

EXHIBITS

ZONING APPEAL FOR 8330 MILLMAN STREET

ZP-2022-000197

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ZBA Appeal Letter from Owner

Your appellant/owner seeks two variances to build an accessory dwelling unit (“ADU”) and states that compliance with zoning code requirements would cause an unnecessary hardship for the following reasons:

1. The House On The Subject Property – Robert Venturi, a Philadelphian who was one of the 20th century’s major architectural figures, designed the existing house, often called “Mother’s House”, at 8330 Millman Street. Mother’s House is among the ten Masterworks of Modern American Architecture featured on a United States postage stamp (Exhibit 1). See also “Ten Buildings That Changed America” (<https://interactive.wttw.com>tenbuildings>vanna-vent>). Many people from all over the world visit Venturi’s iconic house, as it is an internationally renowned architectural masterpiece.

Among the many academics, architects, and critics who have elaborated on the importance of Venturi’s design is David Brownlee, a recently retired Penn professor who is a historian of modern architecture. In his February 6, 2022 letter to the Zoning Board of Adjustment in support of the variances we request, he wrote that Mother’s House “is one of the most important architectural designs of the 20th century, whose unforgettable image catalyzed modern architecture’s momentous turn away from formulaic functionalism” (Exhibit 2, Brownlee letter). The house “has not been materially changed since the house’s completion.” (Exhibit 3, Historic Register Nomination, p.3)

Exterior modifications would obscure and reduce the house’s architectural integrity and constitute revisionist vandalism. It is extremely unlikely that one could modify or add to the exterior of the house because it is listed on both the PHC’s Registry and the National Register of Historic Places. In short, the iconic nature of Mother’s House precludes an add-on and thereby creates “unique conditions” which are not of the owner’s creation. However, Licenses and Inspections issued a Notice of Refusal because of the stand-alone nature of the proposed ADU.

2. Family And Life Changes – The 67 year old owner has been a part of the neighborhood since 1967 when his parents moved him and his older brother into a house close to Mother’s House. The owner attended high school in the neighborhood, raised three children in the neighborhood, and very much wants to age in place in the neighborhood. In 2016, after the death of his wife and his youngest child’s departure for college, and intending to both downsize and age in place in his neighborhood, the owner bought and moved into Mother’s House.

The owner expects to need a caretaker’s aid to remain in the house, and an ADU would provide a room for a caretaker to stay. In addition, the owner wants to adapt the property for contemporary family structures of blended and multi-generational families as well as anticipated post-pandemic continuation of working from home. The owner hopes to be able to offer his 68-year-old single brother and his young daughter, who live in the Phoenix area, a place to reside while avoiding Arizona’s terribly oppressive summer heat. The owner’s elderly widowed mother, who resides by herself in her own house in New Hampshire, wants to escape from New

England's punishing winters. An ADU which is ADA compliant, with a suitable bathroom to use would allow her to winter here. (Mother's House lacks any ADA compliant bathrooms.) The owner's dear partner, a Texan, hopes to retire here soon, and her Manhattan based daughter's family already overuses Mother's House when they visit.

3. Mother's House Is Extremely Small – Robert Venturi designed “Mother's House” for his aging, widowed mother. The house totals 1875 square feet, with only approximately 1400 square feet for first floor living. The third bedroom is accessible only by climbing a narrow and winding set of stairs unsafe for children or elderly (Exhibit 4). There is no garage. Previous property owners placed a small utility shed in the northwest corner of the property. Dan McCoubrey, the managing partner at the architectural firm of Venturi Scott Brown and the chair of PHC's Architecture Committee, noted that the house is “extremely small” and “that the ADU will allow for a larger family to reside at the property or for guests to be accommodated” (Exhibit 5, November 23, 2021 minutes of PHC's Architecture Committee, p.4)

4. The Property At 8330 Millman Street – Mother's House sits on a large irregularly-shaped property totaling 0.85 acres. The property consists of a very long paved driveway with front yards on both sides of the driveway and side and back yards. The north side yard – where the owner hopes to construct an ADU – has grass, flower beds, and, behind the flower beds, an area overgrown with weeds, “volunteer” trees, and the shed.

5. Siting Of The Proposed ADU – The north side yard is the best location for a stand-alone ADU. The proposed ADU location makes use of the existing driveway and is obscured by distance and landscape from both the front (Millman) and rear streets (Navajo). Siting an ADU in the side yard would not change the view scape of Mother's House. The architects and members on PHC's Architecture committee endorsed siting the ADU near the shed because it is the least visible place to site an ADU. Dan McCoubrey said he liked that “the site for the ADU is remarkably invisible given the vegetation” (Exhibit 5, p. 4). The member also endorsed placing the ADU as far as possible from Mother's House. One member suggested that “the corner closest to [Mother's House] could be further set back” (Exhibit 5, p. 5). Siting the ADU at least 36 feet away from the house, behind existing high and thick vegetation, would make the ADU as inconspicuous as possible.

The architects' suggestion to push the ADU as far as possible from Mother's House led us to push its site even further from the house so the proposed ADU is only 8 feet from the property line rather than the required 10 feet. This, in turn, led to Licenses and Inspection's second reason for a Notice of Refusal.

Importantly, the owners of the adjacent property do not object that a wall of the ADU would be only 8 feet from their property line. They wrote “Our Southeast property line also serves as the Northwest property line for the parcel of land on which sits the Vanna Venturi house” “[The owner] asked Jim if we would have any objection to his proposed construction if the wall was only 8 feet from our common property line. Jim answered that we have no objection to an 8 foot setback. With this ‘TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN’ document we reiterate in writing, that we do not object to the proposed 8 foot setback for David's proposed construction. Finally, we do

not object to the construction of the accessory dwelling unit.” (Exhibit 6). A variance for the minimal setback violation is both minimal and appropriate.

6. Conclusion – Inga Saffron, the Philadelphia Inquirer’s perceptive architecture critic, recently visited Mother’s House, walked the property and the site of the proposed ADU, and then wrote “Robert Venturi’s iconic Chestnut Hill cottage is a pioneer for a new form of housing” (Exhibit 7). She used our project to develop the nexus of the need for more space to house blended families, the sensible desire of older people to stay with their families, in their neighborhoods, and age in place, and ADUs. Saffron wrote that ADUs “offer something for everyone, they’ve been relatively uncontroversial, at least compared to other kinds of low-cost housing.” After praising our design and our stand-alone siting she concluded that if the ZBA approves our project “then, [Venturi’s] pioneering work of architecture could become a pioneer for a new kind of housing.”

David Brownlee, the Penn professor emeritus who is a historian of modern architecture and knows Mother’s House very well, has urged the Zoning Board of Adjustment “to approve the variances that will permit the construction of the proposed 2-bedroom building” ...to “make it possible for this very small but very important house to function as the home of those present and future owners who are willing to commit themselves to the work of caring for a historic building (Exhibit 2). Very fortunately, the house is now owned by a vigilant and conscientious steward, David Lockard, who scrupulously cares for it....” Professor Brownlee continued “I am glad to note that the Historical Commission has reviewed and approved this artful solution to a challenging problem asking only that it be moved farther from the main house. This requires a variance.” Professor Brownlee concluded that the variance is needed because the legislation passed by City Council to make historic home ownership easier by allowing the creation of ADUs in designated dwellings “did not foresee this particular historic property configuration” and “Your approval will therefore be entirely congruent with Philadelphia’s commitment to the preservation of our historical resources”.

The appellant has offered substantial credible evidence (1) that there are unique conditions associated with the existing house, (2) compliance with the zoning requirement would cause an unnecessary hardship which your appellant did not create, and (3) your appellant has met all the conditions for approval. Your appellant requests the Zoning Board of Adjustment to grant his appeal for the two requested variances and permit him to construct a stand-alone ADU.

Respectfully submitted,

David Lockard
Appellant/owner

P.S. – Exhibit 8 is the Philadelphia Historic Commission’s Letter of Approval for the ADU



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David B. Brownlee
Frances Shapiro-Weitzenhoffer Professor Emeritus

6 February 2022

Philadelphia Department of Planning and Development
 attention: Zoning Board of Adjustment
 1515 Arch Street
 18th Floor, Room 18-006
 Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Vanna Venturi House ADU

Dear Board Members,

I urge you to approve the variances that will permit the construction of the proposed 2-bedroom building on the property of the historically designated Vanna Venturi house.

I am a historian of modern architecture and know Robert Venturi's "Mother's House" very well. It is one of the most important architectural designs of the twentieth century, whose unforgettable image catalyzed modern architecture's momentous turn away from formulaic functionalism. I have often visited the house with students, written about it several times, and even helped to oversee the building of a full-scale replica of its façade in a 2001 exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Your approval of this project will make it possible for this very small but very important house to function as the home of those present and future owners who are willing to commit themselves to the work of caring for a historic building. Very fortunately, the house is now owned by a vigilant and conscientious steward, David Lockard, who scrupulously cares for it and has even worked with preservation and architecture groups to allow many to visit. We should support this kind of stewardship.

Juliet Fajardo and Donna Lisle's subtle, quiet design for the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) does not touch Venturi's iconic structure. That is essential. The enormous visual energy of the original design is contained, almost magically, within a purely rectangular plan that allows no additions. I am glad to note that the Historical Commission has reviewed and approved this artful solution to a challenging problem, asking only that it be moved farther from the main house. This requires a variance.

Another variance is required to create an ADU. As you know, City Council passed legislation in 2019 to make historic home ownership easier by allowing the creation of ADUs in designated dwellings. It is only because the authors of that ordinance did not foresee this particular historic property configuration that a variance is needed now. Your approval will therefore be entirely congruent with Philadelphia's commitment to the preservation of our historical resources.

Yours sincerely,

David B. Brownlee, PhD, FSAH, FRSA

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with a Board of Revision of Taxes address)

Street address: 8330 Millman Street

Postal code: 19118

Councilmanic District: 8

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Vanna Venturi House; Mother's House

Common Name: Vanna Venturi House; Mother's House

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☒ excellent ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Residential dwelling, single family

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED

6. DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED

7. SIGNIFICANCE

SEE ATTACHED

Period of Significance (from year to year): 1959-1964

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1963-1964

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Venturi & Short (Robert Venturi, design architect)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Contractor: Edmund A. Moyer

Original owner: Vanna Venturi

Other significant persons: Denise Scott Brown

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☒ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☒ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☒ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☐ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTACHED

9. NOMINATOR

Name with Title: Kathleen M. Abplanalp, Ph.D., edited by Emily T. Cooperman, Ph.D.

Email: kmabplanalp@yahoo.com; emily.t.cooperman@gmail.com

Organization: Chestnut Hill Historical Society

Date: 26 October 2015

Street Address: 8708 Germantown Avenue

Telephone: 215-247-0417

City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19143

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: _____

☐ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: _____

Date of Notice Issuance: _____

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

3/16/07

5. Boundary Description

The Vanna Venturi House is located at 8330 Millman Street in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia. The boundaries of the parcel (identified as 128N03-0053) follow:

Beginning at a point on the southwesterly side of Millman Street (50 feet wide) measured South 50 degrees 30 minutes 45 seconds East along the said Southwesterly sides of Millman Street the distance of 207 feet and 5 and 7/8 inches from the Southeasterly side of Gravers Lane (60 feet wide); thence extending South 50 degrees 30 minutes 45 seconds East along the said Southwesterly side of Millman Street 60 feet 0 inches to a point; thence South 39 degrees 29 minutes 15 seconds west 120 feet 0 inches to a point; thence South 5 degrees 30 minutes 45 seconds East 56 feet 6 and 7/8 inches to a point; thence south 39 degrees 29 minutes and 15 seconds West at right angles to Navajo Street and Millman Street 110 feet 1 and 3/8 inches to a point on the Northeasterly side of Navajo Street (50 feet wide); thence still South 39 degrees 29 minutes 15 seconds West partly crossing the bed of said Navajo Street 25 feet 0 inches to a point on the center of said Navajo Street (being the total distance of 135 feet 1 and 3/8 inches along the last described course); thence North 50 degrees 30 minutes 45 seconds West along the center line of Navajo Street 191 feet 7 and 3/4 inches to a point; thence North 39 degrees 29 minutes 15 seconds East partly recrossing the bed of said Navajo Street 25 feet 0 inches to a point on the Northeasterly side of Navajo Street; thence still North 39 degrees 29 minutes 15 seconds East at right angles to Navajo Street and Millman Street 118 feet 1 and 3/8 inches to a point (being the total distance of 143 feet 1 and 3/4 inches along the last described course; thence South 50 degrees 30 minutes 45 seconds East 91 feet 7 and 3/4 inches to point; thence 39 degrees 29 minutes 15 seconds East at right angles to Navajo and Millman Street 152 feet 0 inches to a point on the said Southwesterly side of Millman, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning (see Figure 1 for a boundary map of the property).

6. Description

The Vanna Venturi house is a two-story, rectangular-plan, gable-roofed building with eight-inch structural concrete block walls surfaced with green-painted stucco, with applied, wood tongue-and-groove boards in selected locations. The roof is clad in painted, standing-seam metal. The windows are a combination of sliding aluminum and steel sash, with simple, wood frames with slightly projecting lintels. A central, shed-roofed monitor volume rises at the peak of the main roof, and a brick chimney, stuccoed on the main, northeast elevation, rises from the monitor and is slightly off-center to the southeast. The house is roughly centered in the main section of an approximately .85-acre flag lot. From Millman Street, which abuts the property on the northeast, the house is approached via a paved drive that is intentionally off-center with respect to the main, northeast elevation of the building. The long, narrow drive, which is bordered by lawn and shrubs, terminates at the front elevation of the house near the recess for the entrance door.

The main, northeast elevation (Photo 1), organized in a balanced, asymmetrical composition, is intentionally both overscaled in detail and flat in appearance, and is dominated by a broad, monumental gable with a parapet wall rising slightly above and hiding the roof. A central vertical spilt in the gable, which echoes the appearance of a broken pediment, extends from the roof peak to a reinforced concrete lintel positioned above the nearly-square, centered opening of the entrance vestibule. The entrance recess extends back to the plane of the central, shed-roofed monitor and chimney mass, with a beveled wall recessed behind the main front wall on the first floor. An applied, segmental-arch molding, broken at the split, intersects the lintel. A horizontal, double wood molding that echoes a chair rail and is interrupted by the entrance recess spans the front and rear façades of the house. A series of asymmetrical features intentionally counter the overall symmetry of the gable and centered entrance opening and lend the design a sense of dynamic tension. Chief among these is the chimney itself, which rises just southeast of center from the roof monitor volume. On this elevation the stuccoed monitor volume and chimney combine to give the appearance of an overscaled, monumental chimney. The main entrance is located on the northwest side of the centered, first floor recess, and is located below another recess behind the main front wall (Photo 2). The entrance, which includes a double-leaf, wood door lit by single, fixed, square, top-light sections above square paneled sections, is balanced by a built-in bench on the southeast of the recess. The recess is lit by a large, square, fixed-light window on the upper floor that appears like a centered window in the chimney mass in the manner of a window in a split-flue chimney of large eighteenth and nineteenth century houses of the region. As one approaches the entrance and can see into the recess, however, this window reveals itself to be off-center to the northwest, and to be partially cantilevered out over the wall bevel on the northwest side (Photo 3). The front wall is anchored on the southeasternmost part of the elevation by a single opening that accommodates a square window that appears to have vertical and horizontal muntins through the use of two, two-light, sliding aluminum sash with cross-bars. A smaller, square, steel awning sash window with its sill flush with the horizontal molding across the façade is found immediately to the southeast of the central opening. The wall on the northwest side of the

entrance is lit by a long, horizontal opening with a steel frame and sash ribbon window consisting of five square sash with two awning units flanking the center sash. This ribbon window is also visually anchored by the molding, and its sill lines up with the sill of the smaller, square, awning window to the southeast. The placement of the windows reflects the function of the spaces behind them: a bedroom and bathroom on the southeast side and a kitchen on the northwest side. Historic, industrial-style light fixtures survive in the ceiling of the entrance recess on its southeast side, and over the square, southeastern window.

The side elevations are narrower, asymmetrically organized, and dominated by the roof, with box gutters on each elevation. The shed-roofed monitor is lit on both elevations by large, fixed-light, trapezoidal windows, and the brick of the chimney, which rises above the monitor on these elevations, is exposed. The southeast elevation (Photo 4) includes two recessed, secondary entrances at the outside walls, with white-painted, wood, vertical tongue-and-groove board-clad side walls. The smaller, northeast door matches the leaves of the front door in its configuration. The southwest, double, aluminum frame sliding door, giving access to the first floor bedroom, echoes the large, square, southeast window in its cross-bars, materials, and proportions. A square window with steel, awning sash matching the small window on the front elevation is anchored at the roofline northeast of center adjacent to a historic light fixture matching the one on the front elevation. Approximately three-quarters of the northwest elevation (Photo 5) is recessed in two principal sections. The larger, southwest recess forms a covered porch accessed from the dining area by a four-leaf aluminum sliding door matching those elsewhere. The center leaves are operable and the outer leaves are fixed. The recesses are clad in tongue-and-groove board matching the material on the southeast elevation. A segmental arch-plan screen of posts with square-section lower and circular-plan upper sections divides the porch from a more shallowly recessed, rear entrance section to the northeast. This includes a poured-in-place concrete stair to the basement level with a pipe railing and a single door matching the one on the southeast elevation. The threshold in front of the door is a poured-in-place concrete slab cantilevered over the basement stair. A historic light fixture is located to the southwest of the rear door, which leads into the kitchen area.

Unlike the front façade, the rear, southwest façade (Photo 6) is not pedimented, but includes the chair rail molding of the main elevation as well as a parapet wall rising above the roof. The parapet wall also encloses a balcony (Photo 7) on the second story, and includes a central, small slit echoing the larger split on the main elevation. A wide, centered lunette opening is positioned behind the balcony and includes fixed side lights flanking a centered, heavy, double-leaf door from the bedroom on this level. The wall framing the lunette opening is clad in painted tongue-in-groove boards matching those on the first floor on the side elevations. The first floor is asymmetrically fenestrated, with an open doorway into the northwest, recessed porch on the northwest, an off-center, six-light window to the northwest of center at the living room, and a L-shaped window group lighting the first floor bedroom on the southeast that includes a double window in an opening the same size as the doorway into the porch adjacent to a large, square, fixed light to the northwest of a rectangular casement in a steel frame. The living room openings hold aluminum sash like those on other elevations.

Integrity

The Vanna Venturi House retains the historic integrity required to convey its significance as an internationally significant work of architect Robert Venturi. In fact, it retains the "high degree" of integrity that would be necessary for National Historic Landmark designation. It retains integrity of location, having not been moved. It retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, having sustained no alterations and having been meticulously maintained by its current owner. The property retains integrity of setting, has not materially changed since the house's completion.

7. Statement of Significance

The Vanna Venturi house has been widely recognized as one of the most important works of the internationally distinguished American architect, Robert Venturi. The house has also rightly been characterized as one of the most significant architectural commissions of post-World War II world wide. Vincent Scully, the renowned American architectural historian, famously called the house the “biggest small building of the second half of the twentieth century.”¹ Physically and metaphorically, Scully’s description of the house is precise. For half a century, the Vanna Venturi house, which is small in size but large in scale, has exerted outsized influence on architectural design and theory, both domestically and internationally. Widely proclaimed as the building that changed the trajectory of modernism and led to post-modernism, the house excites and provokes, as much as for its exceptionalism as for the novel theory that informed its design and that continues to influence contemporary architecture.

Choosing the Site

Robert Venturi began work on the design of “Mother’s House” in 1959, shortly before the death of his father, Robert, Sr. Vanna Venturi commissioned her son to design and build her a home that would accommodate her in advanced age and allow her to live comfortably as a single woman. For the building site, the Venturis identified an approximately three-quarter-acre vacant parcel on Millman Street in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia.² The parcel was contained within a property owned by George Woodward, Inc., a real estate company that developed vast tracts of land in Chestnut Hill during the early twentieth century. Vanna Venturi purchased the parcel in 1963.³

The Venturis’ decision to locate the house near the business district of Chestnut Hill was aided by several considerations, including Vanna Venturi’s desire to live in an area that was both accessible to public transportation and within walking distance to stores and other conveniences. The Chestnut Hill site, which was a half-mile from Germantown Avenue and the regional railroad, satisfied these conditions. Robert Venturi also wanted to settle his mother in stylish surroundings.⁴ Born to a second-generation Italian mother and an Italian immigrant father, Venturi lived his early years in a neighborhood of respectable yet modest houses in Upper Darby, a Philadelphia suburb that was populated with working- and middle-class families. Venturi was, however, steeped in patrician culture and had an early comfort with affluence. As a child, he was educated at a Quaker school in Lansdowne, a suburb to the

¹ Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture and Other Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 230.

² The parcel is first documented in Robert Venturi’s 1959 plot plan, which is reproduced in Frederic Schwartz, ed., *Mother’s House: The Evolution of Vanna Venturi’s House in Chestnut Hill* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 61.

³ A deed of sale between Robert Venturi, Jr./Denise B. Venturi and Thomas Hughes /Agatha C. Hughes, 6 August 1973, references the 2 July, 1963 sale to Vanna Venturi. Deed Book 434/Page 553. On file, Philadelphia Department of Records.

⁴ Denise Scott Brown, interview by Kathleen M. Abplanalp. Philadelphia, Pa. 25 August, 2015. Denise Scott Brown notes that the move to Chestnut Hill affirmed Robert Venturi’s rise in “society.”

southwest of Philadelphia, and later at the Episcopal Academy, an exclusive private school on Philadelphia's Main Line.

The Philadelphia with which Venturi was familiar was famed for its collection of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century neighborhoods. Wealthy residents resided in select areas in and around the city, including Rittenhouse Square, Chestnut Hill, and the Main Line. Vanna Venturi was acquainted with the latter; in its Rosemont neighborhood, she had formerly occupied a house designed by society architects Savery, Sheetz, and Gilmour. Of Philadelphia's affluent enclaves, however, Chestnut Hill was and still is the most urbane. Chestnut Hill of the mid-century was home to scholars, academics, and architects. Venturi and his mother, who were both cerebral, were keen to surround themselves with similarly intellectual individuals.

Robert Venturi was also attracted to Chestnut Hill because of its outstanding design history. The village's building stock, an embarrassment of riches, was ceaselessly interesting to architects and historians.⁵ The "suburb in the city" was a home to an impressive collection of eighteenth, nineteenth, and early-twentieth-century buildings. Abundant in number and varied in style, vernacular and architect-designed, these buildings were the subject of multiple articles, books, and critiques.

Beginning in the period after the Depression, modernist buildings, too, began to dot Chestnut Hill's landscape. One of the earliest was a house by Kenneth Day, the Charles Woodward House of 1938-39 on Millman Street close to the future site of the Venturi House, followed by work in the 1940s by such important local firms as Bishop and Wright. In the 1950s, Robert Venturi worked on one of the most important modernist projects in Chestnut Hill of the post-World War II period – Cherokee Village – while in the office of Oskar Stonorov. This development project, which included apartments and townhouses for rent as well as free-standing houses for sale, soon became a magnet for intellectuals, artists, and designers who moved there after its completion.⁶ The arrival of these projects by noted modern designers established the neighborhood's growing reputation as an incubator for progressive architecture. While Venturi was working on his mother's house concurrently with Louis I. Kahn's famed project a half-block away for Margaret Esherick.

Resistance to the placement of these houses in the Chestnut Hill community receded slowly, however. Charles Woodward, a representative of George Woodward, Inc. and the son of its founder, recognized that Venturi's atypical residence had the potential to introduce an

⁵ William Whitaker, the curator and collections manager of the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, was helpful in identifying a Chestnut Hill Historical Society interview in which Robert Venturi talks about his appreciation for Chestnut Hill's distinctive architecture (Collection the Chestnut Hill Historical Society).

⁶ These residents included Ian McHarg, the Philadelphia-based landscape architect and world-renowned designer and ecologist. Emily T. Cooperman interview with Esther Cooperman, a resident of Cherokee Village in the 1950s, resident of Chestnut Hill in the 1960s-1980s, and acquaintance of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, 2004.

uncomfortable dissonance to a neighborhood that was largely characterized by late-nineteenth-century vernacular houses and stone, historicist residences of the early twentieth century. In response to Venturi's inquiry about purchasing the parcel at 8830 Millman Street, Woodward, responded that he was "perfectly willing to approve an avant-garde house as long as it was only controversial and not detrimental to the neighborhood."⁷

Designing

Robert Venturi maintains that in designing the Chestnut Hill house, his mother burdened him with few constraints; she did not want a pretentious or expensive house and she declined to incorporate a garage into the plan because she did not drive. This freedom presented Venturi with the latitude to realize his own vision of how a house should be experienced and understood, by both its owner and by the public.

When Venturi began to envision the house on paper, he was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania (among his colleagues was Louis Kahn) and had not yet independently completed a single building. Venturi's accumulated experiences, however, which included his education, his study in Europe, and his employment in acclaimed architectural offices, including Eero Saarinen's in addition to Kahn's and Stonorov's, endowed him with a foundation of ideas that influenced the design of the house. At Princeton, where he received A.B. and M.F.A in architecture, Venturi's training was heavily focused on history and the study of architectural theory. Venturi's study in England, France, and especially Italy (where he was a Rome Prize Fellow), intensified his interest in historic architecture. These experiences profoundly influenced his use of history as reference in his designs.

In his monograph, *Mother's House*, Frederic Schwartz characterizes the Vanna Venturi house as a "brick thrown at the window of modernism."⁸ Constructed during a period when the tenets of modernism emphasized abstract minimalism and still forcefully dictated the design of buildings, the house brazenly exploited features that were conspicuously anti-modernist, even traditionalist: a prominent gabled roof instead of a flat one, arches, framed windows with conspicuous muntins rather than fixed planes of uninterrupted glass, and a dominant vertical element that housed a central chimney, a quintessential symbol of the domestic house. Robert Venturi has noted that he took his ideas for the residence from classical and mannerist buildings including Luigi Moretti's Casa Del Giasole, Palladio's Villa Barbaro, and Michelangelo's Porta Pia. In his design, Venturi also referred to more recent buildings, including Edwin Lutyen's Middlefield, McKim, Meade and White's Low House, and Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye. Famously, he painted the house green in response to a public modernist's dictum that houses should never be green.

⁷ Text taken from a letter reproduced in Frederic Schwartz, ed., *Mother's House: The Evolution of Vanna Venturi's House in Chestnut Hill* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 6.

On more than one level, Venturi's affinity for historic forms was intolerable to orthodox adherents to the Modern Movement, although Venturi, like Louis Kahn, considers himself a modernist. Architects of modern buildings dispensed with historic elements with the aim of eliminating context and creating universal spaces, if not architectural truths. Their designs favored "clean lines" (an aphorism for simple, largely rectilinear prismatic massing, flat roofs, concrete walls, and ribbon windows) and precision. Venturi, by contrast, borrowed heavily from the past. In his mother's house, he alluded to Mannerist architecture to dramatic effect by employing a monumental gable with a broken pediment on the long facade. He gestured toward classical architecture with the application of a segmental arch over the front door. The arch was not merely a reference to traditional architecture. Used as a decorative element and applied to the face of the house, the arch offered no utility. Rather, it symbolized entry to the house. Its use in this way contradicted the modernist axiom, "Form Follows Function." The interior of the house contains similar contradictions, including stairs that lead to nowhere and an grandly scaled fireplace.

The design evolution of the Vanna Venturi house occurred over a period of three-and-a-half years, beginning from the time of the Chestnut Hill lot's purchase. It is documented in a set of five preliminary schemes and one final one. These schemes trace Venturi's shifting ideas and detail countless modifications to the house. They end in a final design that is complex but that also foregrounds and distills the everyday, iconic features of a house. Critics have frequently remarked, and Venturi has concurred, that the front façade of the house looks like a child's drawing of a house in its abstract epitome of key ideas and forms of domestic architecture. The massive, chimney-like roof monitor and broad gable do summon images of a humble sketch in its abstraction. Its presence in the design reflects Venturi's philosophy that buildings should acknowledge and embrace the ambiguities of modern culture. Venturi's outlined this philosophy in his seminal book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966). In many ways, the Venturi House represents the physical working out of the ideas he would publish in this book.

The final expression of the Vanna Venturi house can be more fully appreciated when viewed within the context of Venturi's personal and professional relationships with several leading figures of the period, including Louis Kahn. Venturi concedes, in fact, that the house "started out more like" the work of his mentor and one-time employer.⁹ If the 'ancestry' of the house cannot be rigidly charted, it may be that, as Vincent Scully suggests, "the forms original to the apprentice and to the master are not always easy to define."¹⁰

Scully's acknowledgement is also helpful in defining Denise Scott Brown's contribution to the design of the house. Over a period of more than 50 years, Denise Scott Brown and Robert

⁹ Robert Venturi, "Robert Venturi," in *Architect: The Words of the Pritzker Prize Laureates in their Own Words*, eds. Ruth Peltason and Grace Ong-Yan (New York: Black Dog and Levanthal Publishers, Inc., 2010), 226.

¹⁰ Vincent Scully, "Everybody Needs Everything," *Mother's House: The Evolution of Vanna Venturi's House in Chestnut Hill*, ed. Frederic Schwartz (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 44.

Venturi established a reputation as one of the foremost design teams of the twentieth century. Scott Brown and Venturi's business partnership started in 1967 when they were married. However, their professional relationship dates to 1960 when they first taught together in a studio at the University of Pennsylvania. As a city planner, Scott Brown theorized that historically, public spaces often evolved organically at the intersection of main streets. In her collaborations with Venturi, Scott Brown applied this theory to building design. Multiple Venturi, Scott Brown commissions contain 'streets' that cross through their interiors. In the Vanna Venturi house, Denise Scott Brown notes, the intersection of the streets creates "a room for living."¹¹

Legacy

When it was completed in the spring of 1964, the Vanna Venturi house attracted the immediate attention of architects and critics.¹² An *Evening Bulletin* review to which Romaldo Giurgola contributed characterized the commission as a "personal kind of house" and echoed Venturi's own sentiments about the value of juxtaposing the simple and the complex.¹³ *Progressive Architecture* acknowledged that the ability of the design to communicate the complexity of modern life was still debatable, but that "when experienced as a living entity, the house has an undoubted impact."¹⁴ During the years following its completion, a chorus of architects and critics echoed this pronouncement. If there is not universal affection for the house, there is consensus that the design vigorously represents a pioneering work of the twentieth century.

Criteria for Designation

The Vanna Venturi house meets multiple criteria for designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, as defined by the City of Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 14-1000, Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia zoning code.

The Vanna Venturi house satisfies Criteria D, E, and F:

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.

The Vanna Venturi house profoundly affected the course of modern architecture, opening it to reference, complexity, and ambiguity. One result of this opening was the later development of postmodernism. The Vanna Venturi house is one of a handful of Philadelphia buildings

¹¹ Scott Brown, interview.

¹² In July 1963, Robert Venturi obtained a city permit to build his mother's house on the Millman Street site. Building permit No. 88610. On file, City of Philadelphia Archives. Construction on the house occurred under the supervision of Venturi's new partner, John Rauch. The project's contractor, which the permit identifies as Edmund A. Moyer, had previously worked with Venturi on the North Penn Visiting Nurses' Association Headquarters.

¹³ Michelle Osborn, "A Personal Kind of House," *Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia), 15 October, 1965.

¹⁴ Ellen Perry, "Complexities and Contradictions," *Progressive Architecture* 46 (May 1965): 170.

(including Kahn's Richard and Goddard Buildings project at the University of Pennsylvania of 1959-1965) associated with the "Philadelphia School" that became and remains globally significant. It can be asserted with reason that this structure is one of the top ten most consequential buildings of the twentieth century. The work of this "school" challenged the orthodoxy of "International Style" modernism by engaging with context, environmental and sociological concerns, architectural history and precedent, as well as the question of monumental civic expression and symbolism in architecture. Venturi and Scott Brown resisted applying the term "postmodern" to their work. They have viewed their work, rather, as an extension of Modernism. Robert Venturi received the AIA Twenty-Five Year Award (1989) for the design of the Vanna Venturi house.

(e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

The prominent Philadelphia architect Robert Venturi designed the Vanna Venturi house, and it represents a crucial moment in his career. Venturi is among the most distinguished architects of the second half of the twentieth century. His commissions, which were frequently executed in collaboration with his wife and professional partner, Denise Scott Brown, were expressions of his groundbreaking theory about the value of complexity and contradiction in architecture. Venturi's work, (exemplified by Vanna Venturi House), his teaching at Penn (1956-65), and his writing (particularly *Complexity & Contradiction*, 1966), dramatically opened pathways closed in more orthodox definitions of modernism. In this respect, Venturi set a generation of architects "free."

(f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

The novel use of symbolism, historic forms, and prosaic elements in the Vanna Venturi house represents a significant innovation not just in American but in architecture internationally. Robert Venturi applied (if not worked out) his theory of "complexity and contradiction" to the design of the house by rhetorically distorting the scale of architectural devices, adopting functional elements purely for ornamentation, and using conventional building components in unconventional ways. The Vanna Venturi house represents a radical departure from the modernist architecture that preceded it and is the design to which postmodern buildings trace their origin.

8. Major Bibliographical References

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City of Philadelphia

Department of Records.

City Archives

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Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966.



Masterworks of Modern American Architecture

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

1. We, Elaine and Jim Ballangee, own and live in 240 West Gravers Lane, Philadelphia.
2. Our house is located at the Northwest corner of West Gravers Lane and Navajo Street.
3. Our Southeast property line also serves as the Northwest property line for the parcel of land on which sits the Vanna Venturi house.
4. In January, 2022, David Lockard, who owns and lives in the Vanna Venturi house ^(at 8330 Millman Street,) spoke with Jim and explained that (1) a wall of the accessory dwelling unit he hopes to build near his existing shed would be situated 8 feet from our common property line, and (2) the governing regulations and codes call for the wall to be set back at least 10 feet from our common property line. David asked Jim if we would have any objection to his proposed construction if the wall was only 8 feet from our common property line. Jim answered that we have no objection to an 8 foot set back.
5. With this 'TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN' document we reiterate, in writing, that we do not object to the proposed 8 foot set back for David's proposed construction.
6. Finally, we do not object to construction of the accessory dwelling unit.



Elaine Ballangee

Date: 1/23/2022



Jim Ballangee

Date: 1/23/2022

Interior Stairwell



result in the diminution of the historic character of the Vanna Venturi House.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided rotating the building is explored, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:03:30

PRESENTERS:

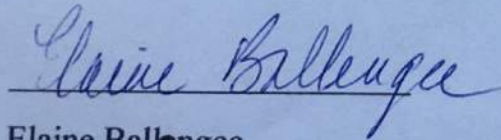
- Ms. Keller presented the application to the Architectural Committee.
- Architects Donna Lisle and Juliet Fajardo represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Lisle stated that they are proposing a separate Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) because it would be inappropriate to add onto the iconic Vanna Venturi House, one of the most famous architectural landmarks of the twentieth century. She added that it would be difficult to modify the interior of the Vanna Venturi House to accommodate future needs.
- Mr. Detwiler asked the applicants to address the staff's question about rotating the ADU building 90 degrees.
 - Ms. Lisle responded that the team initially considered it. While it positioned the ADU further from the historic building, she continued, the ADU would be much more visible. By facing the house, she added, it would engage the house and become part of the design. She commented that their intent is to create a modest building that defers to the Vanna Venturi House. She explained that the ADU is sited where there is lots of vegetation and where it can be subsidiary.
- Mr. McCoubrey asked whether the proposed setbacks are the minimum required.
 - Ms. Fajardo confirmed that the 10-foot and 8-foot setbacks are the minimum. She added that when they explored rotating the building, it became visible from inside the historic house. She questioned whether it would be appropriate to view the ADU from inside the Vanna Venturi House. She argued that, in its current location, the proposed building would not be visible from the street or from inside the house.
 - Mr. McCoubrey agreed with the decision, adding that rotating the building would cause it to project into the grassy portion of the landscape. He also agreed that the building would be visible from the interior of the historic house.
 - Mr. Cluver agreed, adding that he considered whether rotating it would be better, but concluded that the current siting is preferred.
- Mr. Cluver asked whether the Committee accepts the principle of the ADU and whether further discussion of its appropriateness is warranted, or if the Committee accepts the ADU and would like to discuss details. He added that he finds it to be acceptable.
 - Mr. McCoubrey replied that he is very familiar with the house, noting that it is extremely small. He elaborated that, as an alternative to an addition, the proposed ADU is far preferable. He affirmed that the site for the ADU is remarkably invisible, given the vegetation. Part of a rationale for an ADU at this location, he continued, is that the house is so small and that the ADU will allow for a larger family to reside at the property or for guests to be accommodated.

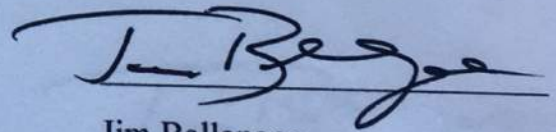
- Mr. McCoubrey asked to review the options presented in the application, noting that the options show different rooflines. He stated that he would strongly support the simple shed rather than the parapeted version. He suggested that the applicant drop down the portion of the roof facing the historic house.
- Mr. Detwiler questioned whether the slope could be increased to be closer to the slope of the house. He stated it looked a little flat. He added that he supports the additional building on the property but noted that the footprint of the proposed building is as wide as the existing house. He questioned whether the footprint could be reduced and whether the corner closest to the house could be further set back.
 - Ms. Fajardo answered that she considered those requests, adding that the ADU is only 800 square feet and that every square foot is needed. She remarked that the design includes an area to allow an existing Japanese maple to remain. The design decision, she elaborated, was to further integrate the garden into the unit.
 - Mr. McCoubrey suggested that when the applicants submit for final approval, they look at options that eliminate the court space and show how the footprint could be reduced.
- Mr. Detwiler agreed with Mr. McCoubrey that the parapets should be eliminated, adding that he liked the switchback roofs.
 - Mr. McCoubrey commented that the parapets on the original house have caused issues.
 - Ms. Fajardo stated that the parapet was included to mimic the Vanna Venturi House and that they would serve mostly as a rainscreen. She elaborated that she thought the parapet would create a softer edge and allow the roof to look more permeable and temporal.
- Mr. D'Alessandro argued that water needs to be removed from the roof quickly, owing to the amount and speed of rainfall in the area. He stated that parapets trap water.
 - Ms. Lisle responded that they were considering inline gutters for the parapeted design.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that removing the parapets reduces the height of the building and makes the building less intrusive in the landscape.
 - Ms. Lisle raised the issue that mechanical equipment will need to be installed on the east side of the building and that they cannot lower the building much further than shown.
 - Mr. Detwiler agreed that the applicants are showing a low-profile building. He added that he finds it acceptable to increase the slope slightly at the back of the building.
- Ms. Stein observed that cedar siding is proposed for much of the building but noted that the drawings show flat areas. She questioned whether the flat areas would be stuccoed.
 - Ms. Fajardo answered that they are still in-concept with materials and are exploring stucco in the flat areas.
 - Ms. Lisle added that the stucco would be used in select areas to bring cohesion to the site. She elaborated that they may incorporate Wissahickon schist into the low retaining walls to reference the stone used around Chestnut Hill. She described the site's topography and the intent behind the grading of the new structure.
 - Mr. Detwiler supported the use of schist.
 - Mr. McCoubrey agreed that the gray palette would be appropriate, adding that he thought the wood siding would be appropriate cladding for the entire building

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Elaine Ballangee

Date: 1/23/2022



Jim Ballangee

Date: 1/23/2022

Monday, February 7, 2022

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Opinion



Robert Venturi's iconic Chestnut Hill cottage is a pioneer for a new form of housing

The owner of the famous house wants to build a backyard cottage known as an ADU to house his multigenerational family.



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David Lockard (right), who now owns Robert Venturi's iconic Chestnut Hill House, asked architect Juliet Fajardo (left) to design a separate cottage on the property to accommodate hi ... [Read more](#)
JESSICA GRIFFIN / Staff Photographer

by Inga Saffron | Columnist
Updated Feb 4, 2022

David Lockard's compact, two-story house in Chestnut Hill seemed plenty big enough when he bought it in 2016. Then came the pandemic. His partner, who normally lives in Dallas, decided she would wait things out in Philadelphia. It wasn't long before their adult children, along with their significant others, were clamoring to join their pod. At the height of the lockdown in 2020, seven people and a dog were hunkered down in the house's five tiny rooms.

This was not just any small house, mind you. Lockard is the [latest person to inhabit](#) what is probably the [most famous residence in Philadelphia](#), the pop art cottage designed by architect [Robert Venturi](#) for his mother in 1964 — a work of architecture so significant, it was honored with a U.S. postage stamp.

Since moving in, Lockard has faithfully accommodated himself to Venturi's vision, arranging his furniture as Venturi suggested, stacking his

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Monday, February 7, 2022

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The five-room Chestnut Hill house that architect Robert Venturi designed for his mother, Vanna, in 1964, is considered one of the most important American buildings of the 20th century.
JESSICA GRIFFIN / Staff Photographer

Still, during those long months of forced togetherness with his blended family, Lockard, like many American homeowners, couldn't help dreaming of ways to gain more space. He knew that any addition that involved breaking through a wall or raising the roof was out of the question. Even if Lockard had wanted to mess with the [legally designated architectural landmark](#) — which he didn't — it's hard to imagine the Historical Commission would allow such tampering.

It turns out there was a simple solution to Lockard's predicament, and it could provide a template for other Philadelphia homeowners.

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» **READ MORE:** [Philadelphia architect Robert Venturi led the rebellion against modernism](#)

Lockard has requested a zoning variance for a second residential structure on his property, a two-bedroom cabin that would be located a discreet distance from Venturi's icon. Once known as a granny flat or in-law suite, such backyard apartments now go by a more formal, and formidable, name: [Accessory Dwelling Unit](#), or ADU. Although the form has been on the books in Philadelphia since 2012, when the zoning code



Diana Lind, author of [Brave New Home](#), have argued that ADUs are a necessary response to changes in the way Americans live. With more multigenerational families, more blended families, and more boomerang kids, the basic single-family home no longer suits everyone. Many believe ADUs can make it easier for older people to stay with their families and age in place. They also have a role in creating affordable housing because granny flats and backyard apartments can be a politically palatable way to increase density, especially in suburban areas where rentals are virtually nonexistent. They've even gotten a boost from heritage groups like Philadelphia's Preservation Alliance, which believe the rental income from an ADU can offset the cost of maintaining historic homes.

Maybe because ADUs offer something for everyone, they've been relatively uncontroversial, at least compared with other kinds of low-cost housing. So far, 98 of the 350 towns in the Philadelphia metro area have legalized the form, according to a survey conducted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. "We were surprised by the number," Karin Morris, the agency's director of community planning, told me. Still, it's not clear how many units have actually been built.

She noted that Portland, Ore., which was an early and enthusiastic supporter of ADUs, has produced very few granny flats so far. Los Angeles, which faces a dire housing shortage, has only [just started to see the numbers rise](#). One of the big challenges, Morris said, is that most lenders don't have a way to approve mortgages for ADUs, forcing homeowners to finance them with cash or a home equity loan.

Those constraints explain why stand-alone ADUs, like the one Lockard hopes to build, are so rare. Most granny flats are carved into existing structures, like garages, gardener's cottages, and finished basements. While not officially considered ADUs, you can find apartments in some old carriage houses in Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill. But those were probably approved under the old zoning code, when such properties were zoned as multifamily dwellings. Philadelphia's [ADU law](#), which was [amended in 2020](#), and again in 2021, is maddeningly complex, which is one reason that Lockard still needs a zoning variance. Four City Council districts [restrict](#) the location of ADUs, and two others don't allow them at all.



Lockard, a lawyer, was hardly expecting to be a housing pioneer when he decided to build his ADU. Even before the pandemic, he and his partner, Jing Ling-Tam, a professional musician, had been trying to figure out how to fit a piano into the Venturi house's small living room. Lockard was also worried about his 94-year-old mother, who now lives in New Hampshire. And he knew it wouldn't be long until one of three adult children made him a grandfather.

"This isn't a great house for little kids," he said, with a wave at Venturi's narrow staircase.

With nearly an acre of land, Lockard had plenty of room to build. The challenge was to come up with an 800-square-foot design that didn't compete with the iconic house. After long discussions with neighbors and architectural historians, the project's architects, [Juliet Fajardo](#) and [Donna Lisle](#), selected a spot at the far corner of the site, next to the driveway, where it won't interfere with the postcard view of the Venturi house facade.

"We didn't want the people in the Venturi house to see another Venturi house," explained [Fajardo](#), and that area "was kind of a dead zone."

Deferential didn't mean the structure couldn't be elegant. Fajardo and Lisle looked to Japanese wooden houses, which are known for their understated details, for inspiration. They settled on a long, low structure, set on a slab, then gave it a gently pitched roof to hide the mechanical systems. On the side facing the garden, they cut in a glass-walled niche that will let light into the main rooms. Keeping with the Japanese aesthetic, they intend to plant a dwarf maple in the opening. The exterior



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The ADU's interior was organized to accommodate the widest variety of people — single adults, couples, small children, and elderly parents. Each bedroom is treated as an independent apartment, with its own bathroom and private entrance. The architects also made the larger bedroom accessible to people with physical disabilities. While the living room is sized for two pianos, the kitchenette is bare bones — just a small fridge and cooktop. Thanksgiving dinners will still have to be prepared in the main house.

Now, Lockard just has to get the project approved. The Historical Commission has already [given the Fajardo-Lisle design a thumbs-up](#). But that's just the beginning.


If Lockard were simply building a single-family house, it's likely that no one would have asked him who its occupants would be. But because it's an ADU, he had to stipulate to the Chestnut Hill Community Association that he would never use it as a short-term rental on Airbnb or other services. Once he made that promise, the project received a warm reception. It still needs to pass two more levels of community association review, however. Then it's on to the Zoning Board for variances.

Ironically, the project wouldn't have needed those variances if Venturi had built a garage on the property for his mother back in 1964, since it could easily be converted to an apartment. But Vanna Venturi didn't drive and didn't want the expense.




could be developed more expeditiously and less expensively. There's no doubt he's gotten this far because he hired good architects who produced a quality design.

Because of the Venturi house's renown, Lockard's project could help raise the profile of ADUs, assuming it's approved. And, then, this pioneering work of architecture could become a pioneer for a new kind of housing.

Published Feb. 4, 2022



Inga Saffron



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Robert Thomas, AIA
Chair

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director

24 January 2022

Donna Lisle
Donna Lisle, Architecture and Design
315 Righters Mill Road
Gladwyne, PA 19035

Re: 8330 MILLMAN ST; Construct building for accessory dwelling unit

Dear Ms. Lisle:

On 14 January 2022, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed your application for 8330 MILLMAN ST and its Architectural Committee's report and recommendation of 21 December 2021. At that time, the Historical Commission voted to approve the application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Guidelines for New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings and Related New Construction, and the Historical Commission's 10 December 2021 approval of an in-concept application.

To complete the processing of your application, please submit an application reflecting the proposal approved by the Historical Commission to the Department of Licenses & Inspections using eCLIPSE, the Department's electronic commercial licensing, inspection, and permit service enterprise, which can be found online at this link:

<https://eclipse.phila.gov/phillylmsprod/pub/lms/Login.aspx>

If the Historical Commission's approval authorizes its staff to review details, you may provide those details through eCLIPSE or transmit them directly to the Historical Commission's staff using instructions, which can be found online at this link:

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20200511142108/PHC-Remote-Business-Instructions-v2.pdf>

You have the right to appeal the Historical Commission's decision, pursuant to Section 14-1008 of the Philadelphia Code, which reads:

Appeals. Any person aggrieved by the issuance or denial of any permit reviewed by the Commission may appeal such action to the Board of License and Inspection Review. Such appeal must be filed within 30 days of the date of receipt of notification of the Commission's action. The Board of License and Inspection Review shall give written notice of any such appeal to the Commission within three days of the filing of the appeal.

Information about the Board of License and Inspection Review is available online at this link:

<https://www.phila.gov/departments/board-of-license-and-inspection-review/> If you have any questions regarding the review or appeal processes, please do not hesitate to contact the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission at preservation@phila.gov.

Yours truly,

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director