


CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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



Interdepartmental Memorandum

DATE: 12/8/22
TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Sara Quinlan, Historic Preservation Specialist 
CC: Jonathan Rekstad, Esq., HPC Counsel
Benjamin Wine, Esq., Applicant
1292 Hancock, LLC, Owner
/File
RE: Case #H22-269
259 York Street
Block: 14106, Lot 6
Zone: H / Van Vorst Park Historic District

I. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Historic Preservation Application, submitted June 16, 2022.
2. Architectural Plans entitled *4 Unit Apartment Building Addition- Renovation, Block 14106 Lot 4, 259 York Street, Jersey City, Hudson County* by Bodnar Architectural Studio most recently revised November 9, 2022.
3. City of Jersey City, NJ 1938 Tax Card of 259 York Street.

II. PROJECT & PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

The property has been owned by 1292 Hancock, LLC (herein referred to as "The Owner") since November 2022. The property is currently used as a four-unit residence.

Per the submitted application and plans prepared by Bodnar Architectural Studio entitled *4 Unit Apartment Building Addition- Renovation, Block 14106 Lot 4, 259 York Street, Jersey City, Hudson County* most recently revised November 9, 2022, the applicant is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for a full height rear addition (visible from the public right of way), two roof decks (not visible from the public right of way), and interior alterations of an altered, contributing, Greek Revival townhouse constructed *circa* 1880 in the Van Vorst Park Historic District. The proposed scope of work includes (but is not limited to):

1. Restoration of the front façade
2. Replacement of front and rear windows
3. Full interior renovation of four units.
4. The demolition of a three-story rear addition and the construction of a four-story rear addition that is visible from the public right of way through a vacant lot on York Street
5. The construction of two roof decks, not visible from the public right of way

6. Construction of a deck and patio as well as landscaping at rear yard

The application and submitted plans were deemed complete by HPC Staff on November 9, 2022.

III. PROPERTY LOCATION & JURISDICTION

259 York Street (herein referred to as “The Property”) is located in the Van Vorst Park Historic District. The property is located on a 25 x 100 lot fronting York Street between Barrow and Grove 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 addition and roof deck are consistent with the existing paradigm of the block and fall within the vernacular traditions of the neighborhood. While the addition is full height, the bulk matches a pattern found on the block, replacing the bulk of previous additions and aligning with the neighbors' additions. 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 or the Van Vorst Park Historic District. HPC Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. The architect, Russell Bodnar, R.A., shall be retained during construction and shall submit as-built, signed and sealed drawings to staff, or a signed and sealed letter representing and noting that site construction was consistent with work approved under this Certificate of Appropriateness before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
2. Any proposed planting or landscaping shall conform with the City of Jersey City Forestry Standards.
3. 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.
4. No portion of the roof deck shall be visible from any public right of way. If any components of the roof deck are visible from the public right of way are visible, this approval shall be considered null and void.
5. All proposed lighting on the roof deck as well as any rear lighting 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. All material samples and specifications shall be submitted to HPC Staff for review and approval prior to the submission of construction documents for permitting.
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 from the architect addressed to Staff.
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 from this Certificate are to be submitted through written request of the architect.