


# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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



Interdepartmental Memorandum

DATE: 5/10/23  
TO: Historic Preservation Commission  
FROM: Sara Quinlan, Historic Preservation Specialist   
CC: Jonathan Rekstad, Esq., HPC Counsel  
Derk Garlick, AIA Applicant on behalf of  
Sarah Lawter, Owner  
/File  
RE: Case #H22-407  
311 Varick Street  
Block: 12808, Lot 11  
Zone: H / Van Vorst Park Historic District

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## I. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Historic Preservation Application, submitted 9/1/22
2. Architectural Plans entitled *311 Varick Street, Jersey City, New Jersey* by Derk Garlick, AIA most recently revised April 2, 2023.

## II. PROJECT & PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

The property has been owned by Sarah Lawter (herein referred to as “The Owner”) since October 2021. The property is currently used as a one-unit residence.

Per the submitted application and plans prepared by Derk Garlick, AIA entitled *311 Varick Street, Jersey City, New Jersey* most recently revised April 2, 2023, the applicant is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the interior renovation, the construction of terrace on an existing one-story rear addition, partially visible from Mercer Street, and a rooftop deck with bulkhead (not visible from the Public Right of Way) of an altered, contributing *circa* 1890 Italianate brownstone fronted rowhouse in the Van Vorst Park Historic District. The proposed scope of work includes (but is not limited to):

1. Interior alterations
2. Rear façade alterations
3. Construction of a new terrace on an existing, one-story, rear addition (partially visible from Mercer Street) and a rooftop deck with bulkhead (not visible from the Public Right of Way)

The application and submitted plans were deemed complete by HPC Staff on April 4, 2023.

## III. PROPERTY LOCATION & JURISDICTION

311 Varick Street (herein referred to as “The Property”) is located in the Van Vorst Park Historic District. The property is located on a 20 x 75 lot fronting Varick Street between Mercer and Montgomery Streets. As defined in the City of Jersey City Zoning Ordinance, the property is zoned as H.

The property was designated as a contributing building within the Van Vorst Park Historic District on February 1, 1977, as well as on the on the National and State Registers of Historic Places on March 4, 1980 and August 1, 1978, respectively. 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 proposal is mostly consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Restoration and New Construction, as well as with the Historic Design Standards and Rules & Regulations. The proposed terrace and roof deck are consistent with the existing paradigm of the block and fall within the vernacular traditions of the neighborhood. While the rear terrace is partially visible from Mercer Street, as seen on the Block Site Plan on page T.000, there are a number of rear additions and terraces in this row that are also partially visible from Mercer Street, including additions and rear terraces at the neighboring properties of 309 Varick and 313 Varick.

In HPC Staff's opinion, the project as proposed will not cause an adverse effect on the character and/or integrity of the historic resource, proximate resources or the Van Vorst Park Historic District. HPC Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. The architect, Derk Garlick, AIA shall be retained during construction and shall submit a signed and sealed letter representing and noting that site construction was consistent with work approved under the final Certificate of Appropriateness before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
2. Details, Specifications, and Material Submissions not currently submitted to and/or approved by the HPC are to be submitted to and approved by the HPO prior to purchase and installation. Any materials approved under this Certificate of Appropriateness that are to be changed during the course of construction are remanded back to the HPC.
3. Any proposed planting or landscaping shall conform with the City of Jersey City Forestry Standards.
4. No portion of the roof deck or accessories (umbrellas, vegetation, etc.) shall be visible from the PROW. If any portion of the roof deck and/or accessories is visible this approval shall be considered null and void.
5. All lighting on the roof deck, bulkhead, and rear terrace shall be downcast in nature. Any fixtures proposed for this area shall be included in the submission of construction documents to be reviewed by HPC staff.
6. 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 for compliance with the issued Certificate of Appropriateness before construction permits are applied for and issued.
7. 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 to staff. Depending on the degree of change or deviation, additional review by the HPC may be required.
8. 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 are to be submitted through written request of the architect.