

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

25 January 1990

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman of the Committee
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect for the
Independence National Historical Park
Dr. David DeLong, University of Pennsylvania,
Historic Preservation Program
John Dickey, FAIA
Herbert W. Levy, American Institute of Architects
Donald Stevenson, Architect

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia A. Siemiontkowski,
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also: Roger T. Pritchard, Old City Civic Association
Richard W. Thom, Old City Civic Association
Diane Stevens, Old City Civic Association
Elliot J. Rothschild, The Rothschild Company, Architect
Florence Klein, K/K Enterprises
Robert Greenberg, Gordon & Greenberg, Inc., Architects
Roland Davies, Old City Civic Association
Diana deFilippi, Old City Civic Association
Patricia C. Bushyager, Washington Square West
Jay Kottoff
R. Pisani, Washington Square West
Sabrina Soong, Soong Associates
J.A. Schwin
Walter R. Livingston, Jr.,
Livingston/Rosenwinkel, P.C.
Michael F. Young, Classic Management, Inc.

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
25 JANUARY 1990

Discussion

- Kearsley Home, Christ Church Hospital: Informal discussion of a site planning study for the proposed construction of an addition to the historic Kearsley Home. The Committee informed the applicant that the study's preferred location for the new addition facing the front facade of the old building was unacceptable and that other locations on the site should be considered.

Approval in Concept

- The Bourse: Approval in concept of a proposed change to previously approved drawings for renovations to the Bourse provided the entrance dimensions indicated on the applicant's drawing are accurate and that the treatment will be identical on the other side of the main entrance. Otherwise, the applicant must resubmit a revised proposal.
- 228-230 Arch Street: Approval in concept contingent upon the revision of the proposal to remove the proposed new construction from the top of the historic buildings, and to research and restore the historic storefronts.

Approval

- 154 N. 3rd Street: Approval, with reluctance.

Approval, Contingent upon Conditions

- 222 S. Quince Street: Approval, contingent upon substitution of a stucco wall instead of the proposed glass block on the Quince Street elevation.
- 5324-26-28 Germantown Avenue: Approval of demolition, contingent upon inspection by staff and the Department of Licenses and Inspections, and submission of proposal for future treatment of this site.

Disapproval

- 1022 Race Street: Disapproval. ~~Require~~ Unless the applicant provides measured drawings of the historic storefront as well as an agreement to preserve the original fabric under the new storefront.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS

✓ Kearsley Christ Church Hospital, 49th Street and Monument Road, Elliot Rothschild. Mr. Rothschild requested an informal discussion of a site planning study for the proposed construction of an addition to the historic Kearsley Home. The preferred design presented by Mr. Rothschild would face the front of the historic building and provide the facility with an internal courtyard for client recreation, while offering a view of the historic front facade for the residents of the new wing. 7 12/14

The Committee expressed its appreciation to Mr. Rothschild for presenting this study for discussion at an early phase in the project. The Committee informed him that the proposed location for the new facility facing and obstructing the front facade of the historic building was unacceptable, and that other locations on the site should be explored.

✓ The Bourse, 21 S. 5th Street, Peter Kelson, Esq. Mr. Kelson presented a proposed change to previously approved drawings for renovations to the Bourse Building. The current proposal entailed a revision to the design of a storefront entrance along the Fifth Street facade, north of the main entryway. Mr. Kelson noted that the double-leaf door previously proposed and approved for this entrance would not meet Code requirements for width and for this reason was not feasible. As a result, the entrance door has been revised to a single glass leaf with butt joints. 7 12/17

Members asked if the applicants had considered requesting an exemption from BOCA requirements available to Historic Buildings. Mr. Kelson noted that the applicants had not sought such a variance.

The Committee expressed concern regarding an apparent discrepancy of scale between the size of the openings on the previously approved plans and those on the plans submitted for this application. The Committee asked for a clarification of this apparent inconsistency, as their recommendation would depend upon whether there was sufficient space for a double door. Assuming sufficient room exists, the Committee expressed its preference for the glass treatment with butt joints on a double-leaf entrance. This approach was considered a superior design.

The Committee informed the applicant that the revised treatment of this entrance would dictate the design of any new entrance within the south bay of this facade and asked

for a letter from the owner acknowledging that these changes would be symmetrical and consistent across the whole facade.

The Committee recommended an approval in concept for the proposed glass treatment with butt joints for a double-door entrance. The Committee also recommended that if there was insufficient space for a double-leaf that the proposed single-leaf would be acceptable. The applicant, however, must submit an accurate measured drawing for either treatment.

✓ 228-230 Arch Street, Florence Klein, K/K Enterprises. *13*

In May 1985, the Historical Commission allowed the demolition of historically designated properties at 218 and 220 Arch Street as part of a plan for the construction of a new parking garage and stores at 218-226 Arch Street. Subsequently, the proposed development was expanded to include the rehabilitation of 228 and 230 Arch Street.

*No zoning
change
needed*

Having obtained a zoning map amendment changing the use from retail commercial to hotel (which also would allow a parking garage), the applicant submitted a new design which includes an addition which extends over the buildings at 228 and 230 Arch Street -- properties designated as historic.

In their presentation to the Committee, the applicants noted that the difference in floor heights spurred them to expand their proposal to include new construction behind and atop the facades of the historic buildings. Ms. Klein noted that the project, which was financed in part by an Urban Development Action Grant, faced significant time restrictions and required the applicants to move quickly or lose the grant.

Mr. Tyler advised the applicants that, to his knowledge, the proposed design did not appear to meet the U.S. Department of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. He informed the applicants that approval of the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council was a prerequisite to receiving an Urban Development Action Grant.

Following considerable discussion regarding the design of the proposed construction, the Committee recommended an approval in concept contingent upon the removal of all new construction from atop the historic buildings. In addition, the applicant was directed to research and restore the historic storefronts and to submit a revised design for final review and approval.

- ✓ 222 S. Quince Street, Patricia Bushyager. The applicant proposed to construct a two-car garage on a vacant lot at the southwest corner of Quince and Locust Streets. The proposed structure would have a steel, raised-panelled door and a pitched roof. The materials proposed for the garage consist of 8" concrete block with a stucco finish. To provide light within the structure, the architect proposed the use of glass block on the Quince St. and side yard elevations.

Though concerned with the pitched roof, the Committee acknowledged that the form of the building suited the function of the mechanical car-jack inside the garage. Therefore, the Committee recommended approval, contingent upon the substitution of a smooth stucco finish for the glass block on the Quince Street elevation.

- ✓ 1022 Race Street, Sabrina Soong, Soong Associates. The staff of the Historical Commission had been informed of alterations, undertaken without a permit, to the facade of this historically designated building. Ms. Soong advised the Committee that the historic storefront remained intact underneath the new facade. However, she requested that the Committee allow these alterations to remain. Ms. Soong explained that the tenant undertook the alterations based on his cultural belief that the central location of the door brought bad luck, and had not been informed by the owner that the building was designated as an historic structure.

Dr. DeLong, alluding to a study of Chinatown undertaken at the University of Pennsylvania, expressed his conviction that the special character of Chinatown was more important than the historical significance of this relatively anonymous building. He stated that the designation of the structure likely was based on its age rather than its significance to the history of the city, or its individual architectural merit. He also noted that the original facade had been covered, and not lost.

The Committee concurred with these points. Given the extraordinary circumstances of this particular application, however, the Committee made the following recommendation: Disapproval, unless the applicant provides measured drawings of the historic storefront as well as an agreement to preserve the original fabric under the new storefront.

- 154 N. 3rd Street. The staff approved a building permit application for extensive interior alterations; the drawings and building permit application explicitly indicated no exterior work. However, in the course of the renovations,

the contractors removed an historic storefront and installed a simplified facade. While similar, the new storefront lacks the three light transoms of the original facade. The applicant requested an approval of the alterations to avoid a violation.

The Committee discussed the application and reluctantly voted to recommend its approval.

Mr. Roger Pritchard of the Old City Civic Association addressed the Committee regarding applications in Old City. Noting his association's approval of the alterations at 154 N. 3rd Street, he registered his concern with the appearance of inconsistency. Referring to the review of an application for 202-204 Market Street, Mr. Pritchard indicated that the Old City Civic Association was dissatisfied.

Ms. Siemiontkowski explained that the Historical Commission has no authority to require the reconstruction of an historic storefront when the original fabric had been lost previously. In addition, the Historical Commission could not require the applicant to expand his scope of work. In this instance, a large billboard covers a portion of the building facade. Although the Old City Civic Association and the Historical Commission would like to see this sign removed, the applicant cannot be forced to take it down and restore the facade to its earlier appearance.

Dr. De Long stated that the Ordinance was ambiguous with regard to the role of the Commission on matters of new construction or reconstruction of historic fabric.

Mr. Hollenberg noted that the goal of perfect restoration of all buildings in Old City was not always practical.

Mr. Hollenberg suggested that the discussion of these matters be scheduled for a time at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

5322, 5324, 5326, 5328 Germantown Avenue; 15,17,19 W. Penn Street. Walter Livingston ; Michael Young. The buildings at 5322 Germantown Avenue, and 15-17-19 W. Penn Street are not locally designated.

Mr. Livingston presented a photographic study of these properties, which illustrated the poor physical condition of these buildings. He reaffirmed his professional opinion that the buildings "are structurally unsafe and deteriorated beyond normal repair."

The Committee asked Mr. Young if he had owned the buildings. He responded that he owned them seven years ago, but presently they were being held by the Sheriff. Mr. Young explained that he sold the properties to an individual who wanted to rehabilitate them, but who experienced financial difficulties, and subsequently allowed the structures to deteriorate. Through the past sixteen to seventeen months, the buildings have been unprotected, and have been both a target of vandals and a site for illicit drug use. Mr. Young noted that he and the neighborhood association had requested that the Department of Licenses and Inspections seal the properties. At present, he is seeking title to the buildings.

Mr. Hollenberg noted that if Mr. Young had access to the buildings over the past seven years, the Committee would not consider this request favorably. The Committee acknowledged that from the presentation made, that demolition appeared necessary. However, before recommending approval of this request to the Commission, the Committee asked for the following:

- that the staff accompany the Department of Licenses and Inspections on an inspection of the properties, and
- that the applicant provide plans for the proposed use of the site.

Mr. Hollenberg informed Mr. Young that the recommendations of the Architectural Committee were only advisory to the Commission, who would decide this matter on 14 February. Mr. Hollenberg asked Mr. Young to attend that meeting, prepared to respond to possible questions regarding demolition by neglect and plans for the site.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel W. Simcox,
Executive Secretary