

**REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
26 September 1995**

Present

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson, Architectural Committee
Tony Atkin
David Hollenberg
Herbert Levy
Suzanne Pentz

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Lori Plavin Salganicoff, Historic Preservation Specialist
Jeffrey Barr, Historic Research Technician

Also

Judith Eden, Center City Resident's Association (CCRA)
Bobbie Burke, CCRA
Teresa Kennedy, 325 South 18th Street
Roy Fuiman, 1210 Spruce Street
George J. Baker AIA, 325 South 18th Street
Robert Borzotta, 621-A South American
William Isenberg, 1424 Chestnut Street
Samuel Fadullon, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Stuart Rosenberg, 1424 Chestnut Street
David Feldman, 2127 St. James Street
Bernard Nearey, CCRA

325 S. 18TH STREET (AT DELANCEY STREET)

Teresa Kennedy, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Partial Reconstruction and Restoration

The Applicant seeks final approval for drawings to rebuild the north and east walls of the rear el. A schematic design for this work was approved at the 13 September Historical Commission meeting. The areas to be rebuilt include two wood frame bays, brick walls, windows, soffits and gutters. The slate roof would remain untouched. After meeting in the field with staff, the Architect proposes to move several windows in order to give more structural support to the bays. The rebuilt bays would be cantilevered from the facade using steel and their current columns retained for historical appearance. The columns may carry some small amount of the weight of the bays. Committee members agreed that it would be structurally beneficial to have brick piers at least 8" thick even though this would necessitate moving windows.

A new aspect of the proposal revealed at this meeting entails raising the Delancey Street bay from one to two stories high. Ms. Kennedy stated that since the bay will be made slightly smaller to allow for the brick piers when rebuilt, the second story should be approved to allow for some extra living space. Ms. Matzkin characterized the proposed alteration as an addition to a primary facade and noted that it seems to partially obscure the view to the cornice and dormer. Ms. Pentz wondered whether the raised bay would be structurally sound. Ms. Kennedy characterized this addition as minor, stating that she could have asked that it extend to ground level as well.

Ms. Matzkin stated that she understood that the concept of the court order was that deteriorated portions of the building would be replaced in kind, and that it specifically disallowed footprint changes. Ms. Kennedy explained that the change would not alter the footprint and she strongly objected to the Committee discussing the court order and promised legal action if Commission decisions are based on issues outside of its purview. Ms. Matzkin reiterated the historic and architectural arguments against such an addition.

Mr. Levy noted that the drawings, although well drafted, were not drawn to scale, and questioned the location and size of some window openings and the articulation of sash and framing. Mr. Baker stated that these measurements had not been verified in the field owing to lack of time. He reminded the Committee that, according to the court order, final working drawings are due to be submitted to the Department of Licenses and Inspections by 28 October. Mr. Levy stated that, absent a well made and accurate drawing, he did not foresee approval. Mr. Hollenberg added that without an accurate drawing, the addition cannot be properly considered. Mr. Levy suggested that the Applicant seek permission from the court to delay the deadline. Commission staff noted that the date was set so as to allow for the completion of construction before the onset of freezing temperatures.

Mr. Hollenberg summarized the Committee's opinions, stating that the relocation of windows as proposed could be recommended for conceptual approval subject to staff review. Raising the bay could not be further reviewed without accurate drawings of both existing and proposed conditions.

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend conceptual approval of moving windows to allow for the construction of interior brick piers subject to staff review.

1210 SPRUCE STREET
Roy Fuiman, Applicant
PROPOSAL: Windows

This proposal comes as a result of a violation issued for the installation of windows without a permit. The building had a fire several years ago and has sat vacant. Mr. Fuiman, a real estate broker whose office is across the street, bought the building and installed vinyl windows with snap-in muntins to replace a temporary covering of the openings. He claims that closing up a building after a fire does not require a building permit. These windows are visible both on the front and back of the building from public streets.

Mr. Fuiman described work he had performed on nearby buildings as examples of his good intentions toward the neighborhood. He explained that he took over the ownership of 1210 Spruce Street to protect his neighboring buildings, and stated that the previous owner was allowing the building to be demolished by neglect. Commission staff added that the previous owner had received numerous violations and had been taken to court. In response, he had repaired the roof and had sealed the windows several times.

The Committee was provided by Mr. Fuiman with photos of two buildings in the neighborhood with aluminum windows. Commission staff noted that one was not designated and the other had been designated with those windows already installed.

Mr. Fuiman stated that he had been allowed to repair car accident-damaged entrance steps on a neighboring building without a permit. He claimed that replacement of windows in a vacant building constituted the same level of emergency and therefore the same lack of need for a building permit. A staff member of the Commission reported that the Law Department determined that a building permit is required for this work.

Mr. Fuiman asked that the Commission take his word that the windows would be replaced upon the rehabilitation of the building whether this is done by himself or the next owner. Commission staff noted that once the property is sold, agreements such as these probably cannot be enforced. Mr. Fuiman promised an affidavit stating his proposition. He offered to hold money in escrow. Mr. Atkin expressed his favor of the proposition if there exists a legal way to do it, otherwise, he recommended denial. Mr. Tyler suggested that the Law Department could draft an agreement requiring that when the building is rehabilitated, whether by Mr. Fuiman or the next owner, more appropriate windows would be required.

Mr. Atkin stated that the issue of whether or not to allow work to be done without a permit is outside of the domain of the Architectural Committee. Committee members agreed that the vinyl windows with applied muntins would not have been recommended for approval had the proposal been reviewed before their installation.

The Architectural Committee decided to allow Mr. Tyler to contact the Law Department to find out if there is a legal way to require appropriate replacement windows when the building is rehabilitated.

621-A S. AMERICAN STREET

Bob Borzotta

PROPOSAL: North Facade Bay Addition

The Applicant seeks to build a second story bay with a third story and solid railing inset balcony onto the building's stuccoed north wall. This wall connects to the front facades of an integral row of buildings constructed at the same time to form a rear court. A bulkhead with windows would also be added at the basement level. A parking lot adjacent to the alley allows for the facade to be fully visible from American Street. It is likely that the wall was always blank.

Mr. Atkin recommended that the first floor window be made into a larger single window to better respond to other buildings on the street. Mr. Hollenberg recommended that the railing be made more open. Committee members recommended that Mr. Borzotta recruit the services of an architect.

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the addition with staff review of details.

1424 CHESTNUT STREET, JACOB REED STORE BUILDING

Stuart G. Rosenberg, Architect

PROPOSAL: Alterations

This proposal calls for installing a new metal signage and canvas banners on the former Jacob Reed store. Barnes and Noble has left the building, to be replaced with a CVS pharmacy. Several areas of the Zoning Code do not allow for projecting signage on Chestnut Street. However, the high vacancy rate on this block may aid the granting of a zoning variance.

The signage would consist of bronze wall plaques, a three dimensional bronze or bronze-like mortar and pestle sign, and banners reading "CVS Pharmacy" hanging from the building's flagpoles. Committee members noted that the proposed size of the banners seem too large. The Committee had previously approved banners for the former Barnes & Noble store. The words "CVS" and "Pharmacy" would be located behind and underneath the mortar and pestle, with their letters cut through metal and made visible with backlit plastic. This sign would require new attachments to the building. Ms. Matzkin expressed uneasiness with a backlit sign on this building. One additional sign saying "CVS Pharmacy would replace the "Barnes and Noble" entrance lintel sign.

Committee members agreed that the word "Pharmacy" is redundant on the bronze mortar and pestle, and suggested that it be removed from the design. It would then have only the word "CVS." They submitted that the banners, which also feature a stylized mortar and pestle, would compliment the 3-D bronze sign if just the word "Pharmacy" were added to the graphic.

Mr. Rosenberg added as a point of interest that the original stained glass, interior murals, and the Mercer Tile column capitals will be retained.

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend conceptual approval of the signage, with the elimination of the word "Pharmacy," and perhaps also "CVS," from the three dimensional mortar and

pestle. The drawings should be corrected to describe the locations of signage and methods of attachment.

2127 ST. JAMES STREET
Marion Rogel, Applicant
David Feldman, Architect
PROPOSAL: Alterations

This proposal has been before the Committee in the two previous months for partial demolition of the Van Pelt Street portion of the property and legalization of an undersized door on St. James Street installed without a permit. The Van Pelt Street addition would be demolished to a level of 8', and a second floor french balcony would be constructed where an opening previously existed on the main building. The Committee delayed the decision in order to allow the community, as represented by the Center City Residents Association (CCRA), to meet with Mr. Feldman to work out a compromise.

Ms. Eden, Co-chair of the Zoning Committee of the Center City Resident's Association, submitted a copy of a 20 September 1995 letter sent to Mr. Feldman. The letter reported that Committee's vote not to oppose the application for a zoning variance for partial demolition of a rear addition with retention of all walls as 8' fence walls, subject to the following six conditions:

1. Existing windows in walls to be partially demolished are to be infilled with matching brick and mortar, and existing tile copings will be used to top the 8' fence walls.
2. All bracing to stabilize the 8' fence walls shall not be visible from the public right-of-way.
3. The air conditioner shall be placed on the flat portion of the third story roof and shall not be visible from the public right-of-way, and no mechanical systems shall be placed in the Van Pelt Street yard.
4. There shall be no parking of automobiles or motorcycles in the Van Pelt Street yard, and the yard shall not be covered with black-top, concrete or other impervious material.
5. There shall be no decks.
6. Any present or future replacement of existing windows shall be historically accurate to the original house.

Ms. Burke expressed concern that these conditions would only come into effect if a zoning variance is needed. Mr. Feldman described his client's interest in seeking this variance in order to have the 8' garden wall. Committee members agreed that the recommendation would be to require that this wall be 8' high, thereby necessitating a zoning hearing. Ms. Burke noted that the original violation had been issued for an air conditioner and french doors installed illegally.

Committee members agreed that the french doors installed on the south facade are inappropriate since

they are too small for the original opening. The leftover space was infilled with non-matching brick and mortar. They discussed reusing this door at the back and requiring an appropriate replacement.

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the reduction of the Van Pelt Street addition to an 8' wall with a second floor french balcony. Secondly, they voted to recommend denial of the french doors on the south facade with the requirement that the new doors should fit the opening. The Architect is to work with Commission staff to get the proper south facade door.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lori Plavin Salganicoff

ADDENDUM

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Following the formal review of applications for building permits, Commission staff introduced the issue of review of paint color. Although the Historic Preservation Ordinance refers to color as a part of the definition of "Design" [Section 14-2007(2)(W)], the Commission has traditionally not regulated the color of trim and has denied only requests to paint unpainted exterior masonry surfaces. It has also offered non-binding guidance when repainting is requested. The Commission has made occasional exceptions to this practice when applicants seek to paint unpainted masonry in the color of that masonry to address serious graffiti problems.

Recently, however, the Commission staff has been confronted increasingly with character-altering paint colors applied to either unpainted surfaces or surfaces with masonry-colored coatings. In fact, in the past month, an originally unpainted building whose masonry-colored paint met with no resistance from the Commission was repainted purple. Although allowing unpainted buildings to receive same-color coatings does not immediately change their character, under standard Commission practice those buildings may later be painted in any color.

Committee members discussed this issue using 2013 Walnut Street as an example. The owner of this building seeks to place an Irish pub in the ground floor. In the often grey weather of that country, pubs are typically painted a bright and cheerful red. Although Philadelphia has very different weather, the owner desires to paint the ground floor red to give the sense of the traditional Irish Pub. Committee members chose to recommend allowing the restaurant to be painted as requested.

The larger issue of review of paint color in general met with support. While not interested in reviewing all applications to paint, Committee members agreed that paint can define or change the character of a structure. In keeping with current practice for review of all other applications for alterations to designated buildings, Committee members recommended that the staff review minor changes related to the painting of historic structures and bring all others to the Architectural Committee for review. They noted that review of these proposed changes would not automatically mean denial as evidenced by the review and recommendation for approval of the proposal to paint 2013 Walnut Street. The ability to deny inappropriate changes to the character of the facade, however, was viewed as important to sustain and clarify.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lori Plavin Salganicoff