservation Commission  
FROM: Daniel M, Wrieden Historic Preservation officer  
CC: Liz Barna, Esq., HPC Counsel  
Thuruparan Manoharan, Applicant and owner  
/File  
RE: Case #H19-430  
245 Third Street Roofdeck Application  
Block: 11109/3/C0003  
Zone: H / Harsimus Cove Historic District

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### I. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Historic Preservation Application, submitted 9.20.2019 and subsequently amended
2. Architectural Plans by Daniel A. Roma R.A. of Artek Studio, LLC entitled *Thulasi Sivalingam 245 Third Street Jersey City NJ Proposed Roof Top Deck to an existing Condominium Building* dated 7-30-19 with subsequent amendments and updates (not noted).

### II. PROJECT & PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

The property, is an altered, contributing, three bay, three and one half story, masonry building with Grecian influences in the Harsimus Cove Historic District, The building was built circa 1875 and apparently altered in the early 20th century with a new stoop and simplified window sash arrangement. The building was further altered during a rehabilitation undertaken in the 1990s, which added new, wood decorative lintels and a cornice to the building. The building, which is now clad in a mid-twentieth century, painted brickface finish, is part of a row of buildings which were most likely rendered with a colored or tinted stucco to unify the row, provide decorative details and the appearance of a stone ashlar facing. These details appear to have been lost on all of the buildings, each building developing its unique, individual character over the subsequent years since construction.

The owner of the topmost condominium unit, Thuruparan Manoharan, is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for a private roofdeck to be accessed from their unit via an existing roof hatch. All parties acknowledge that due to the setting of the building, adjacent to a lower, late Italianate townhouse and the one story building at the corner of Jersey Avenue and Third Street to the west (AKA the Key Food Building), the deck and rail will be visible when viewing the building obliquely from the west. However, the proposed roofdeck and railings will not be visible to the viewer from the front of the building due to the proposed 10' (ten foot) setback of the proposed deck. The owners and their architect appear to have been extremely conscientious when

considering their proposal in order to have the least possible impact on the viewer's experience of the building and the surrounding historic district. In addition to the deep setback at the front of the deck, the proposal also calls for a simple iron railing system and for the owners to access the roofdeck via an existing hatch which is not visible from the public right of way. The application and submitted plans were deemed complete by HPC Staff on June 1, 2021.

### **III. PROPERTY LOCATION & JURISDICTION**

245 Third Street (herein referred to as "The Property") is located in the Harsimus Cove Historic District. As defined in the City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance, and as shown on the City's official zoning map the zoning district is H (Historic).

The property is a contributing building within the Harsimus Cove Historic District, which was locally designated on February 1<sup>st</sup> 1977, as well as on the National and State Registers of Historic Places on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1987. The HPC's jurisdiction regarding the property is defined per § 345-30, entitled *Historic Preservation Review Procedures*:

- a. *No permit shall be issued or amended nor shall any construction, alteration, minor alteration, ordinary maintenance and repair or demolition be started on a landmark building nor on any sign, building, structure, object, site or landscape feature within a designated historic district, whether or not a construction permit is required, prior to a filing of an application for review by the Historic Preservation Commission or the issuance of either a Certificate of Appropriateness or a Certificate of No Effect.*

Additionally, per 2(a), *"The Historic Preservation Officer shall refer all applications for **new construction, alterations, relocation or demolition** to the Historic Preservation Commission for review."*

### **IV. REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Staff notes regarding the Powers and Duties of the Historic Preservation Commission:

Per § 345-9, entitled Historic Preservation Commission, Section (B) entitled Powers and Duties of the Historic Preservation Commission, the Commission has the following relevant powers and duties:

(4) To advise and assist City officers, employees, boards and other bodies, including those at County, regional, State and Federal levels, on all matters which have potential impact on the landmark buildings, sites, structures, object or landscape features in the City or on the ambience of a historic district.

(17) To issue Certificates of Appropriateness or Certificates of No Effect in accordance with the rules and standards set forth herein.

The property is subject to following standards during the Board's consideration regarding the application seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*
2. *City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance § 345-58 entitled H - Historic District*
3. *City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance § 345-71 entitled Historic Design Standards*

4. City of Jersey City Historic Preservation Commission *Rules & Regulations for Alterations & Additions to Buildings & New Construction in Historic Districts*

**V. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS**

**After reviewing the proposed project, Staff finds that the proposed roof deck shall not be a significant visual intrusion into the historic district and recommends the approval of the deck as presented to the Commission due to the deep setbacks, minimally visible railing and the lack of a bulkhead. The roofdeck will be accessed by an existing hatch. These proposals mitigate against the visibility of the deck which will not be visible when this building is viewed from directly across the street. Staff acknowledges that the deck railings will be visible from Jersey Avenue and the western corner of Jersey Avenue and Third Street, but will only be visible when viewed obliquely. Staff does not believe that this minimal visibility will have an adverse effect on the building, a significant roofline or the surrounding historic district. Staff recommends approval of the application with conditions.**

Staff believes that in accordance with the City's General Standards for Historic Preservation The distinguishing original qualities or character of the building, and the surrounding environment shall not be adversely affected by the minimal visual intrusion of the deck when viewed obliquely. There will be no removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features as part of this construction project. The materials themselves are visually simple, clearly modern, discreet and are in keeping with the railings and fences which are often encountered at roofs especially as guard rails around mechanical equipment.

It is staff's professional opinion that, the project as proposed will not cause an adverse effect on the character and/or integrity of the Harsimus Cove Historic District, and nor will the proposed use have an adverse effect on character defining features of the building. HPC Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. Material samples shall be submitted to HPC Staff for review before the submission of construction documents for permitting.
2. Any lighting proposed, current or future, shall be downcast in nature. Any proposed lighting fixtures or integrated lighted shall be submitted for review to HPC Staff prior to purchase or installation.
3. The architect, Daniel A. Roma R.A. of Artek Studio, LLC, shall be retained during construction and shall submit a signed and sealed letter noting that site construction was consistent with work approved under this Certificate of Appropriateness when work is completed and before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
4. Details, Specifications, and Material Submissions not currently submitted to and approved by the HPC under this Certificate of Appropriateness, or changed during the course of construction are remanded back to the HPC.
5. Construction drawings, noting materials and finishes, cross referenced with the material sample board, are to be reviewed by, approved by and signed by the Historic Preservation Officer or HPC

Staff for compliance with the issued Certificate of Appropriateness before construction permits are applied for and issued.

6. Upon final approval of this Certificate by the HPC, any deviations from the granted approval must be approved by the HPC, except in cases of emergency affecting the public safety, health and welfare. Requests for deviations from this Certificate are to be submitted through written request of the architect.
7. When necessary, any changes or deviations from the approved drawings are to be clearly bubbled on the construction drawings and noted in an accompanying signed and sealed letter from the architect addressed to Staff.