

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION

13 June 1991

David Brownlee, Chairman

The thirty-ninth meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation began at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, 13 June 1991 in Room 1301, 1401 Arch Street, Philadelphia Historical Commission Conference Room.

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

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee reviewed applications for the following historical and architectural resources.

Engine Company #2	1028 Berks Street
John T. Windrim architect	1893

Engine Company #2, a brick fire station building at 1028 Berks Street possesses significance as a fine example of the Richardson Romanesque style, of the work of John T. Windrim, and as an expression of the history of the Philadelphia Fire Department. The building also serves as a visual landmark in this North Philadelphia Community. This building exemplifies the Richardson Romanesque style through its arched doorways and windows, its rusticated stonework and multi-colored masonry as well as its asymmetrical arrangement of tower, gables and roof elements. It serves as an early example of the work of John T. Windrim who designed many municipal and other buildings in Philadelphia. He often used Richardsonian Romanesque for fire and patrol stations though he mastered many styles. This represents a fine example of the tremendous growth and blooming of the City Fire Department in the late 19th century.

The Committee unanimously voted in favor of recommending the listing of this building on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Terminal Commerce Building	401-421 N. Broad Street
William Steel and Sons, Designer Engineers	1929-1931

The Terminal Commerce Building, a massive twelve story structure combines in its design, office, showroom, warehouse, freight station, and parking uses. It possesses significance as a unique commercial structure developed by the Reading Company linked to its national freight lines to cater to the needs of Philadelphia's manufacturers. It also possesses significance for its engineering as an extraordinary reinforced concrete structure, as well as for its fine Art Deco styling and its design by William Steele and Sons, a leading design engineering firm in early 20th century Philadelphia.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the Terminal Commerce building for historic designation.

Founders Bell 1 South Broad Street
Gillett and Johnston Foundry 1926

The John Wanamaker Memorial Founders Bell is a fifteen ton bronze bell cast by the Gillett and Johnston foundry of Croydon England in 1926. The Bell was commissioned by Rodman Wanamaker in memory of his father John Wanamaker as a tribute to the sesquicentennial of the United States. The bell was first located atop the present Wanamaker Store penthouse but was later located in the bell tower of the Wanamaker Mens Store, now the PNB Bank building, to provide for better acoustics. The bell was part of the musical collection of the Wanamaker Store together with the organ and a assortment of rare instruments. The bell, which can be heard throughout much of the City has become along with the City Hall clock the de facto community time piece of Philadelphia. The bell possesses significance in the areas of bell casting, music, as an audible landmark and for its association with the Wanamaker family.

The Committee dicussed what parts of the bell should be included in the nomination and recommended unanimously that the bell and the clapper should be historically designated.

Central Talmud Torah & Yeshiva Mishkan Yisroel Magaziner and Potter, architects	314-320 Catharine Street 1911
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The Central Talmud Torah building, a four-story building of buff colored tapestry brick and terra-cotta possesses significance for its history as a Jewish cultural landmark, for its association with

important Philadelphians and for its Beaux Arts architectural style. The Central Talmud Torah was founded as Philadelphia's first Russian Jewish Educational Institution, later it was joined in the building by Yeshiva Mishkan Yisroel the city's first Talmudical College. The construction of this building and the work of the school was greatly assisted by the efforts of Judge Mayer Sulzberger and Rabbi Bernard Levinthal both nationally prominent Jewish American leaders. The building, designed by Louis Magaziner, one of the first Jewish architects practicing in Philadelphia, stands as an imposing example of Beaux Arts Classicism in the Southwark neighborhood.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the building for historical designation.

Holmes Whiteley Store

716 Market Street
1815

The Holmes-Whiteley Store at 716 Market Street possesses three areas of significance for the history of Philadelphia. First, it possesses technological significance as a rare surviving example of the cast-iron commercial building type that characterized East Market Street in the mid-19th century. These cast-iron facades not only allowed an owner great stylistic freedom but also provided more light through its thin columned facade. Second, the building possesses commercial significance as an excellent example of the first generation, all-commercial building type that replaced the street's residential character in the 19th century, eventually transforming East Market Street into one of the country's greatest retailing avenues by the early 20th century. Third, it possesses architectural significance as an excellent example of the late Italianate style applied to a cast-iron commercial facade in the 1870s.

The Committee unanimously recommended the building for designation.

Suburban Station
Graham, Anderson, Probst and White

1601-1639 (1617) John F.
Kennedy Boulevard
1929-30

The Suburban Station Building, a free-standing 21-story, limestone clad skyscraper possesses significance in several areas of history and architecture. First it possesses significance in the history of transportation as the last surviving center city Philadelphia station of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Philadelphia based company that became America's largest corporation and leading railroad from the late 19th through the 20th century. The station served as one

half of the railroad's integrated system of passenger service in Philadelphia. The building possesses significance for its Art Deco design including a vertical form with zoning inspired setbacks, and lavish geometric ornament. It is also significant for its association with the noted Chicago firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, successors to D. H. Burnham and Company, the firm that designed some of the worlds earliest skyscrapers. This, one of the firm's several railroad station designs also possesses far-reaching planning importance as a mixed use complex with the train station and retail franchises located underground with an office structure above.

The Committee discussed the boundaries of the nomination and asked that the train tracks only be included to the extent of the length of the rail platforms. The Committee recommended the designation of the building by a vote of 5 to 0.

Dobson Mills

3502-30 Scott's Lane
4001-55 Ridge Avenue
1858-1928

The Dobson Mills Industrial Complex encompassing a number of stone and brick structures in the East Falls section of Philadelphia possesses historical and architectural significance as one of the largest and most impressively situated industrial complexes surviving from Philadelphia's heyday as the nation's workshop. Begun in the 1850s the complex became by 1870 the largest individually owned woolen firm in the United States, a position it would hold into the twentieth century when six separate mills on the same site provided employment to more than 11,000 residents of East Falls. The Dobson Mills have architectural significance as a largely intact complex of industrial buildings that describe the early character and evolution of Philadelphia mill design along the Schuylkill River and into Germantown.

The Committee recommended the designation of this complex by a vote of 5 to 0.

University Club
Wilson Eyre Jr.

1316 Walnut Street
1887

The University Club in Center City Philadelphia possesses significance in several areas of architectural and social history. The building serves as a rare surviving example of the influential early work of the nationally distinguished architect Wilson Eyre Jr. It is also a fine example of Venetian Gothic Revival Architecture

that Eyre was so influential in reviving in the late 19th century. The building also served as the first clubhouse for the University Club, a newly formed mens club composed largely of Philadelphia's social and professional elite.

Although the committee members regreted the alterations that have occurred on the building at the lower floors, they agreed that the building is such an important example of the work of Eyre and that enough original fabric remains to recommend the designation of the building by a vote of 5 to 0.

Albemarle Hotel
Carl Berger, Architect

1231-1233 Walnut Street
135-141 S. 13th Street
1900

The Albemarle possesses significance as a fine example of the Beaux Arts Renaissance Revival Style with its three part, base, shaft and cornice form and its classical flemish bond brickwork and terra cotta columns, pediments, modillions and swags. It is also significant for its history as one of the early surviving mixed use apartment hotels, a new building type in Center City in the late 1890s. It is significant as an example of the work of Carl Berger a German American architect associated with the German community in Philadelphia.

The Committee recommended designation of this building by a vote of 5 to 0.

Gibson Development Houses
George W. Hewitt, attributed

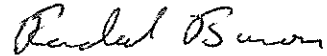
124-126 S. 16th Street
1881-82

The Henry C. Gibson Development Houses possess significance as a fine example of High Victorian Gothic architecture applied to the townhouse form; as a rare surviving example of residential architecture in what has evolved into a commercial district; as a fine example of the early residential design work attributed to G.W. & H.D. Hewitt, one of Philadelphia's most important architectural firms in the 19th century; and as an excellent example of the speculative housing developed by Henry C. Gibson (1830-1891), a wealthy liquor distiller, who became a major figure in the development of the Rittenhouse Square district after the Civil War. While many of the houses Gibson developed beyond Center City survive, the 16th Street building is the only one in the Rittenhouse area that remains from his small real empire.

The Committee recommended the designation of this property by a vote of 5 to 0.

The business being finished the committee adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Randal Baron".

Randal Baron
Preservation Planner

RB:sj