

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION

20 May 1988

David Brownlee, Chairman

The Thirtieth meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation began at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, 20 May 1988 in the Fourteenth Floor Conference Room of City Hall Annex.

Present: David Brownlee, Chairman of the Committee on Historic Designation
David Baldinger, Deputy Director, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Caroline Golab
Janet Klein
Hyman Myers
Sandra Tatman

Ricard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner, Philadelphia Historical Commission

Also: Sara Reiter, K.K.F.S. Architects
George Dutton, Afro American Historical and Cultural Museum
Members of the Congregation of the 18th Street Baptist Church

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee reviewed nominations of the following historical and architectural resources.

The Eighteenth Street Baptist Church
S-E corner 18th and Wharton Streets
J. Franklin Stuckert, Architect

1885-1888

The 18th Street Baptist Church possesses significance as the first Philadelphia Commission of the Architect J. Franklin Stuckert, designer of numerous locally significant churches, synagogues as well as Horn and Hardart Automats. The church is significant as a particularly intact vernacular interpretation of a Gothic Revival church. It possesses a unique history as a rare early church that developed real estate in order to pay for church construction. In the Twentieth Century the Church has played a significant role in the Black Cultural history of Philadelphia. The Church served as the home of the congregation of Reverend Frederick Douglas Edwards who established the first black religious radio Broadcasts in Philadelphia with sermons and gospel music. Many well known gospel singers began their careers through this church.

Numerous members of the congregation as well as Mr. Dutton of the Afro American Museum spoke in favor of designation.

The Committee unanimously recommended the designation of the 18th Street Baptist Church.

Pitcairn Building
Hewitt Brothers, Architects

1027-31 Arch Street
1901

The Pitcairn Building possesses significance in industrial history as one of the seven regional distribution centers established by Pittsburgh Pate Glass Company, the country's first financially successful and largest producer of plate glass, as, later, the office and factory of H. Daroff and Sons, one of the city's biggest manufacturers of ready-made men's clothing and holder of the Botany 500 label, and as a part of the commercial and industrial development that emerged immediately north of Market Street and east of Broad Street following the opening of the Reading Terminal. In addition, the Pitcairn Building has an important place in architectural history as the work of the Hewitt brothers.

The Committee unanimously recommended designation of the Pitcairn Building.

Edward B. Seymour House
Hazelhurst and Huckel

260 West Johnson Street
1891

The Seymour house possesses significance as one of the finest suburban houses of the important Philadelphia architects Hazelhurst

and Huckel. "The building marks the transition from individualistic Victorian design towards the more historicizing architecture that would be characteristic of Philadelphia at the turn of the century."

The house is a successful mixture of Queen Ann, French Medieval and North German Gothic. It maintains its design integrity.

The Committee discussed at length the proposed Society Hill Historic District. The district is to include several historical and architectural themes including:

1. The architectural fabric of the 18th and early 19th century city.
2. The development of the publishing industry around Washington Square.
3. The groundbreaking urban renewal of the 1950s and 60s.

The Committee advised leaving out Independence Park as well as the possible archeological zone between Front Street and The Delaware River.

The Committee unanimously recommended naming the district "Society Hill" and establishing the boundary shown on the enclosed map.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Randal Baron
Preservation Planner

RB/mah

