

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Commission Conference Room

30 January 1992

Present

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David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman  
Tony Atkin, Architect  
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect,  
Independence National Historical Park  
Dr. David DeLong, Professor and Chairman  
University of Pennsylvania, Historic Preservation Program  
Herbert W. Levy, Fellow of the American Institute of Architects  
Donald Stevenson, Architect

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

Also

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George C. Lutz and Phil J. Orchowski, Creative Remodeling  
Joann Weeks, Washington Square West Civic Association  
Philip Scott, John Milner Associates  
Jack Decker, E.C. Durell Associates  
John McGregor, Graduate Health System

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Tabled

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164 N. Third Street: Innovative Designs, Inc., occupants of this corner property, installed a canvas sign without a permit. The sign, which obscures the transoms and the columns of the building, is inappropriate.

Applicant Issy Gaitelband informed the Commission staff by telephone of the company's intention to vacate the premises within thirty days. [Note: The applicant is not leaving because of the violation regarding the sign]. The canvas sign and metal structure will be removed by the end of February 1992.

Based upon the owner's express intention to remove the sign, the Committee tabled this matter until March 1992 and directed the staff to notify the property owner of this matter.

<sup>2/3</sup>  
Approval in Concept

~~240~~-251 S. Camac Street: George C. Lutz and Phil J. Orchowski, of Creative Remodeling, Inc. presented conceptual plans for the rehabilitation of two vacant, burned-out rowhouses that once served as the Deux Cheminees Restaurant. The applicants proposed to remove a wooden, upper-floor, mid-20th century addition at the rear of the building. In its place, they propose to construct a new one-and-a-half story addition of cinder block and stucco in a Neo-Federal Revival style. The applicants presented alternative modern designs as well. It was noted that the adjacent blocks of Fawn and Manning Streets, from which the rear addition will be visible, possess the character of service alleys. The applicants also propose to build a new stair tower to the rear, to reconstruct the interior and to restore the Camac Street facades.

The Committee recommended an approval in concept for the proposed work with the exception of the style of the rear addition. Though amenable to the proposal to stucco the rear portion of the historic buildings, the Committee maintained reservations regarding the appearance and proposed form of the rear addition. The Committee recommended a simpler design, more in character of a "back building." The Committee recommended approval in concept for a design similar to that of the existing wooden structure, with a roof ridge parallel to Manning Street.

Approval

2129 Chestnut Street: Church of the New Jerusalem: Philip Scott of John Milner Associates presented plans to re-roof the former parish house, now occupied by Graduate Health Systems. Its present roof regularly allows water penetration. Though likely that the entire church complex once was roofed with red, diamond-shaped, ceramic tile, the sanctuary and east slope of the parish house are now covered with gray slate. The south and west slopes of the parish house, which are highly visible from Chestnut Street, retain the ceramic tiles. These tiles are likely more than 100 years old and many are cracked; at places, the tile roof has been patched with aluminum tile and other substitutes. In addition to re-roofing the parish house, this proposal entails roofing a flat, non-visible stair-tower roof with EPDM as well as repair in-kind of the roofs of the loggia and sanctuary.

The Committee's primary concern was the proposal to replace the ceramic tile of the south and west slopes of the parish house with gray slate. The applicant dismissed the idea of preserving the ceramic tiles and re-laying them because the roofer would not guarantee his work if forced to use these tiles. The applicant also dismissed roofing in new ceramic tile, based on an estimate by his contractor that the cost would be prohibitive. Mr. Scott

also showed a catalogue-cut of Supra-dur tile in a red Spanish barrel tile design. This Supra-dur tile would cost approximately the same as slate. However, it would result in a different character and may fade in color. The architect, therefore, proposed roofing the entire parish house in gray slate, while preserving existing terra cotta cresting.

Considerable discussion ensued among the Committee members regarding the merits of roofing in slate versus the possibility of using a material which may retain more of the character of the ceramic tile.

Messrs. Atkin and Stevenson, who stressed the value of the color and texture of the ceramic tile, encouraged further investigation for a substitute which would retain its shape and character. Mr. Atkin offered two suggestions to achieve a similar form: either Supra-dur tile, which he thought was made in this shape, or slate cut into a diamond pattern.

Dr. DeLong opposed these suggestions, calling their result undesirable hybrids, which would recreate the form in a material foreign to the building. He maintained that such attempts obscure historical accuracy. If the original material is not affordable, slate offers an acceptable replacement. Mr. Levy added that nearly half of the roof is already slate. Both encouraged saving several of the ceramic roof tiles, in the event that the roof would be restored in the future. They added that the suggested substitutes entail considerable labor, which would inflate the budget. Mrs. Batcheler noted that it would be difficult to duplicate the shadow of the tile.

The Committee recommended approval of the proposed roofing of the stair tower and the repair in-kind of the roofs of the loggia and sanctuary. Mr. Levy suggested a recommendation for approval of the proposed slate roof for the parish house. Messrs. Atkin and Stevenson encouraged the applicant to examine the feasibility of roofing in tile or slate of a shape similar to the historic tile. Mrs. Batcheler concurred and the Committee amended the recommendation to incorporate a request for information on the cost of slate cut into a diamond pattern. The Committee requested that the applicant submit a statement on the feasibility of the proposed roofing substitutes before 7 February. The staff will circulate this information and obtain a consensus from the Committee before the Commission meeting. Mr. Levy and Dr. DeLong maintained reservations with the amendment.

This proposal also entails removal of terra cotta cresting while the new roof is laid. The applicant suggested consolidating the intact pieces on the main roof ridge and using a copper roll-

ridge on the dormers. Although there were questions regarding the juxtaposition of the terra cotta and the proposed slate roof, the Committee recommended reusing all of the terra cotta cresting in all the locations where it now exists. Mr. Hollenberg noted that they presently rise from slate on the eastern slope of the parish house. Mr. Baron suggested replacing broken pieces with cast-stone replacements. Dr. DeLong, who supported preservation of the original terra cotta, questioned the integrity of installing substitutes of a different material. The Committee recommended approval of the removal of the existing terra cotta cresting, contingent upon its replacement on all roof ridges where it presently exists when the roof is finished.

#### Deferral

1524-1534 South Street, The Royal Theater: At this time, the Architectural Committee was joined by the Committee on Financial Hardship. A complete account of this matter is provided in the Report of the Joint Meeting of the Architectural Committee and the Committee on Financial Hardship, 30 January 1992.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel W. Simcox,  
Executive Secretary