

MINUTES OF THE 173rd STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

18 January 1973

Present: Dr. F. Otto Haas, Chairman
Charles R. Tyson, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Rosemary Crumlish
Edward Pinkowski
William A. Costello, Commissioner of Public Property
Henry J. Magaziner, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Executive Secretary
David Rosenblum, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor
Mrs. Joseph Segal, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority

Also: Theodore Bartley, A.I.A., Architect for the Pennsylvania Hospital
Dorothy Byrd, reporter for the Evening and Sunday BULLETIN.

Unless otherwise noted, all action taken herein is the result of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the Stated Meeting, 7 December 1972, were approved with a recommendation that a copy of the proposed Fiscal 1974 Operating Budget, as approved by the Commission, be appended thereto.

REPORTS

The Reports of the Architectural Committee for 19 December 1972 and for 16 January 1973 were approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

Staff Recommendations for Certifying Buildings, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian. There was no report this month.

Report on Historical Commission Activities, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian. Dr. Tinkcom's report for the month of December and part of January was approved and directed to be filed with the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

700-14 Spruce Street (Pennsylvania Hospital property), Mr. Henry J. Magaziner, A.I.A. and Mr. Theodore Bartley, A.I.A. The Chairman introduced the matter relating to these historically certified buildings to the Board and asked Mr. Magaziner to begin the discussion. A fact sheet outlining the recent history (copy attached) on 700-14 Spruce Street, prepared by Mr. Magaziner, was distributed to all those present. This sheet outlined the importance of these buildings and the question of their retention or demolition.

OLD BUSINESS

Although the Historical Commission had approved of the demolition of these certified buildings, upon the expiration of the Board's six month withholding period, it was the opinion of Mr. Magaziner that, because of new developments in preservation law subsequent to the agreement of the Pennsylvania Hospital with the Redevelopment Authority in 1963 calling for the demolition of these buildings, it would now be possible to preserve at least the facades of the structures. As Chairman of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects' Committee on Conservation and Historic Preservation, Mr. Magaziner protested the Historical Commission's decision to approve the demolition of these buildings publicly and organized a picket line to call the attention of the public to these structures. Telegrams were sent to officials in Harrisburg and Washington and to other interested persons.

Mr. Bartley, architect for the Pennsylvania Hospital, requested permission to read to the Board Mr. Magaziner's telegram concerning the Spruce Street buildings and the reply of Lynne M. Abraham, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, to this telegram. (Copies of both are attached herewith.) Mr. Bartley then pointed out that while it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the Hospital could build around these buildings, to do so would not allow the Hospital to develop its out-patient department to meet the needs of the community.

Commissioner Costello questioned the reason for this discussion, since the Historical Commission now has no power to withhold a demolition permit. Dr. Haas replied that the matter was on the agenda at Mr. Magaziner's request. Since the Chairman had acted to release these buildings, it was now necessary for the Board to affirm his action. Commissioner Costello asked that the members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission consider the good of the City and the community as well as the preservation of buildings in this particular instance.

Dr. Tinklen, speaking to the staff's position at Commissioner Costello's request, pointed out that the Pennsylvania Hospital in January of 1972 was asked to review their plans for this block in the light of the new developments in historic preservation. The Hospital, subsequently, undertook a feasibility study and reported in December that to achieve their goals, the property would need to be cleared as originally planned. In view of the Hospital's preservation of the eighteenth-century Pine Street buildings and of the open space which provides their historical environment, and in view of the fact that no matter where the Hospital turned it was surrounded by historical buildings, on Pine Street, Delancey, Spruce, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Streets, the demolition of these structures, 700-14 Spruce Street, would offer the most reasonable compromise possible between the concerns of preservationists and the requirements of the Hospital.

OLD BUSINESS(Cont'd)

After much discussion, the Historical Commission voted to allow the Pennsylvania Hospital to execute their contract with the Redevelopment Authority as drawn up and approved in 1963.

Access to Interstate 95 between South Street and Washington Avenue, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian. The Queen Village Neighbors Association's protest of the proposed access ramps to Interstate 95 in Southwark was related to the Board by the Historian. Both of the plans proposed by the Highway Department are unacceptable to the neighborhood and to the Historical Commission since the implementation of either would mean the demolition of a number of historically certified buildings. The Queen Village Neighbors Association has gone on record as opposing any access routes between South Street and Washington Avenue. The Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects' Committee on Conservation and Historic Preservation, at the Historian's request, also considered this matter at a recent meeting and suggested that the Highway Department restudy their plans since there will be no Crosstown Expressway. It was suggested by that Committee that Washington Avenue might serve as the site for any access ramps in South Philadelphia. The Board voted to write a letter to the Highway Department, with a carbon copy to R. Damon Childs, Executive Director of the City Planning Commission, opposing the present plans and asking for an alternative proposal.

Assistant to the Executive Secretary, Dr. F. O. Haas, Chairman.
Dr. Haas reported his conference with Commissioner Costello stating that no additional staff had yet been appointed to the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution memorializing Dr. Roy F. Nichols. Dr. Haas agreed to prepare this resolution with the help of the Commission staff.

Enlargement of the Historical Commission. After meeting with Mr. Weinberg of the Law Department, it was agreed that, at this time, nothing could be done to enlarge the Commission's membership.

Next Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. The Commission's next Stated Meeting will be held on 1 March 1973.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Executive Secretary