

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Commission Conference Room

26 December 1991

Present

David Hollenberg, Chairman
William Cornell, J.S. Cornell & Sons, Inc.
Herbert W. Levy, Fellow of the American Institute of Architects

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also

Robert S. Saxon, Nathan Saltz and Tiko F. Campbell
Saxon/Capers Architects
William A. Kingsley, Reading Terminal Market Preservation Fund
Martin Rosenblum and Peter A. Copp
Martin Jay Rosenblum RA & Associates
Dr. Gary S. Shaber, owner 528 Spruce Street
David L. Cohen, Central Philadelphia Development Corporation

Approval

Reading Terminal Market: Saxon/Capers Architects submitted plans to alter several vendor stalls in the Reading Terminal Market. Most of these modifications involve rebuilding non-historic fabric or restoring the little remaining historic material. The basic configuration of a market stall consists of a cast iron frame, with counter, locker, sign board and meat hooks. This assembly, however, is evident more in parts than as a whole. Of the approximately 70 merchants in the Market, only 12 to 20 stalls have extant historic fabric. Through design development, the architects worked extensively with the staff. The staff has met with the Health Department to learn their concerns while reducing the impact on the historic fabric.

Among the City Council ordinances for the Convention Center, one explicitly grants authority to the Historical Commission over the design of any improvements in the market. Mr. Tyler indicated that the proposal will also be reviewed by the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation. Finally, Mr. Tyler stressed the importance of preserving what little historic material remains.

Through staff review, it became apparent that several stands presented particular difficulties in accommodating merchants' interests within existing stall configurations. Robert Saxon, Nathan Saltz and Tiko Campbell, all of Saxon/Capers Architects, presented drawings of Godshall's, Spataro's, Basic 4/Bassett's

Original Turkey, Moyer's, Kamal's and Halteman's. Only the first two entail any substantial demolition and removal of historic fabric. At Godshall's, a signboard will be removed and moved to Kamal's; a second counter-back and signboard will be moved further west in the stand. At Spataro's, one whole counter will be demolished to accommodate a walk-in refrigerator and one counter will be partially demolished for sinks. On the latter, the front of the counter will be preserved.

Following considerable discussion and examination of the drawings, the Committee recommended approval of the project, including the job specifications enumerated in the architects' letter of 16 December 1991, which shall be incorporated into the record. The Committee also requested a comprehensive key, illustrating the scope of work in the Market.

William Kingsley of the Reading Terminal Market Preservation Fund, who noted that he had not seen the drawings previously, did not object to the proposal. Though he would like to preserve some of the elements being lost, he viewed the market as a dynamic place and understood the need to change, within reasonable bounds.

Approval in Concept

528 Spruce Street: Architect Martin Rosenblum presented plans to restore the facade of a much altered Society Hill rowhouse to its circa 1839 Greek Revival appearance. The owner, Dr. Gary Shaber, previously appeared before the Architectural Committee to "restore" the building to a "1793" appearance. At that time, the Committee requested further documentation to justify the proposed Federal style. The owner retained Mr. Rosenblum to examine historic records of the house and to devise an accurate plan for restoration. Mr. Rosenblum proposed a restoration to a Greek Revival facade, based on an 1839 insurance survey, the extant Flemish-bond wall and details.

In general, the Committee was amenable to the proposal and recommended approval of most parts, including: the removal of Victorian elements, including a metal cornice, stone watertable and some deteriorated brownstone; the installation of first-floor shutters, a wood cornice and a wooden door surround of Greek Revival style; and restoration of the dormer.

The Committee doubted the authenticity of the proposed door of two-leaves with sidelights. This configuration seemed a physical improbability given the physical dimensions of the masonry opening, which is 5'4" wide. It recommended further study of this element and suggested deleting the sidelights.

The Committee recommended an approval in concept for the proposed work, excluding the treatment of the door.

Mr. Hollenberg informed each applicant that a final vote would be taken on these matters at the next meeting of the Historical Commission, scheduled for 8 January 1991.

Having completed its agenda, the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel W. Simcox", written in a cursive style.

Daniel W. Simcox,
Executive Secretary