

Manayunk Neighborhood Council, PO Box 4667, Philadelphia, PA 19127

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July 5, 2006

Claire Gatzmer
Municipal Services Building
11th Floor
1401 JFK Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: **Request for appeal; 3 Rector Street
Archibald Cambell & Co. Textile Mill. 1876**

Dear Ms. Gatzmer,

Persuant to Section 14-2007(10) of the Philadelphia Code, Manayunk Neighborhood Council requests that the Board of Building Standards hear an appeal to the Historical Commisison Approval of construction at 3 Rector Street.

On June 9, 2006, the Historical Commission heard a request for approval of construction of condos at 3 Rector Street, in the Main Street Historical District.

On June 21, 2006, the Historical Commissions notification letter was issued.

Included in this request

- Document detailing our objections, and the basis for the appeal.
- Historical Commission approval notification; June 21, 2006
- Related photos of the property
- Developer's renderings introduced at the June 9 hearing.

Minutes of the June 9 hearing are not yet available.

Thank you,

Kevin Smith
President.

**3 Rector Street, Manayunk:
Archibald Campbell & Co. Textile Mill. 1876**

Basis for Appeal against Historical Commission Approval to convert the above industrial building to residential use with additions

Procedural Objections:

Information indicating form, elevational treatment and materials was introduced during the Commission hearing which had not previously been submitted or reviewed by Commission staff.

The information presented at the hearing was in the form of two perspective views, one from the south (canal side) and one from the north (Main Street). These two views show different configurations for the west end of the building; the view from the north shows a lower element projecting from the main body of the addition while the view from the south shows the west façade to be one continuous plane. The view from the north also contradicts the description in the application to the Commission to reinstate the existing cornice along the façade to the Private Street (north elevation). The view from the south also appears to contradict the assertion in the application that the rear elevation of the addition would be set back 5' feet from the rear (east) elevation.

Prior to these perspective views being introduced at the Committee hearing, a motion had been proposed and seconded to support the Architectural Committee's recommendation to deny the application. The introduction of these views, providing inaccurate and conflicting information without an opportunity to examine the information submitted, prejudiced a considered review of the proposal.

Objections to the Proposal

Changes from the previous proposal

The latest proposal adds an additional story to the addition, with a raised guard rail at roof level. The height of the latest proposed addition is approximately 16 feet higher than any adjacent building.

The proposal increases the amount of parking provided to include the first floor as well as basement level and the parking entrances are increased from one to two along the north façade.

The latest proposal includes a new six story addition along the Private Street. This addition extends from the existing north façade approximately 10' to the north property line and requires the demolition of the majority of the north elevation of the existing building.

Modifications to the existing building included in the application

In addition to the demolition of the north elevation noted above, an existing window in the remaining piece of the original north elevation is replaced by an infilled, arched opening. From the perspective view, the existing dentiled brick eaves of the existing building are not replicated on this new addition. Thus, one of the two longer elevations of the building is, with the exception of 10 feet, totally obliterated.

Although the existing facades along Rector Street and the towpath/canal are to be retained, the openings at basement level along the towpath are to be infilled with wire mesh. There is reference in the application to an entrance canopy on the Rector Street facade, although none is shown in the perspective view. A concrete entrance ramp along Rector Street plus 2 new concrete balconies on the first floor canal side elevation are indicated in the perspectives. Each element has cable guard rails over concrete slabs proposed, details which are alien to the detailing of the original building

In the perspective views, the existing exterior stucco finish is indicated as being retained rather than a more appropriate restoration of removing the stucco finish and reinstating the original random schist wall that remains beneath, which is evident in all the original mill buildings adjacent.

The design of the additions to the original building.

The appearance and character of the addition is significantly changed in the latest proposal; the materials and fenestration make no reference to the scale of the original building or the surrounding buildings of the same period; earlier schemes proposed brick and large industrial scale punched openings within the masonry walls.

The north and west elevations in the perspectives indicate large scale panels of unspecified materials as opposed to the brick of the earlier proposals. The south elevation is fully glazed with concrete balconies whereas an assortment of horizontally and vertically proportioned windows are indicated on the west and north elevations which is highly visible from Main Street.

None of the materials indicated are of a scale or texture which relate to the existing building or to adjacent buildings. None of the multiplicity of fenestration patterns used in the addition relates in scale, size or pattern to the surrounding buildings nor do they provide a consistent contemporary contrast to the original design.

Basis of the Appeal

The approval by the Historical Commission to construct a six story addition on the 2 story property at the above address and within the Manayunk Historic District is appealed for the following reasons:

- that the original architectural features of the original building, including fenestration, arched openings, and brick eaves detailing, are unnecessarily and arbitrarily removed or modified and that repairs and modifications to the outside of the building are unsympathetic to the original character of the building.
- that the additions and new construction are of a height that is incompatible with scale of the surrounding buildings and that the fenestration and materials proposed are incompatible with the scale of the original building and with the scale and texture of the contributing adjacent building within the historic district.
- that the approval was given unconditionally, without the requirement to develop the design in consultation with, and with the approval of, Historical Commission staff.