

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Offices, One Parkway, 13th Floor, 1515 Arch Street
29 August 2000

Present

Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair
Rudolph D'Alessandro
Suzanne Pentz

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Julianne Brennan, Historic Preservation Planner
Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Sara Jane Elk, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Inc
Zilan Munas, 221 Fitzwater Street
RCH Architects
Dominic Aspite, 1030 Irving Street
Grace Schuyler, 1030 Irving Street
Sam Olshin, Atkin, Olshin, Lawson-Bell Associates Architects
Rebecca Stoloff, Society Hill Civic Association
Bernice Hamel, Society Hill Civic Association
Phillip King, Phillip King Company
Donald Kushon
Ronald Patterson, Klehr, Harrison, Harvey Branzburg and Ellers
Francisco Lozada Jr., 5404 Walker Street
Marylin Lozada, 5404 Walker Street
Farid A. Gilan, 1635 Spruce Street
Clark Pease, 2742 South 10th Street
Oscar Soldano, 2012 Spruce Street
Marguerite Rodgers
Melanie Piltch
Charles Evers, Atkins, Olshin, Lawson-Bell Associates Architects
Lisa Dustin, Atkins, Olshin, Lawson-Bell Associates Architects
Spence Kass, Kass and Associates
Allen Model, 1720 Delancey Street
Michael A. Gresko III, Kise, Straw and Kolodner
John Gibbons, Kise, Straw and Kolodner

Robert Thomas, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m.

2107 Fairmount Avenue, Eastern State Penitentiary

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Sally Jane Elk, Applicant

DATE: 1825; altered 1889

PROPOSAL: Exterior lighting

The applicant proposes to light the walls of Eastern State Penitentiary to highlight the architecture of the building, setting most of the fixtures into the ground or behind window openings. The staff recommended approval.

Ms. Elk attended the meeting to answer questions and explain the proposal. She proposes re-opening windows previously closed for the lighting.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

245 Race Street, a.k.a. 201-203 North 3rd Street

Michael Yaron, Owner

Albert Taus, Applicant

DATE: c. 1853

PROPOSAL: Fire stair and openings

At a previous meeting, the Commission approved a fire stair and openings at this property; however, the Department of Licenses and Inspection required a roof over the fire stair to meet the fire code. Given the limited visibility of the rear addition, Mr. Baron suggested a staff approval if the Committee concurred.

The Committee concurred.

221 Fitzwater Street

Zilan Munas, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1830-1899

PROPOSAL: Rear alteration

The applicant proposes to install large windows in the frame structure at the rear of a Fitzwater Street row house. This frame structure has visibility from a mid-block courtyard of houses. The staff recommended denial because the frame addition shows up in the mid-19th century Hexamer & Locher atlas and has visibility. Although the structure has itself been previously altered and re-sided, the applicant can remove the shingles and expose the evidence of the original openings and clapboard. The owner can then restore the original design.

Ms. Munas, owner, stated that owing to the fence and shrubbery in the rear, a portion of the frame structure is hidden. She said that Queen Village is unusual, and she has a great awareness of preservation and the historical integrity of the property. The applicant asked that she be allowed to have French doors on the lower level in exchange for the restoration of the windows on the upper floors.

A 1923 Smith Atlas also shows the wood frame structure. The Committee believed that the wood portion had been covered with siding and the windows reduced. Therefore they recommended removal of the existing siding in order to determine the original window configuration. They further believed that the Commission could better consider a compromise solution after the exploratory work's determination. The issue of the proposed smooth stucco finish was also tabled until the determination. The Committee recommended that at this point, the applicant remove some siding and call the staff to look at the frame portion of the building.

The Architectural Committee recommended tabling the proposal pending a site visit after the removal of the siding to determine the historic fabric and original window configuration.

1030 Irving Street

Grace Schuyler, Owner

Dominic Aspite, Applicant

DATE: c. 1818

PROPOSAL: Additional floor

The application calls for the removal of an historic dormer and its replacement with a full width dormer. The building, which predates 1818, consists of two back to back row houses combined into one. The rear of the building has visibility from 11th Street and a now closed side street. The staff recommended denial, as the work violates Standards 2, 5, 9 and 10.

Grace Schuyler and Dominic Aspite attended the meeting to answer questions and explain the proposal. Mr. Aspite presented photographs showing the visibility from all directions. He stated that the applicant needs additional space and that it should be in the direction of the rear courtyard. The plans show a substantial portion of the roof and the expansion to the side at the neighbor's house with greater visibility from south 11th Street.

Mr. Baron expressed concern about the removal of historic fabric. Although renovated, the original dormer remained with six-over-six windows.

Ms. Schuyler suggested a compromise that keeps the dormer with the enlargement to the east. She stated that from the east there is minimal visibility and that she wishes to replace the roof with the unequal heights of the roofline maintained. She noted that the historic fabric would be maintained except on the east- side. It was recommended putting in another window next to the existing window since the dormer will be wider.

The Committee recommended that the applicant submit new drawings before the next Commission meeting.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted but approval of a revised submission, with the roofline at the same level.

3260 South Street, University Museum

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

Sam Olshin, Architect

DATE: 1893-1899

PROPOSAL: Alteration to modern link building

The applicant wishes to cut new windows into an existing addition to the University Museum. The building contains square windows that represent a signature element of their time period. The architect proposes to install longer windows to make a transition to the new addition under construction at the museum, and fill an open area with new windows and a concrete recessed panel.

The staff recommended approval; however, the new windows should respond to the square shape of the fourth floor windows and the square opening at the third floor.

The final drawings show the windows spread out. The issue is whether the transition windows should be longer.

Sam Olshin, architect, noted that there are many types of windows in the building and that the glass will match the existing glass.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

725 Spruce Street

Bert Serota, Owner

Phillip King, Contractor

DATE: c. 1803

PROPOSAL: Remove wood gate and install roll-up garage door

The proposal involves covering over the parking area and removing a sliding vertical gate at the back of the house to install a roll-up garage door. This block has consistent vertical board gates and has some front doorways facing onto the street.

The staff recommended denial because this block should maintain the vertical board gates per Standards 9 and 10. For a garage the applicant could install a pivot or side sliding garage door with vertical boards.

This property is in an historic district on a block where the backs of the houses form an important aspect. Some members of the Society Hill Civic Association were present to voice their concern that harmony be maintained with wooden gates with vertical boards.

The proposed garage door's height would be three feet higher than neighboring houses; however, the applicant said that extending upward keeps it on his property line. The Committee discussed at length possible alternatives but concluded that the applicant should come back with a new revised submission showing a wood door with vertical wood elements and the height of the wall on the rear property line not to exceed the fence-line.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted, but made suggestions to the applicant to submit a revised plan at a later date.

2033 Appletree Street

Donald Kushon, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Roof deck and stair house

The applicant seeks to add a deck and stair house to his roof. A raised firewall between his house and the neighboring church will hide most of the structure. The staff recommended approval.

Although this house does not have a rear ell, the neighboring church and rectory block most of the visibility.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

421 Vine Street

John Midwood, Owner

Sam Olshin, Architect

DATE: c. 1795

PROPOSAL: Construct oversize rear dormer

The applicant proposes to install an oversized visible dormer on the rear slope of this corner row house. The staff recommended denial per Standard 2.

The Committee stressed the importance of not removing historic fabric, which would change the character, and the new addition is not giving a false impression. The rear of the house has high visibility because it sits on a corner. The existing 18th century framing would be altered by this proposal. This house, a corner house, never had a rear dormer. The Committee believed the proposed dormer too intrusive.

Sam Olshin, architect for the proposal, stated that his client's needs would be best met with the large dormer. However Mr. Olshin agreed to compromise with a dormer two-thirds the size of the original submission with two matching windows.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted but approval of a revised submission two-thirds the size of the original submission with two matching windows.

243 Race Street

Elliot Diamond, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Cut window in visible party wall

The applicant seeks to legalize a casement window installed on the party wall of this structure. The staff recommended approval per Standards 9 and 10.

In order to legalize the work, Licenses and Inspections requested a letter from the owner of the neighboring house allowing the owner of 243 to cut a window in the party wall with the understanding that it will be blocked up if he builds a taller house. The Commission's staff received the letter.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

2215 Walnut Street

Herman Miller, Spectrum, Owner

Ronald Patterson, Esq., Applicant

DATE: c. 1870; Altered 1899-1902

PROPOSAL: Legalize window replacement

The applicant seeks to legalize a violation for the replacement of windows on both facades of this corner property. The lawyer for the owner states that the owner entered a contract for the window replacement before the mailing of the letters of the Commission's having the property under consideration for designation as part of the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District. He concludes that this warrants legalization, but suggests further consultation to reach a settlement of this matter. The issue is complicated by the fact that once the Commission sent its notice letter to the owner, the windows then required a permit. The notice happened before the installation of the windows. For this reason, the staff recommends a compromise.

The staff recommended approval of all windows except the three windows on the front façade, second floor. These windows the owner should replace in wood with two-over-two arch head windows.

A violation issued when the work was done. The applicant wishes to sell the property and wants to clear the violation.

The Committee recommended a compromise of the replacement of the three windows on the Walnut Street side on the second floor. The Committee noted that the window replacement cost would be much less if wood frames exist underneath the aluminum.

After a private discussion, the applicants agreed to accept the compromise. The Committee asked the owner to document the proposal with a photo blueprint to provide a record of the legalization and to show the existing condition.

The Architectural Committee recommended legalization of all existing sash subject to the replacement of the three front second floor windows which are to be restored with two-over-two curved wood frames with staff to review details.

1635 Spruce Street

Farid Ahmed Gilani, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Legalize exterior grates

The applicant installed exterior roll down metal grates and received a violation. He now seeks to legalize his work. The staff recommended denial. The applicant should install the grates inside the windows.

The inappropriateness of the exterior roll-down grates in this Historic District was expressed by the many calls from neighbors in opposition. Consideration of interior grate replacement was noted to the applicant when his application for an interior soffit with lights was approved.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial.

1635 Spruce Street

Farid Ahmed Gilani, Owner

Marylin Lozada, Contractor

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Install awnings

The applicant seeks to install awnings over the windows of this store. She shows several variants of awnings, including plastic awnings that wrap around the corner of the building. The staff recommended approval of a non-illuminated canvas type awning with at least a three foot extension and a smaller lip. The color should be compatible with the building.

The Committee recommended traditional awnings with a smaller lip and more projection, not the wrap-around type.

Marylin Lozada and Frank Lozada attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal and were receptive to the Committee's recommendations.

Mr. Burke of the Art Commission recommended that with shed type awnings the angle should not be too flat and that the color should be muted.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with the following revisions:

1. Two separate canvas awnings over the existing window;
 2. A lip of ten to twelve inches;
 3. A projection of at least three and a half feet;
 4. No side or bottom on the awnings, and
 5. Color red and yellow but toned down.
- With staff to review all details.*

225 South 18th Street, Rittenhouse Regency

Rittenhouse Regency Affiliates, Owner

Melanie Piltch, Marguerite Rogers, Applicants

DATE: 1929

PROPOSAL: Signage and awning spears

The applicant seeks to install decorative signage and spears to support the new awnings at the "Bleu" restaurant. The staff recommended approval.

Marguerite Rodgers and Melanie Piltch attended the meeting and showed examples of the decorative signage and the awning spear. Ms. Rodgers stated that signage would be on a wood framed glass panel and the awning spears placed at the end of the awnings.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

2012 Spruce Street

Oscar Soldano, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1860

PROPOSAL: Remove rear bay and construct deck

Mr. Soldano proposes to remove a bay tucked in the inside rear courtyard of his house facing a service alley. He wants to remove the bay and add two skylights to bring light to an extremely dark area of his house. He will also rebuild a reduced version of an existing rear deck. The staff recommended approval because the work faces a service alley.

Mr. Soldano stated that he wishes to take off the bay, restore two-over-two windows, remove paint, and re-point. The proposed new deck's size is half that of the demolished deck with very little visibility. Owing to the flat roof, the skylights would not be intrusive.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

2008-2010 Delancey Street

Rosenbach Museum, Owner

John Farrell, Contractor

DATE: c. 1890

PROPOSAL: Rooftop addition and louvers

The applicant proposes to build a rooftop addition that will have minimal visibility from the rear service alley and no visibility from Delancey Street. The basement windows will receive louvers and reconstructed metal grates. The staff recommended approval; however, the louvers should sit within the window frame and receive a black finish.

The sight line study shows the invisibility of the roof top addition. Owing to the large setback and the neighboring houses' having large mansards, the addition will not be seen.

Ms. Pentz questioned whether the cornice would be maintained, and it was noted that it would remain.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with the louvers painted black to match grates with the staff to review details.

1720 Delancey Street

Allen Model, Owner

Spence Kass, Architect

DATE: c. 1870

PROPOSAL: Stucco damaged marble base

In renovating the building, the applicant found that the marble under the modern applied stone had suffered substantial damage. He seeks to restore the historic parging and cover the damaged marble with stucco formed into a base. Prices show the cost of marble replacement approximately four thousand dollars more than stucco.

The staff recommended denial. The owner should maintain the damaged marble in its present condition until he has sufficient funds to replace it in kind.

Owing to the high visibility of this portion of the building, the staff hoped that the watertable would be in good condition because marble is very costly and stucco should not be placed over the marble.

Mr. Thomas cited a process of applying a latex mixture to the damaged surface, in essence using the same material that blends into the damaged surface. He cited a property that used this process and stated that it looks good and is durable. He agreed, however, that the badly damaged lintels should be replaced in marble.

The applicant was very receptive to the process.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted but approval of the repair bringing the stucco down to the water table and treating the watertable with a marble dust and resin blend with the staff to review details.

1901 Spring Garden Street

Spring Garden Limited Partnership, Owner

Stephen Ehrenhalt, Applicant

DATE: c. 1875

PROPOSAL: Fire connection and ramp

This proposal involves a ramp to create an accessible unit within this apartment complex, and a fire department connection and bell as part of sprinkling the building.

The staff recommended approval; however, the applicant should install the supports for the ramp and the fire department connection in the sidewalk to avoid cutting the marble façade per Standards 2 and 10.

John Gibbons and Michael Gresko III were present to answer questions and explain the proposal.

The Committee recommended placing the ramp to the side that is more open so only a small portion of the railing would be visible. It also recommended that the fire connection come up from the sidewalk corner behind the step, although it would be less costly for it to come up through the marble façade.

The question of color was raised and it was noted that the apartment complex is grayish in color.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the ramp's placement to the side and the fire connection through the sidewalk with the exposed foundation parged a color similar to the existing foundation.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hughes
Executive Secretary

