

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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



Interdepartmental Memorandum

DATE: 7/24/23
TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Sara Quinlan, Historic Preservation Specialist *sq*
Maggie O'Neill, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist *mon*
CC: Jonathan Rekstad, Esq., HPC Counsel
Heather Kumer, Esq. Applicant on behalf of
Caroline and David Sutton, Owners
/File
RE: Case #H22-420
313 Varick Street
Block: 12808, Lot 10
Zone: H / Van Vorst Park Historic District

I. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Historic Preservation Application, submitted 9/9/22
2. Architectural Plans entitled *Renovation and Addition to 313 Varick Street, Block 12808, Lot 10, Jersey City, Hudson County 07305* by Russ Bodnar most recently revised April 21, 2023.

II. PROJECT & PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

The property has been owned by Caroline and David Sutton (herein referred to as “The Owners”) since January 2022. 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 construction of a terrace on an existing one-story rear addition, partially visible from Mercer Street, with stairs to the rear yard 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. Rear façade alterations
2. Construction of a new terrace on an existing, one-story, rear addition (partially visible from Mercer Street) with stairs to the rear yard

III. PROPERTY LOCATION & JURISDICTION

313 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."*

Because the proposed project requires Zoning Board of Adjustment approval, this application comes to the HPC as referral per 40:55D-110 of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law. Per this provision, the historic Preservation Commission "... may provide its advice, which shall be conveyed through its delegation of one of its members or staff to testify orally at the hearing of the application and to explain any written report which may have been submitted."

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, there are a number of rear additions and terraces in this row that are also partially visible from Mercer Street, including those at the neighboring properties of 309 Varick and 311 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 and recommendation to the Zoning Board of Adjustment with the following conditions:

1. The architect, Russ Bodnar, 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. All lighting on the 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.
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 for compliance with the issued Certificate of Appropriateness before construction permits are applied for and issued.
6. 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.
7. 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.