

**STAFF REPORT: JUNE 9, 2021 MEETING**

**PREPARED BY: J. ROSS**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 21-7295, 21-7296, 21-7297, 21-7298, & 21-7299**

**ADDRESS: 1628, 1632, 1638, 1644, & 1650 BAGLEY**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN**

**APPLICANT: NIKKI RITTENOUR (ARCHITECT)**

**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 5/17/2021**

**DATE OF STAFF VISIT: 6/5/2021**

**SCOPE OF WORK: ERECT 4 NEW MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The project area includes five adjacent open/vacant lots. A review of Google Maps indicates that three prefabricated metal containers were added to the parcels sometime between 2018 and 2019 (without HDC approval) and the site appears to have served as a staging area to support nearby rehab projects during this period. A ca. 1985 multi-family residential development, known as Clements Kern Gardens, is located to the south of the project area. These buildings are two stories in height and are largely clad with horizontally-oriented vinyl siding and brick. A ca. 1910, two-story, brick-clad apartment building (known as Beyster Terrace) is to the east/side of the project area, while 1 ½- and 2-story, ca. 1900-1910, detached, wood-frame residences are to the west of the project parcels. These buildings are typically clad with wood (horizontally-oriented) siding with a small number of brick homes. Roofs are typically gabled. Trees are intermittently located within the berm/public right-of-way area between the sidewalk and street on the north side of Bagley/adjacent to the project area. The site planning/location of the buildings allow for the parking to be screened from view from the public right of way as it is located toward the interior of the site and within the two rear carriage house buildings.

### **PROPOSAL**

With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to erect a new multi-family residential development to include two (2) , three-story buildings (eight units each) and two (2), two-story carriage houses (3 units each). Each of the carriage houses includes seven interior/integrated parking spaces at the first story. See the submitted renderings, which provide details around the proposed new development. Specific details re: the project include the following:

#### **Bagley Buildings # 1 &2**

- Three stories in height
- Flat roof with shed-roof penthouses. The penthouse roof shall be covered with black asphalt shingles
- Exterior walls shall be primarily clad with cementitious (James Hardie) panels with a reveal joint system and concealed countersunk fasteners. Finish color depicted as "dark" on the submitted rendering is Sherwin Williams "SW6994 Black of Night," while that depicted as "light" is Sherwin Williams "SW9166 Drift of Mist." Brick is found at the entry door surrounds at the front and rear elevations. Exterior cladding at the penthouse units is 8" horizontal lap composite, smooth finish, and painted Sherwin Williams "SW6994 Black of Night"
- Windows are aluminum-clad, wood casement units (finish color black)
- Exterior entrances are single, flush steel doors with sidelites at the front and rear elevations, first stories. Aluminum-clad wood sliding doors are at the first stories, side elevations, and at the second and third stories, front and rear elevations.

- Second that third-story balconies at the front elevations are accented by a wood slat brise soleil. Glass railings are located at all front and rear elevation balconies

### **Carriage Houses**

- Setback is generally consistent with the adjacent 1602 Bagley (to the east)
- Setback is inconsistent with the adjacent, single family homes to the west (1656 Bagley and beyond)
- Two stories in height
- Side-gabled roof topped with low-profile skylights
- Exterior cladding is 8" horizontal lap composite, smooth finish, and painted Sherwin Williams "Rockwood Sash Green SW2810"
- Windows are aluminum-clad, wood casement units (finish color black).
- Exterior entrances are single, flush steel doors with sidelites at the front elevation, first story. A flat metal awning shelters each entrance. Aluminum-clad wood sliding doors are at the second story, front elevations. Overhead Coplay steel flush garage doors (finish color black) are located at the rear/alley-facing elevations, first story. Pella Steel entry doors, flush panel, painted SW6994 Black of Night are proposed at the first story, west elevations
- Glass railings are located at the front elevation Juliet balconies
- Exterior doors - Pella Steel entry doors, flush panel, SW6994 Black of Night

### **Fencing**

- 4'-high aluminum picket type black fencing is proposed for location at the south/front property line, directly adjacent to the sidewalk. 6'-0" tall pressure-treated wood fencing (unpainted/unstained) is proposed to enclose the rear yard.

### **Landscaping**

- The site plan indicates that landscaping will be added in the rear yard and within the berm/public right of way to the front/south of the development. These shall be dogwoods.
- Two Skyline Honey Locust trees are proposed for the interior/rear yard. Shrubs & grasses proposed for installation at the rear/interior yard include Boxwood shrubs, Gro-Low Sumac, & Elijah Blue Fescue

### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- The project area is located at the southwestern edge of the historic district. The south side of Bagley falls outside of the district's boundary.
- The applicant has provided historic Sanborn maps which indicate that auxiliary/secondary structures had existed within the rear yards of all of the subject parcels
- The front setback for the new buildings is consistent with the adjacent two-story brick apartment building but pushes forward the setback established by the single-family homes to the west of the new apartments.
- The new buildings/townhomes are approximately 20'-0" higher than its neighboring apartment building to the east and detached dwellings to the west.
- As previously noted, a ca. 1985 multi-family residential development, known as Clements Kern Gardens, is located to the south the project area, directly south of the district boundaries. These

buildings are two stories in height and are largely clad with horizontally-oriented vinyl siding and brick. A ca. 1910, two-story, brick-clad apartment building with a flat roof is to the east/side of the project area, while 1 ½- and 2-story, ca. 1895-1910, detached, wood-frame residences are to the west of the project parcels. These buildings are typically clad with wood (horizontally-oriented) siding with a small number of brick homes. Roofs are typically gabled

- The applicant has stated that the brise soleil element proposed for the townhomes was inspired by the light brick detailing which frame each bay at the adjacent, 2-story Beyster Terrace apartment building to the east/adjacent to the project area.

## **ISSUES**

- It is staff's opinion that the proposed new buildings are generally compatible with their historic surrounds. However, the siding proposed for the townhomes is a flat cementious (James Hardie) vertical panel while the historic siding which predominates within the district is horizontally expressed (lapped wood siding or brick). Also, the colors proposed for the townhomes, black and white, do not generally conform to the "earth tones and...richer and darker colors, such as browns, golds, grays, and blues" which predominate within the district. Staff recommends that the applicant select a siding for the townhomes which displays a horizontal expression. Also, staff recommends that the color palate of the townhomes' siding more closely align with the predominating colors outlined in the district's Elements of Design
- Detroit Planning and Development Department Historic and Design staff met with the applicant on 5/24/2020 to discuss the project design. During this discussion, PDD Design staff (Russell Baltimore) expressed concern around the long-term fitness of the Hardi panel cladding proposed for the townhomes. They also noted that they felt that the proposed glass balcony railing was not compatible with the district's historic character. HDC staff defers to PDD design staff's opinion re: the quality of the Hardi panel cladding as he is a licensed architect with many years of experience in the field.
- It is staff's opinion that the proposed glass balcony railings at both the townhomes and carriage houses are not compatible with the district's historic appearance. Staff recommends that the applicant select a product that more closely replicate existing railing within the district.
- The applicant has stated that the wood fencing at the rear/side property lines shall be unpainted/unstained.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### Section 21-2-73, Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

It is staff's opinion that the proposal should qualify for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a COA for the proposed application because it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Corktown District's Elements of Design. However staff does recommend that the Commission issue the project a COA with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall select a balcony railing product that more closely replicate existing railing within the district. The applicant shall present the new railing product to HDC staff for review and approval prior to their submission of the final CDs/application to the building's department/prior to permitting.
- The siding proposed for the townhomes shall have a horizontal expression. The siding may be masonry, wood, composite, or cementious. However, it cannot be a James Hardi product. The applicant shall present the new siding proposal to HDC staff for review and approval prior to

the their submission of the final CDs/application to the building's department/prior to permitting.

- The applicant shall select a color palatte for the townhomes that more closely aligns with the districts Elements of Design. The applicant shall present the new color palate to HDC staff for review and approval prior to the their submission of the final CDs/application to the building's department/prior to permitting.
- Any new wood fencing shall be stained or painted a color which is compatible with the approved color palette for the buildings within one calendar year of the issuance of the project's permit. The applicant shall present the new color choice to HDC staff for review and approval prior to the their submission of the final CDs/application to the building's department/prior to permitting.