

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

27 September 1990

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect for
Independence National Historical Park
Dr. David DeLong, University of Pennsylvania,
Historic Preservation Program
Donald Stevenson, Architect

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also: Robert Levy, Valley Green Inn, proprietor
Irv Shapiro, Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber, architect
William Petrauskas, Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber, architect
Gianne Conard, Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber, architect
F.M. Rivinus, Friends of the Wissahickon
Gail S. Bower, Friends of the Wissahickon
Allan Edmunds, Brandywine Workshop
Samir Mukherjee, Brandywine Workshop, architect
Lonne Rice, Drexel University, resident architect
Terri Graboyes, Graboyes Windows
Larry Graybill, Graboyes Windows
William Martin, Traco Windows
John McGaw,
Administrator for City Hall Restoration Program

Discussion of Rules and Regulations: The members discussed relevant sections of the recently adopted Rules and Regulations. Ms. Batcheler suggested an amendment to the provisions for demolition which would require recordation of designated buildings prior to demolition. Mr. Hollenberg noted that the document allowed for a larger committee. Given the quorum requirement, he recommended that enlarging the Committee would diminish any problem arising from this requirement. He suggested the names of several individuals considered for the Committee.

Mr. Hollenberg announced that a quorum was present and proceeded to the agenda.

APPROVAL IN CONCEPT

Valley Green Inn, Fairmount Park. Irv Shapiro, William Petrauskas and Gianne Conard, architects, Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber; and Robert Levy, Jr., proprietor, Valley Green Inn. At its meeting of 26 July 1990, the Architectural Committee reviewed a proposal to construct a new banquet facility and kitchen behind the Valley Green Inn, constructed in the early nineteenth century. The Committee recommended an approval in concept for an elongated stone addition and landscaped terrace. The kitchen facilities would be located behind the Inn. A banquet room and open-air terrace would appear to the side. On 8 August 1990, the Commission adopted the recommendation of its Committee and approved, in concept, this proposal. Since that time, the architects have met with the Friends of the Wissahickon to discuss the proposal.

The architects presented a model of their proposal, which incorporated previous comments of the Architectural Committee. Following a thorough presentation by the architects, the Committee recommended an approval in concept, with the following specific design guidelines:

- that the trellis in front of the addition remain open, without a solid roof.
- that the landscape to the rear of the Inn remain clear of HVAC or other mechanical systems. As an alternative, the Committee recommended the installation of a small structure on the roof of the addition, behind the Inn, which would not be visible from surrounding public spaces.
- that the architects retain the present contours of the patio roof.

Overall, the Committee commended the architects for their incorporation of the new structure into this popular historic site.

Although primarily a concern of the Planning Commission, Mr. Tyler inquired into the plans for parking. Mr. Levy indicated that he hoped to increase the use of a second existing parking lot upstream. He anticipated that he could achieve this result through valet service, improved lighting and security.

APPROVAL

730-732 S. Broad Street, Franklin Hose Company #28: Samir Mukherjee, architect, and Allan Edmunds, Brandywine Workshop. Mr. Mukherjee presented drawings for the restoration of the facade of this circa 1868 Second Empire firehouse. This exterior work is the first phase of a plan to rehabilitate the building for use as the Firehouse Arts Center by the Brandywine Workshop. This facade restoration includes the masonry, wooden doors, windows, cornice and mansard roof.

One vexing element for the architect and Committee was an concrete transom infill alteration on the south side of the facade. The applicant seeks either to remove it, if structurally and financially feasible, or to replicate it on the north side of the facade. After considerable discussion, the Committee recommended that the Commission approve the removal of the existing infill alteration and the installation of a reproduction of the spandrel glass filling the transom of the adjacent bay, if feasible. However, if this treatment is not viable, then the existing infill may remain, but cannot be duplicated on the adjacent bay.

The Committee also addressed the applicant's proposal to patch the marble facade. After discussion of a proposed glass-fiber concrete treatment, the Committee disapproved this element and encouraged the applicant to leave the marble as it is. The Committee also discouraged grinding the marble to smooth and clean the surface. Instead, the members recommended a gentle cleaning with water. Finally, the Committee reminded the applicant to obtain staff approval of a test patch of all proposed cleaning and patching.

Drexel University, Drexel Institute: Lonne Rice, Drexel University, resident architect; Terri Graboyes and Larry Graybill, Graboyes Windows; and William Martin, Traco Windows. The Committee first reviewed a proposal to replace the existing wood sash on the Drexel Institute at its meeting on 28 June 1990. Because the drawings were not adequate to review the proposal, the matter was tabled. The Commission ratified this decision on 11 July 1990. Members of the Committee met on-site with Mr. Rice on 16 August 1990. At that meeting, the Committee members in attendance witnessed the extent of the window deterioration. Subsequent drawings submitted by the applicants, however,

did not address adequately several significant concerns of the Committee.

At this meeting, Mr. Rice reasserted several points. Given existing maintenance problems with the deteriorated wooden sash and frames, the building experiences considerable energy loss. Although Mr. Rice personally preferred to replace the deteriorated sash and frames with reproductions in wood, the university could not afford them. Given the limited budget, the University proposed aluminum replacements. To mitigate the impact of this change, the university would restore the auditorium windows on the northern facade.

Mr. Hollenberg indicated that the drawings submitted most recently were not internally consistent. Further, they depicted considerable differences between the dimensions of the meeting rail and profile of the existing and replacement windows. For example, the glass width of each window will be reduced by five inches and the width of the replacement windows' meeting rail would be more than double those of the existing windows. To clarify these concerns, Mr. Hollenberg provided specific comments on a previously submitted drawing.

Mr. Hollenberg repeated his reservations regarding the dimensions of the jamb head, meeting rail and transom. He added that he previously had not seen a proposal for panning in which the dimensions changed so considerably. Yet, he acceded that the windows were deteriorated, and that the university had a justifiable interest in replacement. Therefore, he suggested that the Committee approve the proposed replacement contingent upon the restoration of not only the auditorium windows, but also those within the arch of the main entrance on Chestnut Street.

Ms. Grayboyes, Mr. Graybill and Mr. Martin addressed specific concerns regarding the window dimensions. They explained that the weight of operable and insulated glass required wider window jambs. The dimensions desired by the Committee could be attained, but only if the university removed the existing wood before panning. This labor-intensive task would increase the cost of the project considerably.

Though reluctant, the Committee approved the proposed replacement contingent upon the restoration of not only the auditorium windows, but also those within the arch of the main entrance on Chestnut Street. Further, the Committee

made approval contingent upon the correction of the drawings of record so that they accurately depicted the existing conditions and that they were internally consistent. The Committee also emphasized that this approval was predicated on the financial hardship of this non-profit corporation.

DISAPPROVAL

City Hall, "T" Level Observation Platforms: John McGaw, Administrator for City Hall Restoration Program, Department of Public Property. Mr. McGaw submitted a conceptual plan to install new observation platforms in the "T" Level of City Hall Tower. The decks, which would cantilever from existing structural plates, would allow visitors to walk closer to the oculus windows at this level. At present, there are approximately two feet between the plates and the windows.

The Committee expressed appreciation for the exhilarating elevator ride and stunning view of the City. However, members agreed that the present space was worth preserving, and that it offered visitors superb vistas of the City. Further, they expressed concern with the concept of cantilevering decks from the existing floor plates.

Having survived the descent on the elevator and completed the agenda, the Committee adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel W. Simcox
Executive Secretary