

STAFF REPORT: SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 MEETING

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

APPLICATION NUMBER: #22-8004

ADDRESS: 2827 JOHN R & 105 ALFRED

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BRUSH PARK

APPLICANT/OWNER: MICHAEL VANOVERBEKE

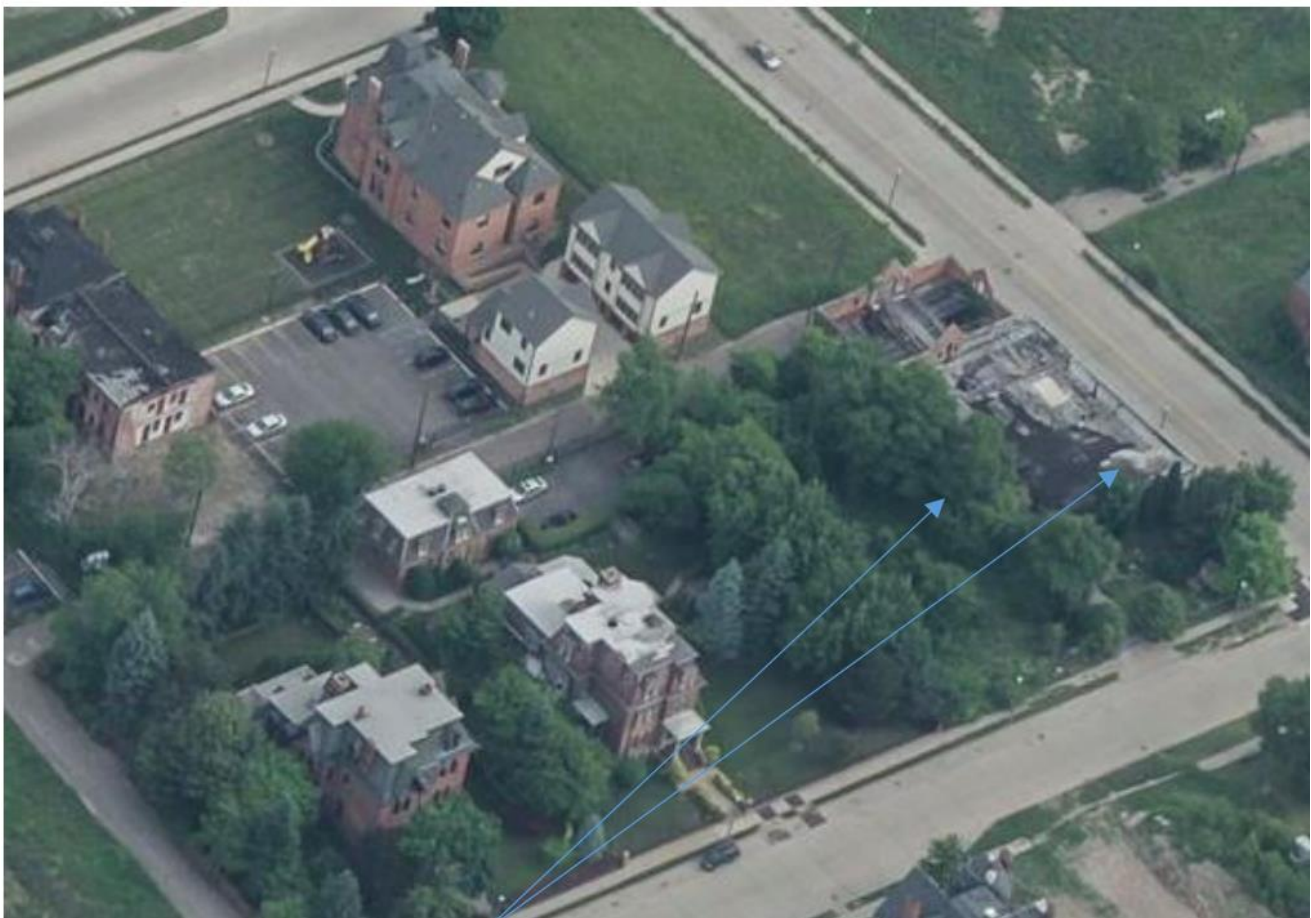
DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 8/22/2022

DATE OF STAFF VISIT: 9/1/2022

SCOPE OF WORK: DEMOLISH BUILDINGS, ERECT MIXED-USE BUILDING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

As per the below aerial photo, the proposed project includes two parcels that are located within the Brush Park Historic District: 105 Alfred and 2827 John R. The parcel at 105 Alfred is a vacant, grassy lot, while 2827 John R includes an existing historic-age building. The building appears to have been built in three stages. Specifically, the existing building includes a two-story, brick carriage house that was erected ca. 1880; a ca. 1925 brick one-story shop addition/storefront; and a ca. 1945 brick and concrete block, one-story shop addition. As per the attached structural report and photos which were submitted with a previous application, the building is in poor condition, as it suffered from a fire and the roof has caved in. The historic-age, 2-1/2 story JL Hudson house is west of the 2827 John R/105 Alfred building.



2857 John R and 105 Alfred



2827 John R and 105 Alfred, current conditions (staff photos)

PROPOSAL

Please note that this is the third time the applicant has appeared in front of the Commission seeking the body's approval to erect a new building at this site. The following is an outline of the previous applications which were submitted to the Commission for consideration:

- **June 13, 2018 Regular Meeting of the Historic District Commission**

- The applicant submitted a proposal for new construction within the district, which included the rehab and integration of the existing ca. 1925 and 1945 commercial storefronts in addition to the adjacent ca. 1880s carriage house remains at 2827 John R into a new 4-story building. The new construction also included a substantial new 4-story residential/parking garage to be located at 105 Alfred. See the below renderings of the proposed new building
- The Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed, to include the rehab of the shell of the existing buildings at 2827 John R., the new construction/building at 2827 John R, and the new construction/new garage and residential wings at 105 Alfred



Ca. 1880s carriage house and ca. 1925-1945 storefront remains



6/13/2018 presentation. Note that the historic buildings were to be retained and incorporated in the new construction

- **June 10, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Historic District Commission**

- The applicant submitted a revised proposal for new construction within the district. However, the new application proposed to demolish the existing ca. 1925 and 1945 commercial storefronts while retaining and incorporating only the adjacent 1880s carriage house remains at 2827 John R into a new 4-story building. The new construction also included a substantial new 4-story residential/parking garage to be located at 105 Alfred. See the below renderings of the proposed new building. The applicants noted that they had undertaken additional structural investigations of the existing buildings and found that the commercial storefronts then proposed for demolition were deteriorated beyond repair. Staff did visit the site prior to the June 2020 meeting and concurred with the applicant’s findings/found that the ca.1925 and 1945 lacked the integrity to contribute to the district.
- Note that the applicant submitted a structural assessment of the ca. 1880s carriage house that noted that it was in “good condition.” Staff concurred with this assessment
- The Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project, to include the demolition of the ca. 1925 and 1945 commercial storefronts at 2827 John R., while retaining and incorporating the adjacent 1880s carriage house remains into a new 4-story building. The new construction also included a substantial new 4-story residential/parking garage to be located at 105 Alfred.



Design submitted to the Commission in June 2020. Note that this portion of the building is new (to be clad with metal siding). This is the current approved design.



Design submitted to the Commission in June 2020

The **current application** proposes yet a third revised version of new construction at 2827 John R/105 Alfred. Specifically, the current submission proposes the following:

- Demolish the existing building at 2827 John R, to include the ca. 1880s carriage house and the ca. 1925 and 1945 storefronts/clear all of the historic buildings from the site
- Erect a new 4-story, mixed-use building to include a parking garage per the submitted application. The new building will incorporate brick screen walls at the northeast corner, first-story which will reference the demolished ca. 1880s carriage house (see the below images)



New building to include brick screen walls that reference the historic carriage house



Current design

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- It is staff's opinion that the ca. 1880s carriage house is a contributing building to the Brush Park Historic District
- Per the 2020 staff report, staff did visit the site that year, observed the condition of the ca. 1925-1945 storefronts, reviewed the submitted structural report (dating from 2018) and concluded that those portions of the building did not retain the integrity necessary to contribute to the district due to their poor condition
- The applicant has provided a new, more recent structural assessment of the carriage house which noted that any interventions which might be undertaken to stabilize or rehabilitate the building would require its complete demolition and reconstruction. Also, much of the original brick cannot be salvaged due to its poor condition. On 9/2/2022 HDC staff visited the site and met with members of the development team, to include the current project structural engineer and safety manager, to assess the condition of the carriage house as well as the 20th century storefronts. As a result of this field visit, staff did determine that the submitted structural assessment did provide an accurate description of the historic building's current conditions.

ISSUES

- Per the above discussion, staff does concur with the findings of the recent structural report re: the extreme level of deterioration of the carriage house. It is also staff's opinion that the carriage house contributes to the historic district. Per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards # 6):
Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.

Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

As the project proposes to demolish a contributing building but will not replicate the carriage house, it is staff's opinion that the work does not meet the SOI standards.

- The applicant has noted that they have proposed to incorporate brick screen walls at the northeast corner of the new building's first story as a nod to the historic carriage house because a replication of the carriage house represents a financial strain on the development's proforma. Staff also maintains that an attempt to "replicate" the entirety of the carriage house using current materials would result in a false sense of historical development. Staff therefore recommends that the Commission consider the issuance of a Notice to Proceed for the project under the following prong due to the carriage house's current condition:

1). The resource constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or the occupants

Staff does believe that the current design/proposed brick screen wall does provide a reference to the former carriage house but does not replicate it/present a false sense of history.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-75, Notice to Proceed

As noted above, it is staff's opinion that the carriage house contributes to the district. Staff therefore recommends that the issue a Notice to Proceed for the work as proposed because it does not conform to the district's Elements of Design, nor does it meet the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards for Rehabilitation but is without substantial detriment to the public welfare and without substantial derogation from the intents and purposes of Article II of Chapter 21 of Section 21-2-75 has been met