

**BEFORE THE LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF  
ARCHITECTURAL EXAMINERS**

IN THE MATTER OF:  
GABRIEL D. RATCLIFF  
CASE NO. 2025-64

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER**

A hearing of the captioned matter was held before the Louisiana State Board of Architectural Examiners (“LSBAE”) on March 6, 2026, at the board office, 9625 Fenway Avenue, Suite B, Baton Rouge, LA 70809. The prosecuting attorney was John C. Miller, Butler Snow, City Plaza, 445 North Blvd #300, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, and the LSBAE was represented by W. Carlos Spaht, Alexander Sides Spaht & Mullins, LLC, 10214 Jefferson Hwy, Baton Rouge, LA 70809. Gabriel Ratcliff appeared. On the basis of testimony and other evidence presented, the LSBAE makes the following findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order.<sup>1</sup>

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Gabriel D. Ratcliff (“Ratcliff” or “Respondent”) is not and has never been registered or licensed as an architect in the State of Louisiana. He has a residential and commercial contractor’s license, and on the projects that are the subject of this Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order, he was the “contractor and owner.” (Tr. at pp. 78-79)

2. Thomas E. Doll, a licensed Louisiana architect, was hired by Respondent to draw plans for four residential projects in New Orleans: 1634 Florida, New Orleans (plans dated July 12, 2022); 7008 Collapissa, New Orleans (plans dated June 4, 2023); 1915 Montegut, New Orleans (plans dated July 28, 2023), and 2136 Feliciana, New Orleans (plans dated September 23, 2023).

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<sup>1</sup> Board members David K. Brossett, John E. Cardone, Jr., Kristine Kobil, and Stephen M. Long were present during the hearing and concur in these findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order. Board members Michael F. Holly, Christian R. Elbertson, and Jason I. Zuckerman recused themselves and did not participate in any way in these findings, conclusions, or order.

The plans for the four residential projects described in this paragraph, all prepared by Doll, are sometimes referred to hereafter collectively as the “Doll plans.”

3. The Doll plans were stamped by Mr. Doll and delivered or otherwise provided to Respondent for construction of the residences described therein.

4. Ratcliff mentioned to Mr. Doll that “he had more projects coming in the future.” (Tr. at p. 85). These projects were related to NORA (New Orleans Redevelopment Authority). *Id.* Ratcliff asked Mr. Doll to lower his price for these additional projects, but Mr. Doll refused. *Id.*

5. Without the written or verbal approval of Mr. Doll, the Doll plans were duplicated and used by Respondent without Mr. Doll’s knowledge or approval for residences at 2213 Bartholomew St., New Orleans; 2307 Desire St., New Orleans; 2332 Mazant St., New Orleans; 2135 Piety St., New Orleans; and 2138 Piety St., New Orleans; and 2422 Piety St., New Orleans.

6. More specifically, pursuant to a written proposal dated July 3, 2023, from Mr. Doll to Respondent for “basic architectural plans” for “Residence for ‘Gabe Ratcliff’ 1915 Montegut St. New Orleans, LA,” accepted by Respondent on July 26, 2023, Mr. Doll prepared plans for 1915 Montegut, New Orleans, LA dated July 28, 2023. (Tr. Ex. 3-B) Without the knowledge or approval (written or otherwise) of Mr. Doll, the plans for 1915 Montegut were duplicated and replicated by or for the benefit of Respondent for 2138 Piety, New Orleans, LA and dated October 30, 2023. (Tr. Ex. 4). The plans for 2138 Piety continued to bear Mr. Doll’s architect stamp (even though Mr. Doll prepared no plans for 2138 Piety St.), and a note was added to Sheet A1 of the plans stating “PROPOSED RESIDENCE FOR A&GR18, LLC 2138 PIETY ST NEW ORLEANS LA.” *Id.* At the hearing, Ratcliff testified that he was associated with A&GR18, LLC, which was owned by him and his ex-wife. (Tr. at 58)

7. The drawings for 1915 Montegut St. and 2138 Piety St. are virtually identical. In addition to the stamp of Mr. Doll on the drawings for 2138 Piety, many of the drawings contain Mr. Doll's name in small print in the bottom left corner.

8. In March of 2024, Mr. Doll discovered that his plans for 1915 Montegut had been replicated and submitted by or on behalf of Ratcliff for permitting for 2138 Piety. On March 7, 2024, Mr. Doll emailed Ratcliff:

Mr. Ratcliff  
you changed those plans without my permission and submitted them to the city of new  
orleans  
That's NOT right and you know it.  
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(Tr. Exhibit 4-A)

9. In response to an inquiry from the board, the City of New Orleans identified Ratcliff as the applicant for the permit. (Tr. Exhibit 2-C). Ratcliff was the general contractor for 2138 Piety, and Ratcliff knew that "[t]he way the permitting process works, the general contractor has to be the applicant because you have to have a licensed general contractor to apply for new construction." (Tr. at p. 61) Ratcliff was the owner and contractor. (Tr. at p. 79) He established a Safe Balance account to pay for the permit submission. (Tr. at p. 71)

10. Ratcliff claims that, even though he is identified on the application as the applicant, he did not *personally* submit the plans for permitting. Rather, he hired a "permit expediter," who was the person who *personally* submitted the plans for permitting. In correspondence to the Executive Director of NORA, Ratcliff described his relationship with the permit expediter as follows:

"When applying for the permits, I [Ratcliff] utilize a third-party firm – Resolute Permit Solutions – to streamline the submission process and facilitate document requests and revisions from the City." (Tr. Ex. 10)

11. The board finds that Respondent submitted the plans to the City through his authorized agent who was acting within his authority to submit the permit application and that Ratcliff participated in the submission. Ratcliff hired the permit expediter. Ratcliff authorized the expediter to use his (Ratcliff's) "log in details" on the One Stop app. (Tr. at 87) Ratcliff paid for the submission. Ratcliff knew that the City of New Orleans required that the general contractor submit the application. (Tr. at 61)

12. Regardless, the primary issue before the board for 2138 Piety is whether Ratcliff *used* the Doll plans without the written approval of Mr. Doll. *See* R.S. 37:152(A)(2). The evidence that the Doll plans were *used* by Ratcliff to obtain a permit and construct the residence at 2138 Piety is overwhelming. The plans for 2138 Piety contain Mr. Doll's architect stamp on every sheet and his name in small print in the bottom-left on many of them. (Tr. Ex. 4). Ratcliff admits that he reviewed the completed plans for submission to the permitting authority. (Tr. Ex. 2-A) The plans were submitted and the permit was issued. Ratcliff testified, "I wait for the stamped plans and I use those to build." (Tr. at p. 59) Ratcliff provided the plans to his subcontractors, who used those to build. (Tr. at p. 67) The board makes a finding of fact that Ratcliff *used* the Doll plans for 2138 Piety without the written approval of Doll.

13. After Ratcliff received Mr. Doll's email dated March 7, 2024, he communicated with Clifton C. James, a licensed Louisiana architect, about doing work for him on three additional projects. (Tr. at pp. 55, 68) James' son sent a sample of sealed drawings to Ratcliff to show what James could do. (Tr. at 52) No agreement was ultimately reached between Ratcliff and Clifton James because Ratcliff would not agree to James' pricing. (Tr. at p. 68) Ratcliff summarized his relationship with Clifton James in his reply letter dated July 29, 2025 as follows:

I do not have, and have never had, any formal or contractual relationship with architect Clifton C. James. I initially reached out to Mr. James to obtain pricing for

drafting services for these three projects [2213 Bartholomew Street, 2135 Piety, and 2422 Piety]. However, his fees were beyond my budget. During our brief correspondence, he shared some of his previous work as examples. These examples, along with Mr. Doll's prior project plans, were part of the reference package I shared with the freelance drafter. Mr. James did not participate in, approve, or stamp any of the drawings ultimately submitted. (Tr. Ex. 2-A)

14. Despite no agreement having ever been reached between Ratcliff and James, the stamp and logo of James was affixed to the plans for 2213 Bartholomew Street, 2135 Piety, and 2422 Piety, three more residences built by Ratcliff as the contractor. (Tr. Exhibits 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C) And while the stamp and logo of Clifton C. James were affixed to these drawings, the inscription "THOMAS E. DOLL ARCHITECT" in small print continues to appear in the bottom left corner of many of them, showing that Mr. Doll actually prepared these drawings. The board finds that the architect stamp of Mr. Doll was removed from the Doll plans without his permission or approval (written or otherwise). The board also finds that Mr. James did not prepare or supervise the preparation of any of these plans, did not stamp them, and that his stamp (or a replication of his stamp) was affixed to the subject plans without his approval.

15. Like the plans for 2138 Piety Street, the plans for these three residences contain, respectively, an additional note on Sheet A1 of each set stating "PROPOSED RESIDENCE FOR A&GR18, LLC 2213 BARTHOLOMEW ST NEW ORLEANS LA," "PROPOSED RESIDENCE FOR A&GR18, LLC 2135 PIETY ST NEW ORLEANS LA," and "PROPOSED RESIDENCE FOR A&GR18, LLC 2422 PIETY ST NEW ORLEANS LA." Sheet A-1 of the subject plans provides:

"OWNER INFO  
A&GR18,L.L.C.  
Mr. Gabe Ratcliff  
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As stated earlier, Ratcliff admitted at the hearing that he was the owner and contractor of the subject properties. (Tr. at p. 79)

16. Ratcliff claims that he did not *personally* remove Mr. Doll's logo or stamp or *personally* apply James' stamp or logo to the subject plans. He suggests that such actions must have been done by a freelance drafter from India or Bangladesh whom he found through the freelance platform Guru.com and hired. Ratcliff provided the drafter with "prior plans that Mr. Doll had worked on for other properties" and the "sample drawings" obtained from James. (Tr. Ex. 2-A) The plans that Ratcliff provided to the drafter had Doll's logo and stamp.

17. Not one but *three* sets of plans submitted to the permitting authority included the logo and stamp of a person (Clifton James) whom Ratcliff had concluded was "beyond my budget." (Tr. Ex. 2-A) Ratcliff admitted that his responsibilities as applicant included "reviewing the completed plans for submission to the permitting authorities ..." (Tr. Ex. 2-A) Ratcliff further admitted that he used the stamped plans to build. (Tr. at 59). Ratcliff admitted that, at the very least, he reviewed the plans when he sends them to his subcontractors. (Tr. at 67). That these were the same Doll plans which Ratcliff had previously used had to have been recognized by Ratcliff.

18. For the residences at 2213 Bartholomew Street, 2135 Piety, and 2422 Piety, the board makes a finding of fact that Ratcliff *used* the Doll plans without Mr. Doll's approval (written or otherwise). and that Ratcliff participated in such removal and application. Ratcliff hired the freelance drafter. Ratcliff provided the freelance drafter with the Doll plans and the Clifton James sample drawings. Ratcliff reviewed the plans submitted to the permitting office for such residences, such plans clearly showing the removal of Doll's stamp and the application of James' stamp. Ratcliff knew that James' "fees were beyond [his] budget." (Tr. Ex. 2-A) In addition to

reviewing the plans bearing James' logo and seal, Ratcliff used such plans to construct the residences at 2213 Bartholomew Street, 2135 Piety, and 2422 Piety, as he was the general contractor for such residences. For such residences, the board makes further findings of fact that Ratcliff, through his authorized agent, removed the stamp of Mr. Doll and applied the stamp of Clifton C. James without James' approval (written or otherwise).

19. The board makes findings of fact that the Doll plans were also duplicated and replicated by or for the benefit of Respondent for 2307 Desire St., New Orleans, and 2332 Mazant St., New Orleans. The board finds that the architect stamp of Mr. Doll was removed from the Doll plans for these residences without his permission or approval (written or otherwise), and the duplicated plans for these residences each bears the stamp of a licensed Louisiana professional engineer. Like the plans for 2138 Piety Street, the plans for these two residences contain, respectively, a note on Sheet A1 of each set stating, "PROPOSED RESIDENCE FOR A&GR18, LLC 2307 DESIRE ST NEW ORLEANS LA" and "PROPOSED RESIDENCE FOR A&GR18, LLC 2332 MAZANT ST NEW ORLEANS LA." The OWNER INFO on these duplicated plans identifies the OWNER as "A&GR18, LLC MR. GABE RATCLIFF." Except for some minor changes to the structural plans, the plans for these two residences are virtually identical to the Doll plans.

20. La. R.S. 37:145(A) provides that no person shall practice architecture in this State unless such person shall have secured from the board a certificate of registration and license in the manner therein provided, and shall thereafter comply with the provisions of the laws of the State of Louisiana governing the registration and licensing of architects.

21. La. R.S. 37:152(A)(2) provides that the removal of an architect's seal or stamp, and/or use of an architect's plans, unless otherwise provided by law or by written approval of the architect, shall be a violation of this Chapter.

22. La. R.S. 37:154(A) provides that any person, corporation, company, partnership, firm, business entity, or individual, who shall practice, or offer to practice, architecture in this State without being certified in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, or any person presenting or attempting to use as his own the certificate of registration or the seal of another, or any person who shall give any false or forged evidence of any kind to the board, or to any member thereof, in obtaining a certificate of registration, or any person who shall falsely impersonate any other registrant or certificate holder of like or different name, or any person who shall attempt to use an expired or revoked certificate of registration, or any person, applicant, registrant, or certificate holder who shall violate any of the provisions of this Chapter, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

23. La. R.S. 37:154(C)(1)(a) provides that the board shall ensure enforcement of the provisions of the Architect Licensing Law, and the board may, after notice and hearing and by a majority vote of the entire membership authorized to participate in the proceeding, fine any person found to have violated this Chapter [the Architect Licensing Law]. The fine shall not exceed one thousand five hundred dollars per violation in the case of an individual.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

24. The board concludes that Ratcliff used architectural plans originally prepared by a licensed architect, Thomas E. Doll, without the written approval of that architect in violation of La. R.S. 37:154(A)(2). More specifically, the board concludes that Ratcliff used the architectural plans prepared by Mr. Doll without his written approval in connection with 2138 Piety St., New Orleans; 2213 Bartholomew St., New Orleans; 2307 Desire St., New Orleans; 2332 Mazant St.,

New Orleans; 2135 Piety St., New Orleans; and 2422 Piety St., New Orleans, and thus committed six violations of such statute. This use violated the Architect Licensing Law (La. R. S. 37:141 et seq., specifically La. R.S. 37:152(A)(2)) and constitutes sufficient cause for the fining of Ratcliff pursuant to R.S. 37:154(C)(1)(a) in the amount of one thousand five hundred dollars per violation, plus all reasonable costs incurred in connection with this disciplinary proceeding, including investigator fees, stenographer fees, and attorneys' fees pursuant to La. R.S. 37:154(E). The board is unpersuaded by Ratcliff's testimony that he bears no responsibility for these six statutory violations because he did not personally submit Mr. Doll's architectural plans to the permitting authority.

25. The board concludes that Ratcliff removed the seal or stamp of a Louisiana licensed architect, Thomas E. Doll, from architectural drawings in violation of La. R.S. 37:152(A)(2). More specifically, the board concludes that Ratcliff removed the seal or stamp of Mr. Doll in connection with five projects: 2213 Bartholomew St., New Orleans; 2307 Desire St., New Orleans; 2332 Mazant St., New Orleans; 2135 Piety St., New Orleans; and 2422 Piety St., New Orleans, and thus committed five violations of such statute. This use violated the Architect Licensing Law (La. R. S. 37:141 et seq., specifically La. R.S. 37:152(A)(2)) and constitutes sufficient cause for the fining of Ratcliff pursuant to R.S. 37:154(C)(1)(a) in the amount of seven hundred fifty dollars per violation, plus all reasonable costs incurred in connection with this disciplinary proceeding, including investigator fees, stenographer fees, and attorneys' fees pursuant to R.S.37:154(E). The board is unpersuaded by Ratcliff's testimony that he bears no responsibility for these five statutory violations because he did not personally remove Mr. Doll's seal or stamp from his architectural drawings.

26. The board concludes that Ratcliff used as his own the seal or stamp of a Louisiana licensed architect, Clifton C. James, without the written approval of that architect in violation of La. R.S. 37:154(A). More specifically, the board concludes that Ratcliff used the seal or stamp of Clifton C. James without the written approval of that architect in connection with three projects: 2213 Bartholomew St., New Orleans; 2135 Piety St., New Orleans; and 2422 Piety St., New Orleans. This use violated the Architect Licensing Law (La. R. S. 37:141 et seq., specifically La. R.S. 37:154(A)) and constitutes sufficient cause for the fining of Ratcliff pursuant to R.S. 37:154(C)(1)(a) in the amount of one thousand five hundred dollars per violation, plus all reasonable costs incurred in connection with this disciplinary proceeding, including investigator fees, stenographer fees, and attorneys' fees pursuant to R.S.37:154(E). The board is unpersuaded by Ratcliff's testimony that he bears no responsibility for these three statutory violations because he did not personally use Mr. James's seal or stamp without written approval.

### **ORDER**

1. IT IS ORDERED that Ratcliff is FINED the total sum of \$17,250.00, and IT IS ORDERED that Gabriel D. Ratcliff pay this fine; the attorney's fees incurred by the LSBAE for John C. Miller (\$5,275.00), W. Carlos Spaht (\$2,590.00), and Paul H. Spaht (\$1,200.00); the costs charged by the court reporter, CRLA Veritext Company, for transcribing this hearing (\$1,066.00), and the costs and expenses incurred by the LSBAE (\$756.74) related to this case; or the TOTAL SUM of \$27,071.74.

2. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that these findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order shall be posted on the board website; that a summary of this matter and these findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order shall be published in the official newsletter of the LSBAE, *Louisiana Architect*, and that these findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order be reported to

the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards ("NCARB") Disciplinary Database, all identifying Gabriel Ratcliff by name.

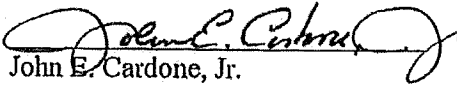
**REVIEW**

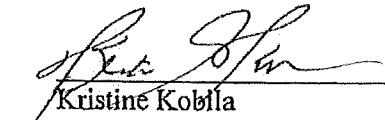
This Order is entered pending review and written approval by the Louisiana Department of Justice. If approved, the date of the final Order shall be the date the Louisiana Department of Justice issues written approval of the Order.

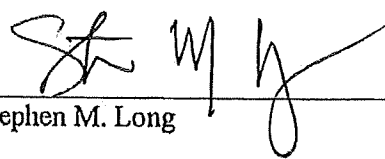
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this 18 day of June, 2026.

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF  
ARCHITECTURAL EXAMINERS

  
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John E. Cardone, Jr.

  
Kristine Kobila

  
Stephen M. Long