

THE MINUTES OF THE 307TH STATED MEETING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

28 JANUARY 1987

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
Christine Washington, Vice Chairman
Joan Ferreira
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning
Commission
John Street, Esq., Councilman, 5th District
Dudley Sykes, Commissioner, Department of Public Property
Yolanda Wilson, Office of Housing
David Wismer, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses
and Inspections
Mark MacQueen, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Terri Koob, Executive Secretary
Maureen Heaney, Clerk Stenographer I

Also: Sandra Garz, City Planning Commission
Edna M. Irving, Councilman Street's Office
Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation Coalition
of Greater Philadelphia
Martin McNamara, Foundation for Architecture
Patrick Starr, Foundation for Architecture
Frank Washington, Private Investigator for the Boyd Theatre
And others.

Unless otherwise noted, all actions taken herein are the results of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the 306th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 26 November 1986, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman, were reviewed and approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 11 December 1986, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg reported that the additional information requested for five submissions was not received. The following projects are still pending: 2021 Delancey Street, 2143 Mt. Vernon Street, 24-26-28 S. Front Street, The Union League located at 140 S. Broad Street, and 29 E. Penn Street. Mr. Hollenberg informed the Committee that the additional information requested for 762 S. Front Street has been received and an approval is now recommended.

The Commission unanimously voted to accept the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 11 December 1986 including the approval of 762 S. Front Street.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 8 January 1987, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg reported that the additional information required for three submissions was not received. The following projects are still pending: 1923-1925 Brandywine Street, U.S. Naval Home, and 503 Woodland Terrace. Mr. Hollenberg also explained to the Commission that the economic feasibility study, prepared by Growth Properties on behalf of Mr. Taxin, owner of 149 S. Hancock Street, is in the hands of an independent consultant for evaluation. Mr. Hollenberg further informed the Commission that the bill relating to 126 Chestnut Street introduced into City Council on 18 December 1986 by Councilman Beloff has been withdrawn. This bill, if passed, would have allowed Mr. Tayoun to build an enclosed one story glass addition onto the public sidewalk in front of the Middle East Restaurant at 126 Chestnut Street.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 8 January 1987.

THE REPORT of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff Activities for 15 November 1986 - 15 January 1987, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer. Mr. Tyler introduced Yolanda Wilson of the Office of Housing who was attending the meeting as a representative of Julia Robinson. Mr. Tyler also introduced Maureen Heaney, Clerk Stenographer I, as the newest member of the Historical Commission staff.

As an addendum to the Activities Report, Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that he received a letter dated 21 January 1987 verifying that the federal government has certified Philadelphia's preservation ordinance as meeting federal standards for purposes of the historic preservation tax incentives. The Department of the Interior had approved it earlier for Certified Local Government status.

In addition, the federal government also certified the locally designated Diamond Street Historic District as substantially meeting National Register criteria. Mr. Tyler commented that this certification allows for the possible use of the rehabilitation tax credit for the renewal of Diamond Street.

As an additional item to be included in the Activity Report, Mr. Tyler noted that there is a rather substantial preservation component contained in the City Planning Commission's Center City Plan. This portion of the plan emphasizes technique and proposes a variety of tools and economic incentives to encourage preservation in Philadelphia. Mr. Tyler stated that some concern was raised at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Planning Commission on the small number of local designations of buildings and districts. Neighborhood representatives objected to the high level of documentation required for designation and the criteria established to determine which districts would be designated. Mr. Tyler reported that these concerns have been addressed in a formal letter to the City Planning Commission. The Commission's standards are essentially the same as those adopted by the State for National Register designation. The high level of documentation, including the photographic record, aids in the protection of the designation and provides a useful tool to assist the staff in making intelligent and expeditious reviews in the permit process.

The decision to designate the Rittenhouse Square district before Society Hill rested on several considerations. First, the Society Hill National Register Historic District nomination, an early one, lacks the sufficient level of documentation found in the Rittenhouse nomination. This documentation is necessary to the local designation process and enables the staff to proceed in an expeditious manner. Secondly, development pressures which threaten historic resources are greater in the Rittenhouse area. And, finally, the majority of older buildings in Society Hill already receive the protection provided by individual designation. For these reasons, the decision was made to submit to the Committee on Historic Designation and the Commission a local district nomination for Rittenhouse Square before Society Hill.

Mr. Tyler cautioned that the City Planning Commission's study may raise expectations which would mean additional staffing and budgetary allotment. In response to Ms. Kaplan's question on future goals and objectives of the Historical Commission, Mr. Tyler stated that the preliminary budget proposal for next year calls for the creation of three major historic districts and the designation of some seventy-five buildings, structures, sites and objects. The fiscal 1988 budget also proposes the addition of two staff persons who will participate in the research and writing necessary to achieve these goals.

Patrick Starr, Foundation for Architecture, addressed the Commission and reported disappointment within the preservation community in that

the Historical Commission did not expeditiously designate National Register Districts as local districts with the passage of the new preservation ordinance. Mr. Starr continued that any request for funding for additional staff to assist in the designation process would be supported by the Foundation for Architecture.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Report of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff Activities for 15 November 1986 - 15 January 1987 including the addendum included in the minutes of this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Boyd Theatre, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street

Mark MacQueen, legal counsel for the Commission, reported to the members the recent filing of a petition for a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction. This petition was filed on behalf of Sameric Corporation by the law firm of Sprague, Higgins and Creamer and granted by the court of Common Pleas on 27 January 1987. The court order temporarily restrains the Historical Commission from holding any hearing or adjudicatory proceeding for the purpose of designating the property at 1908-1910 Chestnut Street, the Boyd Theatre, an historic building. A date upon which the Sameric Corporation's request for a declaratory judgment and final injunction hearing will be heard has been set by the Court for thirty days from 27 January 1987.

Owing to the temporary restraining order, the Historical Commission did not vote on the designation of the Boyd Theatre as an historic building.

NEW BUSINESS

The Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund Requests

Mr. Tyler requested approval from the Commission to use funds available from the William Penn Memorial Foundation grant on deposit in the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund for \$580 to cover the cost of computer training for Historical Commission staff and for \$65.00 for the purchase of a Multi-mate extended support package.

The Commission unanimously approved this request.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Heaney
Clerk Stenographer I