

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson

Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street

24 September 1992

Present

Arlene Matzkin, AIA, Chairperson
William Cornell, P.E., Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia
Herbert W. Levy, FAIA
Don Stevenson, AIA
David Hollenberg, National Park Service

Richard Tyler, Ph.D., Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Ira Kauderer, Executive Secretary

Also

James Matour, R.C.I. Corp.
Lanny Leibowitz, Architect
Richard W. Thom, AIA, Historic East Market Street
Charles Cross, Sabatino Architects
Mort Altshuler, Old City Civic Association
William Burke, Art Commission
Antonio Scarduzio, Contractor
Dan Peter Kopple, DPK & A Architects
Kate Sherwood, DPK & A Architects
Carl Doebly, DPK & A Architects
Albert L. Doering, University Barge Club
Jeff Walker, Architect

Approval

Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, 18th and the Parkway: This proposal calls for constructing a one-story meeting room addition along the rear rounded apse of the Cathedral. This addition would be somewhat visible from Race Street, and more visible from 17th Street.

The Committee expressed dismay that the addition and its handicapped accessible entrance ramp would hide so much of the rounded apse. Members wondered whether the additional space

could be found in existing buildings. If the church does decide to proceed with these plans, the Committee agreed with the architects that the addition should be faced with a random-coursed hammer-faced brownstone that matches that of the Cathedral.

The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this project, contingent on review of a stone sample.

312 Market Street: This application appeared before the Committee last month. Mr. Baron met with the applicant's architect on the site. The resulting plans call for saving and restoring the existing extant storefront in its entirety, but installing a new centrally located double door in a portion of the storefront that was once a large plate of glass.

Committee members requested that the transom run across the central double doors, and that these new doors be constructed to match the existing original one in the recessed entrance. The architect and applicant agreed to these requests.

The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this proposal.

University Barge Club, #7 Boat House Row: This application calls for the partial restoration and alteration of the river facade of the building. A large glass sliding door had been cut into the second floor several decades ago. The proposal calls for restoring this wall, and installing French doors to match an existing historic condition on the southernmost bay. The new French doors would be doubled, however, to provide more light and air. The transom windows above would be restored. The rounded wooden shingles of this whole facade would be replaced in kind. The missing gable end trim will be restored.

The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this project.

Boy Scouts Building, 22nd and Winter Street: This proposal involves a series of small alterations to the building plus a major piece of landscape furniture to be added in the courtyard. The structure is to be cleaned and repointed. The existing handicapped ramp will receive a new railing. The area below this ramp is to be walled in to create a storage area. Facing Winter Street, new iron gates based on existing ironwork will close off the front portico. At the rear, new entryways will be cut into the parking lot wall and old openings will be infilled. A new

ramp for the disabled will be dug for the basement.

At the front, two low semi-circles of granite will enclose a new space where the names of donors will be carved. Granite pavers in a herringbone pattern will replace the current flagstone paving in the courtyard. The Boy Scout Statue in the forecourt will be removed and conserved during construction, and will be replaced when the project is completed.

The Committee unanimously voted to approve the plans as presented.

Disapproval

907 Race Street: This came to Committee as the result of a violation issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections for work done without a permit. The illegal work consists of a new brick storefront wall built in front of an existing modern tiled storefront. The new illegal brick storefront projects further into the street, rather than being built in the plane of the facade.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the applicant should take off the new brick storefront and get an architect to work with the staff to design a more appropriate and legal storefront for this earliest of "Chinese style" Chinatown buildings.

The Committee unanimously recommended disapproval of this proposal.

Also

Reading Terminal Trainshed, 1115-1141 Market Street:

Proposals

Trainshed interior: This application calls for a change in the scheme approved by the Committee and the Commission for the treatment of the intersection of the trainshed ceiling truss with the glass wall separating the ballroom from the forecourt. At a previous meeting there was approval of the idea of a glass wall which would reach nearly the height of the truss and then cantilever northward under the truss and continue to rise to the ceiling behind the truss. This would have allowed the truss to be seen from the public forecourt and allow light to shine through the truss from behind. This proved to be about \$44,000.00 over budget. The new proposal is to either bring the glass wall up in front of the truss, or to make a cantilever

arrangement using drywall instead of glass. The drywall would be painted to match the color of the ceiling, and would cost about \$7,000.00 over budget. The drywall alternative, it should be noted, will not allow light to pass through the truss.

The Committee met with project architects at the trainshed to best analyze these alternatives. After considerable discussion, the Committee could not come up with what they considered a desirable cheaper solution to this problem. The Committee argued that the original idea to preserve the sense of the long train shed was about to be lost. Sandra Bressler of the Art Commission expressed concern that the more public view from the forecourt was being sacrificed to the view from the ballroom.

Committee members noted that the architects originally had \$120,000.00 in the contract for covering all sides of the building with birdnetting. This money was returned to the Authority as a credit when the birdnetting scheme was scaled back. Committee members asked whether the Authority could use \$44,000.00 out of the \$120,000.00 for the glass/cantilevered solution. Mr. Garrison explained that this would present a problem because the Authority would still be liable for the unsolved bird problem. Mr. Baron pointed out that the real need for the birdnetting was over the entrances and Filbert Street, where people walk below. Committee members further noted that the new Convention Center Building walls will not be netted.

The Committee members thought that the Commission needed to review the budget and consider shifting funds from some other area of the project to allow the building of the glass cantilever solution. They made no recommendation on this part of the project and expressed the opinion that a larger and more public body needed to make the decision.

Bird Netting: The Committee looked at several schemes of bird netting. Of the options presented the most favorably received was mesh netting which presently covers the eastern facade of the train shed spanning the bays over Filbert Street. The Committee recommended this option because it seemed most effective and least visible.

New Storefront: Mr. Myers asked the Committee to consider the replacement of a modern metal and glass storefront in the northernmost bay of the western facade of the Market. Engineers have discovered that the existing storefront does not adequately carry the wind load that it safely should. Mr. Myers proposed replacing the existing storefront with one that looks virtually the same, but would have deeper metal mullions. The Committee

recommended approval.

Rear wall: The Committee expressed their disappointment, that the historic integrity of the first-floor facade along Arch Street was to be compromised. At that location plans call for replacing damaged molded patterned brick with regular brick. Since funding was once again the problem, Ms. Bressler suggested that funds might be raised from outside sources. For example, molded bricks could be sold at the Beaux Arts Ball to be used in the restoration. The Committee asked for information on the cost of possible restoration in order to help plan restoration.

Respectfully submitted,

Ira Kauderer,
Executive Secretary